# Virgin Media O2 launches AI character Daisy to tackle telephone scams



In an innovative approach to combat the rising tide of telephone scams, Virgin Media O2 has introduced "Daisy," an AI-generated virtual character designed to engage and frustrate scammers while alleviating the burden on unsuspecting victims. This initiative was officially launched on 14 November 2023 and has already led to over 1,000 interactions with fraudulent callers. Daisy, characterised as a tech-illiterate grandmother, wastes scammers' time by sharing irrelevant anecdotes about her fictional grandchildren, effectively turning the tables on those seeking to exploit individuals for financial gain.

Murray Mackenzie, the director of fraud at Virgin Media O2, explained the strategic intent behind Daisy's design, stating that the initiative aims to "outsmart and outmaneuver" scammers in their relentless efforts to deceive. By employing Daisy, Virgin Media O2 aims not only to occupy the time of these fraudulent callers but also to raise awareness about the tactics used by scammers and the importance of vigilance among consumers.

Daisy operates as a sophisticated AI language model, which translates spoken language to text, searches a comprehensive database for an appropriate response, and converts that text back into spoken language, all in a matter of seconds without human intervention. The character was meticulously developed using insights from real scam artists, enabling it to respond effectively to various scamming scenarios. To further enhance its reach, the company employed "number seeding," strategically listing Daisy's phone number on websites favoured by scammers to increase the likelihood of receiving calls.

Tackling the serious issue of fraud, Virgin Media O2’s statistics indicate that 69% of the British population has encountered scams, reflecting a significant concern among consumers. The company has claimed to have intercepted and blocked over £250 million (approximately $260 million) in suspected fraudulent transactions in the past year alone. Rob Orr, Chief Operating Officer at Virgin Media O2, emphasised the grave nature of the threat, describing the operation of organised fraud rings that continuously target individuals across the UK.

Although the UK faces considerable challenges with telecom related scams, the problem is echoed across the Atlantic. TrueCaller, a caller ID and phone blocking application, has reported that Americans receive an average of 2.9 billion spam calls each month – around eight per user. To combat this, several U.S. telecom companies are employing call screening technologies to identify scam calls, but, as yet, there is no equivalent to Daisy in the American market.

In a similar vein, Google recently introduced a new AI feature for its Pixel phone, designed to listen for patterns in conversations that are indicative of a scam. If the AI detects phrases commonly used in fraudulent calls, such as urgent requests for money or sensitive information like bank details, it alerts users, enhancing their ability to avoid scams.

As interest in AI automation grows across industries, the developments surrounding Daisy and similar technologies highlight a proactive approach toward fraud prevention. While consumers are urged to remain vigilant and cautious regarding unsolicited communication, companies like Virgin Media O2 are leveraging artificial intelligence in innovative ways to combat the troubling rise in telecommunications fraud.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.malwarebytes.com/blog/news/2024/11/ai-granny-daisy-takes-up-scammers-time-so-they-cant-bother-you> - Corroborates the introduction of Daisy, an AI-generated virtual character designed to engage and frustrate scammers, and details her operation and impact.
* <https://news.virginmediao2.co.uk/o2-unveils-daisy-the-ai-granny-wasting-scammers-time/> - Confirms the launch date of Daisy on 14 November 2023 and her role in wasting scammers' time with human-like conversations.
* <https://www.hindustantimes.com/trending/british-company-launches-ai-granny-that-chats-with-scammers-to-waste-their-time-101731917856250.html> - Supports the description of Daisy as a tech-illiterate grandmother and her method of engaging scammers with irrelevant anecdotes.
* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ai-grandma-daisy-uk-anti-fraud-scammers-virgin-media-o2/> - Details Murray Mackenzie's statement on the strategic intent behind Daisy's design and her ability to outsmart scammers.
* <https://www.eweek.com/news/ai-granny-fights-phone-scammers/> - Explains the sophisticated AI language model used by Daisy and her development with insights from real scam artists.
* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ai-grandma-daisy-uk-anti-fraud-scammers-virgin-media-o2/> - Provides statistics on the prevalence of scams in the UK, including the 69% of the British population that has encountered scams.
* <https://news.virginmediao2.co.uk/o2-unveils-daisy-the-ai-granny-wasting-scammers-time/> - Mentions the interception and blocking of over £250 million in suspected fraudulent transactions by Virgin Media O2.
* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ai-grandma-daisy-uk-anti-fraud-scammers-virgin-media-o2/> - Discusses the problem of telecom-related scams in the US and the use of call screening technologies by U.S. telecom companies.
* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ai-grandma-daisy-uk-anti-fraud-scammers-virgin-media-o2/> - Details Google's new AI feature for its Pixel phone designed to detect scam patterns in conversations.
* <https://www.eweek.com/news/ai-granny-fights-phone-scammers/> - Highlights the proactive approach toward fraud prevention using AI automation, as seen in the development of Daisy.
* <https://news.virginmediao2.co.uk/o2-unveils-daisy-the-ai-granny-wasting-scammers-time/> - Urges consumers to remain vigilant and cautious regarding unsolicited communication, while companies leverage AI to combat telecommunications fraud.
* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ai-grandma-daisy-uk-anti-fraud-scammers-virgin-media-o2/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data