

Citation

E. Bouma-Sims, L. Klucinec, M. Lanyon, L. F. Cranor, and J. Downs, "The kids are all right: Investigating the susceptibility of teens and adults to youtube giveaway scams," in Proceedings of the Network and Distributed System Security (NDSS) Symposium 2025.
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Link:

<https://www.ndss-symposium.org/ndss-paper/the-kids-are-all-right-investigating-the-susceptibility-of-teens-and-adults-to-youtube-giveaway-scams/>

Abstract:

Fraudsters often use the promise of free goods as a lure for victims who are convinced to complete online tasks but ultimately receive nothing. Despite much work characterizing these "giveaway scams," no human subjects research has investigated how users interact with them or what factors impact victimization. We conducted a scenario-based experiment with a sample of American teenagers ($n = 85$) and adult crowd workers ($n = 205$) in order to investigate how users reason about and interact with giveaway scams advertised in YouTube videos and to determine whether teens are more susceptible than adults. We found that most participants recognized the fraudulent nature of the videos, with only 9.2% believing the scam videos offered legitimate deals. Teenagers did not fall victim to the scams more frequently than adults but reported more experience searching for terms that could lead to victimization. This study is among the first to compare the interactions of adult and teenage users with internet fraud and sheds light on an understudied area of social engineering.