

# Romance scam workshop

- Media workshop on romance scammers for senior citizens and young people (aged 16-29)
- Let Your Voice Be Heard on Social Media! project
- The Postal Museum, the Finnish Museum of Games and the Media Museum and Archives Merkki, the Rupriikki Media Museum, 2024
- In collaboration with the Finnish Society on Media Education, the Finnish Pensioners' Federation, the University of Tampere, Save the Children Finland, the Sosped Foundation, Maria Akatemia and the Romance Scam Recovery project



# Online, anyone can be anyone

- Media literacy
- What is media criticism?
- How do I identify romance scammers and groomers online?



# Warm-up exercises:

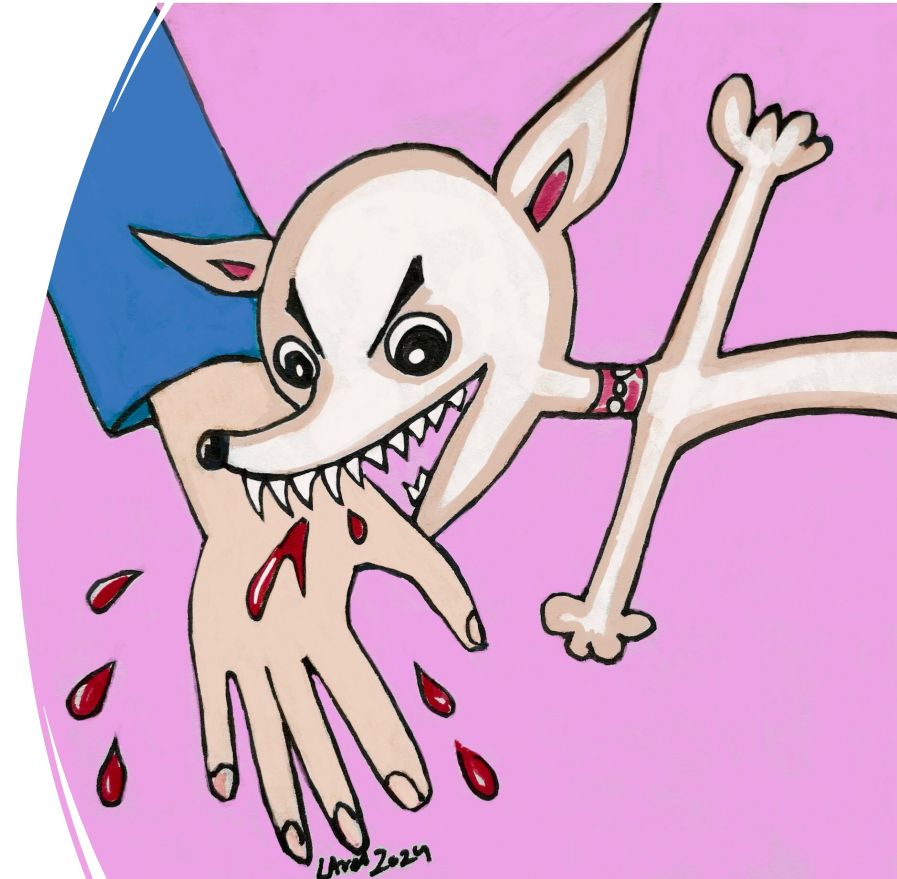
- Names
- Yes – I don't know/prefer not to say – no – game
- Questions:
- Has an unpleasant person ever tried to hit on you at a bar, at a party or elsewhere?
- Has anyone tried to hit on you online?
- Have you been approached online by an officer, peacekeeper, oil rig worker, African prince or similar?
- Rabbit warm-up game, creating the Pantalone character (Commedia dell'arte) – (these games are explained in the footnotes of the publication)



# Description of the romance scam workshop:

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- Theme: Romance scammers and groomers
- Analytical approach, participants are not to share their experiences
- Explore the topic in small groups



*Nobody's sugarbabe!!!!*

# Sosped, How does a romance scammer operate? [Nettideitturva.fi](http://Nettideitturva.fi)

- Romance scammers are financial criminals who pretend to have a romantic relationship with the victim.
- Contact with the victim takes place on social media platforms or online dating applications.
- All social media platforms.
- The scammer is usually the one to send the first message.
- The message may praise the victim's profile.
- The scammer sends a similar message to several profiles.



- The scammer tries to appear trustworthy and successful (soldier, doctor, engineer or company director).
- The scammer uses images of people who work in these professions.
- A female profile is a student, single parent, model or someone in a low-paid job.
- The scammer wants to continue messaging on a secure messaging app like WhatsApp, Signal or Telegram.
- This means that the scammer can continue the scam without interference from the social media platform and be more difficult to track down.



# The scammer builds trust.



- In the 'money phase', the scammer urgently needs financial help from the victim, for their first face-to-face meeting or to avoid some kind of crisis, for example.
- The need for money may be justified with authentic-looking wills, customs or other documents (tickets, customs fees, to avoid going to prison or to receive an inheritance)
- Investing in cryptocurrency may also be a way to persuade the victim to send money.
- For example, the scammer says that they have become rich by investing and promises to advise the victim.
- The scammer has set up an authentic-looking online investment website.





# Grooming

- Building a relationship with children or young people for the purpose of sexually exploiting them.
- Grooming is common and growing online and on social media platforms.
- Groomers pretend to be friends with the young people.
- They may pretend to be young and create fake profiles.
- Grooming is a criminal offence, and its harmful effects on young people's lives are diverse, including mental health problems, shame and guilt.
- Grooming is never the young person's fault; adults are always responsible for their actions.



# Create a scammer character

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- Divide the group into sub-groups or pairs. Choose who will play the romance scammer.
- Who is the video aimed at: a young person, older woman, older man? The pair chooses the style.
- The scammer may pretend to be an officer, a good-looking police officer, an African prince, a cute teenage boy or girl, a beautiful young woman, etc. The pair chooses.
- A senior citizen and a young person create an email or a video using a mobile phone camera, etc.
- Use hats, a moustache, chest hair, glasses and other props to create the character.



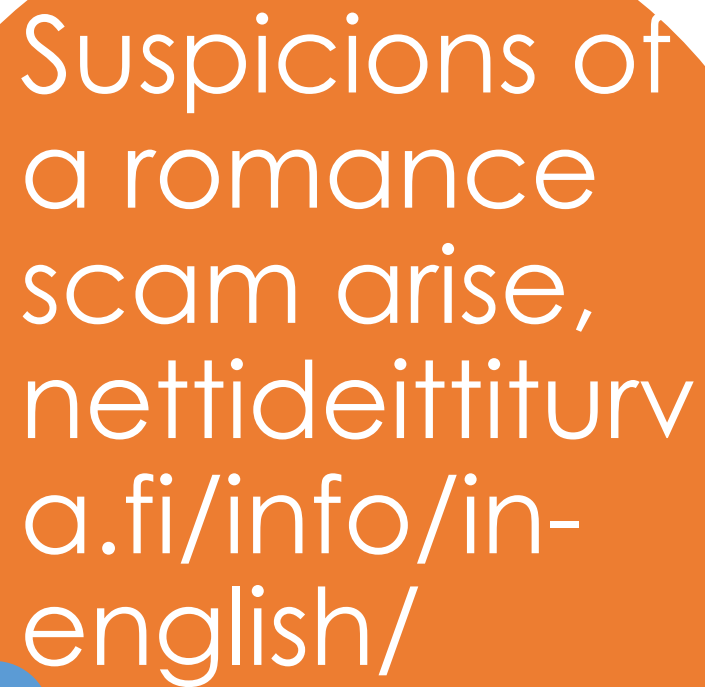
# Discussing the videos

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- The group watches the videos. They can be analysed; are they credible? How did they make the participants feel? Could I be fooled by this?

# Consequences of romance scams and grooming





Suspicious of  
a romance  
scam arise,  
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a.fi/info/in-  
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- The scammer has tried to isolate the victim from their loved ones; the victim may be left alone with their feelings of doubt.
- The victim begins to question the scammer's messages and tries to understand what is real in the relationship.
- The scammer strengthens the relationship of trust and tries to restore the victim's trust with numerous messages and affirmations of love.
- The scammer appeals to the victim's emotions and their future together and may blame the victim for not believing them.
- Sometimes the scammer cuts all contact (ghosting, disappearing without explanation) and moves on to the next victim to get money if they think that their victim is too sceptical.

- The victim often slips back into the romance and new money phases.
- It is difficult to accept being a victim of crime. The money is lost and the remote partner is exposed as a scammer.
- The scam is exposed in the final phase.
- The victim is full of self-accusation and shame.
- Once the shock is over, the victim can begin to recover.
- The scammer disappears and is either held criminally liable or walks away without any consequences.
- It is up to the victim to decide whether to report the crime.

(Nettideitturva.fi)



# Help others: give your group's video/contact message to the museum for marketing the workshops!

- Romance scam videos made in the workshops and related photos and letters can be donated to the museum.
- Pictures of scammer characters can be used as illustrations in future workshops and advertising as well as on the museum's social media and for other purposes related to the museum's activities.



# In cooperation with

VAPRIIKKI  
MEDIAMUSEO RUPRIIKKI



MERKKI



SOSPED

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Thank you for  
attending the  
workshop!  
Be careful  
online <3!

