

Nearly 30% of people who lost money to a scam said it all started on social media, with Americans reportedly **losing a [whopping \\$2.1 billion](#) to social media scams** in 2025. Facebook alone accounted for \$794 million of those losses, while WhatsApp and Instagram accounted for a combined \$659 million.

Meta has also recently **come under legal fire** with lawsuits alleging the tech giant generated as much as **[\\$7 billion annually from so-called 'high-risk' ads](#)** that showed clear signs of fraud.

But where in the world are users most at risk from online financial scams - and **what phrases do scammers most commonly use to lure them in?**

With this in mind, the **[forex experts at BrokerChooser](#)** scraped the Meta Ads Library and analyzed over 1,400 active finance-related ads **live in April 2026** to identify the countries **where social media users are most vulnerable**.

Key findings:

- As of April 2026, **nearly half of (46.78%) finance-related Meta ads** targeting **US social media users** are classified as **'high-risk'**.
- **Adam Nasli**, Head Broker Analyst from **[BrokerChooser](#)**, highlighted the surge in investment scams on social media and the **red flag scam phrases** users should watch for in their feeds.
- A **sharp rise** in ads promoting **AI-powered trading bots** was identified, often promising guaranteed profits and accurate signals while failing to disclose risks.
- Fraudsters tend to **exploit personal messaging apps**, directing users to Instagram and WhatsApp to bypass platform detection.

US social media users are the third most exposed to scam finance ads



Rank	Country	Safe financial ads (%)	Financial ads without risk disclaimers (%)	Financial ads with exaggerated claims (%)	Risky financial ads (%)	Scam financial ads (%)	Total high-risk financial ads (risky + scam %)
1	Poland	15.00%	90.00%	70.00%	70.00%	15.00%	85.00%
2	United Kingdom	66.81%	54.42%	28.32%	25.66%	7.52%	33.19%
3	United States	53.22%	85.19%	40.13%	40.34%	6.44%	46.78%
4	Italy	11.59%	94.20%	76.81%	82.61%	5.80%	88.41%
5	Germany	54.14%	80.66%	45.30%	42.54%	3.31%	45.86%
6	France	63.64%	84.85%	21.21%	33.33%	3.03%	36.36%
7	Spain	38.89%	81.94%	47.22%	58.33%	2.78%	61.11%
8	Switzerland	9.80%	90.20%	74.51%	88.24%	1.96%	90.20%
9	Ireland	53.16%	77.22%	53.16%	45.57%	1.27%	46.84%
10	Belgium	13.64%	95.45%	68.18%	86.36%	0.00%	86.36%
11	Czech Republic	21.43%	78.57%	46.43%	78.57%	0.00%	78.57%
12	Finland	26.67%	73.33%	60.00%	73.33%	0.00%	73.33%
13	Denmark	38.46%	69.23%	46.15%	61.54%	0.00%	61.54%
14	Greece	65.52%	86.21%	34.48%	34.48%	0.00%	34.48%

Please find the full dataset [here](#).

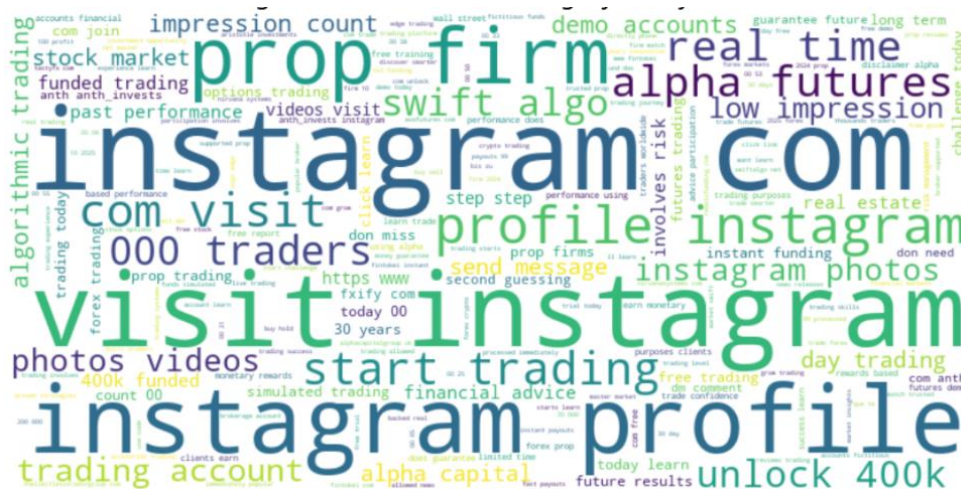
Over 80% of Meta finance ads targeting US users lack proper risk disclaimers

US social media users remain at significant risk, with a worrying **46.78% of finance-related Meta ads** classified as 'high-risk'. While **half of ads (53.22%)** are considered safe, this still means that nearly one in two finance ads may be potentially misleading or unsafe. In fact, over **two in five finance ads (40.34%)** shown to US users are deemed **risky**, with a further **6.44%** flagged as outright **scams** - highlighting how many users continue to encounter questionable financial promotions in their feeds.

According to [BrokerChooser](#)'s analysis, these risky ads tend to promise rapid profits while downplaying potential losses. **Over 85%** of Meta finance ads in the US **fail to include proper risk disclaimers** and **40% like to use exaggerated**, persuasive language such as "*deliver consistent annual returns exceeding 80%*" with "*no market dependency*" or promote "*easy money*" through a "*free forex trading masterclass*" claiming a "*proven formula to trade profitably everyday*" - **all without properly disclosing the high volatility** and potential for loss in this speculative market.

Particularly concerning is the **rise of AI-powered trading bots** marketed for forex and crypto, often **directing users to contact sellers via WhatsApp**, a platform largely unregulated with minimal consumer protection.

Spot the scam: Top fraud phrases in Meta finance ads revealed



Adam Nasli, Head Broker Analyst from [BrokerChooser](#), commented on the rise of investment scams across social media:

"Social media has become a fertile hunting ground for financial scammers, reaching billions of users online. Our analysis reveals that **many high-risk ads rely heavily on persuasive, attention-grabbing language** while **avoiding clear risk disclosure**.

Common red flags include phrases like "**unlock \$400K**", "**instant funding**" and "**free trading**", often paired with prompts **directing users to private messaging apps** such as

Instagram, WhatsApp or Telegram. By moving interactions off-platform, scammers bypass moderation, avoid detection and manipulate users directly in a one-on-one setting.

Prop trading ads are especially widespread on social platforms, promoting access to large trading capital with minimal upfront cost and implying low or guaranteed risk. In practice, many users pay repeated fees to take trading “challenges” with strict rules and high failure rates. These tactics **exploit powerful psychological triggers**, like fast wealth, professional status and exclusivity, leading novice investors to underestimate risk and suffer significant financial losses. Education, due diligence, and scepticism toward exaggerated claims remain the best defence.

In addition, choosing brokers with top-tier regulation, diversifying risk by using multiple providers, and remaining sceptical of investment advice from unknown individuals who initiate (or originally initiated) contact via social media can further help protect investors’ funds."

Notes to editors

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If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch!

Kind regards,

Clara

Email: clara@journalistic.org

Methodology:

1. In response to the growing presence of scam adverts on social media platforms, [forex broker experts at BrokerChooser](#) analysed financial advertisements across 18 countries using data collected from the Meta Ads Library.

a. Approximately 1,200 active adverts under the category of financial products and services were included.

b. Only adverts that were active on 15/01/2026 were sourced for analysis.

2. To ensure data quality and standardise ad content, the experts took the following steps:

a. Removal of emojis and special characters to standardise the text content.

b. Initial deduplication based on the cleaned content to eliminate exact duplicates.

c. Further deduplication using fuzzy matching via the RapidFuzz Python library to detect near-duplicate texts with minor variations.

3. To filter out irrelevant advertisements in the cleaned dataset, a two-step zero-shot classification was applied.

- a. The Facebook/Bart-large-MNLI model was used to classify ads as finance-related or not, using a confidence threshold of 0.8.
 - b. Ads filtered out in the first pass were then reassessed with MoritzLaurer/mDeBERTa-v3-base-mnli-xnli, a RoBERTa-based multilingual model to factor in non-English content.
4. Advert images were scraped to capture information often missing from textual descriptions, such as financial risk disclaimers or image-only content. Text embedded in images was extracted using pytesseract OCR, providing additional context for evaluation.
5. The filtered dataset of financial ads was further classified using Deepseek LLM into:
- a. Three risk levels: safe, risky, scam
 - b. Presence of risk disclosures
 - c. Exaggerated claims
6. Data was collected on 27th April 2026 and is correct as of then.