# AI-driven investment scams use sophisticated tactics to deceive even experienced analysts



Leon, a fraud and data analyst with experience in financial institutions, recently encountered an investment scam that exemplifies how artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming fraudulent activities. His interaction began with a cold call from someone claiming to represent the marketing agency Assent Advisory, promoting a purported investment opportunity. Despite recognising the red flag of a cold call, Leon engaged with the caller to better understand the operation.

The scammers provided Leon with links to sophisticated, professionally designed websites for both an investment firm named APPC Capital Singapore and a mining company called Thackeray Mines and Minerals Inc. These websites were highly detailed, featuring business registration numbers, weekly blog posts, board member lists complete with photographs and educational backgrounds, locations of mining sites, and numerous company policy documents accessible to the public.

Leon described the websites as convincingly authentic, stating, "I do this kind of work, I'm a pretty sceptical person, but I looked at the [site] and I thought 'well, if I was given this website by someone I trusted … I wouldn't [take] a second glance'. So basic due diligence is probably not enough here."

Associate Professor Lennon Chang, a cyber risk and policy expert at Deakin University, noted that while scams are not a new phenomenon, recent technological advances have enabled scammers to utilise AI to create more realistic frauds. He explained that AI tools can now generate websites, company policies, images, and even financial reports with increasing ease, making it more challenging for the public to discern genuine from fraudulent.

Examining the details of the scam websites, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation conducted a fact-checking investigation. The images of the senior management of Thackeray Mines displayed minor anomalies—such as missing shoulders, partial earlobes, and unnaturally smooth skin—common indicators of AI-generated photographs. Many of the executives listed had associated profiles claiming academic qualifications from various universities; however, two universities confirmed they had no records of the named individuals as alumni.

Further probing revealed that the senior management profiles for APPC Capital Singapore were vague and lacked verifiable information about previous employers and did not have any presence on professional platforms such as LinkedIn. Both entities also lacked business pages on LinkedIn, which is unusual for legitimate companies.

The claimed mining locations of Thackeray Mines also raised doubts. The government of Nunavut, Canada, where two mines were purportedly operating, confirmed that no record existed of the company in the region. Additionally, a prominent Canadian mining corporation, Agnico Eagle, stated it was unfamiliar with Thackeray Mines in its operational areas. Several images presented as being from Thackeray Mines' properties were actually identified through reverse image searches as images belonging to other mining sites. Attempts to verify APPC Capital Singapore’s physical addresses in high-rise buildings were unsuccessful, with property managers confirming no record of the company, including one floor under renovation and unavailable for leasing.

Although APPC Capital Singapore did have an active business registration number with the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) in Singapore, experts suggest this can be a misdirect. Associate Professor Rakesh Gupta from Charles Darwin University emphasised that mere registration is insufficient. In Singapore, firms providing financial services must hold a licence from the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS). APPC Capital Singapore is not listed on the MAS licence register.

The scale of investment fraud in Australia remains significant. A 2025 report from the National Anti-Scam Centre revealed Australians lost approximately $945 million to investment scams in the previous year, constituting nearly half of the total $2.03 billion lost to scams overall.

Dr Gupta advised the public to maintain a "healthy cynicism" when approached by unsolicited 'investment experts'. He cited typical indicators of scams including cold calls—rare in legitimate investment industries—offers that seem "too good to be true," and illegal claims of insider knowledge. He recommended consulting with registered financial advisors to receive personalised and legitimate investment advice.

Dr Lennon Chang urged those who believe they have been scammed to report the incident and contact their financial institutions immediately. Furthermore, he highlighted the need for enhanced mental health support resources for scam victims, suggesting counsellors and support groups could offer much-needed assistance.

This incident illustrates how advances in AI technology are being utilised in increasingly sophisticated investment scams, potentially complicating efforts by individuals to confidently identify legitimate investment opportunities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://dfpi.ca.gov/news/insights/ai-investment-scams-are-here-and-youre-the-target/> - This article highlights how AI is being used to trick investors through sophisticated scams and fake content, similar to the tactics described in the scam Leon encountered. Scammers leverage AI to create non-existent individuals and deepfake videos.
2. <https://caniphish.com/blog/ai-scams> - This blog discusses AI-driven investment scams, including the creation of fake online profiles and manipulation of market perceptions. These tactics align with the detailed websites and fake company profiles described in Leon's experience.
3. <https://disb.dc.gov/page/artificial-intelligence-ai-and-investment-fraud> - The article explains how AI technology can be used to clone voices and create fake images, which is relevant to the AI-generated photographs and profiles in the scam Leon encountered.
4. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/tech-ceo-charged-artificial-intelligence-investment-fraud-scheme> - This news release describes a real-world case of an AI investment fraud scheme, where false claims about AI technology were made. This scenario parallels the scam's reliance on AI as a convincing tool for deception.
5. <https://bolster.ai/blog/investment-fraud> - This blog post details how AI is used in creating advanced investment scams, including deepfake videos and unregistered investment platforms. This is consistent with the sophisticated websites and AI-generated content used in Leon's case.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source would ideally corroborate the scale of investment scams and the impact of AI in such activities, but specific content is not available in the search results. However, it serves as the original source for the article about Leon's experience.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMimgFBVV95cUxNNmFaNlJ3X0ZwWmJNWWhhb2VQMjVsZDdxSjlrVGdDVndSV1B6T01WdlNSaENqTUtnWnY5UFZBUmJmRnExZGRUN0MtSkk5M3M2TE1FRUVONmtxSDNsRUJMLW5KWC0yeVV2UE5xS2dOcXJlY21GVUlJYThPREpuSjJhZ1BfR21OMEJ4T0E0cGZ5cDBBdWhlZjhzTmZR0gFSQVVfeXFMTXZPNTkzNk1mUGdVNDJqZ0ZyYVBzTWp4VVZsa29JU0pnS2RtSmlmS3gwbF85bU9yWnFlRnRHV2dMSnp4MWxjOWVWdU5uczhDY05OZw?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data