Bitcoin ATMs: A payment portal for scammers

Bitcoin ATMs (or BTMs)¹ have been popping up at convenience stores, gas stations, and other high-traffic areas for years.² For some, they're a convenient way to buy or send crypto, but for scammers they've become an easy way to steal. FTC Consumer Sentinel Network data show that fraud losses at BTMs are skyrocketing, increasing nearly tenfold from 2020 to 2023, and topping \$65 million in just the first half.7 he 21.7 (vastu)-1.8 mt312 (aje)0.6 ofitt31 t

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now crypto is a top payment method for many other scams, too. ⁶ Widespread access to BTMs has helped make this possible. Reports of losses using BTMs are overwhelmingly about government impersonation, business impersonation, and tech support scams. ⁷ And when people used BTMs, their reported losses are exceptionally high. In the first six months of 2024, the median loss people reported was \$10,000. ⁸		
In the first half of the year, more than three times as li report a loss using a BTM. ⁹ every three dollars reporte machines was lost by an old	kely as younger adults t In fact, more than two o d lost to fraud using the	o of
Scams that use BTMs work Many start with a call or me suspicious activity or unaut account. ¹¹ Others get your warning on your computer, company like Microsoft or a	essage about supposed horized charges on an attention with a fake se often impersonating a Apple. These things are	ecurity hard

to ignore, and that's the point. From there, the story quickly escalates. They might say all your money is at risk, or your information has been linked to money laundering or even drug smuggling. The scammer may get a fake government agent on the line – maybe even claiming to be from the "FTC" – to up the ante.

So where do BTMs fit into the story? Scammers claim that depositing cash into these machines will protect your money or fix the

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