

18.06.2025

# Small ad phishing

**Online shopping and small ads have long since become part of everyday life. But where there's seemingly tempting deals, there might just be scammers lurking just around the corner, too. Protect yourself!**

Criminals usually react straight after your ad has been published. They pretend to be potential buyers and suggest handling payment and collection of goods via some purported courier service (for instance, the Post Office). The next step involves sending sellers a link to a fake website asking them to enter their credit card information or e-banking access credentials.

Instead of a payment, what victims receive instead is a bitter awakening: Their credit card has been misused, quite often involving some horrendously expensive transactions abroad. Some cases may even involve identity theft.

Swiss platforms particularly affected by small ad phishing are for instance tutti.ch or anibis.ch.

## Cases have sharply increased

As per the Bundesamt für Cybersicherheit (BACS), reported cases have increased five-fold over the last year – from less than 50 to over 250 cases a month. Attacks are professionally organised, with fake websites hard to distinguish from the real thing.

## Security measures when using small ad platforms

- **Don't click on any links or open any QR codes** you receive via a messenger service or by e-mail – particularly so if they involve purported payments.
- **Don't enter any sensitive data** – especially if credit card details, e-banking access credentials or passport copies are involved.
- **Only ever communicate via the platform itself** – don't accept switching to messenger services such as WhatsApp or text messages.
- **Only ship goods once payment has been received** – payment confirmations received via messenger services or e-mail could be fake.
- **Critically review unusual offers** – for instance if someone would like to pay straight away or would like to offer a lot more money than asked for.

Small ad phishing is no longer the exception – but part of everyday life. The more professional a criminal approach, the more important it is that you are aware. Protect yourself by taking the above security measures.

[Link to the Bundesamt für Cybersicherheit \(BACS\) article \(https://www.ncsc.admin.ch/ncsc/en/home/aktuell/im-fokus/2025/wochenrueckblick\\_14.html\)](https://www.ncsc.admin.ch/ncsc/en/home/aktuell/im-fokus/2025/wochenrueckblick_14.html)