

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

by the TRANSLATOR SCAMMERS INTELLIGENCE GROUP

www.translator-scammers.com

Issued: January 2, 2019 / Page 1 of 3

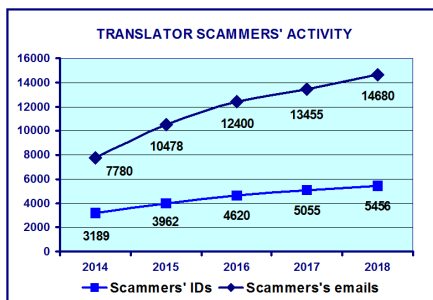
Our year online

Scammers live online, operate online, and try to hide online. Our mission is to expose their operation and hiding places and to make their lives a living hell. Yes, the CV scam is real, and our rule is simple: whatever scammers make public, we publish it online for everyone to see! Below is a summary of our activities in 2018.

Items Tracked	2014	2015	Change from 2014	2016	Change from 2015	2017	Change from 2016	2018	Change from 2017
SCAMMERS' IDS EXPOSED (1)	3189	3962	24%	4620	17%	5055	9%	5456	8%
New scammers' IDs created per MONTH	n/a	64	n/a	55	-15%	36	-34%	33	-8%
SCAMMERS' EMAIL ADDRESSES EXPOSED	7780	10478	35%	12400	18%	13455	9%	14680	9%
New scammers' emails created per MONTH	n/a	225	n/a	160	-29%	88	-45%	102	16%
EMAILS SENT TO TSD	n/a	576	n/a	1940	237%	1125	-42%	3066	173%
New Listings in Directory resulted from Emails	n/a	24%	n/a	37%	54%	39%	5%	39%	0%
WEBSITE PAGEVIEWS	103053	117580	14%	167995	43%	172280	3%	149370	-13%
Page views – Daily Average	283	323	14%	460	42%	472	3%	410	-13%
WEBSITE UNIQUE VISITORS	80880	93567	16%	104250	11%	88627	-15%	77768	-12%
Unique Visitors – Daily Average	222	257	16%	285	11%	243	-15%	213	-12%
WEBSITE FIRST TIME VISITORS	47433	54851	16%	60088	10%	44698	-26%	42100	-6%
First Time Visitors – Daily Average	130	151	16%	165	9%	123	-25%	115	-7%
WEBSITE RETURNING VISITORS	33447	38716	16%	44162	14%	43929	-1%	35668	-19%
Returning Visitors – Daily Average	92	107	16%	121	13%	120	-1%	98	-18%
FOLLOWERS ON TWITTER	n/a	1960	n/a	2415	23%	2732	13%	2956	8%
COUNTRIES VISITED WEBSITE	n/a	208	n/a	213	2%	214	0%	215	0%

(1) Scammer ID = Name (fake or just stolen) + Email

1. Let the numbers speak. Compared to 2017, we've noticed in 2018:

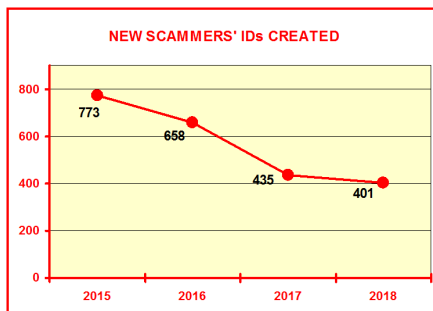


8% MORE [↑] NEW SCAMMERS' IDs (from 9% MORE in 2017)
(33 per month, 401 in the year).

9% MORE [=] NEW EMAILS (from 9% MORE in 2017)
(102 [↑] per month (MORE 15% from LESS 45%), 1225 in the year).

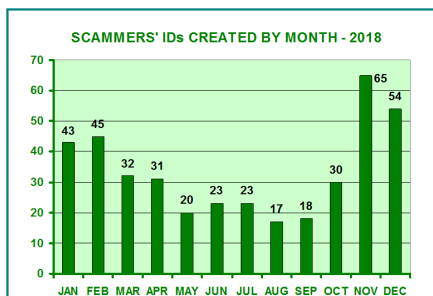
NOT all emails listed in our website are related to CV theft scams. In 2018, we have witnessed an increase of emails related to other scams targeting translators, like the impersonation of translation companies and other financial scams (mainly of the overpayment type).

NOTE: We do not list financial scammers individually, but we do collect and list their email addresses.



NEW SCAMMERS' IDs and NEW EMAILS are going down consistently since 2014, with a slight deceleration in trend in 2018.

NOTE: 97% (approx.) of the fake CVs circulated in 2018 were just recycled, i.e., re-sent either from known names and emails or from newly created emails.



Starting in 2018, we also analyzed the monthly distribution of FAKE CVs created throughout the year. The November/December spike (about 30% of the year total) is due to:

- (1) Year-end effort by scammers to create new IDs (name + email), and
- (2) The discovery of a large scamming operation involving 25 chained websites operated by the same gang.

Burned everywhere and with their names and emails systematically exposed on our website and elsewhere, scammers resort to keep creating new fake CVs. Only to be busted and exposed again.

WEBSITE AND VISITORS ACTIVITY

TOP 6 VISITING COUNTRIES

- 13% LESS WEBSITE PAGEVIEWS (13% LESS on the daily average);
- 12% LESS UNIQUE VISITORS TO OUR WEBSITE (12% LESS on the daily average);
- 6% LESS FIRST TIME VISITORS TO OUR WEBSITE (7% LESS on the daily average);
- 19% LESS RETURNING VISITORS TO OUR WEBSITE (18% LESS on the daily average).

- United States: 16.3%
- United Kingdom: 16.0%
- France: 6.0%
- Spain: 4.8%
- Argentina: 4.7%
- Germany: 4.7%

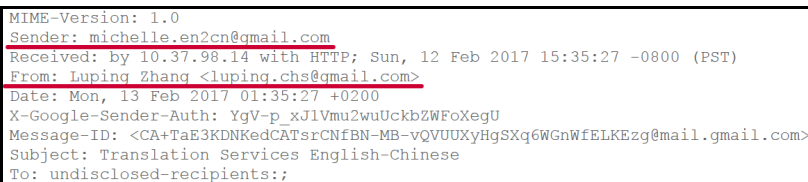
2. **NEW ON OUR WEBSITE.** As of 05:00 PM DST of August 31, 2018, the Online Directory has been redesigned to list ONLY the NEW scammers' ID (Name+Email) collected after that date. This change was done to reduce bandwidth and to allow for a faster loading of our homepage. Once a week, data from these scammers is transferred to our [Offline Translator Scammers Directory](#) in PDF format. **On average, the Offline Directory is being downloaded 35 times/day.** Because Google efficiently indexes PDF contents and, also, because we continued to update the website page containing ALL email addresses used by scammers, online searching for scammers' data is not be impaired.

3. **WHAT DO THE ABOVE NUMBERS MEAN?** We see all these numbers as fairly positive: NEW SCAMMERS' IDs and NEW EMAILS have been going down consistently since 2014 (with a slight deceleration in trend in 2018), and even the drop in visits to our website indicates that the busting of fake CV and false translators is now being done by the potential victims themselves. Remember: **once you know what to look for, a fake CV can be spotted in about 30 seconds.**
4. **WHAT ABOUT THE INCREASE IN NEW SCAMMERS IDs IN 2018?** This trend deceleration is due to **three** reasons: (1) exposed everywhere, scammers keep on creating new IDs, in a useless attempt to avoid being busted; (2) the increase of scammers impersonating real people from genuine translation companies, using their signature blocks and including links to their real websites in their messages to translators sent from free email addresses. Lured by the prospect of another "job", these poor suckers end up wasting their time doing jobs that never be paid, and (3) more translators and companies joining the fight against scammers, leading to more scammers being exposed: this year, **we have received 2808 emails, about 99% reporting fake CVs.**
5. **RAISING AWARENESS.** We continued warning translation jobs posters about the high probability of their offers being answered by false translators with fake CVs. One European reacted to our warning like this: *"Well, we did get the translation!"* **The inclusion of advisories in translation job posts pages warning about this risk and the need for a careful assessment of all applicants would be a great service to all in the Translation Community.**
7. **HOW EXPOSURE IS MADE.** We expose all NEW FAKE IDs (NAME + EMAIL) **FIRST ON TWITTER.** Because tweets are fed straight into Google as they are posted, scammers' data show up very quickly in search results. In 2018, our **658 tweets** were shown about 1450 times per day. We unfollow inactive accounts in the last 6 months, and we also continued to **AGGRESSIVELY BLOCK** spammers, free riders, non-identified followers and "eggs", gratuitous namers and shamers and **those with protected tweets (we provide our information openly and freely and we feel no obligation to allow those who protect their tweets to have access to our information).**
6. **THE ROLE OF TRANSLATORS' PORTALS.** Scammers see (and use) translator portals as a cheap and fast way to get some sort of online footprint and "professional credibility". We regularly warn the major translator portals – ProZ, TranslatorsCafé and TranslationDirectory – about any profiles kept by scammers in their directories. Response to delete false profiles from TranslatorsCafé continued to be swift and outstanding, TranslationDirectory is still very slow to acknowledge our warnings and delete the scammers' profiles, and we wish ProZ could be more responsive to deny scammers access to their portal. Here are two examples:

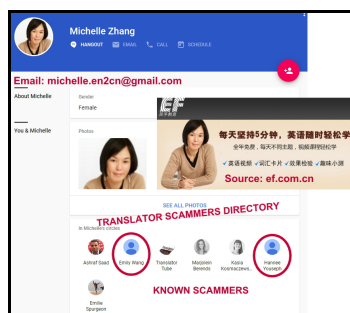
On 26FEB2018, we warned ProZ about ghost "Ken Toshi" (aka jap4trans / jap4trans@gmail.com) keeping a profile (1930181) on their portal. To this date (AND SINCE JUN 2014), this fake profile is still online. This excerpt of "his" CV is self-explanatory:



On 28APR2018, we also warned ProZ about a scammers-created ghost, "LuPing Zhang" (luping.chs@gmail.com), keeping a profile (2072506) on their portal. LuPing's email is sent by the email account of another ghost, "Michelle Zhan" (michelle.en2cn@gmail.com). To this date (AND SINCE, AT LEAST, MAY 2015), this fake profile remains active on ProZ. Let's see how the scam works:



Michelle Zhan's email used to send LuPing's email and fake CV.
Image: email header (excerpt).



Michelle Zhan is a fake translator created by a Palestinian scammer going by the name Hannee Youseph, aka Hani, whose name appears on "her" Google profile, together with "Emily Wang" (emily.chinese1@gmail.com), another ghost created by scammers.

To make his ghost Michelle look "real", Hani used the photo of a random Chinese female available online.

8. **ANNUAL REPORT.** Our 2017 Annual Report has been viewed 6903 times on Twitter and downloaded 1130 times from our website.
9. **DATABASE OF FAKE CVs.** The Database of Fake CVs (yes, the fake CVs themselves) now has 3418 files (753 were added in 2018). More fake CVs are constantly being added as they are processed or become available. Also, please read the information about accessing the database **very carefully.**
10. **WHERE SCAMMERS LIVE.** The Directory of FAKE OR STOLEN addresses, phone numbers, VAT numbers and other ID data shown on the scammers' CVs continues to grow. It now contains 2996 entries and is becoming one more invaluable tool in the fight against translator scammers.

11. **IS THIS SCAM SERIOUS?** With EACH fake CV emailed by the scammers to about 2000 to 3000 recipients and with about 130 fake CVs circulated worldwide EVERY WEEK, is it serious?
12. **IS THIS EXPOSURE OF SCAMMERS WORKING?** Clearly, yes: **new scammers' IDs and new emails are going down consistently since 2014 (with a slight increase in 2018)**. And, above all, genuine translators and companies are being warned not fuel the scammers' "business": no jobs and no money for scammers and impersonators. **Shamefully, despite our warnings, we continued to see some translation companies, mainly based in India, Pakistan and Far East countries, working with or granting safe haven to false translators.** Do their clients know how their documents are being handled? Also worrying are the numerous translators who lack active knowledge about the scammers operation and those who regularly come forward publicly to tell us all that they have fallen victims to all sorts of scams, from stolen/fake CVs to overpayment and other online scams. Where do these people live? In Wonderland? In the twilight zone? And what about the many others who never publicly share their losses to scams?

We were featured

We continued to see a great number of translators, translation companies and other players in the translation world [talking about our work and our Directory in their websites, blogs and other sources](#). In 2018, we were featured in the following original online publications (even in a book), and in posts and comments in translation portals and social media too numerous to mention individually. A big Thank You to you all:

Date	Publication Title	By / Source
Jan 2018	<i>Group Exposes Thousands of Fake Translator Profiles Created by Scammers (1)</i>	Lance Ng, SLATOR, Switzerland
Jan 2018	<i>Avoiding Translation Scams</i>	Niki's Int'l LTD, UK
Jan 2018	<i>Esiste una blacklist di agenzie di traduzione non affidabili?</i>	Marco Cevoli, DiventareTraduttori
Jan 2018	<i>How to Identify & Avoid Scammer Clients</i>	Petro Dudi, Translators Tech Help, Greece
Jan 2018	<i>Scamming in the Translation sector!</i>	Françoise L'Hévede, Cortextuel, France
Feb 2018	<i>Group Fights Back Against Translation Scammers</i>	Responsive Translation, USA
Feb 2018	<i>How to Find the Right Game Translator</i>	Marianna Sacra, 1UP Translations, USA
Feb 2018	<i>Risorse / Resources</i>	Studio Prof. Averna, Italy
Mar2018	<i>Beware of scammers!</i>	Diana Rhudick, NETA News (Volume XIX, No. 73), USA
Apr 2018	<i>7 ways to avoid getting scammed in the translation industry</i>	1-StopAsia, USA
Apr 2018	<i>Information on Scams – If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is</i>	NCTA (Northern California Translators Association), USA
May 2018	<i>How to identify and avoid translation scammers</i>	The Savvy Newcomer
May 2018	<i>Scam Alert! Pitfalls For Unwary Translators (And How to Avoid Them)</i>	Lian Pang, Poland
May 2018	<i>В начале были переводчику (In the beginning there were translators)</i>	Inlingo – Game Localization Studio
Jun 2018	<i>5 conseils pour éviter les non-paiements et les escroqueries</i>	Charlyne Verrier, EspritFreelance, France
Jun 2018	<i>Business Practices</i>	Helen Eby, Gaucha Translations
Jun 2018	<i>The hidden world of the CV scammer</i>	Word Connection, France
Jun 2018	<i>Translator-Scammers: alles nur Fälschung</i>	Alexandre Nefedov, Techtrans Rússia, Germany
Jul 2018	<i>Translation Scams Reloaded</i>	Carole Berger, The ATA Chronicle (Jul/Aug 2018), USA
Jul 2018	<i>Translator Scammers Directory</i>	Andre Hagestedt, Japan
Sep 2018	<i>Vérifier la légitimité d'une entreprise, d'un client</i>	Clément Pruvot, Langnet France
Nov 2018	<i>C'est mon identité !</i>	Julie Delegrange, Word Illusio, France, in LinkedIn
Nov 2018	<i>Der digitale Freelancer: Selbstständig im Internet</i>	Thomas Pentzek, amazon.com
Nov 2018	<i>Role of Translation Companies In International Fundraising</i>	Melinda Woodward, QBase Fund Raising
Nov 2018	<i>Scammer e traduzioni</i>	Patrizia Pari, StudioTraduzioni, Italy

(1) Reported one of *Slator's Most Popular Language Industry Stories of 2018*

Acknowledgments

Our work and this Report would not have been possible without the support and collaboration of the many independent translators and translation companies who tirelessly share with us data, emails, fake CVs and other documents circulated by scammers, and more are joining this fight every day. Without your dedication – you know who you are – scammers would have a much easier life. A very special appreciation goes to our top 6 very determined champions in 2018:

Source	Geographic origin	Exposure contributed
S.D.	Belgium	752 emails / 752 scammers
M.M	France	512 emails / 512 scammers
R.C.	France	253 emails / 340 scammers
T.L.P.	United States	186 emails / 213 scammers
P.E.	United Kingdom	165 emails / 825 emails
M.A.	United Kingdom	110 emails / 425 scammers

and many, many others, for the many fake CV shared with us daily.

How the CV Scam works — A reminder

CVs from legitimate freelance translators are stolen from translation websites and modified with made-up names (sometimes) and emails controlled by the scammers. Remember, **the CV Scam is based on ONE thing, and ONE thing ONLY: an email address (or several email addresses) created and operated by scammers as their point of contact.** Forget about street addresses, phone numbers or video chats: scammers communicate by email only, and only in English. Asked by an Italian company why "she" didn't write in Italian, one false "Italian translator" responded: *"I talk with all my clients with English language even if they are Italian, because of a lot of reasons such that to find my emails easily when I need to search about anything, to improve my English language and a lot of things that make my works easier"*.

Then, armed with their shining CVs, claiming proficiency in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Turkish, and Dutch (always "capable" to translate in both directions) and boasting an impressive list of degrees from 4 Universities from 3 different continents in a span of 5 or 6 years, these "multi-skilled" and "multi-language" ghosts go online, trying to lure unsuspecting clients with their "skills", or responding to online job posts. As for their prices, scammers tend to follow what they perceive as "market fees", to which they undercut 2 or 3 cents, i.e., just enough for some greedy but careless and gullible companies believe they've found Treasury Island... Then, if a job lands on their computers, scammers will just deliver some Google-translated gibberish or turn into "companies" or "independent PMs" and try to attract the cheapest operators they can find, which, in the end, are either not paid or just paid no more than 3 cents. Yes, the client-victim will never use them again, but the damage has been done.

And who are the scammers' victims? Scammers spare or respect no one: from translators living in poor African countries to those living in richer European or American cities, everyone is prey to their scamming madness, but particularly anyone with years of experience to whom they snatch their credentials. And when busted, scammers initiate threats to defame their client-victims online: *"I will put you in the blacklist at all the sites"*, one said.

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