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Amazon targets fake review fraudsters on social media

A graphic of a mobile phone with a social media network pulled up on the screen and a padlock alongside the phone.

Amazon today filed legal action against the administrators of more than 10,000 Facebook groups that attempt to orchestrate fake reviews on Amazon in exchange for money or free products. These groups are set up to recruit individuals willing to post incentivized and misleading reviews on Amazon's stores in the U.S., the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Japan.

Amazon smile logo

The fraudsters behind such groups solicit fake reviews for hundreds of products available for sale on Amazon, including car stereos and camera tripods. One of the groups identified in the lawsuit is "Amazon Product Review," which had more than 43,000 members until Meta took down the group earlier this year. Amazon's investigations revealed that the group's administrators attempted to hide their activity and evade Facebook's detection, in part by obfuscating letters from problematic phrases.

Amazon was a pioneer of product reviews, having introduced them in 1995 to help customers make more informed shopping decisions. The company aims to ensure every review that appears in its stores is trustworthy and reflects an actual customer experience. Amazon's expert investigators use industry-leading tools to detect and block fake reviews. As a result, Amazon proactively stopped more than 200 million suspected fake reviews in 2020 alone.

Today's legal action is the latest step by Amazon aimed at stopping fraudsters who attempt to post fake reviews in Amazon's stores. In the past year, legal action from Amazon has shut down multiple major review brokers targeting customers in the U.S., the UK, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain.

However, the nefarious business of brokering fake reviews remains an industry-wide problem, and civil litigation is only one step. Permanently ridding fake reviews across retail, travel, and other sectors will require greater public-private partnership, including collaboration between the affected companies, social media sites, and law enforcement, all focused on a goal of greater consumer protection. Amazon remains eager to continue to partner with all the relevant stakeholders to achieve that mutual goal.

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