



17 June 2024

Cat and mouse game aims to trick scammers

Today, Netsafe is announcing a series of cutting-edge advancements designed to enhance New Zealand's anti-scam initiatives, focusing on both innovative mitigation strategies and robust international partnerships.

In continued efforts to disrupt the scammer network, Netsafe is bringing back [ReScam.org](https://re scam.org), a cutting-edge AI tool designed to waste scammers' time so they can't target their next victims.

This innovative technology leverages the latest artificial intelligence measures to disrupt potential scams. It also educates users on the tactics used by cybercriminals in email scams.

By forwarding suspicious emails to me@rescam.org, the system identifies scams and begins a never-ending conversation, wasting scammers' time. With multiple personalities and an ever-growing vocabulary, there's no way for scammers to know they're talking to Netsafe's specialist scam baiting intelligence system.

Netsafe's CEO Brent Carey says that when Re:Scam was first developed back in 2017, the game of cat and mouse sent more than a million emails to scammers, wasting a total of more than 5 years of their time.

"As the rise of scam victims - and the total cost of their losses - persists in New Zealand, Netsafe continues to look for innovative ways to disrupt scammers, launching yet more products and services to prevent and support victims of scams," he says.

Scams are a growing problem in New Zealand and costs to the economy are estimated to be NZD\$2 billion annually, equating to 0.85% of NZ's GDP in 2023. New Zealand's response to scams lags behind other OECD regions and there are government-backed calls on the banks to invest in technological upgrades.

Crucially, there is no government funding for incident response and victim remediation. Yet in recent research by Netsafe and the Global Anti-Scam Alliance, 53% of New Zealand respondents admitted to a significant emotional impact post-scam.

Unsurprisingly, only a fraction of scams and fraud are reported to law enforcement and police resources are too stretched to prioritise cybercrime unless it occurs within the context of syndicated organised crime. Only 15% of people who try to recover their funds lost to scams are successful.

The online safety not-for-profit organisation has rolled out new scam-busting tools and services every month of 2024 so far, following their publication [State of Scams report](#) at the end of 2023.

These included the Chorus-funded Get Set Up for Safety toolkit for Seniors scam prevention, followed swiftly by the commercial alliances with Cybera, Dolla and Akau. The partnerships spanning banking, crypto and telecommunications sectors will give victims more options in trying to recover their losses.

"New Zealand's scam prevention and redress model needs the whole ecosystem to be mobilised to combat scams efficiently and effectively," Netsafe CEO Brent Carey said.

Within the ecosystem Netsafe primarily focus on consumer protection, incident response and victim remediation.

"While Netsafe alone cannot bring about regulatory or legislative change, nor do we have the means to deliver banking system technological advancement, we do have 25 years experience in harm prevention education, and our award-winning online harms and scams helpline is a well-known and trusted clear pathway for consumer reporting of scams. A pathway people trust because we are confidential, independent of both government and the institutions they are banking with."

Expanding on their existing international collaborations to bring best practice to New Zealand, Netsafe is assuming a convening role of global coordination efforts by hosting a virtual Oceania chapter of the Global Anti Scam Alliance (GASA) meeting on Tuesday 30 July as part of Netsafety Week. Registrations are at <https://www.gasa.org/event-details/gasa-oceania-chapter-establishment-meeting>

Netsafe has also become the latest member of international not for profit the Cyber Helpline which builds communities to deploy tools, services, and programs that provide cybersecurity at global scale.

"We are playing our part to help New Zealanders to navigate the digital landscape safely and confidently," said Brent Carey CEO, Netsafe. "These new initiatives underscore our commitment to innovation, collaboration and proactive action against online scams."

This is evidenced by Netsafe's year-on-year growth of reports to its helpline. This processes around 15,000 scam reports a year from victims. Meanwhile more scam busting tools are being rolled out by Netsafe throughout 2024 and into 2025.

ENDS

For further information call or email

Caro Gibson | Consultant | Boyd Public Relations Ltd | m: 021 288 7023 | e: caro@boydpr.co.nz

About Netsafe: Netsafe is New Zealand's independent, non-profit online safety organization. With a mission to promote confident, safe, and responsible use of digital technologies, Netsafe offers a range of services and resources to individuals, families, schools, and businesses across the country. For more information about Netsafe's activities related to scams, visit their [scam page](#).

About GASA: GASA brings together governments, law enforcement, consumer protection organisations, financial authorities and providers, brand protection agencies, social media, internet service providers and cyber security companies to share knowledge and define joint actions to protect consumers from getting scammed.