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# Fake online shops: Fraud in the run-up to Christmas

**For many people, Christmas is a time full of joy; for giving and celebrating. Yet while all the streets are lit up with festive decorations and online shops are full of special offers, there is a danger lurking in digital space often easily overlooked in the bustle of year-end shopping: Fake online shops trying to scam gullible customers.**

The run-up to Christmas always means a very busy period for retailers. Many people are looking for the perfect present and are therefore more prepared to buy from unknown online shops. Fraudsters systematically abuse these increased shopping volumes, the Christmas rush and all those tempting offers.

Fake online shops frequently use attractive deals which just seem too good to be true. But there are several indicators pointing to the fact a shop is fake:

- **Prices are too low:** Offers are far lower than market prices.
- **Ambiguous websites:** Does the website have a transparent design? Are their T&Cs and contact details (address, telephone number, e-mail etc.) stated on their site? Is it a Swiss vendor? Use search engines to look for reviews of any vendor.
- **Non-secure payment methods:** Fraudulent sites often allow prepayments only or don't use any standard, officially recognised payment providers.
- **Non-secure transmission of confidential data:** In the process, data entered (passwords, credit card details etc.) are not transmitted in encrypted form. You can read up on how to recognise a secure connection [here](https://www.ebas.ch/en/checking-certificates/) (<https://www.ebas.ch/en/checking-certificates/>).
- **Hidden malware:** Using [drive-by downloads](https://www.ebas.ch/en/drive-by-download/) (<https://www.ebas.ch/en/drive-by-download/>) can result in you downloading malware by simply visiting an infected website. Make sure your devices are well protected by consulting our [“5 steps for your digital security”](https://www.ebas.ch/en/5-steps-for-your-digital-security/) (<https://www.ebas.ch/en/5-steps-for-your-digital-security/>).

The Christmas season should be one filled with happiness and joy, not with scams and disappointment. Please do stay careful when shopping online. Just a little bit of caution and research can help make sure that your holiday season will be cheerful and safe.

Further information can be found on the [Wegweiser Online-Shopping](https://www.e-commerce-guide.admin.ch/e-commerce/de/home.html) (<https://www.e-commerce-guide.admin.ch/e-commerce/de/home.html>) (Online Shopping Guide) of the Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaft SECO.