

# Gift Cards Are Used As a Tool For Online Fraud



Online frauds are constantly evolving. Romance scammers now often avoid traditional bank transfers, instead manipulating victims into purchasing and transferring various types of gift cards. This use of gift cards represents a new form of money laundering.

## Gift Cards Jeopardize Consumer Safety

Banks monitor money transfers in order to protect their customers. The aim is to detect suspicious activity and stop fraud. Cybercriminals are aware of this, which is why they have moved on to new ways of obtaining money. Gift cards from various service providers, such as Google Play, the App Store, Steam, and Spotify, offer fraudsters the opportunity to acquire money quickly and anonymously.

## Gift Cards Facilitate Romance Scams

In addition to completely circumventing bank controls, gift cards offer other advantages to criminals:



**Difficult to trace:** It is difficult to refund the value of a used gift card to the card buyer.



**Quick to convert into cash:** It is easy for criminals to resell gift cards or convert them into cash.



**Anonymity:** Criminals can obtain card details without revealing their own personal information.



**Ease of use:** Gift cards from highly popular service providers can be used anywhere in the world.



**Obscuring the value of money:** Gift cards obscure the value of money, making it difficult to grasp the total amount of money transferred to the scammer.

Have you met someone new online with whom you chat regularly? Remember that only perpetrators will ask you to buy them a gift card. Do not send anything of monetary value to anyone you have not met in person. Anyone can fall victim to a romance scam, regardless of age, gender, or education level.

## How Scammers Operate

Scammers who have built a close relationship of trust with their victims manipulate and pressure them into buying gift cards and giving them the card number and PIN code.

## Common Methods Used By Romance Scammers



### There is a great sense of urgency:

Perpetrators usually refer to a sudden crisis or emergency when asking for a gift card. They do not want to give the victim a chance to stop and assess the situation.



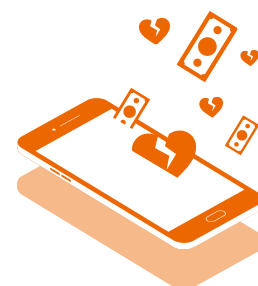
### Detailed instructions for purchasing the card:

Criminals know what they want. They give victims detailed instructions on how to purchase the gift card.



### Disclosing card details:

To get the funds loaded on the card, the perpetrator only needs to know the card number and PIN code.



## If You Have Been a Victim Of a Romance Scam

- Stop communicating with the scammer.
- Save all information related to the scam.
- Contact your bank, tell them what has happened and follow their instructions.
- Report the crime to the police.
- Seek help to recover and deal with the situation.

**More information about romance scams:**

[nettideitturva.fi/info/in-english](https://nettideitturva.fi/info/in-english)