SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

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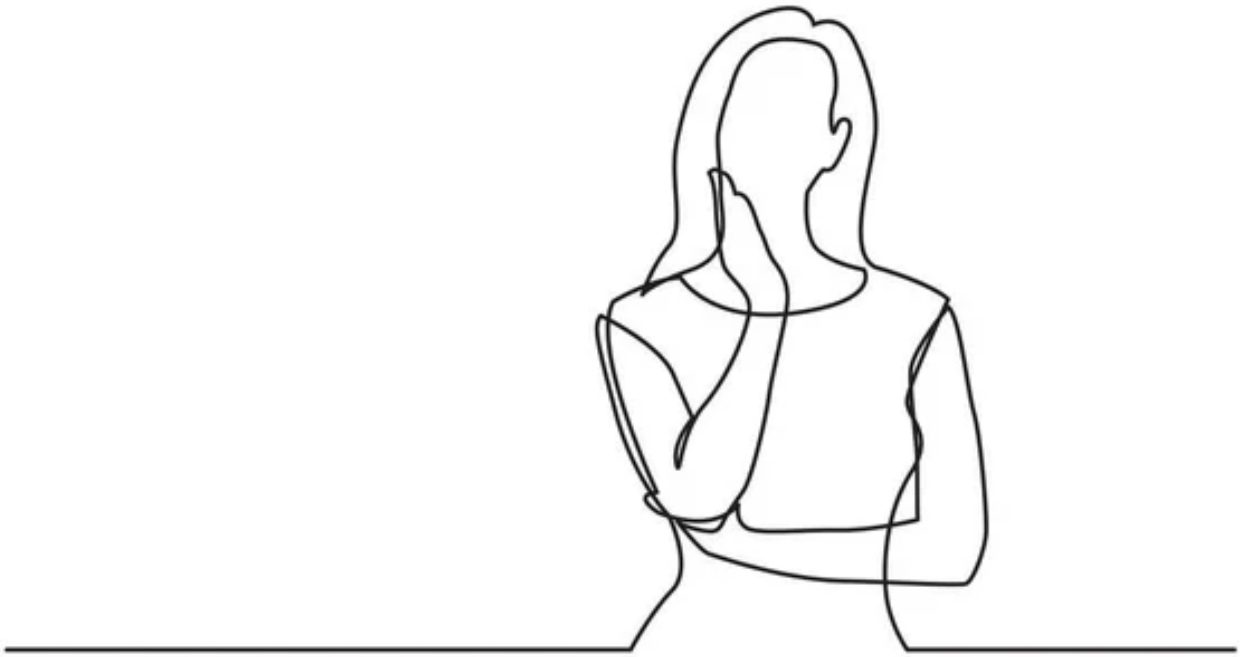


For the past month, we have been collecting evidence and assessing the efficacy of recognising, reporting and removal of fake profiles across platforms, specifically Meta.

Reporting systems across each platform vary and it's clear that more needs to be done on them all to ensure user safety is increased. Unless you are using the systems on a regular basis, it's difficult to understand the inadequacies. The systems in place will be explained, along with several different types of reporting and the removal rates behind them.

With today's technological advancements, the fact that AI facial recognition isn't being used to facilitate removal of well used faces or faces alerted to the platform is of grave concern.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

BY ANNA ROWE

Evidence collected shows:

- Numbers of fakes for a well known name and picture
- Number of fakes in a random name search
- Removal rates for Legacy Verified Profiles
- Removal rates for Paid For Verified profiles
- Removal rates for non verified profiles
- Removal rates on special forms

In the second part of the report, other types of frauds linked to Romance Fraud will be highlighted. Re-victimisation is high and recovery scams of different types are rife across the platforms.

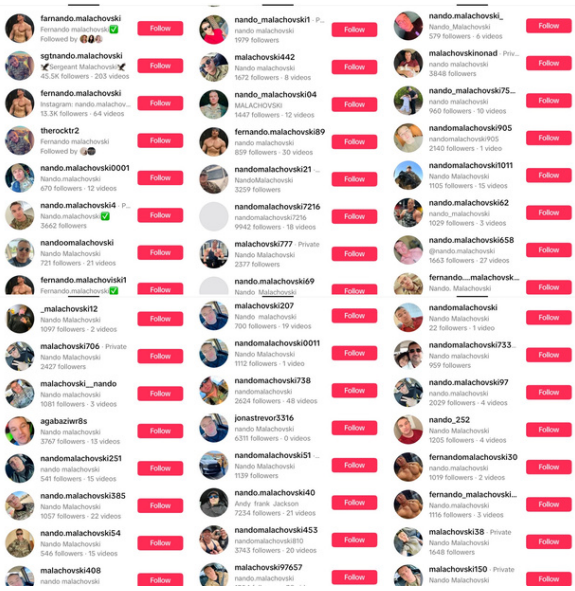
WELL KNOWN NAME SEARCH

Fernando Malachovski is a US Army Sergeant. His pictures are used extensively across social media on all platforms. The next page is a break down of profiles using his pictures.

Several anti scam groups ran this name through each platform search. Instagram restricts the number of results shown from a search so there may well be more.

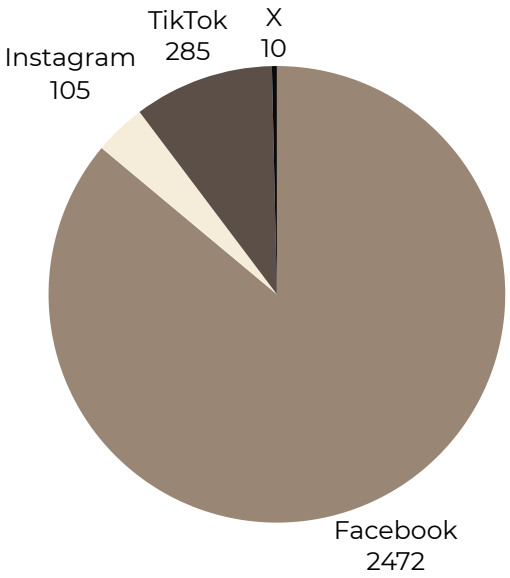
Even when on occasion, the picture was not of Nando (but using his name) the pictures could be recognised as fakes by the anti scam group member.

Nando is just one of thousands of people whose pictures are stolen from the platforms and used in criminal activity.



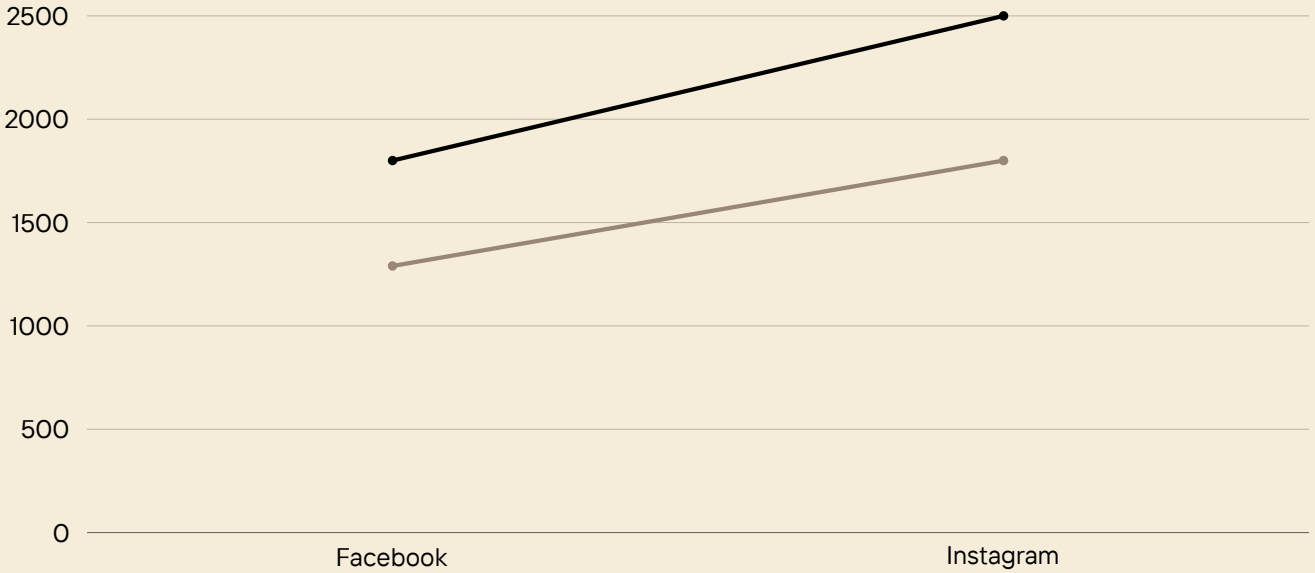
STATISTICS

To make a fair test, we used several varied searches to ascertain the number of fakes and the removal rates.



Results of the name search ‘Nando Malachovski’
(with some variants of his name)

Special removal forms



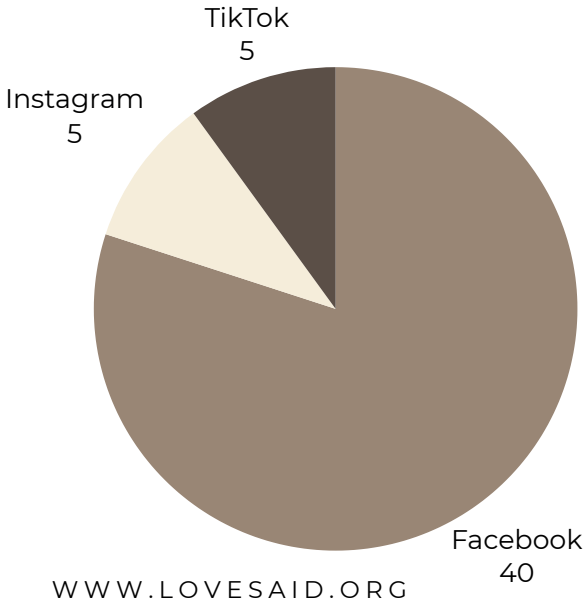
Some individuals or groups have been given special removal forms to email, if they are trusted as knowledgable with regards to fake profiles. This is incredibly rare and there are certain profiles not allowed to be listed such as obvious ‘fan pages’ which are used in celebrity scams. Black is submitted, brown is removed.

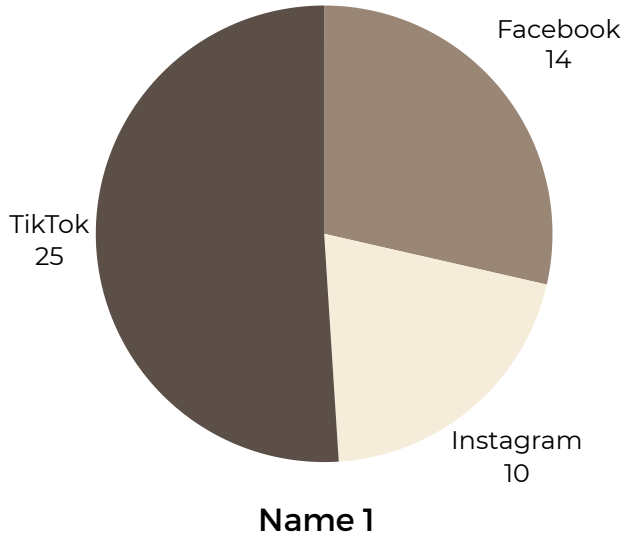
RANDOM NAME SEARCH

A search was performed on two random names:

1) Steven Murphy

This revealed hundreds of profiles The first name Steven was used to limit a search as this last name is incredibly common.





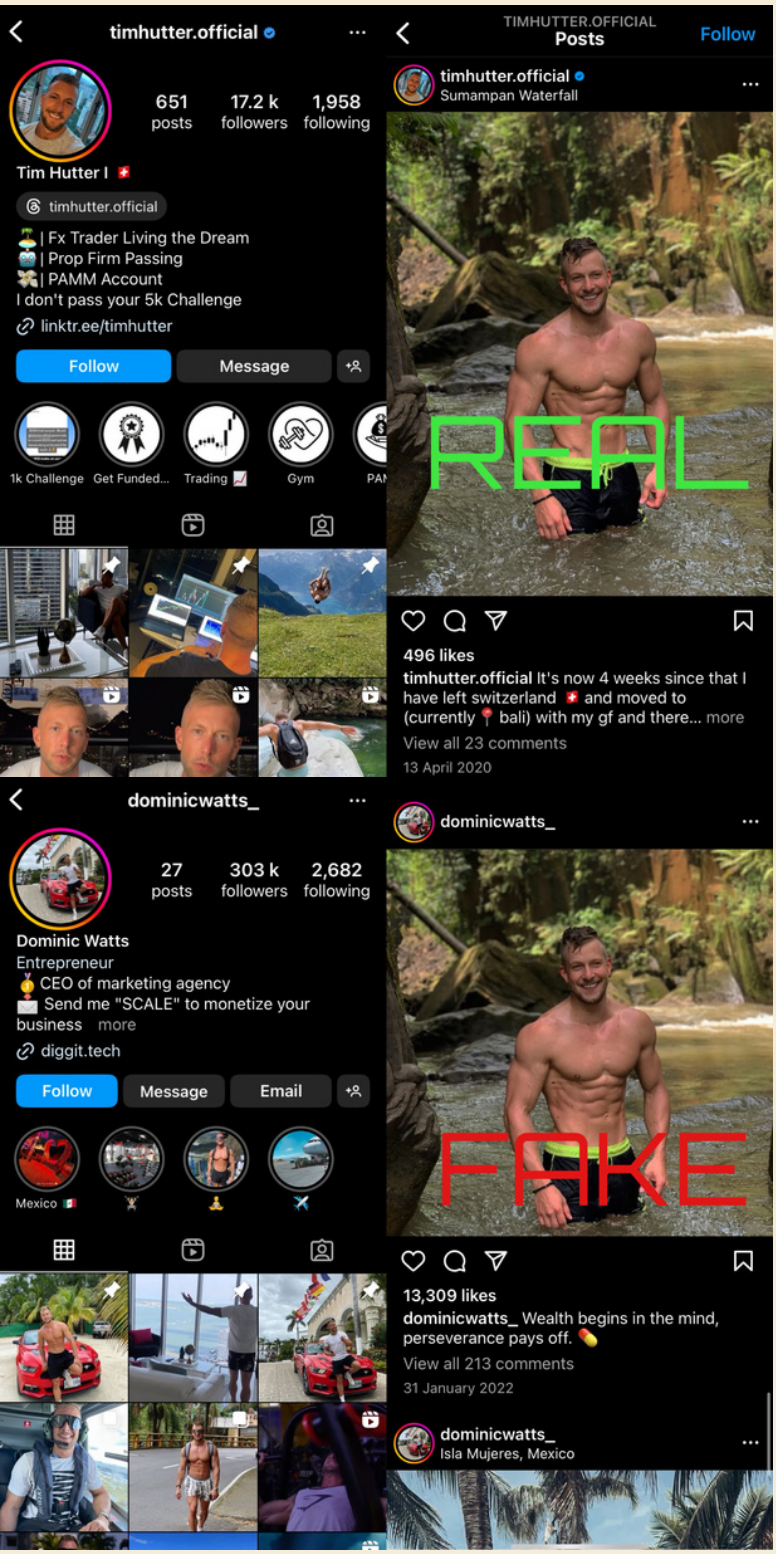
Name 1

2) Dubois (open first name)

This name is less common here in the UK but still yields a large amount of profiles.

Out of 100 profiles, these numbers were fake.

INSTAGRAM



Despite a huge number of different profiles reporting this fake, it still remains.
The number of followers on the fake is likely the reason it is not being removed-even against the verified one.

Removal of profiles against Legacy Verified Profiles

60%

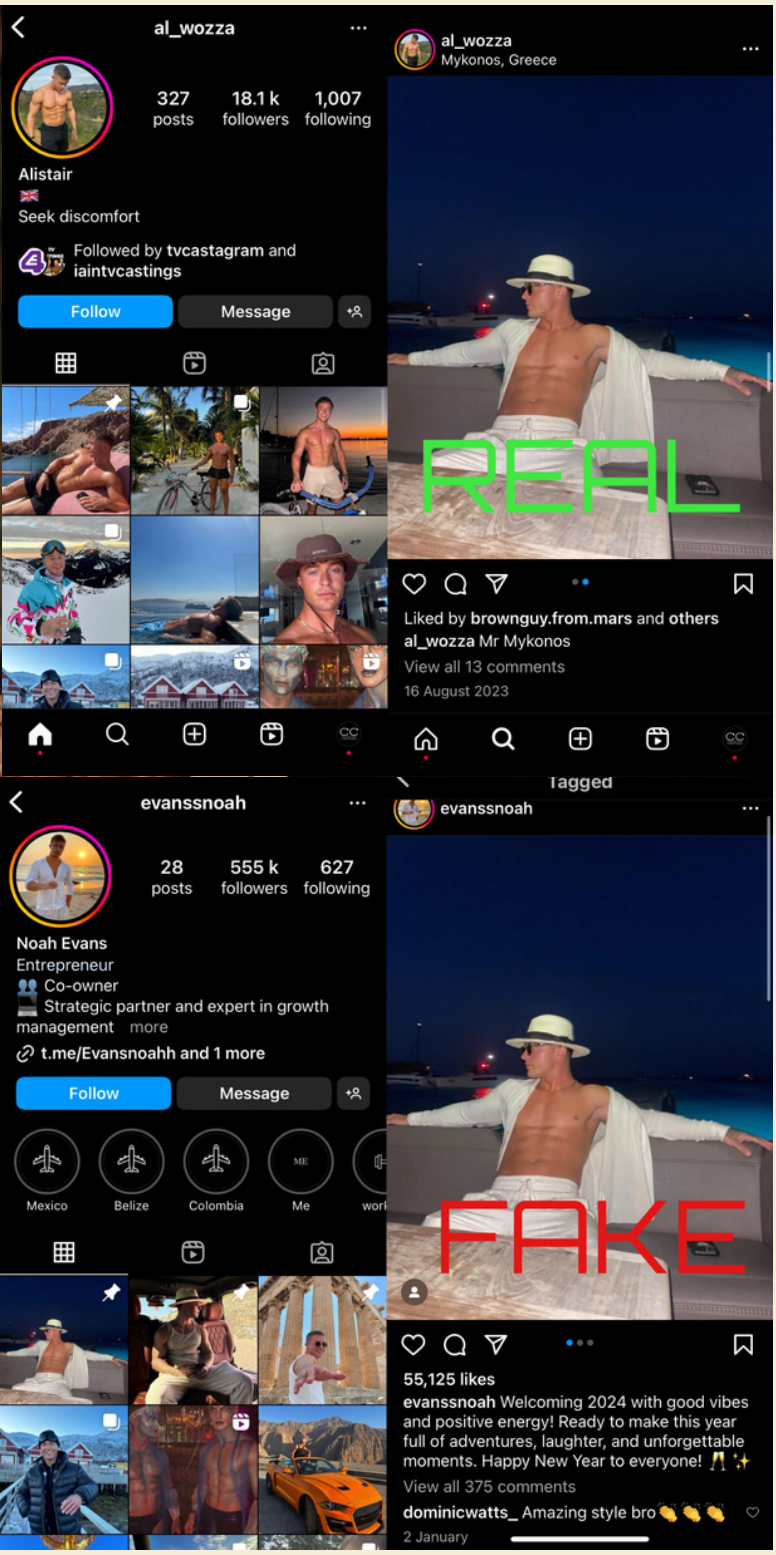
Legacy verified profiles can be reported through the celebrity/public figure option on the 'in app auto reporting' for pretending to be someone else. Not all legacy verified profiles are celebrities or public figures.

Removal of profiles against Paid Verified Profiles

50%

Paid Verified profiles cannot be reported through the celebrity/public figure reporting as above. The names do not appear in the list. The only way to report for more effective removal is by following the account and then reporting as 'someone I follow' under 'pretending to be someone else'.

INSTAGRAM



Again, the number of followers on this fake profile is huge in comparison to the real profile, making it all more convincing to other users.

Removal of profiles against Non verified profiles

10%

Non verified profiles remain the most difficult profiles to get removed when fakes appear using their stolen pictures. There is no difference in statistics for following and reporting or for reporting as ‘Spam’.

Removal of profiles reported as fraud or scam.

1%

Another way to attempt to report the fake profiles is as ‘fraud or scam’. This statistic is the worst for removal with just 1 profile per hundred being removed.

FACEBOOK

Removal of profiles reported as fake.

2 %

Non verified profiles remain the most difficult profiles to get removed when fakes appear using their stolen pictures. There is no difference in statistics for following and reporting or for reporting as ‘fake’.

Removal of pages reported as fake.

0%

In all my time working in this field, I have not yet had a page removed when reported as a fake page. They are sometimes removed when reported through the special form system.

Removal of profiles reported against Verified Profiles

40%

Reporting fake profiles for using the photos of a verified user still yields low removal statistics.

Removal of profiles reported as ‘impersonating me’

40%

Some of the well used people who have a vast number of fakes whether verified or not, see approximately 40% of fakes removed when reported for ‘impersonating me’.
I have personally had fake profiles using my pictures and pages impersonating our organisation, they have not been removed.

TikTok and X

Removal of profiles against Non verified profiles

0%

There is no reporting option for reporting a fake profile on TikTok, unless the account is a verified one or ‘impersonating me’. The reporting system is geared towards ‘content’ rather than intent. Normal photos don’t violate community guidelines.

Removal of profiles on X

50%

Reporting against a Verified user is more successful, reporting as a fake is not successful. However, there are far less fake accounts used for Romance Fraud. Celebrity fake profiles are the main bad actors there.

Removal of profiles against a Verified User.

40%

Reporting against a Verified User is much like other platforms but has low removal with on average, just 40 profiles per hundred being removed.

OTHER BAD ACTORS RELATED TO ROMAMCE FRAUD

Recovery or follow up scams are rife across social media.

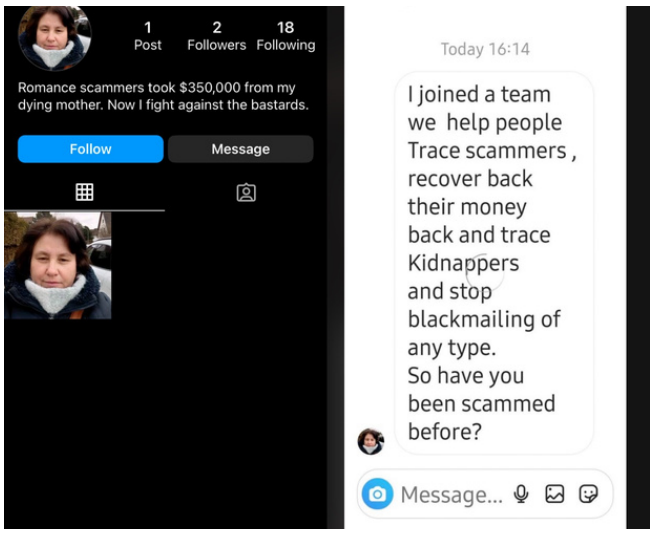
These can be in the guise of other ‘victim’s’ claiming to have been helped and offering help to others.

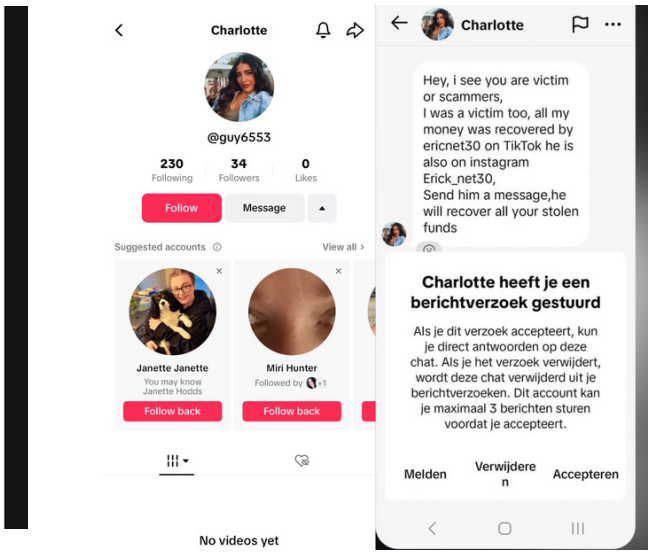
Hacker accounts will also offer to get back money or accounts (which are also often hacked as part of Romance Fraud).

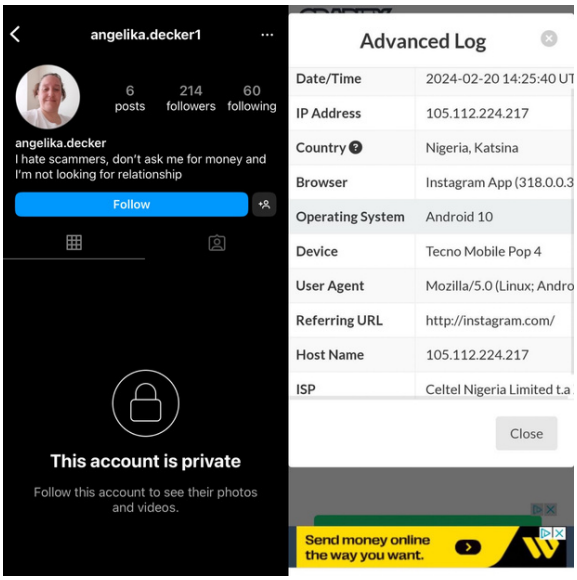
Hacker accounts (seen on the following page) often spam the comments on anti fraud accounts on TikTok in particular.

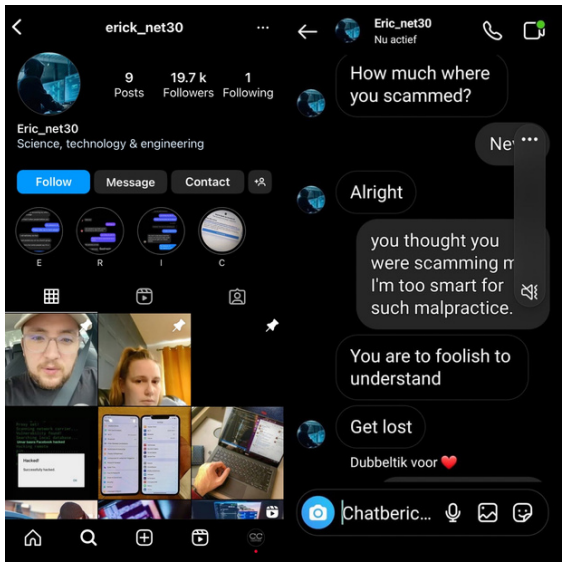
They are rarely ever disabled when reported under any option be that fraud, deception or spam.

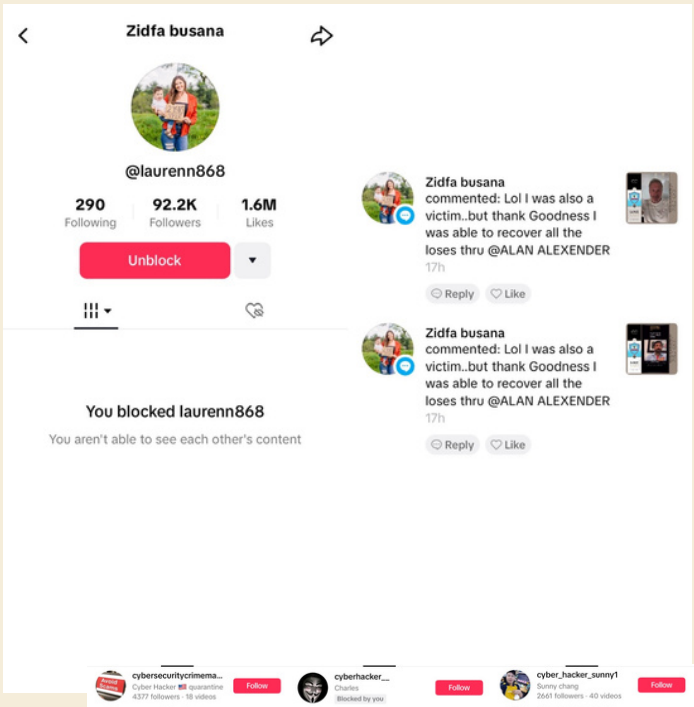
Would any ‘cyber hacker’ account be genuine?

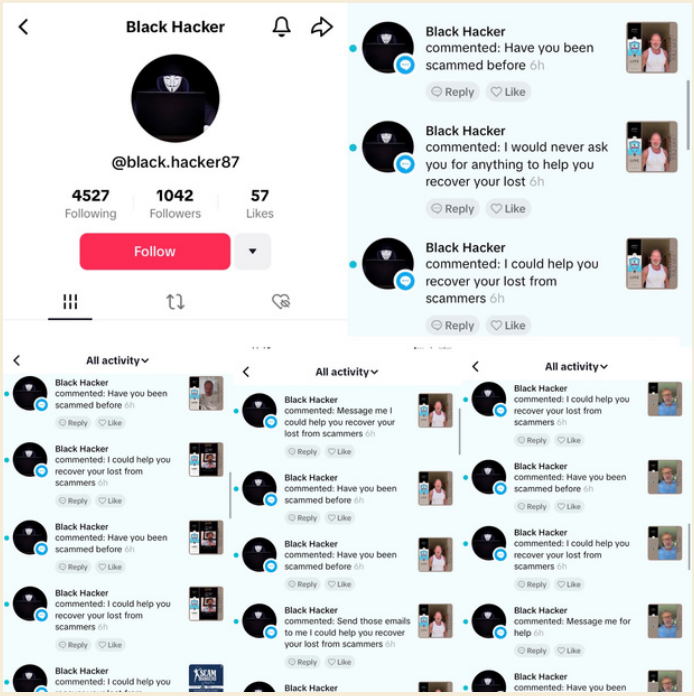


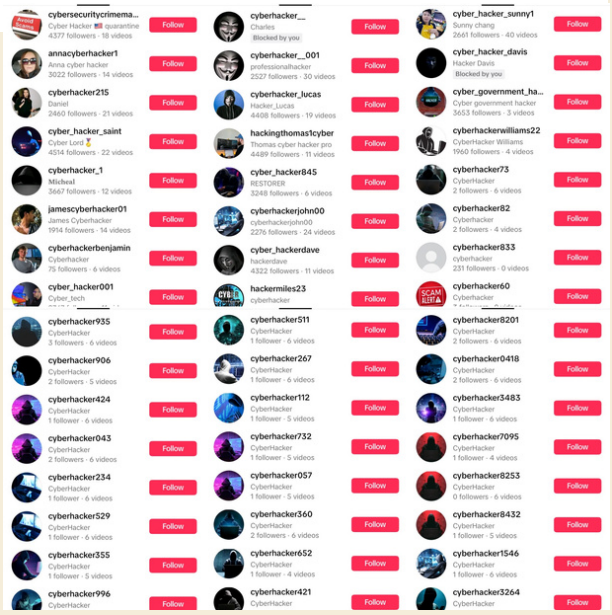


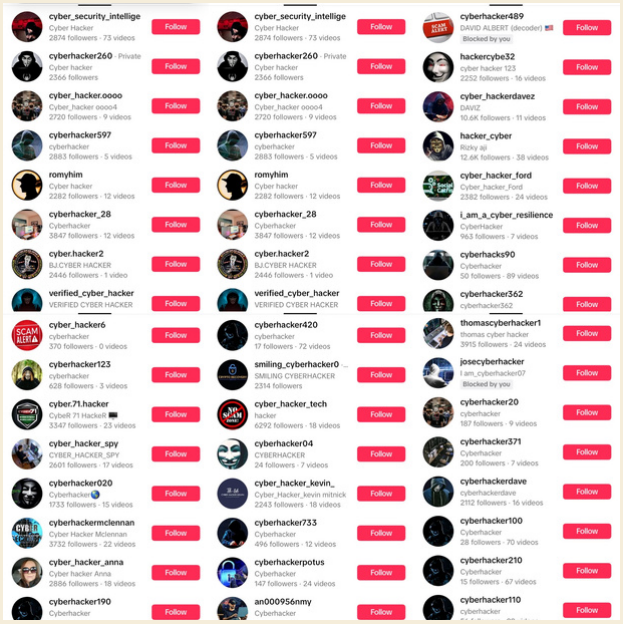


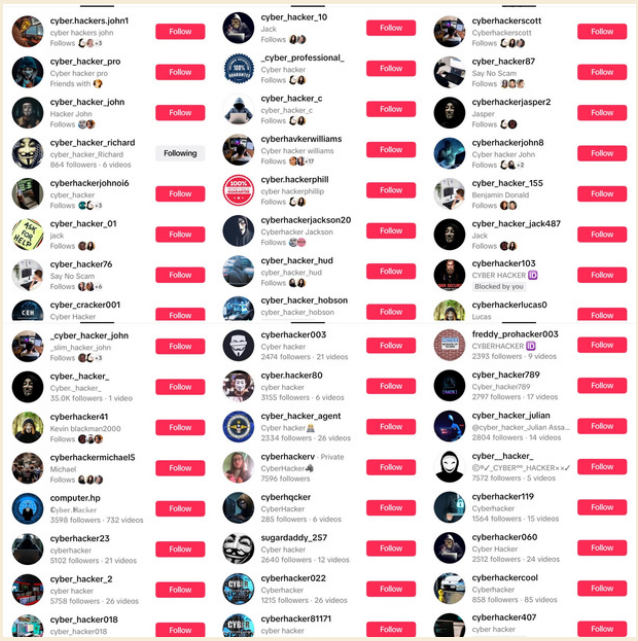



Zidfa busana
@laurenn868
290 Following
92.2K Followers
1.6M Likes
Unblock
Zidfa busana commented: Lol I was also a victim..but thank Goodness I was able to recover all the loses thru @ALAN ALEXENDER 17h
Reply Like
Zidfa busana commented: Lol I was also a victim..but thank Goodness I was able to recover all the loses thru @ALAN ALEXENDER 17h
Reply Like
You blocked laurenn868
You aren't able to see each other's content

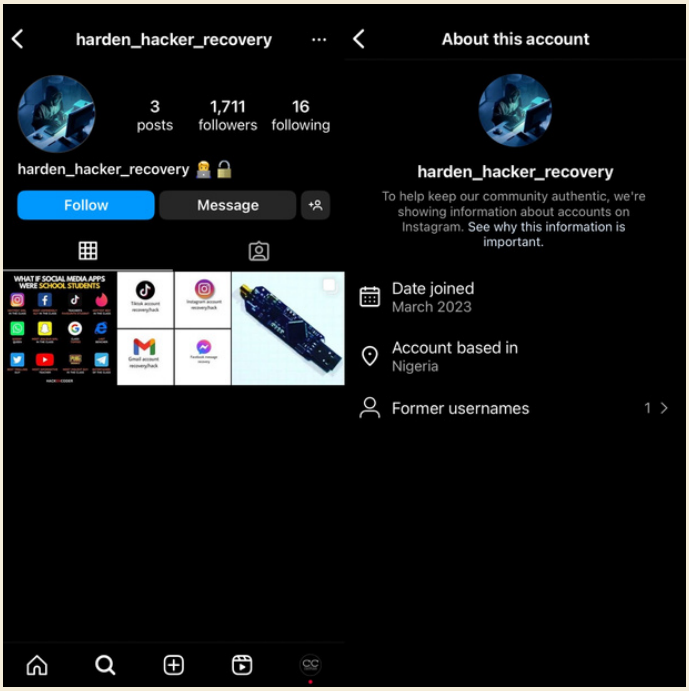

Black Hacker
@black.hacker87
4527 Following
1042 Followers
57 Likes
Follow
Black Hacker commented: Have you been scammed before 6h
Reply Like
Black Hacker commented: I would never ask you for anything to help you recover your lost 6h
Reply Like
Black Hacker commented: I could help you recover your lost from scammers 6h
Reply Like
All activity

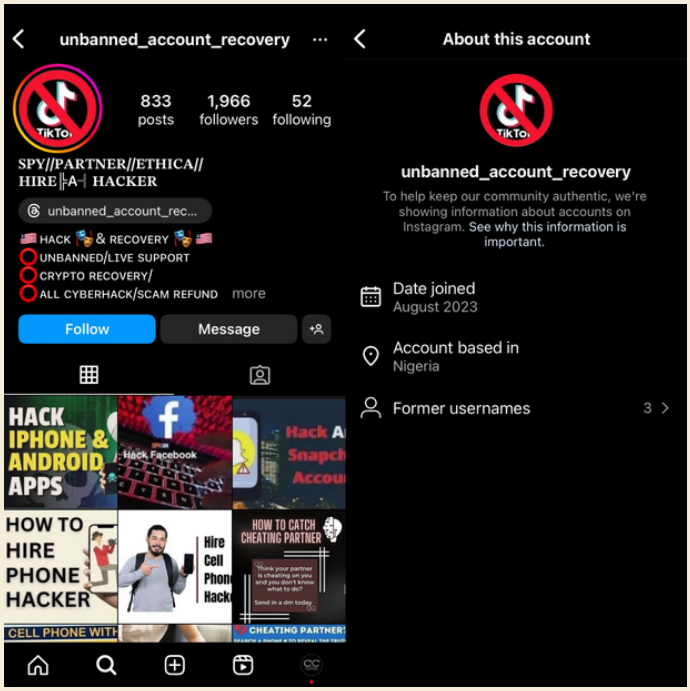


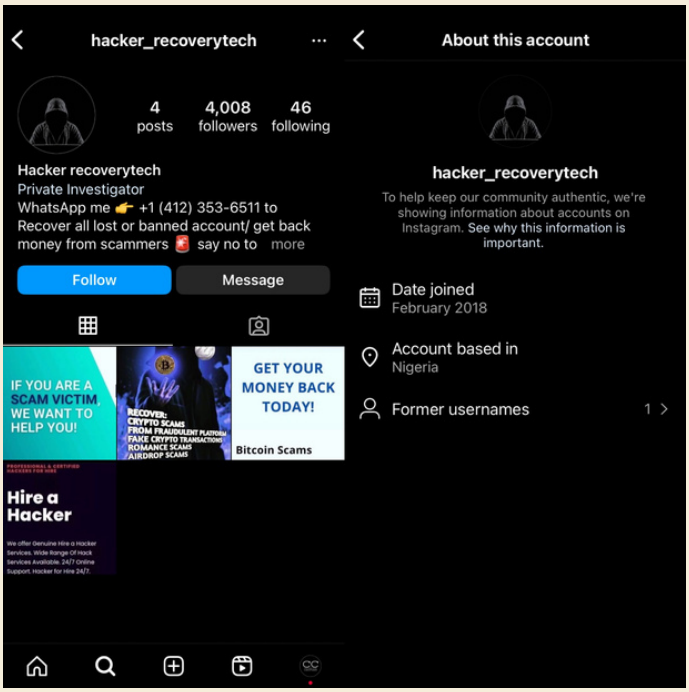


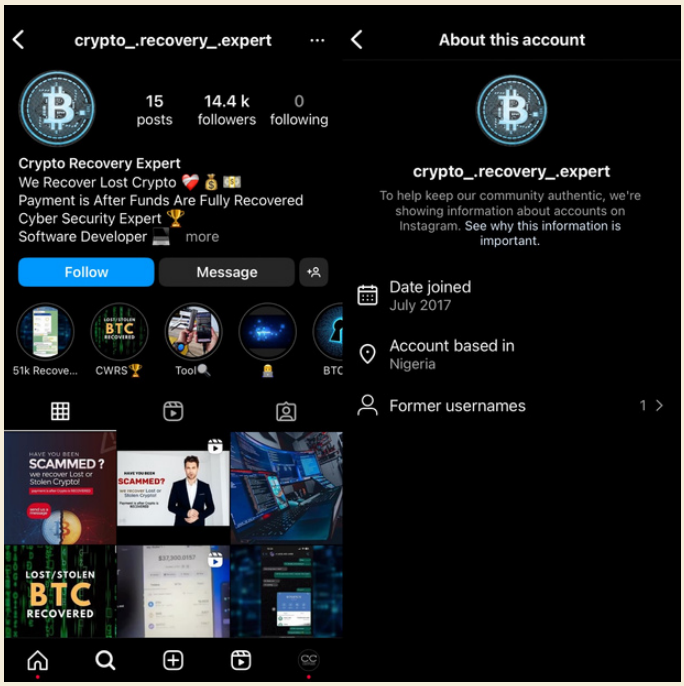


TikTok









Recovery accounts for crypto currency and account retrieval or hacking are mainly on TikTok and Instagram.

All of these, along with impersonation accounts of the FBI, Interpol and others can catch victims at their most vulnerable.

RECOGNISING FACES?

We assume because of the lack of removal, that these platforms do not have the capacity or technology to remove fake profiles.

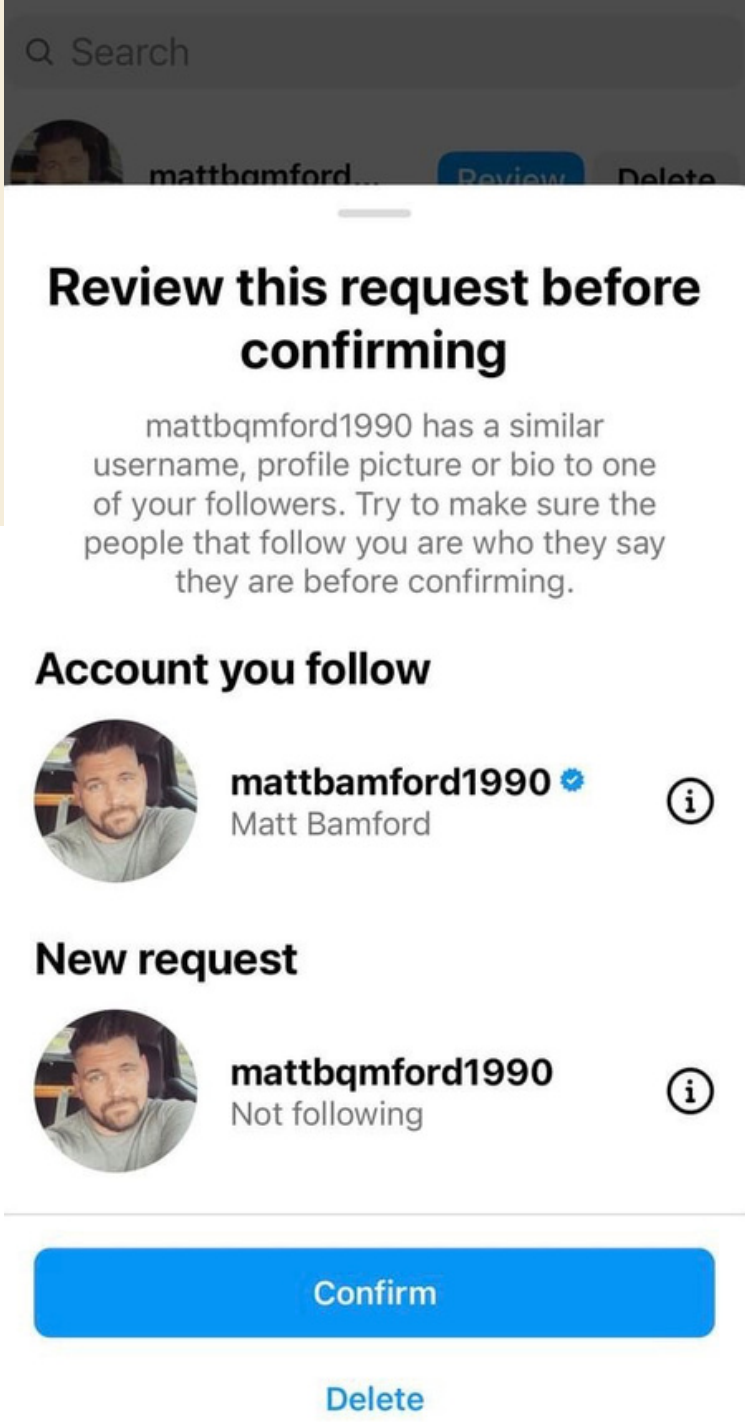
However, this feature on Instagram clearly shows that indeed, when it's wanted, facial recognition is used.

This 'feature' is being paraded as a user safety measure.

If facial recognition and/or name recognition is picking up on this to alert users when a new request is made when they already follow an account with the same picture and in this instance, a paid for verified account, the questions we should be asking are:

Why is this clearly fake account not being immediately removed when the name and picture present as the same and an account is verified?

If this is something Meta can use when they want to, why are any fakes of at least 'verified' profiles, still on their platforms.



There is a locked profile feature on Facebook which is still only available to some countries (mainly those with Islamic citizens, bar some users in Australia and New Zealand and currently Ukraine), screenshots cannot be taken of the profile picture.

Why is this technology not being activated across all profiles to put a stop to criminals taking the pictures from all profiles?

Why is the locked profile feature not available to everyone?

CONCLUSION

Next Steps:

In the future, we would like to see AI used to remove profiles which use stolen pictures from well used faces on all platforms.

Users have lost faith in these platforms in many aspects but mainly in the realms of User Safety.

They feel unsafe to use these 'social' platforms as they were intended.

AI must be used to capture the faces being used on fraudulent profiles. There are platforms offering AI facial recognition to the public for free, Platforms which make billions per year from their users can and should budget to incorporate this type of technology in to their organisation.It's not complicated, please don't make it out to be. If you want the profiles removed, they can be.

01 **Verified Profiles**

Profiles which are verified on one of your platforms should be automatically verified on all of them (META). The best case scenrio, would be that platforms collaborate to include verification across all platforms through the process or to enable to add to this list if a new profile is created at a later date.

02 **New paid for verified profiles**

These should be added to a new 'Verified Profile' list on the in app reporting system rather than keeping the list as 'celebrity or public figure' for legacy ticks. Currently you have to follow the paid verificarion profile to report it.

03 **Reporting systems**

Reporting systems are not covering the needs of users for fake profiles when not against a legacy verified profile. Reporting a hacked profile goes no where. This system need to be better. Emphasis is on content.

04 **Stay on top of industry trends**

Platforms like ours are made aware quickly of new trends and there should be collaboration to enable these to be incorporated into removal algorithms on a regular basis. This also works for other important data.

05 **Employ more trust and integrity staff**

Algorithms and AI are great but not as competant as the human eye.

YES, YOU CAN

WITH THANKS

With thanks to:
Tracey Grummett,
Debbie May and others
for helping with the
evidence collecting.

Got any questions?
Please contact
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