

Forum: [Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [Enforce buyers to use a middleman in contracts for deals above \\$100](#)

Navos - October 27, 2023, 1:18 am

Recently it has come to my attention that scams and exit scams are on the rise.

Recent cases here:

Spoiler [\(Click to View\)](#)

Have a look at this recent deal dispute:

<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=6254812>

Where Lukasi was scammed off \$2,000.

As someone who has also lost \$3,000 to an exit scammer, I know how it feels.

Here was my deal dispute with the scammer that got closed.

<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=6244376>

I used to deal with him for similar figures and he delivered so I never thought I had to use a MM. But in the end trust is a fragile thing. He finally decided to exit scam with the last transaction out of greed.

Something has to be done to minimize these scams or even eliminate it and I have a few suggestions:

Spoiler [\(Click to View\)](#)

First, when we open a contract there is a field for us to input middleman.

See screenshot below

<https://imgur.com/a/Qm4zmG3>

Currently it is optional. I feel that another field to input the value of the purchase should be placed above the Middleman field.

And if the value surpasses \$100, the Middleman field becomes mandatory instead of optional.

This can prevent a lot of scams from happening.

For purchase value above \$5000, a 2nd Middleman field should appear for two Middlemans to be involved.

Why two middlemen? Because as I mentioned trust is a fragile thing, we can't place full trust on any online personnels.

This is not said to offend any honorable MM here.

It's that we need to see scams stop and Omni won't have to dedicate so much time to look at the DD sub forums and can focus on other stuffs.

Anyone, please feel free to improve my suggestion as you see fit and constructive.

Advice to buyers here on the forum:

Spoiler [\(Click to View\)](#)

I personally think that online trust is fragile, we cannot place our trust on the other user just because he is highly repped or a long-term forum member.

I have also encountered few such "high repped" people who have declined MM, they would be citing one of the reasons below:

- 1) "It's too much of a hassle."
- 2) "I'm trusted here, have been here longer than you and have more rep than you." (This would make some buyers feel guilty and trust them blindly)
- 3) "My method/mentorship is not going to work with a MM"

This is all despite me saying that I will cover all MM fees and show proof of me working on the method or else the MM still releases funds to them.

You should not buy from any seller (highly repped or not, it doesn't mean dung) if they refuse MM. Protect your own funds.

Skorp - October 27, 2023, 4:48 am

' Wrote:And if the value surpasses \$100, the Middleman field becomes mandatory instead of optional.

' Wrote:For purchase value above \$5000, a 2nd Middleman field should appear for two Middlemans to be involved.

When you say mandatory, who would these middlemen be. I don't think Omniscient is going to have a middleman official group. Also what happens if no one wants to be a middleman or the buyer doesn't want to pay MM fees, both of you two unfortunately end up not having the deal take place. Yikes.

' Wrote:we cannot place our trust on the other user just because he is highly repped
Popularity/reputation means nothing.

webdev77 - October 27, 2023, 5:01 am

You can use a middleman or not. Most people getting scammed are failing to do even any amount of basic research prior to dealing anyways and there's nothing you can do to fix stupid.

Cooligan - October 27, 2023, 7:34 am

I can never stress enough how important it is to use a trusted MM when dealing with people you don't know nor trust, and this is why. There are serial scammers in every marketplace, HF isn't special when it comes to that.

I doubt Omni will force members to use a MM since that would in a way be endorsing whatever MM they chose to use. Not directly endorsing of course, but almost by proxy. This thread would almost serve a better purpose in the Marketplace Discussions section as a PSA to new and old members alike. I think your point would get across better there, not to mention more marketplace-focused members would see it there rather than this section.

Also, no matter how much you push the service (I've been a MM on HF for over 10 years now so believe me I know how much this happens), people unfortunately still choose to deal without a MM either because they don't want to pay the MM fee, or they don't want a 3rd party being involved, etc etc etc..

I still think a solid middle-ground would be having a Middleman section on the forum. Nothing that's endorsed by HF whatsoever, but just a section where MM can offer their service thread so everyone

else would eventually get used to the fact that we have a MM section for you to quickly go into, find one you like, and begin your deal. Rather than having to ask around the community about who's trusted, who's online and available, what their username is, etc etc..

Navos - October 27, 2023, 7:53 am

(Oct 27, 2023 04:48 AM)Skorp Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) When you say mandatory, who would these middlemen be. I don't think Omniscient is going to have a middleman official group. Also what happens if no one wants to be a middleman or the buyer doesn't want to pay MM fees, both of you two unfortunately end up not having the deal take place. Yikes.

There are already a few established MMs here, I won't mention names in case I offend those that I missed out on naming.

Omni can consider setting up an official middleman group with them.

If the buyer doesn't want to pay a fee, they can choose MM who don't charge a fee.

(Oct 27, 2023 04:48 AM)Skorp Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Popularity/reputation means nothing. It is exactly what I meant.

(Oct 27, 2023 07:34 AM)Cooligan Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I can never stress enough how important it is to use a trusted MM when dealing with people you don't know nor trust, and this is why. There are serial scammers in every marketplace, HF isn't special when it comes to that.

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Thanks for the constructive feedback. We need more of this to refine the initial suggestion.

But do note that my suggestion on enforcing a middleman to be used is not for it to auto generate a MM's name into the field.

But rather, we have to give the user a choice to input a Middleman of his/her choice. They will fill up that field themselves.

Your suggestion on opening up a Middleman sub-forum section is great and I do agree it should be set up.

Regarding the fact that people refuse to use MM because of the fee, there are already a few established MMs here that are doing it for free.

So the only reason I can think of why people still refuse to use those MM is because they don't

know those MMs exist.

Hence, I do agree opening up a Middlemen sub-forum is a great idea to start with.

webdev77 - October 27, 2023, 9:23 am

(Oct 27, 2023 07:53 AM)Navos Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Omni can consider setting up an official middleman group with them.

That categorically isn't happening. See the sticky thread.

<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=5990007>

Quote:But do note that my suggestion on enforcing a middleman to be used is not for it to auto generate a MM's name into the field.

But rather, we have to give the user a choice to input a Middleman of his/her choice. They will fill up that field themselves.

Contracts already have a field for middlemen profile links.

Rionxee - October 27, 2023, 10:44 am

This really has always been an at-your-risk site, do your due diligence beforehand.

Biggy - October 27, 2023, 10:58 am

Unfortunately, we're never going to solve the issue of "scamming" 100%. The middleman just as easily could also perform the scam.

However, I believe Omniscient has done a fantastic job at putting defenses in place to help users avoid being scammed on HF. We have the contract system, a stickied thread in the marketplace with suggested middleman, and even a welcoming PM explaining some of these things.

It's really important that a user does their due diligence in deals. Some responsibility has to be placed on the individual for choosing not to have someone in place to be a middleman. They are taking a risk in these transactions and allowing themselves the risk of a loss. HF cannot step into every deal and essentially attempt to control the transaction, I think this would frustrate more users than anything, and they'll somehow find a way around using a "required" middleman anyway, and then still blame HF for them getting scammed. We have a lot of measures in place right now, including scammers being closed when found guilty of said some. Take a look at the deal disputes and see how many members have been closed by Omniscient.

Cooligan - October 27, 2023, 11:04 am

(Oct 27, 2023 09:23 AM)webdev77 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Contracts already have a field for middlemen profile links.

The one thing I hope that's eventually implemented is B-rating's for the middlemen that's part of the deal as well.

That'd be really nice to see happen. I can't remember what Omni has said about this specifically though, if anything that is. Not sure if it's been brought up to him directly.

StarZ - October 27, 2023, 11:15 am

I don't foresee this happening. As many above have stated deals are at risk. Use common sense, and don't risk anything you can't afford to lose. If that were to happen, scammers would try and circumvent it by just not using a contract. Also, putting a dollar amount limit seems arbitrary. I do think having the warning text be a bit more vibrant could be beneficial. Just make it more eye catching. It kinda just blends in imo.

IMMORTAL1TY - October 27, 2023, 5:26 pm

This would certainly be helpful for the marketplace but exit scams are not going to go away just by doing this, as they are prevalent on any type of community where currency is exchanged. This is "HackForums," after all. Nonetheless, a feature like this has my full support.

Navos - October 27, 2023, 6:22 pm

(Oct 27, 2023 10:47 AM)-Scrub Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Yeah let's force people into getting exit scammed by middle men

(Oct 27, 2023 10:58 AM)Biggy Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Unfortunately, we're never going to solve the issue of "scamming" 100%. The middleman just as easily could also perform the scam.

One of my suggestions was to involve more than one MM for purchase value above a certain amount.

If two reputable middleman somehow decides to get in cahoots and hug your \$1,000 and exit, it'd be a cartoon.

Can it happen? Of course.

We cannot eliminate scamming 100% but there are ways to minimize it.

It's not to say my suggestion is the solution, it's a raw idea that needs refining.

It would help a lot if everyone help to improve and add-on to the suggestion to make it something viable for the community.

freedom - October 27, 2023, 10:44 pm

(Oct 27, 2023 06:48 PM)-Scrub Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I see your idea but who is to deem the mm more trusted than the buyer or the seller? If you don't trust the deal then don't do the deal that goes for either party.

So, true there are dubious MM on here as well

Cooligan - October 27, 2023, 11:33 pm

(Oct 27, 2023 10:44 PM)freedom Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) So, true there are dubious MM on here as well

There are dubious people all over the internet, you should always approach any situation with slight caution just to keep yourself safe.

HF is like any other marketplace in terms of anyone, can do anything.

SIM-5423828 - October 27, 2023, 11:50 pm

Products that are sold on Hackforums should be reviewed by staff, or a Highly reputable member before they're sellable and rated on a scale of if they work and can be sold, or doesn't work and cant be sold. That would make the contract system sincere because it would mean every seller has sold a product that DOES what they say it will, with checks done every so often. Otherwise its up to the user to guess if the seller will defraud them, plus the user runs the risk of a middle man running which is the same reason Omni likely doesn't want to endorse mm by proxy.

Or;

Leave it as is and if you get scammed while using contracts, the scammer gets banned.

Omniscient - October 28, 2023, 11:52 am

We could do better in educating members that using MM is better. Also, I don't really like the flow of how MM works in Contracts. I don't think it's intuitive.

An official MM group would make sense. Possibly a deposit to be part of the group? Or levels of MM like Bronze (under \$100), Silver (under \$1000), Gold (under \$10k) and Platinum (Unlimited). Just a concept I'm thinking over.

I do take exception though with OP framing that exit-scamming is on the rise. It's always been part of HF a couple recent high-profile scams doesn't mean that the incidents are rising.

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(Oct 28, 2023 11:52 AM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) An official MM group would make sense. Possibly a deposit to be part of the group? Or levels of MM like Bronze (under \$100), Silver (under \$1000), Gold (under \$10k) and Platinum (Unlimited). Just a concept I'm thinking over.

I was about to suggest this too but one of the ex-staff said something about how it won't happen and I scraped the idea earlier.

What I had in mind was something similar, for official MMs to put in a collateral as part of the requirement of being HF's official MM.

Hence, the amount that new MMs of the official group can hold between buyers and sellers, will be the same amount as the collateral they put in.

For example, when the new MM puts in a collateral of \$1000, he can only MM deals up to \$1000

After a few successful deals from the MM, I think the MM levels like you mentioned could come into play nicely.

For example:

Bronze MMs can MM and hold funds up to 3x their collateral

Silver MMs will be 5x their collateral

Gold MMs will be 10x their collateral

The multiplier might need to be adjusted and a method to determine how they earn their levels should be tested too.

Also, the middleman applying to the official MM group should mention which field he is knowledgeable and experienced in.

For example, e-commerce or programming etc and etc.

So that buyers can choose the most appropriate middleman for the deal to enhance the efficiency of the MM/deal process since the MM would then know what works and what doesn't.

I would also like to thank you Omniscent for your time taken to read my thread and suggestion, it means a lot.

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Kind of true, I think it's because I've only recently increased my time on the DD forums due to my personal encounters with scammers.

Been really fixated on ideas to minimize scam incidents.

Divinity - October 29, 2023, 2:33 am

(Oct 28, 2023 06:44 PM)Navos Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I was about to suggest this too but one of the ex-staff said something about how it won't happen and I scraped the idea earlier.

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SIM-5423828 - October 29, 2023, 2:52 am

If all of the products sold via contract system on HF are tested and proved to be working products, or even simply meeting expectations as far as their often times paid for sales thread claims, before they can be sold...

Why bother with middle men? There remains little reason, the only way a user could be scammed would be if the seller altered the product that was ALREADY shown and demonstrated to staff as working in meeting the claims made via sales thread.

(HF could charge sellers for this feature, as certain tools would likely need to be retested, if the seller neglects to submit an updated demonstration within an allotted time frame)

All of the products on Hack forums are sold to be used on your own machine, Imho I feel like enforcing working, modernized, (high) quality and legitimate information guides / programs to be the only ones sold on this website is a bigger step than adding more steps to middlemen and contracts.

Thank you.

Navos - October 29, 2023, 3:20 am

(Oct 29, 2023 02:33 AM)Divinity Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Don't think they should ever be able to go x over their collateral. Would still make a (unlikely) exit scam possible if their deposit is 10k and they deal up to 100k, obviously they don't care they lost 10k when they ran with 90k.

The multiplier needs to be fine-tuned, possibly not as high as 10x.

And to reach higher multipliers, the MM needs to have a clean and long track record.

The purpose of this multiplier is to ensure there are at least 1 or 2 reputable MMs to hold funds for bigger values.

At this stage, I can't really think of a foolproof way for how the levels should be earned.

I'm sure with enough community input, it can be made into something viable,

(Oct 29, 2023 02:52 AM)superman6922 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) If all of the products sold via contract system on HF are tested and proved to be working products, or even simply meeting expectations as far as their often times paid for sales thread claims, before they can be sold...

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Thank you.

The middleman only hold the funds.

They don't get to see the product/method content. They only know what it is about, category-wise.

No leakage of the product will get to the MM. They won't be receiving free method/tools.

So I hope this clears your doubts from your first and last paragraph.

For your second paragraph, the middleman is there to ensure the seller will provide everything as intended from the sales thread or their private convo with the buyer.

It's to ensure the seller will deliver everything as provided.

While it may be a hassle for the seller, it protects the buyer to a certain degree.

When a seller is sincere on building his portfolio, this hassle is nothing more than a mere extra step.

Also, it's at this stage when the word 'Middleman' is mentioned, more than 50% of jackass scammers drop out.

When a middleman is involved, it reduces the scam rates significantly.

SIM-5423828 - October 29, 2023, 3:46 am

(Oct 29, 2023 03:20 AM)Navos Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The multiplier needs to be fine-tuned, possibly not as high as 10x.

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Also, it's at this stage when the word 'Middleman' is mentioned, more than 50% of jackass scammers drop out.

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IF the products are verified by STAFF and only sellable if they are actually what they purport to be. (Information is not leaked)

Middlemen aren't needed to hold funds if staff verify the legitimacy of products, other than niche situations requiring sensitive data, which should probably be done by people that know what they're doing anyway and probably wouldn't use middlemen.

Using your method; there is still the potential for a disagreement between user middleman and seller.

Alternatively, If the product is sold with black and white expectations there is literally no room for user error barring refusal or lack of support.

If the seller is sincere, they should have no problem submitting a working build for a staff member to test, or providing a video of their software or service in use and performing to the standard that they are selling the user on.

There is no need to add extra fees for the user, or add an extra vector for money leaving my wallet.

Stop the threat vector before it begins by STAFF verification of product legitimacy.

If we go to the starting stage, and make sure a product actually exists, the scammer won't even try to scam you because now it's impossible unless they want to build an application that only works temporarily? Only performing to the expectations of the sales thread temporarily?

Doesn't make much sense to even consider scamming if you've already built, proved and are in ownership of a project developed to be sold...

SIM-2273342 - October 29, 2023, 8:00 am

(Oct 28, 2023 11:52 AM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) We could do better in educating members that

using MM is better. Also, I don't really like the flow of how MM works in Contracts. I don't think it's intuitive.

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I do take exception though with OP framing that exit-scamming is on the rise. It's always been part of HF a couple recent high-profile scams doesn't mean that the incidents are rising.

Why not build in an escrow system like most freelance sites?

Add disclaimers in TOS about liability (or lack thereof) for the forum. Create wallet addresses for BTC/ETH and have the buyer deposit the funds into escrow. Funds will be cleared once both parties are satisfied.

MM groups are useless imo, people will just deposit and, depending on their level, can scam well-above their deposit amount. Those groups would only work if you required KYC or something privately to Omni where you kept record offline of each specific user and their details in the case of scamming. But, realistically, 99.9% of people on here wouldn't do the KYC for the MM group.

Omniscient - October 29, 2023, 8:28 am

(Oct 29, 2023 08:00 AM)SIM-2273342 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Why not build in an escrow system like most freelance sites?

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Really bto?

That ends you.

sdjksldsd - October 29, 2023, 8:34 am

(Oct 29, 2023 08:28 AM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Really bto?

That ends you.

So why was a genuine recommendation what got me closed? lol

Omniscient - October 29, 2023, 8:37 am

(Oct 29, 2023 08:34 AM)sdjksldsd Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) So why was a genuine recommendation what got me closed? lol

For those wondering...literally the ONLY sticky in this forum section....

<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=5990007>

Quote:We will not be having an official HF escrow service for deals.

Do not recommend it. You will be CLOSED if you do.

Cyam - October 29, 2023, 2:18 pm

(Oct 29, 2023 08:37 AM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) For those wondering...literally the ONLY sticky in this forum section....

<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=5990007>

I cringe at the thought of how many times you had to say HF won't do an escrow. ?

I feel sorry for the guy, but if he didn't learn that in 9 years of being on the forum, then I have no idea what to say lol

Factor8™ - November 3, 2023, 10:31 am

What if the MM scams and exits huh?

I got offers to sell my account 2 years back for some good amount because of the goodwill attached to my HF Account for the past 14 years almost.

Trust your instincts else don't deal onsite and online anywhere.

Omniscient - November 3, 2023, 11:07 am

(Nov 3, 2023 10:31 AM)Factor8™ Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) What if the MM scams and exits huh?Well that's why if I did this the Middleman would have to buy-in to the group and be approved for certain amounts. That should minimize exit scam appeal. If you have \$2500 deposit then scamming for \$1500 isn't gonna be worth it.

Immortal - November 5, 2023, 3:56 am

I do not support this, deals can get fucked up because middle men too. I say buy at your own risk.

Navos - November 5, 2023, 4:40 am

(Nov 5, 2023 04:56 AM)Immortal Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I do not support this, deals can get fucked up because middle men too. I say buy at your own risk.

With Omni's suggestion, the MM needs to pay a collateral to be a registered MM.

My further suggestion to build on it is that if a Middleman pays \$2500 collateral, he can only MM deals up to \$2500.

This way the MM has no reason to exit scam because the \$2500 collateral will then be used to compensate the victim.

Immortal - November 5, 2023, 4:48 am

(Nov 5, 2023 05:40 AM)Navos Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) With Omni's suggestion, the MM needs to pay a collateral to be a registered MM.

My further suggestion to build on it is that if a Middleman pays \$2500 collateral, he can only MM deals up to \$2500.

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1. How many people are going to want to mm and pay to do so.

2. Then it becomes a logistical nightmare so you have mm that's good for 2500 what about if you have a 4k deal does that mean you need to find a 6k mm or what if you have a 20k deal. I don't think we need mm I think we need proper member vetting and deal vetting by the customer.

Navos - November 5, 2023, 7:28 am

(Nov 5, 2023 05:48 AM)Immortal Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) 1. How many people are going to want to mm and pay to do so.

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Hence, one of the earlier suggestions was to have MM levels for certain established MMs who have done tons of successful deals, to be able to MM a bit more than their collateral. This will only be a few of them, like 1 or 2.

All these needs proper testing.

For your suggestion about member vetting, what's the idea behind it?
What do you have in mind for a vetting system?

Artisan - November 5, 2023, 8:25 am

(Nov 3, 2023 11:07 AM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Well that's why if I did this the Middleman would have to buy-in to the group and be approved for certain amounts. That should minimize exit scam appeal. If you have \$2500 deposit then scamming for \$1500 isn't gonna be worth it.

Could multi-sig contracts be added to this idea to improve safety?

Professor74 - November 5, 2023, 8:30 am

Pretty sure this is in the Suggestions, as a pinned comment. It's a legal reason as to why administration doesn't do it.

As per exit scams? We disrupted several high profile dark net markets over the past year. It's really amusing to see poor security be an issue.

Immortal - November 5, 2023, 9:01 am

(Nov 5, 2023 08:28 AM)Navos Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Hence, one of the earlier suggestions was to have MM levels for certain established MMs who have done tons of successful deals, to be able to MM a bit more than their collateral. This will only be a few of them, like 1 or 2.

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For your suggestion about member vetting, what's the idea behind it?
What do you have in mind for a vetting system?

Yes but then like I said it becomes a logistical nightmare to find a mm of the level you need thats online for your deal.

Im not saying dont use a mm im just saying it should not be forced.

as far as vetting, it will & won't work. I used to get scammed a lot, but now I vet each person before I do a deal with them If I don't think it's worth it then I don't deal with them and I haven't been scammed since. So I think that should be on you guys as Buyers and sellers.

I don't support the forcing of another set of hands in the deal. Ill say that till I'm blue in the face.

Hell I don't even use a mm 1/2 the time I just did a 4k deal no mm all fine.