

The balance on their website is not your money

"Their platform shows my account is worth \$180,000. Isn't that mine?"

No. A number displayed on a website is a database entry that the website's owner types and can change. It is a claim about money, not money. Until you have withdrawn it to somewhere you control, treat it as zero.

What you are actually looking at

When a platform shows you a balance, your browser is displaying a number that their server sent it. That number lives in their database. They decide what it says. Nothing about showing you \$180,000 obliges anyone to give you \$180,000, and nothing about it means \$180,000 exists anywhere.

This is different from your bank. When your bank shows a balance, that figure is backed by a regulated institution, deposit insurance, an examiner who inspects the books, and a legal obligation to honour your withdrawal. A trading website registered three months ago has none of those things. The screen looks the same. Everything behind it is different.

Why the number usually goes up

In a relationship-led investment fraud, the displayed balance rises steadily and impressively, because a rising number is what keeps you depositing. It frequently includes a small successful withdrawal early on — a few hundred dollars paid back to you — because that single real payment is what converts scepticism into trust. That payment is a marketing cost. It is paid out of your own deposit.

The number goes up because someone chose the growth rate. Some of these platforms let the operator set it per victim from an admin panel.

The only test that means anything

Withdraw. Not all of it — a small amount, all the way out, to a bank account or a wallet you control, with no new conditions attached. If that works cleanly and repeatedly, you have learned something real. If it does not, you have your answer, and the answer does not change no matter how much more you deposit.

A platform that shows a balance but blocks withdrawal behind a fee, a tax, an insurance premium, a margin top-up, or a verification deposit has already told you what it is. Each payment produces a new condition, because the payment is the product.

How this gets used against people

Every pig-butcherer and fake-platform fraud runs on this single misunderstanding. The screen is the whole product. Everything else — the app, the charts, the account manager, the customer service — exists to make the number credible.

What you can check yourself

- Withdraw a small amount to an account you control, before sending anything more.
- If a fee is demanded to release a withdrawal, stop. Real platforms deduct fees from the balance; they do not ask you to wire more money in.
- Ask yourself who would sue whom, in which court, if the number turned out to be false.

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