

The 2021 Crypto Crime Report

Everything you need to know about ransomware, darknet markets, and more

February 16, 2021

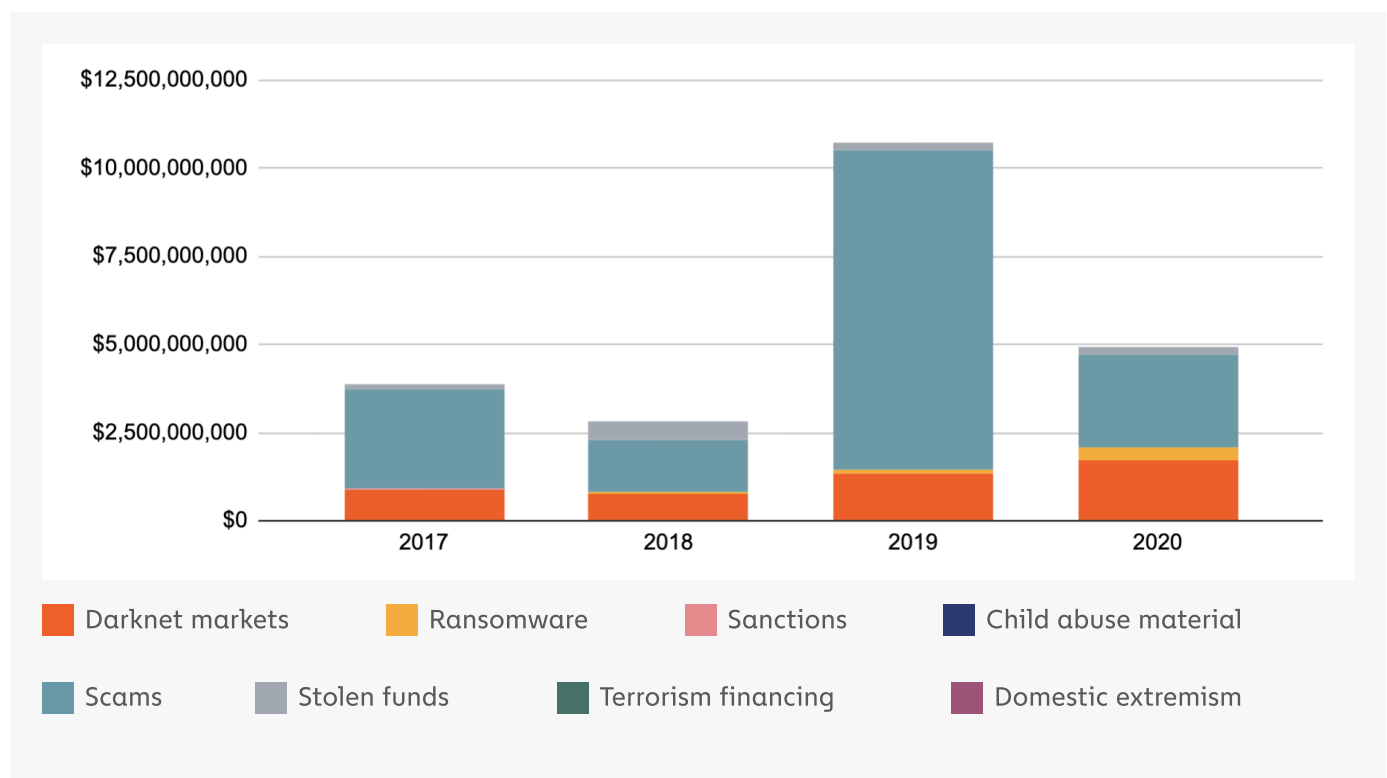


Crypto Crime Summarized: Scams and Darknet Markets Dominated 2020 by Revenue, But Ransomware Is the Bigger Story

Cryptocurrency-based crime fell 54% in 2020, but ransomware attacks skyrocketed.

2020 was an important year for cryptocurrency, as an influx of institutional investment helped drive Bitcoin and other crypto assets to new all-time highs in price. But cryptocurrency still remains appealing for criminals as well thanks to its pseudonymous nature and ability to facilitate instant transactions anywhere in the world.

Total cryptocurrency value received by illicit entities | 2017 - 2020

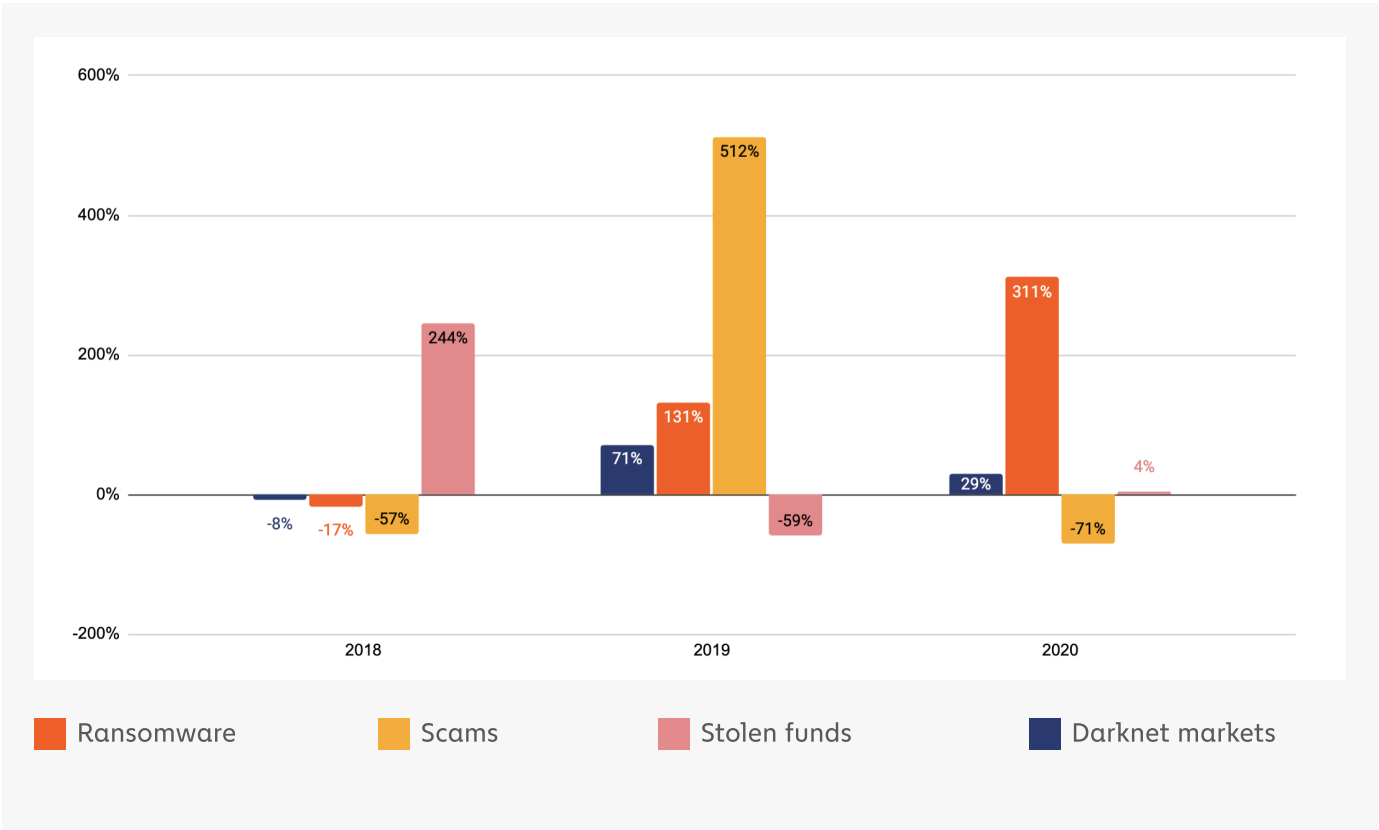


In 2019, criminal activity represented 2.1% of all cryptocurrency transaction volume or roughly \$21.4 billion worth of transfers. In 2020, the criminal share of all cryptocurrency activity fell to just 0.34% or \$10.0 billion in transaction volume. Scams and darknet markets made up the majority of that activity, but no crime category grew more than ransomware.



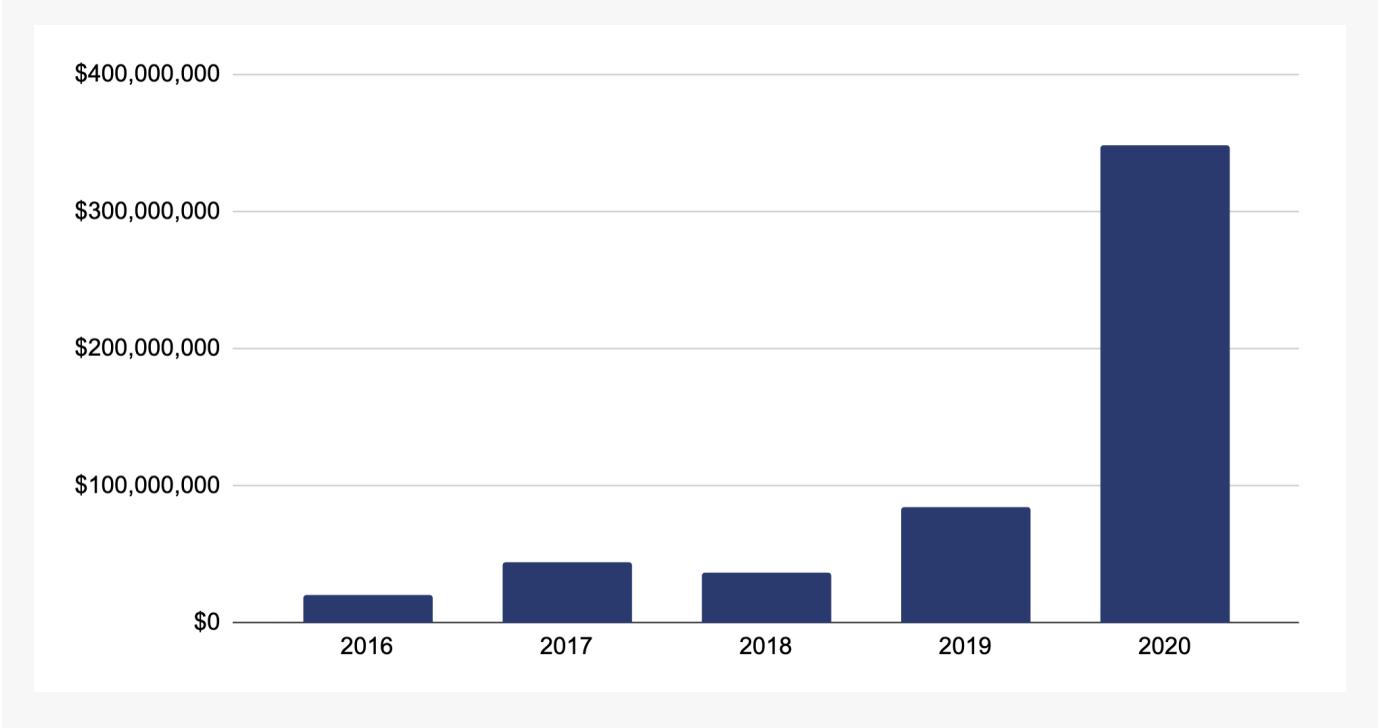
Crime categories by percentage increase in cryptocurrency received

| 2018 - 2020



Total cryptocurrency value received by ransomware addresses per year

| 2016 - 2020





Ransomware payments more than quadrupled in 2020 to reach nearly \$350 million worth of cryptocurrency. Keep in mind that due to underreporting, those numbers are likely underestimates of the true total.

In addition to the rise of ransomware, we observed other important trends in cryptocurrency-based crime, such as:

- How a small group of shady cryptocurrency services, mostly operating on top of large exchanges, conduct most of the money laundering that cybercriminals rely on to make cryptocurrency-based crime profitable
- DeFi platforms' unique vulnerability to hacking, as well as how cybercriminals such as those of the North Korea-affiliated Lazarus Group utilize DeFi platforms for money laundering
- A rash of darknet market closures as competition heats up in the space

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Our Customer Success Managers will help set your team up, make connections, and handle any requests.

Recommended Resources



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Data and insights portal to understand cryptocurrency markets



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