

What is CAPTCHA?

 [Print this guide](#)

You may have noticed a box of gibberish, a maths sum or a series of words to copy and type when filling in forms on websites. This is called a 'CAPTCHA' and is a way to make sure that a real person is filling in the form, rather than a spam 'robot'. CAPTCHA stands for '**C**ompletely **A**utomated **P**ublic **T**uring test to tell **C**omputers and **H**umans **A**part'.

The use of CAPTCHA codes in internet security scams

Facebook is a popular target for cybercrooks looking to compromise someone's internet security, encouraging them to hand over their personal information, such as passwords and even credit card details. More recently cyber criminals have started to incorporate CAPTCHA codes to make their scams more believable.

Here are some examples where cyber criminals have used CAPTCHA to trick everyday internet users:

- Scams which carry intriguing messages encourage you to complete a CAPTCHA code and then to complete a survey
- Money mule scams promoted through online ads
- Complex scams using messages such as Flash Player Upgrade Installations reveal a pop-up which asks you to enter a simple CAPTCHA code. While waiting for this code to be validated, malware with bot capabilities is installed onto your PC

Safety checklist

Make sure your PC is protected by effective internet security software. You can find out how to do this in our [guide to internet safety](#)

Update February 2023

Next steps

-  [What is spam?](#)
-  [What is Antivirus?](#)
-  [What is malware?](#)
-  [Email safety tips](#)

Want to help people learn Digital Skills?

[Find out about Digital Champions](#)

