

E-Book Scams Grow along with E-Book Sales

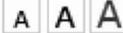
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E-book sales are growing exponentially, according to the American Association of Publishers. For the first eight months of 2011, e-book sales increased 144.4 percent, to \$649.2 million. In February sales of e-books eclipsed those of traditional paperbacks. And e-readers are expected to be a hot gift item for the holidays.

But as the popularity of e-readers and e-books grows, so does the likelihood of related scams, including the following:

- E-books filled with useless and often badly written information sold for a couple of dollars. Malware is sometimes attached in order to obtain your credit card information.
- A single book is given different editorial spins and then sold under different titles or authors' names.
- Material that is plagiarized from websites and blogs then packaged into an e-book and sold.
- Writing competitions with the winner having his or her work published digitally. Although the contests include entry fees, the cost to publish digitally is minimal.
- E-readers spammed with ad-laden works and hotlinks to both commercial and malware sites that load viruses onto your machine.
- E-book purchases and sales used to build up credentials for bogus sellers and buyers on auction sites

To avoid e-book scams, the BBB advises:

- Stick with authors you already know or those who have an established reputation.
- If you decide to buy from an unfamiliar author, see if you can download a free sample (Amazon lets you do this) first to test the quality.
- Don't be taken in by great reviews that accompany cheap e-books. They may be genuine or the writers may have been paid to produce them.
- Do a search on the book name or author to see what other people say or how many other books they supposedly have written.
- Don't click on links inside an e-book unless it's by an established, reputable author. Even then, it's advisable to visit their websites via your Internet browser rather than using the link.
- If you believe you've been scammed, seek a refund. You should also register your complaint with the seller's customer service department. And, if all else fails, do other readers a favor by writing an honest review of the book.

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