

In My Humble Opinion

by

Terry Holcomb

What is worse than “who goofed on Katrina”? Katrina Scams by Scumbags!!!

Leisure Worlorder's are socially conscious and humanitarian people. Giving to the victims of Hurricane Katrina will be commonplace. But: **Givers Beware**... the scam artists are hitting the phones, emails and websites.

CNN/Money staff writers (Christie and Seid) state that scammers have quadrupled their efforts to steal you money and gifts. According to the **watchdog site www.Scambusters.org** scams include:

- **Phishing:** In this scheme scamsters use fake Web sites that pretend to be legitimate relief organizations. If you click on the site and enter credit card or other financial information, it will be used to steal your identity. Any contributions you make go into the pockets of the scammers.
- **Viruses and trojans:** Spam is sent that includes photos of disaster areas or individual survivors, and these attachments contain computer viruses. These can enable hackers to take control of your computer and obtain information that they can use for identity theft.
- **Fee-based spams:** These are unsolicited e-mails that offer, for a fee, to locate missing relatives and loved ones caught in the hurricane.

To get the best value for your dollar use established charities. During crisis times the admin structures and experience of groups such as the American Red Cross and AmeriCares can often serve everyone better. If you find other possible charities, go to **[www.charity navigator.com](http://www.charitynavigator.com)** and check out the organization. The site also includes a “best of the best” list for your aid in selection. They also have identified some early **scam sites** such as www.neworleanscharities.org (a scam). Be sure you are REALLY giving to the Red Cross etc. Give directly or check out another **good site... www.give.org** which lists legitimate charities and sites. Scammers are not only out for your money, but also for your credit information.

A few other ideas suggested by **CNN/Money** include:

1. Do not give cash, only checks addressed to charity,
2. Don't respond to Email requests,
3. Don't let anyone try to pressure you to give more money than you feel comfortable giving

Don't hurt yourself while trying to help others.

IMPORTANT!

If you have not been receiving your email from the Computer Club, please send your email address to:

menromi@fea.net

