

How culture drives foul play on the internet and how new “upcode” can protect us | MIT Technology Review

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The world of online misdeeds is an eerie biome, crawling with Bored Apes, [Fancy Bears](#), Shiba Inu coins, self-replicating viruses, and whales. But the behavior driving fraud, hacks, and scams on the internet has always been familiar and very human. New technologies change little about the fact that illegal operations exist because some people are willing to act illegally and others fall for the stories they tell.

To wit: Crypto speculation looks a lot like online sports betting, which looks like offline sports betting; cyber hacking resembles classic espionage; spear phishers recall flesh-and-blood con artists. The perpetrators of these crimes lure victims with well-worn appeals to faith and promises of financial reward. In *Fancy Bear Goes Phishing*, Yale law professor Scott Shapiro argues that technological solutions can't solve the problem because they can't force people to play nice online. The best ways to protect ourselves from online tricks are social—public policies, legal and business incentives, and cultural shifts.

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