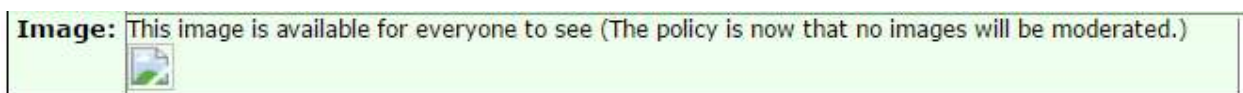


Overview

Scammers sometimes try to get around hotword filters by having a subject and description for one thing, but attaching an image for something else – often a laptop computer. This can make it harder to spot a scam. When a post raises any suspicions, here’s how to view the attached image.

First, does the offer include an image?

In ModTools -> Posts, search for the post id. If the post includes an image, the post details will include this:



If the “Image:” section isn’t present, the post does not include an image.

If there is an image, you won’t be able to see it here, unless the post is in a group that you moderate. This is due to a deficiency in ModTools, where the generated image URL is something like this (it includes the name of the group that you moderate, rather than the group that the offer was posted to):

https://groups.freecycle.org/group/EastonMA/post_thumb/60700988

Option 1: The Offer is Live

If the offer’s status is approved + open, you can view the image in the group’s “Offers” page. Go to <https://my.freecycle.org/home/groups> and in “Find other groups” search for the name of the group that the offer was posted to. Then click the “Go to group page” button for the appropriate group, and open the “Offers” tab. If it’s not a recent offer, or it’s a busy group, you can use “Search Posts” to find the offer. Click the offer’s subject, or “See details” to view an image thumbnail. Click the thumbnail to see the full-sized image, which will likely be sideways if it came from a smartphone.

Option 2: The offer is Not Live

This option actually works whether the post is live or not; it's just a bit more work.

In your browser's address bar, construct a URL as follows. Start with

https://groups.freecycle.org/group/xxxxxxx/post_image/nnnnnnn

Replace "xxxxxxx" with the name of the group the offer was posted to, and "nnnnnnn" with the post id. The group name can often be guessed: in the UK it's usually something like "BristolUK" and in the US it's usually like "ManchesterNH". Some group names look like "Freecycle_LondonON" or "LondonOHFreecycle". If you're not sure, you can find the name by opening the group's landing page, as with option 1, and examining the URL:

`https://groups.freecycle.org/group/MarlboroughMA/posts/all`

Notes

Something scammers sometimes do is grab an image from the web and attach it to their offer. This can often be spotted by doing a reverse image search. For example, in Chrome I open the image using one of the above options, then right-click on the image and select "Search Google for image." If you find an identical image from a 2013 blog post, something might be amiss – raise one eyebrow, mutter "Hmmm..." and continue your investigation.