

Holly Willoughby, Philip Schofield and Martin Lewis exploited as Brits lose thousands to celeb crypto scams

Holly Willoughby, Philip Schofield and Martin Lewis were among the top TV celebrities whose profiles were exploited in fake online adverts as Brits lost thousands to celeb [crypto](#) scams.

Fraudsters raked in a combined £1.7 million from the six biggest celebrity scam ads, data from [Natwest](#) shows, as fraudsters used pictures of familiar famous faces to promote dodgy crypto investments.

This Morning presenters Holly Willoughby and Philip Schofield topped the list of biggest celebrity scam-ad losses, being featured in a fake cryptocurrency investment scheme in which one unsuspecting social media user saw the pair on a Facebook advert and transferred over £370,000 in what they thought was a genuine investment.

Money Saving Expert founder Martin Lewis was also featured in a fake 'Bitcoin Evolution' scam in which another user was tricked into handing over £317,000.

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NatWest scam expert Stuart Skinner said: "Fraud is surging in the UK...in knowing that criminals are exploiting the images of celebrities we can all take steps to protect ourselves.

"If you have seen an ad promising large profit, high rates of return and/or offering to help you invest in cryptocurrency, this is a likely to be a scam – if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is."

In 2018, Martin Lewis said he was suing Facebook after he claimed more than 50 ads appeared on the social media platform bearing his face and saying he invested £250,000 in a particular company.

Over £1.3 billion was stolen by criminals through authorised and unauthorised fraud in 2021, according to research from trade association UK Finance, with criminals taking advantage of online shoppers searching for discounted products on social media. £1.4 billion was prevented from reaching fraudsters.

UK Finance economic crime MD Katy Worobec, said: "Major online platforms – search engines, social media and shopping platforms – are the gateway to almost all online activity and they must provide a barrier to fraud and not a conduit."