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Headline: App-solute must-have programs  
Publication/Portal: The Star  
Date: 8 November 2018

Language: English  
Section: Nation  
Page: 13

# App-solute must-have programs

## Police: Smartphone apps a good way to block spam calls and scams

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**PETALING JAYA:** Install mobile applications that block spam calls and messages, police have advised smartphone users.

This can help prevent scammers such as the notorious Macau Scam syndicates, Bukit Aman said in a post on the Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM) Facebook page.

“We are sharing this post today as one of the means to prevent scammers from reaching the people,” the

post said.

The police asked whether users had tried anti-scanner apps such as Truecaller or WhosCall, urging those who had to discuss their merits.

Statistics from the Communications and Multimedia Ministry showed that telecommunications fraud cases involved an estimated RM162.6mil this year alone, with the Macau Scam being the most common.

A Macau Scam often starts with a phone call from someone pretending to be an officer from a bank, govern-

ment agency or debt collector.

The scammer will then claim that the potential victim owes money or has an unpaid fine, often with a very short window of less than an hour to settle the payment or face “dire consequences”.

The unsuspecting victims will then be asked to make payments to get them off the hook.

According to the PDRM Facebook posting, spam blocking apps typically work by gathering phone numbers that have been reported.

While there is no guarantee that

such apps can completely stop scammers, smartphone users can reduce the risks, the police said.

The post has received hundreds of responses.

The majority of people who commented agreed that such apps were useful. However, some raised privacy concerns because such apps may require users to allow access to their contact list.

“While call identifying apps allow users to obtain information about scammers and marketing people easily, it should be remembered

that the users’ details (such as their phone number and name) are collected and stored in a database.

“It may lead to data security concerns,” said Prasanth Ramachandran.

Facebook user Saza Lina thanked the police for the suggestion, adding: “Good information, maybe I can try the application.”

Users of the Android mobile operating system can download Truecaller and WhosCall from Google Play, while those on the iOS operating system can download the apps on Apple’s App Store.