

How Consumers Can Keep Safe From Online Scams This Christmas

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Cybersecurity company, BullGuard (<http://www.bullguard.com/>), offers seven top tips to help shoppers identify and defeat emerging online scams during the Christmas shopping period

LONDON, DECEMBER 11, 2020 — During the pandemic, online shopping has grown enormously, and cybercriminals have been quick to exploit this. With Christmas nearly upon us, scams are ramping up, with criminals' prime targets including those buying electronic goods - such as smartphones, the new PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X, as well as bicycles and branded goods. Scams that steal personal data are also picking up the pace as cybercriminals seek to siphon personal information such as payment card data and email addresses to be used for identity fraud.

To help keep consumers safe when shopping online, cybersecurity company, BullGuard (<http://www.bullguard.com/>), outlines seven top scams, how to spot them and how to ensure you don't become a victim of fraud this Christmas.

Counterfeit goods - The internet is awash with fake goods. One of the main tell-tale signs is if the product is suspiciously cheap. However, higher-quality counterfeits can be more expensive. For instance, genuine Jordan Four trainers can retail for up to several hundred pounds. 'Good quality' Jordan Four counterfeits are sold for £60 to £70 and upwards leading the buyer into mistakenly thinking they have bagged a bargain. When shopping online, don't be fooled by low prices for expensive goods and stick to reputable websites when making online purchases.

Purchase scams - You can often pick up a bargain at an online marketplace or auction website. But you can also be defrauded. The basic ploy is simple; you part with your money but don't receive the items you paid for. Item details and photos, often copied from a real seller's listing, will look very real but the low price will be too good to be true. If a seller, or buyer, tries to persuade you to go outside the website's usual process or payment methods, it's a big red flag. When buying or selling on a website that offers protections to buyers and sellers, take advantage of it.

Christmas e-cards - Scam Christmas e-cards contain malicious software hidden in animations, pictures, videos, or a link to a hacker-controlled website. Be wary of emails that push you in the direction of e-cards and if you receive a suspicious e-mail, don't open it, don't click any links, and don't download any attachments. If malware is downloaded it is likely to be a banking Trojan or a form of spyware, both of which are designed to steal your sensitive data. Make sure you are using good antivirus software to detect malware.

Fake websites - How do you identify fake websites? The first thing to look for is the <https://> at the beginning of the address. The S in <https://> stands for 'secure' and indicates that the website uses encryption to transfer data, protecting it from hackers. You might also notice a padlock before the <https://> which also means the website can be trusted. If a website uses <http://> (no S), it doesn't mean that a website is a scam, but you shouldn't make payments over it. Another thing to look out for is poor grammar. Fake websites are also unlikely to have Help and Contact pages.

Emails that urge quick action - Phishing emails are stock tools for cyber-villains and during the Christmas period you may have quite a few landing in your inbox that offer discounts, products and services, and even parcel deliveries. The goal of these phishing emails is usually to harvest your personal data for identity fraud. If they urge quick action, this is a strong sign that it's a scam. Be patient and don't respond to pressure because cybercriminals are hoping you will reveal personal information such as payment card details, name and address, and so on.

Gift card scams - Scam Christmas gift cards are usually promoted via social media networks, like Facebook or Twitter, and claim to offer exclusive deals such as an Amazon gift card that gives the holder discounts. However, scammers are looking to steal your personal information. How can you avoid falling victim to a gift card scam? Don't click suspicious links on social media websites, even when a 'special offer' comes from a friend, and don't complete online surveys that ask for your personal information.

Fake charities - The season of goodwill presents opportunities for scammers who either create bogus charities and appeal for donations through a website or misuse a charity's name and appeal on their behalf. If in doubt about a charity, simply avoid it or check with the Charities Commission website where you can find full details of every registered charity within seconds by using the search tool.

Paul Lipman, CEO at cybersecurity company, BullGuard, said: "The cost of online fraud tends to spiral upwards every year. In the wake of the pandemic and lockdowns, this year, more people than ever are expected to be shopping online. With Christmas on the near horizon, we can expect even more fraudulent activity than usual. Thankfully, if you know what to look for, online scams can be easy to identify and avoid."

About BullGuard

BullGuard is an award-winning cybersecurity company focused on providing the consumer and small business markets with the confidence to use the internet in absolute safety. We make it simple for users to protect their data, identity and privacy – at home, in the office and on the go. The BullGuard product portfolio extends to PC, Mac, tablet and smartphone protection, and features a comprehensive product suite, including internet security, mobile security, identity protection, an easy-to-use VPN with military-grade encryption, and BullGuard Small Office Security, a dedicated, cloud-managed endpoint service designed specifically for small offices. BullGuard released the world's first IoT vulnerability scanner, real-time Home Network Scanner and unique Game Booster delivering the most secure and optimized gaming experience for PC Gamers. Today, BullGuard continues to lead the cybersecurity industry in providing innovations.

BullGuard has an unmatched channel focus. Our total commitment to channel partners is evident with our industry-leading Advantage Partner Program and unrivaled revenue share scheme, which has made BullGuard the channel's favorite endpoint security vendor, consistently recognized by prestigious industry awards.

All BullGuard customers and partners enjoy expert live, 24/7 customer support and a no-logs policy. Follow us on Twitter @BullGuard (<https://twitter.com/BullGuard>), like us on Facebook at BullGuard (<https://www.facebook.com/BullGuard/?fref=ts>), or learn more at www.bullguard.com.

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