



Scammers Don't Take a Holiday: Netsafe's 2024 Guide to Protecting Your Summer Shopping

Netsafe warns New Zealanders to stay alert as online shopping scams build over the summer months

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As summer heats up and Kiwis dive into pre and post-Christmas sales, Netsafe is urging caution with online shopping scams expected to exploit the hunt for seasonal bargains. Scammers are not taking a holiday, and with evolving tactics, they're targeting shoppers like never before.

"Scammers have become experts at blending in with the summer sales frenzy. While you're hunting for a good deal, they're hunting for your personal details and money," says Netsafe CEO Brent Carey. "We're seeing a new breed of scams that are more sophisticated and harder to spot."

2024: The Year of the Online Shopping Scam

According to the State of the Scams Report 2024, conducted by Netsafe and the Global Anti-Scam Alliance (GASA), scams are draining billions from Kiwis' savings with total losses surpassing \$2.3 billion in 2024. It highlighted online shopping scams as most prevalent and surpassing identity fraud as the number one scam type.

Online Shopping Scam Reports to Netsafe typically spike in the summer months as holiday shoppers are lured into fake deals during the peak of the online sales season.

So, what is new in 2024? Here are the top trends Netsafe is tracking:

- **Social Media Shopping Scams:** Scammers are targeting platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, using fake ads for high-demand products at "too-good-to-be-true" prices.
- **Fake Brand Impersonation:** Pop-up websites are increasingly sophisticated, imitating trusted brands with fake sales, promotions, and even tracking systems that look real but are designed to steal your information.
- **AI-Powered Chatbots:** Some fraudulent websites now use AI to mimic customer service reps, tricking shoppers into believing they are speaking with real companies.
- **Marketplace Missteps:** Scams on platforms like Facebook Marketplace are present, with fake listings for hot-ticket items like electronics and toys and unwanted Christmas presents.

Netsafe's Top Tips to Outsmart Online Scammers

Netsafe has its Scams hub to help Kiwis shop smarter, spot scams faster, and stay safer:

1. **Scam Scan It Before You Click:** Use Netsafe's checknetsafe.nz Scam Scanner tool to double-check links, and websites to see if a site or url has been reported as a scam



2. **Trust Verified Retailers:** Always visit known and trusted websites directly. If you're unsure, Google the store and read independent reviews before purchasing.
3. **Be Cautious with Payment Methods:** Stick to secure payment options like credit cards, PayPal, or virtual cards.
4. **"Wait a Sec — Could This Be Fake?":** Modern scams are designed to catch you off guard and make you act before you think. By taking just a moment to ask yourself, "Could this be fake?", you can spot the signs of a scam and protect yourself.
5. **Check Your Banking Activity Regularly:** Keep a close eye on your bank and credit card activity. Quick detection of fraud can limit your losses.
6. **Do a Digital stocktake:** Use the summer holidays to reevaluate your social media presence. Consider your privacy and security settings and friends and followers. Are you sharing the right amount of information with the right people at the right time?

Netsafe Scams Helpline: Here to Help

Netsafe's helpline is available every day except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day and complaints can also be made anytime online at www.Netsafe.org.nz/report.

"Scammers may be clever, but by arming yourself with the right tools and knowledge, you can outsmart them," Carey says. "Stay alert, use the resources available, and keep your holiday shopping scam-free."

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About Netsafe

Netsafe is an independent non-profit organisation supporting people in Aotearoa to have safe and positive online experiences. We keep people of all ages safe online by providing free support, advice, and education. Visit netsafe.org.nz for free resources or to report incidents of online harm.