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## Industry stung by Cannes hotel scams

18 May, 2013 | By Andreas Wiseman

**EXCLUSIVE:** Companies lose thousands in the annual Cannes accommodation scams.

A number of companies at the Cannes Marche this year have been stung for thousands of euros by fraudulent online accommodation services.

One outfit with a film in Directors' Fortnight lost thousands and had to relocate incoming talent when the hotel bookings they had made via an online service turned out to be a sham.

UK, French, Italian and Indian companies have all been subject to scams this year. At least two of the companies claim to have been stung by a company called Concierge Plus Group, who were unavailable for comment when contacted by Screen.

"We received the usual barrage of accommodation emails before the market and were tapped for time so had to go with one of them," explained one of the stung companies. "We spoke to an English-speaking man called Chris Robson at Concierge Plus Group who booked us some hotel rooms for our attending talent. When I went to the hotel in Cannes they had no record of our booking. I called the company again and they promised to rebook us in another hotel. That hotel had no record of the booking either. Now we can't get through to the company."

"They are never available the first time you call them," the exec continued. "There was no delay or echo on the phone. I wouldn't be surprised if it wasn't France I was calling. I get the impression this is a big operation."

Bruno Draillard, owner of Cannes Accomodation and president of Cannes Rentals Certification, an alliance of legitimate accommodation outlets, told Screen that there were around eight online companies he knew to be sham operators: "They are ghosts. We can't catch them," he told Screen.

"The companies' staff, who often work remotely, are often unaware of their employers' fraudulent activities," he continued.

Draillard recommended that all industry refer to the list of agencies sanctioned by Cannes Rentals Certification when booking accommodation: <http://www.cannes-rentals-certification.com/fr/liste-des-membres.html>

The Cannes tourism office was unavailable for comment.

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