

FRAUD & PANDEMICS FROM THE SPANISH FLU TO THE PRESENT

Professor Michael Levi, Professor of Criminology, Cardiff University

Webinar

Wednesday, 30 June 2021, 11:00 BST















































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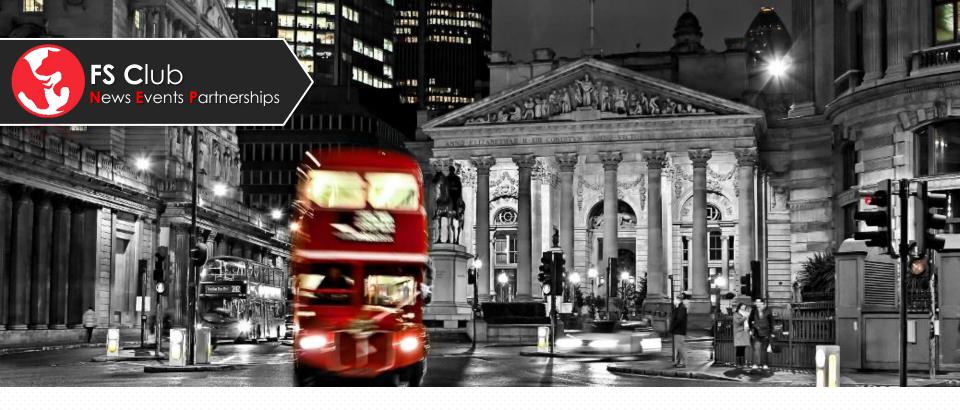












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A Word From Today's Chairman





Graeme Gordon

Chief Executive Officer

Praxity





















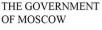












The Department for External Economic and International Relations of Moscow













































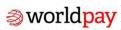


































Today's Agenda



- 11:00 11:05 Chairman's Introduction
- 11:05 11:25 Keynote Address Professor Michael Levi
- 11:25 11:45 Questions & Answers

Today's Speaker





Professor Michael Levi
Professor of Criminology
Cardiff University

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Soon to be a major movie starring Russell Crowe as...



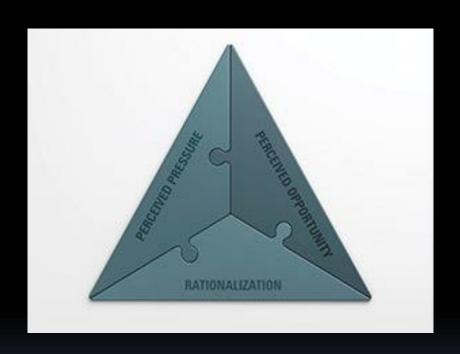
Levi, M. and Smith, R. 2021.

Research Report no. 19.
Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. Open Access https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rr/rr19

Pandemics, Economic Trends and Fraud Risks

- What impact have the Covid-19 pandemic and previous pandemics had on frauds and on reactions to fraud?
 - "You only find out who is swimming naked when the tide goes out." Warren Buffet (2001)
 - We need to factor in the length of time it takes before conduct that we define as fraud or corruption emerges, IF IT DOES
 - Separate out Prevention and Resilience efforts; Administrative controls; and Policing/Criminal Justice controls
 - Lessons learned for the next crisis?
 - Will they actually be learned?

The Classic Fraud Triangle



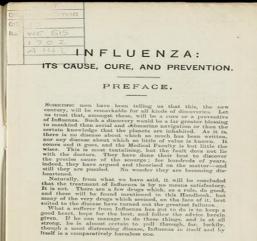


Classifying & analysing scams

- Changes in offender motivations & networking
 - Individual v small network v 'Organised crime' are we thinking and analysing clearly enough about these?
- Changes in Target and Third Party 'Defender' conduct
 - Frauds against individuals
 - Frauds against businesses
 - Frauds against government new and old opportunities
- Data collection and validation issues over time
- Impact of technologies and public-private partnerships
- Market opportunities in prevention
 - And market failures in prevention?

Spanish Flu & (mis)Advertising









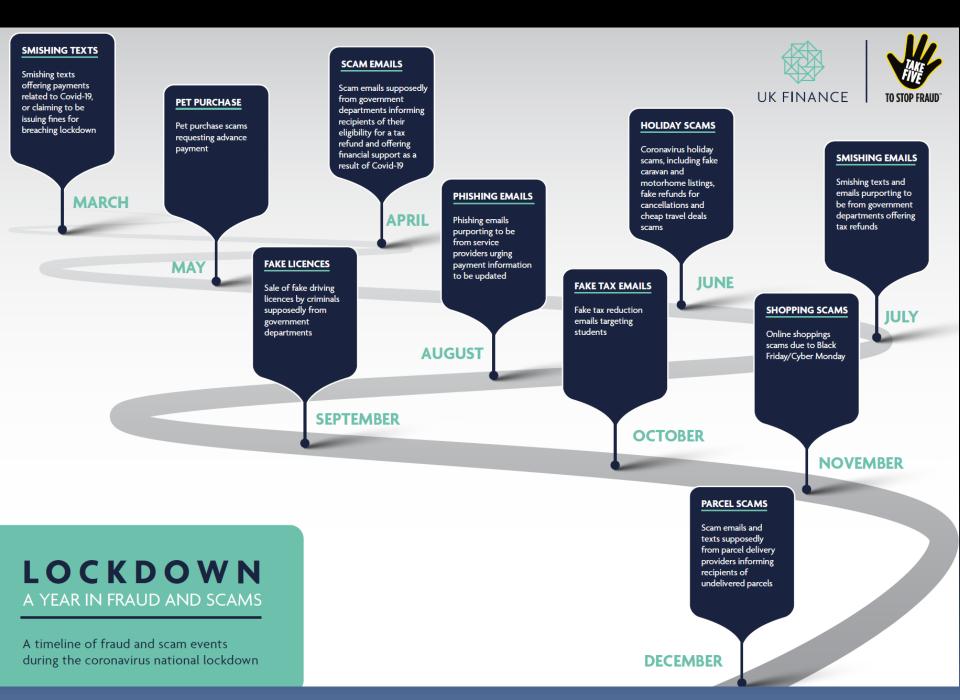
What's new this time?

- COVID-19 pandemic first systematic approach to combating health and financial scams during a pandemic or even during an epidemic in the UK
- Tied to more general contemporary concerns about the impact of the internet and social media on fraud (and politics) affecting the general public.
- Public-facing warnings against consumer and investment scams by
 - the financial sector; government; third sector bodies (e.g. www.scamwatch.gov.au); some social media companies (e.g. Google's https://scamspotter.org/ though Google still takes a lot of money from advertising frauds
 - advice from financial consultancies and government to the business sector aimed at reducing fraud risks from changes in the organisation of business in the short and longer term transition to home working.
- But *effectiveness* of warning techniques?
- No pandemic-related public advice relates to reducing fraud committed by senior executives or to reducing corruption with collusion of politicians.
- Many elite, blue collar and 'organised crime' frauds go on independently.
- Pandemics alter the shape of opportunities and pressures on individuals, but do not dominate the levels of fraud or other economic crimes.

Headline cases Covid-19

- Crooks con £55,000 a day out of lonely hearts during an online dating boom in lockdown
- Is Your Vaccine Card Selfie a Gift for Scammers? Maybe
- Ministers ignored legal advice to give failing company a huge Covid test contract leaving taxpayers with £87MILLION bill when tests didn't work
- Banks raid accounts to claw back Covid loans
- Fraudster injected 92-year-old woman with fake coronavirus vaccine - and charged her £160

- Millions of Counterfeit N95 Masks
 Were Bought in 5 States, U.S. Says
- Lawmaker Promoted Stem Cell Therapy for Covid-19 in Fraud Scheme, U.S. Says
- South African probe finds evidence of political pressure, fraud in COVID-19 contracts
- A black market for illegal coronavirus vaccines is thriving in the Philippines
- Beware the internet car scams: How online fraudsters are taking advantage of the pandemic to trick buyers out of thousands of pounds



The evidence so far?

- Improved data from banks, police and population surveys
 - UK bank data show slight fall in frauds, even online
- Big public education campaigns against online scams
- Huge frauds/alleged corruption against public purse (UK)
 - Fraud Advisory Panel warnings
 - Cabinet Office attempts at coordination of govt prevention
 - Not yet crystallised as fraud, but...
- 'Chumocracy' allegations in by-passing formal procurement processes in emergency
 - Media and legal challenges in the UK
 - Longer term consequences for political legitimacy
- Evidence from EU Member States? Elsewhere?
 - 'Beware of Scam Using The Name of Europol's Executive Director'
 - Important JITs and direct cooperation and messaging impacts to offenders, potential offenders and to the general public

Cumulative number & value of COVID-19 scams reported to Scamwatch Australia, 1 March 2020 to 30 May 2021



UK card & account fraud losses



Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis 2008 I

Credit squeeze brings frauds to light

- masked by the general level of insolvency and by creditors' unwillingness to pursue
- influenced by honesty and incentive structures of insolvency practitioners who wind up companies
- Influenced by attitudes and resources of media, investigators, prosecutors and regulators

Impacts of the GFC 2008 2

- Official resources easier to find to deal with stigmatised groups and for 'asset recovery' than to deal with the more elite suspects
- Clear positive net returns for more tax fraud/ evasion investigators - easier to link staff to financial recoveries
 - But elite staff investigators group need to be trained
- The GFC 2008 led to
 - increased governance of reckless lending
 - more international cooperation between regulators and tax authorities
 - some symbolic prosecutions, few connected to GFC

Impacts of the GFC 2008 3

- When economic times are hard and interests rates are low, more individuals take bigger risks
 - 1. to pay to obtain jobs from 'gangmasters' or
 - 2. to get better returns on investments/ pensions



- Increased supply of 'potential victims'
- Tighter credit fewer application
 frauds but more account takeover frauds

Conclusions to Global Financial Crisis

- Compared to estimated scale of losses from fraud in the UK - £38.4 billion in 2010 – recoveries and prosecutions were and remain pitiful
 - but does this matter? Is prevention not the key?
 - What is the relevance of cj and prevention efforts to the GFC?
- Little evidence of predicted boom in insider frauds or in 'organised crime' involvement in fraud. But we need to collect better data to link events!
- Bankruptcy/corporate insolvency frauds excepted, there is no evidence that the GFC per se had a major impact on increasing the cost of fraud or levels of fraud, compared with other influences



Examples of Fraud Warnings

Courier Frauds

Hacking prevention

Spot the signs of courier fraud



Someone claiming to be from your bank or the police call you to tell you about fraudulent activity but is asking you for personal info or your PIN to verify who you are.



They try to offer you peace of mind by having somebody pick up the card for you to save you the trouble of having to go to your bank or local police station.







Examples of Warnings



A survey of UK passwords reveals popular password choices

National Cyber Security Centre Aware

15% use their pet's names

14% use their family members names

13% use a significant date

6% use their favourite sports team



Pre-pandemic Romance & Pet frauds





Conclusions

- Apart from government loans & anti-covid purchasing, there is probably not a tsunami tide of new fraud
- Criminal justice for fraud & corruption remains a sideshow in the management of fraud risks
- But important for justice and public reassurance
- Many but not all online offenders will be in hard-to-reach countries without easy extradition
- Or in own jurisdiction for those with political protection
- Need to watch out for more management frauds in future
- Cross-border and public-private cooperation remain crucial in reducing fraud & stopping money outflows
- The faster we stop frauds via data sharing and outreach to those at risk, and by active auditing, the less harm is done

Post- bubble crash coming soon?

Box 1: Financial bubbles throughout history

- 1. The Dutch Tulip Bubble 1636
- 2. The South Sea Bubble 1720
- 3. The Mississippi Bubble 1720
- 4. The late 1920s stock price bubble 1927–29
- 5. The surge in bank loans to Mexico and other developing countries in the 1970s
- 6. The bubble in real estate and stocks in Japan 1985–89
- 7. The 1985–89 bubble in real estate and stocks in Finland, Norway, and Sweden
- 8. The bubble in real estate and stocks in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and several other Asian countries 1992–97 and the surge in foreign investment in Mexico 1990–94
- 9. The bubble in over-the-counter stocks in the United States 1995–2000
- 10. The bubble in real estate in the United States, Britain, Spain, Ireland, and Iceland between 2002 and 2007.

Source: Aliber & Kindleberger (2015)

Rational Choice Theory



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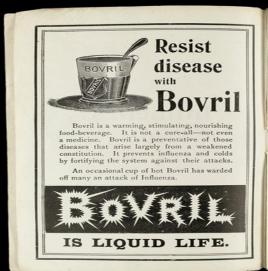
Pandemics, Economic Trends and Fraud Risks

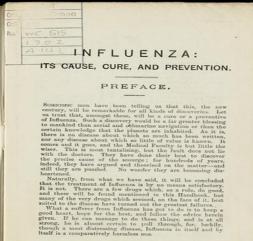
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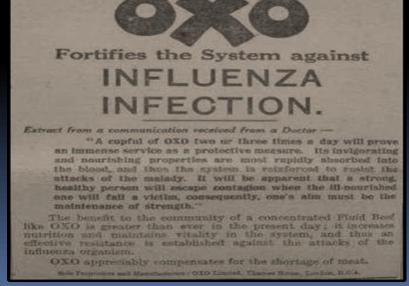
- Changes in offender motivations & networking
 - Individual v small network v 'Organised crime' are we thinking and analysing clearly enough about these?
- Frauds against individuals online and offline
- Frauds against businesses staff and ransomware
- Frauds against government new and old opportunities
- Data collection and validation issues over time
- Relationship of technologies and public-private partnerships to fraud dissemination and counter-action in situational fraud prevention models
- Market opportunities in prevention

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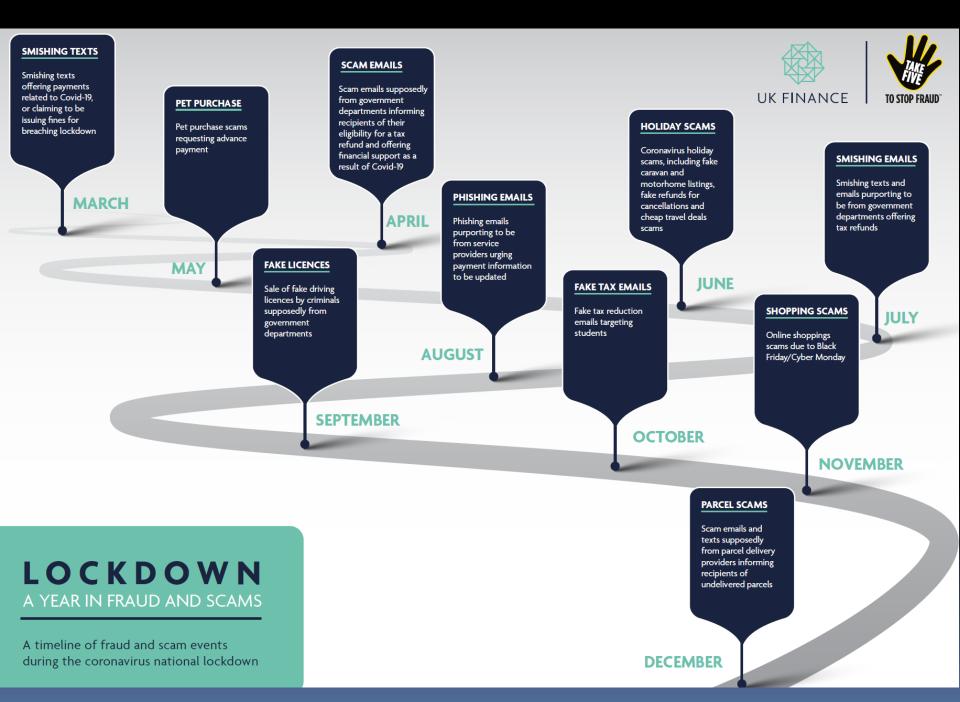
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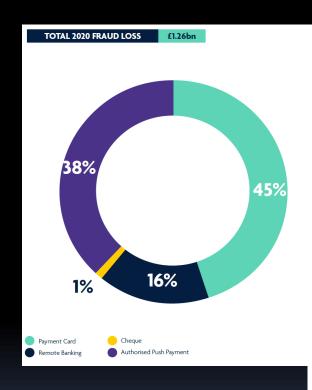
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Source: Aliber & Kindleberger (2015)

UK bank fraud losses 2020



Fraud Type	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change
											19/20
Remote Purchase (CNP)	£221.0	£247.3	£301.0	£331.5	£398.4	£432.3	£408.4	£506.4	£470.2	£452.6	-4%
Of which e-commerce	£139.6	£140.2	£190.1	£219.1	£261.5	£310.3	£310.4	£394.2	£360.5	£376.5	4%
Counterfeit	£36.1	£42.3	£43.3	£47.8	£45.7	£36.9	£24.2	£16.3	£12.8	£8.7	-32%
Lost & Stolen	£50.1	£55.4	£58.9	£59.7	£74.1	£96.3	£92.9	£95.1	£94.8	£78.9	-17%
Card ID Theft	£22.5	£32.6	£36.7	£30.0	£38.2	£40.0	£29.8	£47.3	£37.7	£29.7	-21%
Card non-receipt	£11.3	£12.8	£10.4	£10.1	£11.7	£12.5	£10.2	£6.3	£5.2	£4.4	-15%
Total	£341.0	£390.4	£450.2	£479.0	£568.1	£618.1	£565.4	£671.4	£620.6	£574.2	-7%
UK	£260.9	£288.4	£328.2	£328.7	£379.7	£417.9	£407.5	£496.6	£449.9	£414.5	-8%
Fraud Abroad	£80.0	£102.0	£122.0	£150.3	£188.4	£200.1	£158.0	£174.8	£170.7	£159.7	-6%

Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis 2008 I

Credit squeeze brings frauds to light

- masked by the general level of insolvency and by creditors' unwillingness to pursue
- influenced by honesty and incentive structures of insolvency practitioners who wind up companies
- Influenced by attitudes and resources of media, investigators, prosecutors and regulators

Impacts of the GFC 2008 2

- Official resources easier to find to deal with stigmatised groups and for 'asset recovery' than to deal with the more elite suspects
 - Though Germany, Italy & legality principle countries differ
- Clear positive net returns for more tax fraud/evasion investigators - easier to link staff to financial recoveries
 - But elite staff investigators group need to be trained
- The GFC 2008 led to
 - increased governance of reckless lending
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Examples of Fraud Warnings

Courier Frauds

Hacking prevention

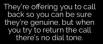
Spot the signs of courier fraud



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They try to offer you peace of mind by having somebody pick up the card for you to save you the trouble of having to go to your bank or local police station.







Examples of Warnings



A survey of UK passwords reveals popular password choices

14% use their pet's names
14% use their family members names
13% use a significant date
13% use a significant date
16% use their family members names
18% use a significant date



Pre-pandemic Romance & Pet frauds





Conclusions

- Apart from government loans & anti-covid purchasing, there
 is probably not a tsunami tide of new fraud but maybe will
 be one with the recession, if...
- Criminal justice for fraud & corruption remains a sideshow in the management of fraud risks
- But important for justice and public reassurance
- Many but not all online offenders will be in hard-to-reach countries without easy extradition
- Or in own jurisdiction for those with political protection challenges for prosecutor autonomy & integrity & reputation
- Need to watch out for more management frauds in future
- Cross-border and public-private cooperation remain crucial in reducing fraud & stopping money outflows
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Rational Choice Theory



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Comments, Questions & Answers























































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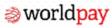




































Thank You For Listening



Forthcoming Events

- Mon, 5 Jul (16:00-16:45)
 The Psychology Of Seduction
- Thu, 8 Jul (15:00-15:45) Financial Centres Of The World 2021: Focus On British Virgin Islands
- Tue, 13 Jul (11:00-11:45) Esop Sofa: Hot Topics In Employee Share Ownership
- Wed, 14 Jul (15:00-15:45) The Nifty Fifty: The True Story Behind The Infamous Stock Market Bubble

Visit https://fsclub.zyen.com/events/forthcoming-events/