



Do Scam Victims Get Their Money Back?

Author: James Greening

Dear Reader,

We surveyed **2,575 consumers** from across the world asking them about their experience with trying to get their money back from scammers. While all income groups, educational categories, age levels and continents are represented, it is interesting to note that **mostly men (77%)** participated. This trend is similar to our 'Why Do Consumers Buy Fakes?' report, where 67% of the participants were men, suggesting that men may be falling for scams more than generally thought.

Also interestingly, most of the victims have reported being from **Asia (39%)** and **Africa (32%)**. This goes to show that not only do several scams originate in those places, but scammers may be victimizing more people domestically than internationally. Victims are generally young, with most falling in the **age group of 26-35 years (30%)** followed closely by **18-25 (29%)**.

Investment scams (40%) by far seem to be the most common scam that consumers are getting trapped in. This is followed by **Shopping Scams (15%)**, **Money Recovery Scams (13%)** and **Job Scams (10%)**. Consumers are also losing money to Subscription Scams (7%), Romance Scams (5%) and Phishing (4%).

Most of the survey participants **lost less than \$100 (32%)**. **11% lost a huge sum of money - \$5,000 to \$10,000** – but 7% did not lose any money. 66% said that getting scammed had a **significant negative impact** on their finances. The payment methods most favored by scammers are **Cryptocurrency (30%)** and **bank transfer (21%)**.

Remarkably, **69% said that they made no effort to get their money back from the scammer**. The main reason cited for this is that **the victim did not know how to get their money back (54%)**. A considerable portion also said that they did not try to recover the money as **they did not think they would get their money back even after trying (32%)**. Among the consumers who did try to get their money back, they did so by approaching the **scammer (32%)**, their **bank (28%)**, the **crypto exchange (17%)**, **PayPal (12%)** and **chargeback companies (11%)**. Less than 8% approached law enforcement.

Most importantly, it was reported that **66% of the victims failed to get their money back from a scam**. Even those who recovered their money were not always able to get the entire amount back as **14% said that they only got a partial refund**.

Interestingly, **40% of the participants** who recovered their money said that **getting their money back from the scammer was easy** while **39% disagreed**.

I wish you happy reading!

Jorij Abraham

General Manager, ScamAdviser & Global Anti Scam Alliance



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Closer collaboration between private companies and government agencies is the key



What surprised you about the survey?

What surprised me the most about the survey was the South American element. The survey indicates there were a large number of affected individuals from this area of the world who were scammed. However, we do not see this in the number of inquiries we get from this region for cybercrime investigations. It is also striking that the survey confirms that cryptocurrency is the most common method to fraud victims. Of all the investigations we conduct at Cybertrace, around 80% concern scams through cryptocurrency. Sadly, I predict that the number of cryptocurrency cybercrimes in South America will continue to grow, as cryptocurrency is regularly now used as a form of either official or unofficial currency.

What should we do to make reporting easier for consumers?

Closer collaboration between private companies and government agencies is the key to improving the reporting process easier and more efficient. The disconnect between the private and public sectors has been an issue that I have been advocating for several years. To make reporting easier for consumers, there should be a closer liaison level between law enforcement and private companies particularly for data collection and data sharing. A scam victim does not want to report their crime twice, so private investigations companies and the police should actively share this data. This will allow for more realistic insight into the actual number and type of cybercrimes.

Which actions are needed to help consumers get back their money, especially from cryptocurrency scams?

As mentioned earlier, collaboration between public-private organizations is severely lacking. On many occasions it is near impossible for private companies to conduct investigations due to bureaucratic complications.

For example, we often require police assistance to request records from cryptocurrency exchanges during cryptocurrency trace investigations. Sadly, many police agencies will not share the data with us and the victim. To make matters worse, police often close the investigation as the offender is outside their jurisdiction. This ultimately means the victim is left with no alternative course of action including civil investigation and litigation.

For this reason, I believe it is important to continue to raise awareness to this issue, for example through politicians, in order to move away from the traditional 'us and them' scenario, and advocate for closer collaboration.

How can Cybertrace help?

Cybertrace can assist both government and private organizations such as banks and other financial institutions by providing expert cyber investigative capability and advice. Cybertrace also works directly with members of the public to investigate cases of cyber fraud with the aim of recovering assets to recover.

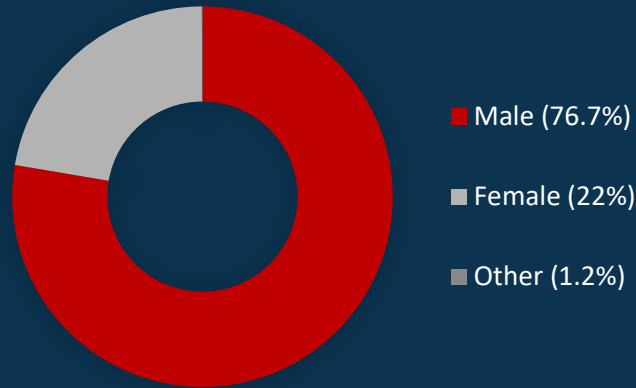
We are confident in our capability, however, closing the gap in public and private collaboration will collectively increase results for victims. Although we currently have strong relationships with several global law enforcement bodies, this unfortunately is not consistent with some jurisdictions refusing to cooperate with private industry.



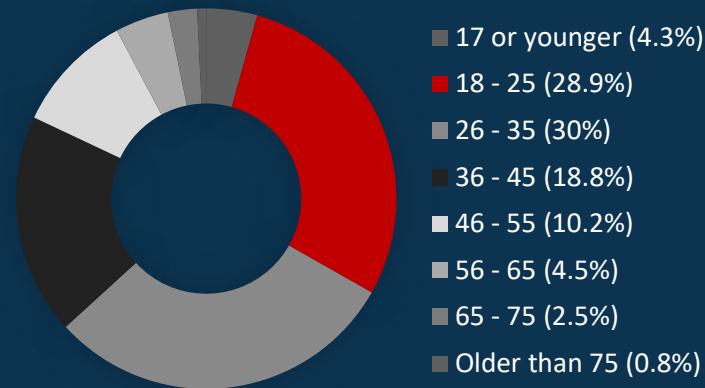
Dan Halpin
CEO & Founder
Cybertrace

2,575 consumers participated in the survey

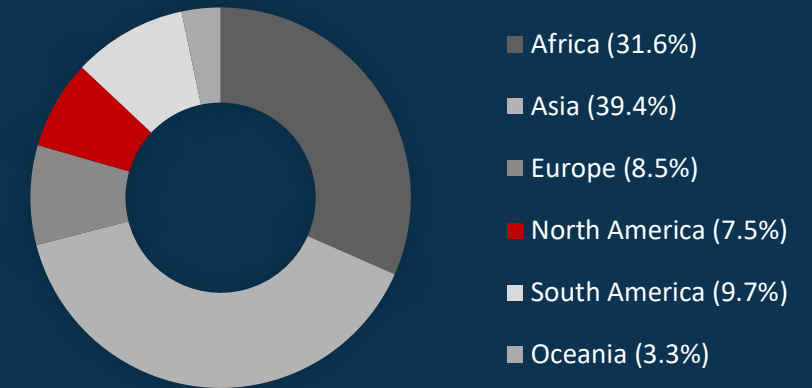
What is your gender?



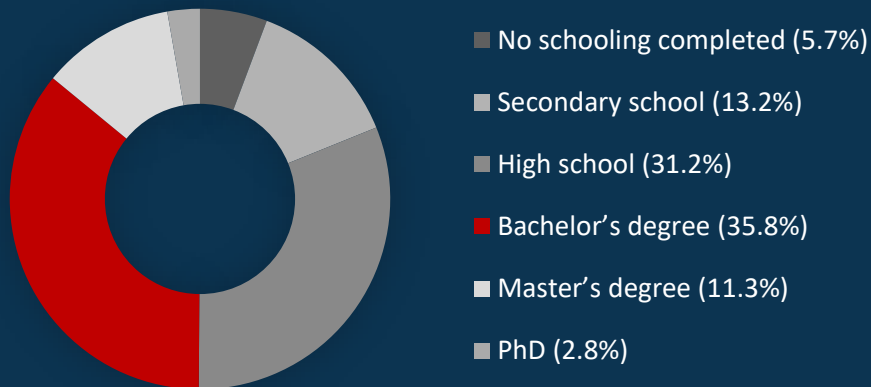
What is your age?



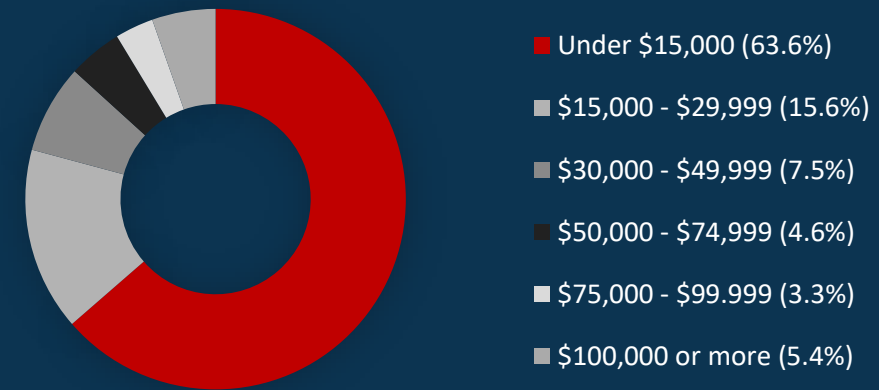
Where are you from?



What is your education level?



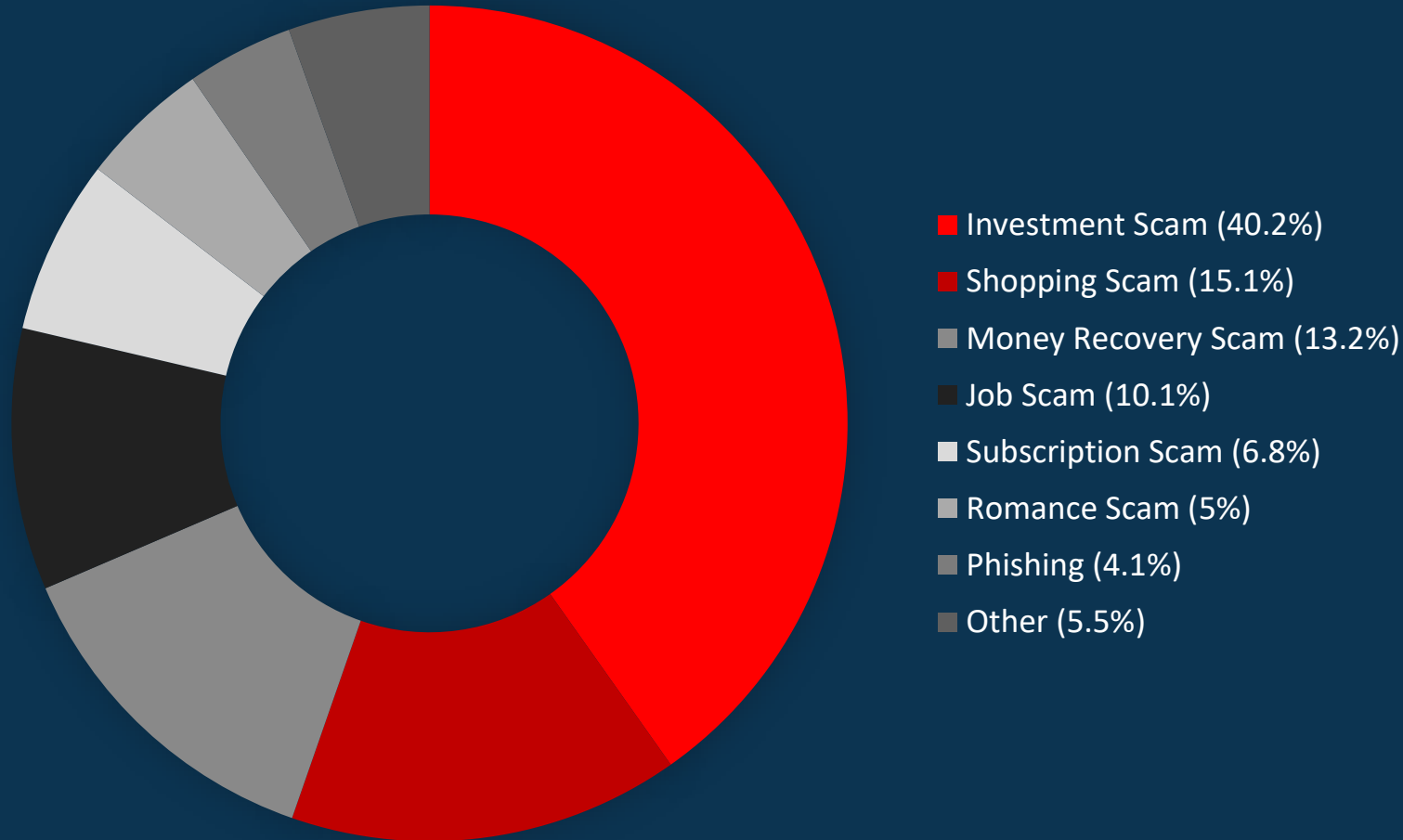
What is your annual income?



Surprisingly, the number of men (76.7%) by far outweighs the number of women (22%)

Most money is lost to Investment Scams (40.2%)

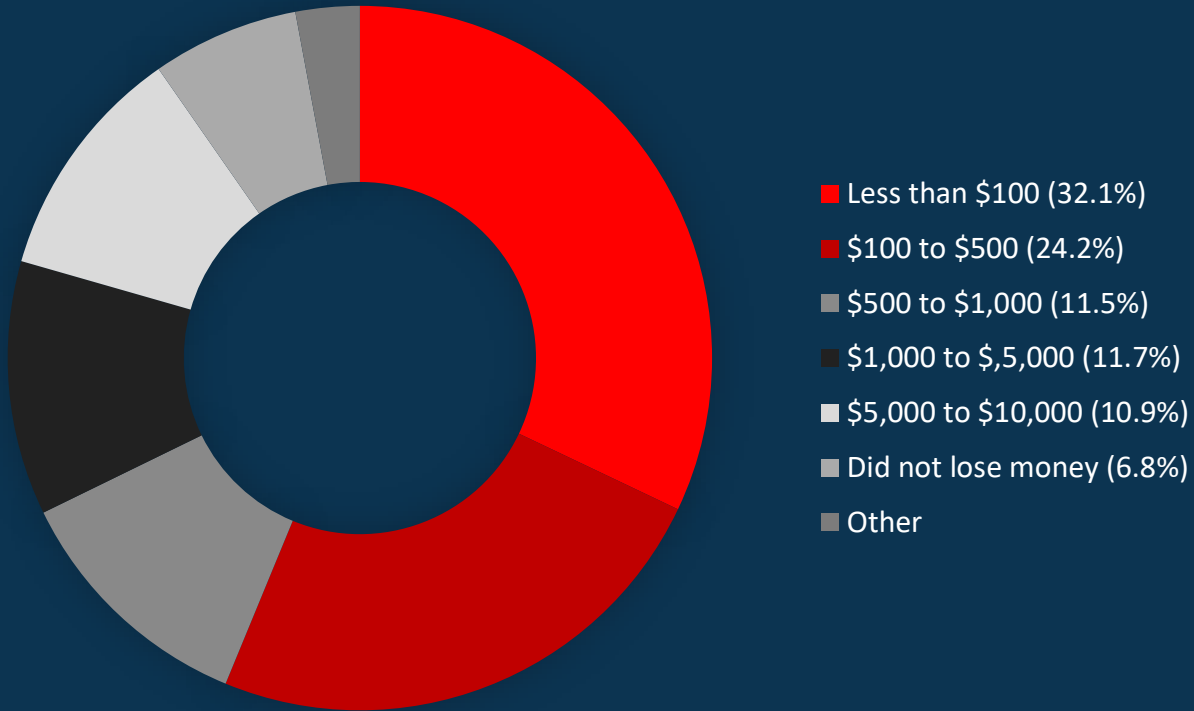
What kind of scam did you fall for?



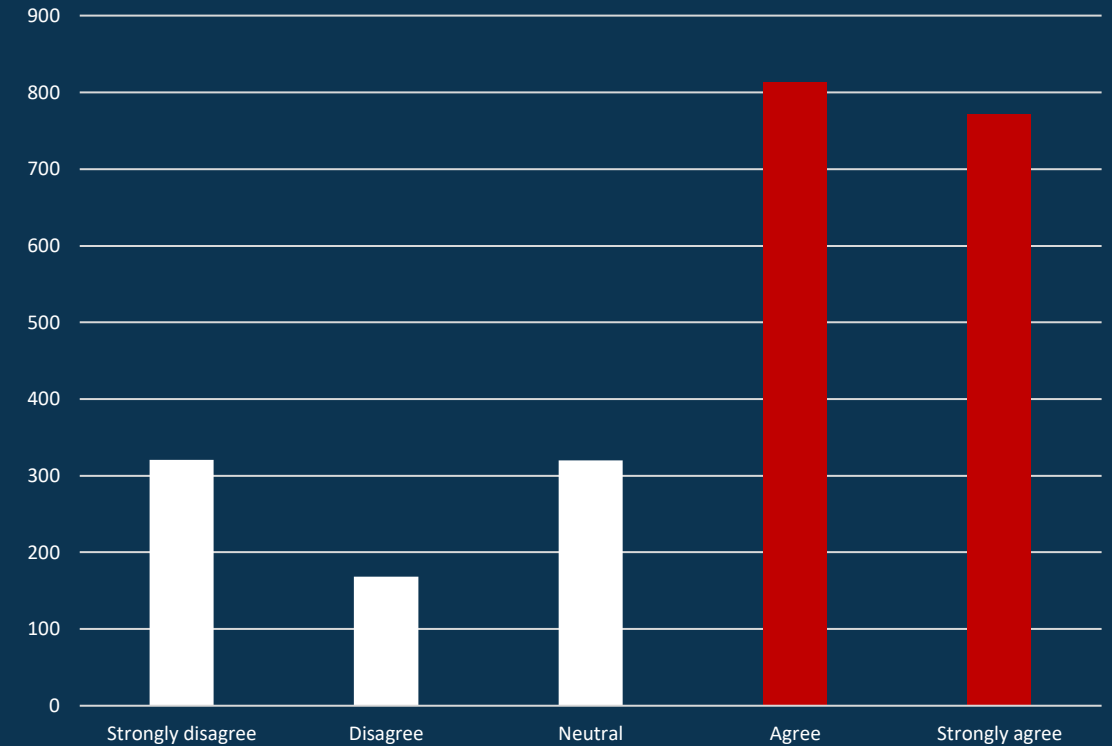
Shopping Scams (15.1%) and **Money Recovery Scams (13.2%)** are next two most-named scams

Individual losses are not large but seriously impact victims

How much money did you lose?

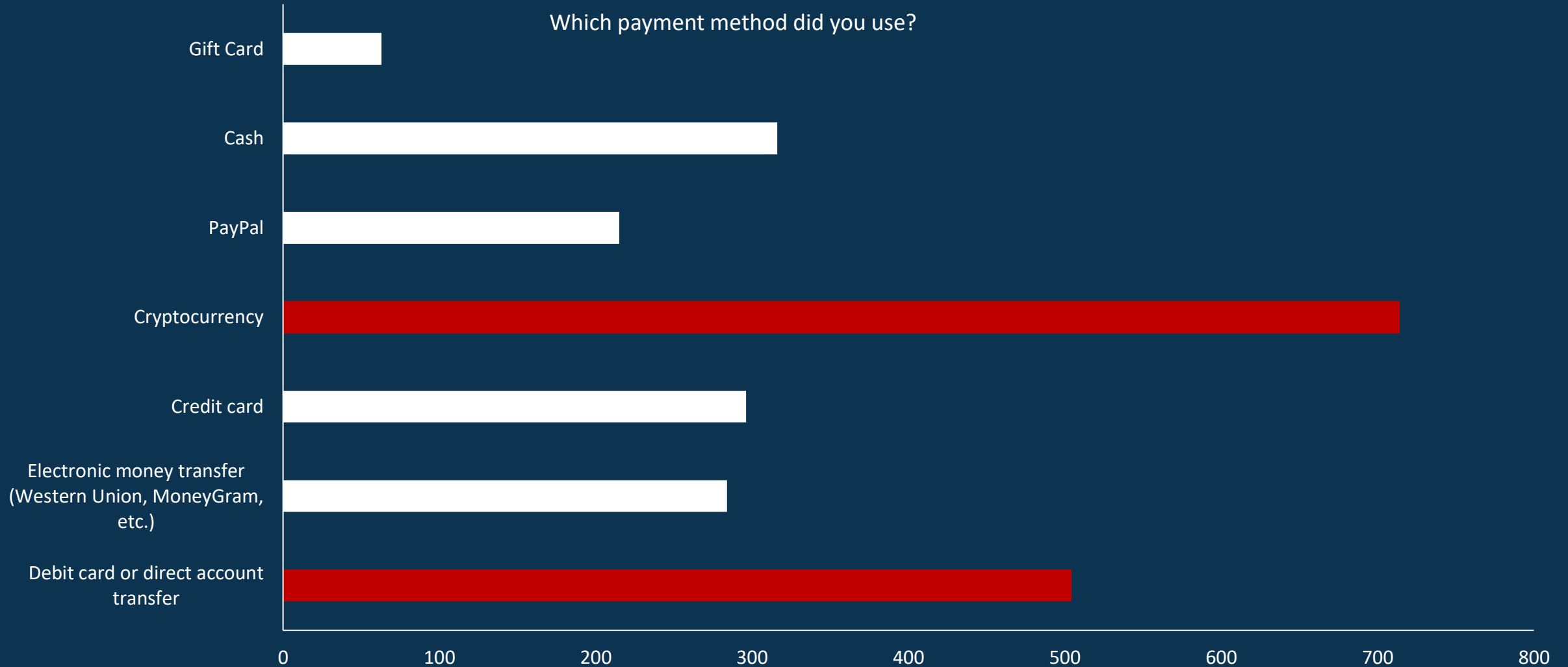


Getting scammed had a significant negative impact on your finances



56.3% reported losing less than \$500 but 66.2% agree or strongly agree that their finances were significantly affected

Victims lost money majorly through Cryptocurrency (29.8%) payments



Debit card or direct account transfer were used in 21% of the cases
Scammers also favor **Credit Card (12.4%)** and **Electronic Money Transfer (11.9%)**

There should be one single global place for victims of scams to report and to file a criminal complaint



What surprised you about the survey?

I was most surprised about the result from the survey that most victims lost less than \$100. It might have to do with the audience for the survey coming from more on the consumer/e-commerce side of things. Our platform has supported over 2,000 victims of financial cybercrimes – scams – since launch a few months ago and, unfortunately, the average amount lost is much higher, in the \$30,000-\$40,000 range. That being said, several victims lost above \$100,000 – in two incidents above \$300,000 in total. The majority of reported complaints on our platform result equally from investment scams, so that is congruent with what we are seeing.

What should we do to make reporting easier for consumers?

In my view, there should be one single global place for victims of such scams to report and to file a criminal complaint. Filing a criminal complaint enables law enforcement and banks to react. It should be easy and fast. Unfortunately today it is still very confusing and complicated to file a criminal complaint. In some countries, such as my home country Switzerland, it is even impossible to file online and the victim needs to go to a police station in person. This results in not filing or loss of valuable time. Loss of time reduces chances to get funds back. Even if a victim does file with the local police, that complaint rarely reaches the beneficiary bank or crypto exchange which is however needed to take action on their part.

Which actions are needed to help consumers get back their money, especially from cryptocurrency scams?

First of all, it is important to point out that the chances remain low in many cases to get funds back. We need to keep inventing and investing in prevention. However, once funds are transferred, then filing a criminal complaint fast and globally provides the best chance to get funds blocked and returned according to Interpol's project on stop payment requests. That being said, today it is up to the victim to find out and file their criminal complaint with relevant beneficiary banks or law enforcement agencies globally and this is very hard to do. This is even more so when crypto was transferred since investigating possible exit points at crypto exchanges requires specialist knowledge and software. The police has limited resources to support in single cases especially if losses are below let's say \$100,000.

How can CYBERA help?

I founded CYBERA 2 years ago as a direct result of my experience as a Swiss cybercrime Prosecutor supporting victims of scams and other financial cybercrime. In that function, together with our police force, we successfully helped individual victims with filing a criminal complaint fast and globally and had some successful cases that resulted in freezing and refunding the victim. It triggered my motivation to build a system that can help any victim in the world – and the respective financial institutions and crypto exchanges – to share and receive high quality criminal complaint information fast and global. We are still at the beginning of our journey but I am proud to say that after 2 years building technology, raising \$5 million from leading investors, and getting some of the smartest minds on our team – we are starting to see some real positive results both in helping victims to get funds back and in sharing relevant data with our financial industry partners to prevent fraud transactions in the first place.

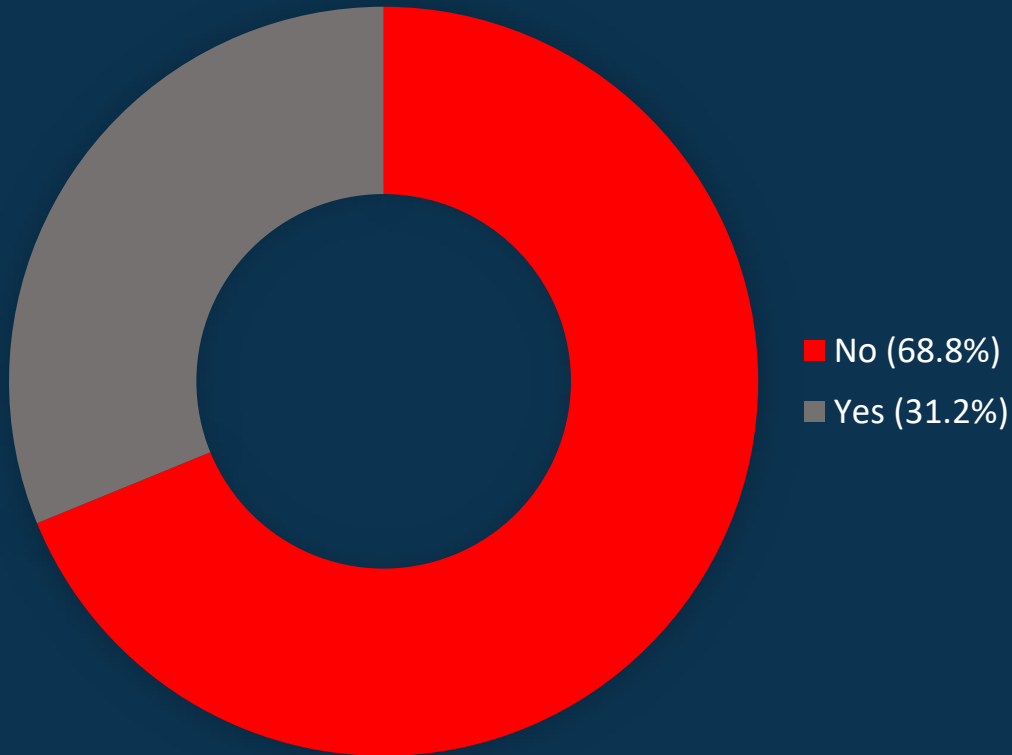


Nicola Staub
CEO & Co-Founder,
Cybera Global

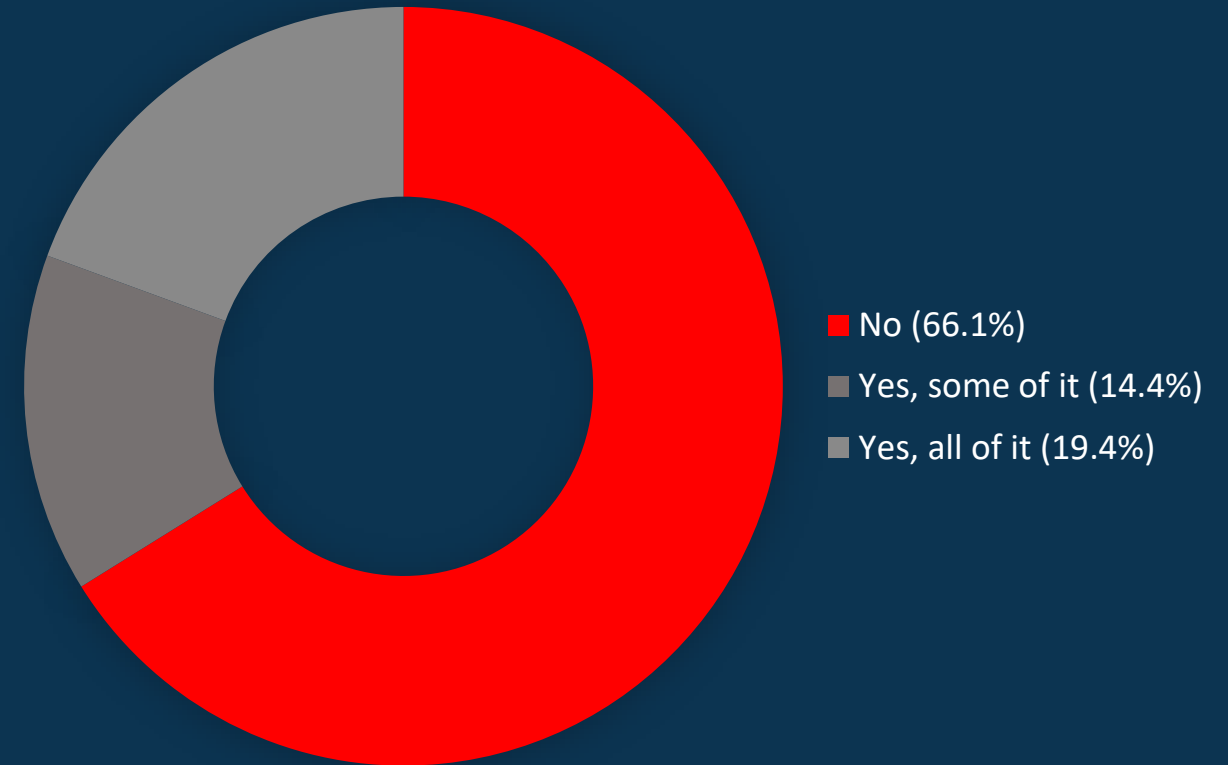
68.8% of the victims made no effort to recover their money

From those who tried, 66.1% were unsuccessful at even getting a partial refund

Did you try to get your money back?



Did you get your money back?



More consumers were successful at getting a full refund (19.4%) than a partial refund (14.4%)

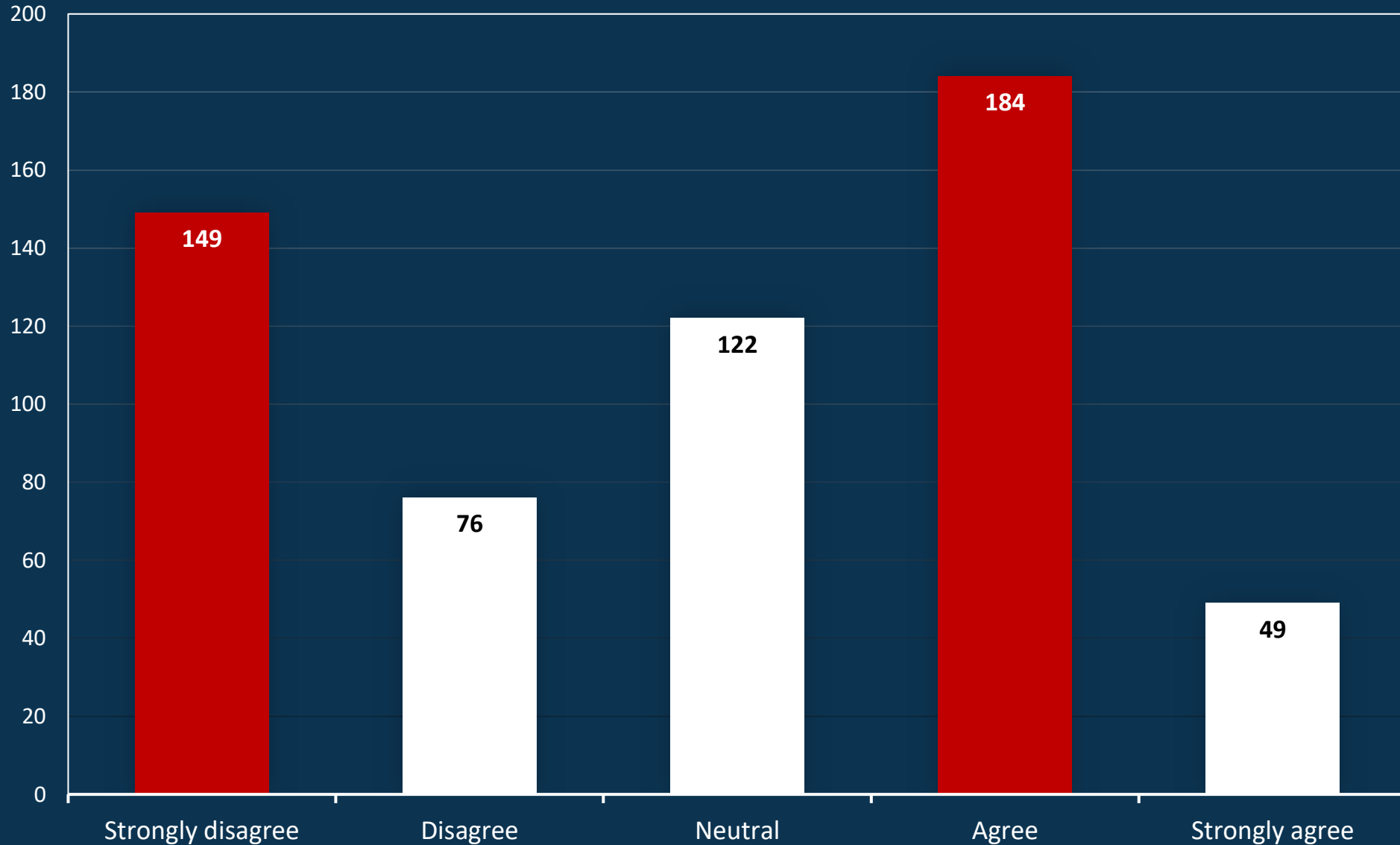
53.7% said they did not know how to get their money back



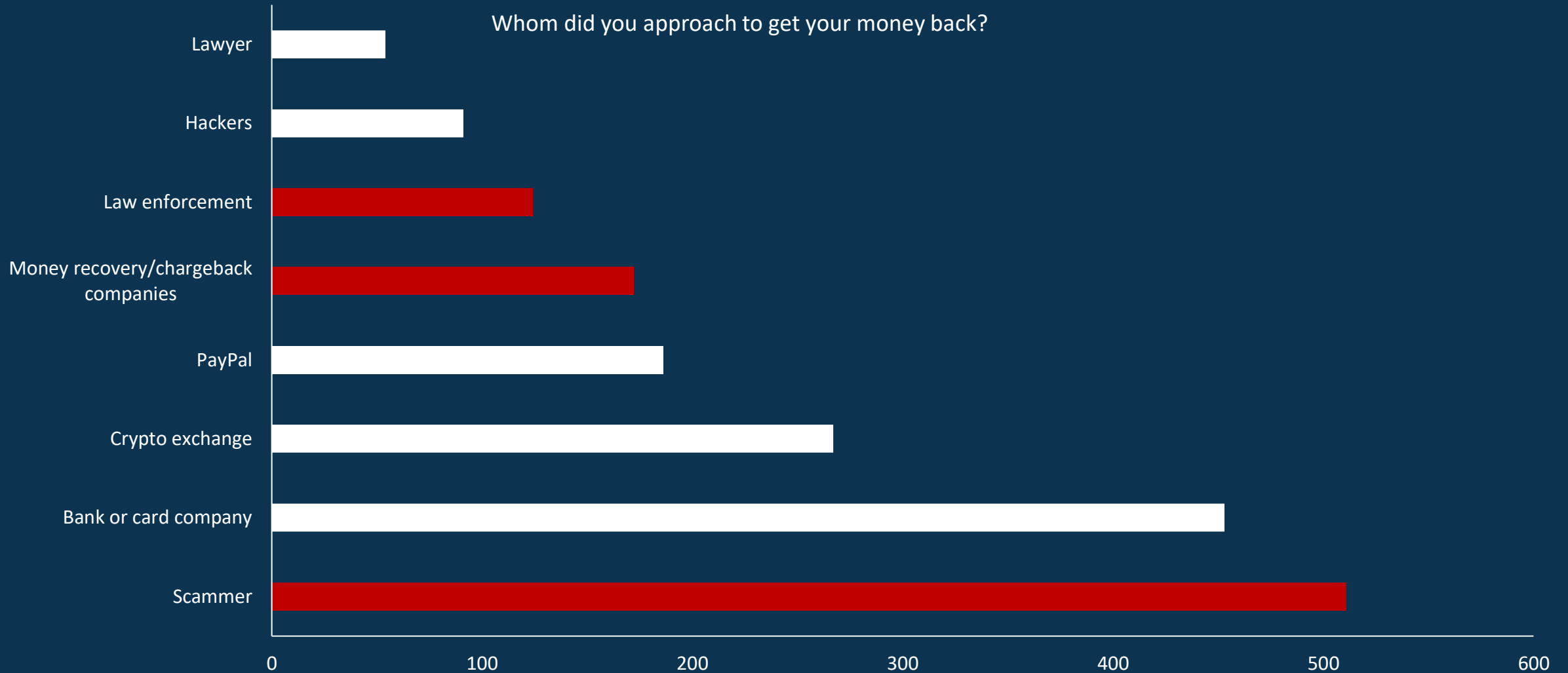
31.5% thought their efforts would be fruitless and **14.6%** did not try as the amount they lost was low

40.1% agreed that getting money back from the scammer was easy

Agree or Disagree: Getting my money back from scammers was easy



Victims first approach the scammer (31.9%) followed by their bank/card company (28.3%) for a refund



16.7% approached the crypto exchange while 10.7% sought the help of money recovery services. Only 7.7% reported it to law enforcement. 3.4% tried taking legal action.

About this Report



Who are we?



The Global Anti Scam Alliance (GASA) is a non-profit, bringing together law enforcement, consumer authorities, NGOs, brand protection, cybersecurity, and commercial organizations to share insights and knowledge surrounding scams.

ScamAdviser.com checks the likelihood of a website being legit or a scam for more than 120,000 consumers daily. More than 1 million new domains are added to our database monthly. Via our Data Partners, we protect more than 1 billion consumers worldwide.



**Our Goal:
Help Consumers
Not Get Scammed**



Interested in becoming a Partner?

Contact us to join our fight against online scams!



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