

Facebook and eBay pledge to combat trading in fake reviews

In a win for online shoppers, Facebook and eBay have signed up to agreements to better identify, investigate and respond to fake and misleading reviews after the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) told them to address this issue.

More than three-quarters of people are influenced by reviews when they shop online, and billions of pounds are spent every year based on write-ups of products or services. Fake and misleading reviews are illegal under consumer protection law. Websites have a responsibility to ensure that this unlawful and harmful content isn't advertised or sold through their platforms.

In response to the CMA highlighting its concerns about the trade of fake and misleading reviews in the summer, Facebook has removed 188 groups and disabled 24 user accounts, and eBay has permanently banned 140 users.

Both organisations have also pledged to put measures in place that will help prevent this type of content from appearing in the future. As part of this, Facebook has agreed to introduce more robust systems to detect and remove such content. eBay has improved its existing filters to better identify and block listings for the sale or trade of online reviews.

During a further sweep of relevant platforms the CMA also highlighted new examples of fake and misleading reviews for sale via Instagram, and reported these to Facebook which operates Instagram. Facebook has committed to investigate the issue. The CMA will be seeking a commitment from Facebook to take action to tackle these further issues.

Andrea Coscelli, CMA Chief Executive, said:

Fake reviews are really damaging to shoppers and businesses alike. Millions of people base their shopping decisions on reviews, and if these are misleading or untrue, then shoppers could end up being misled into buying something that isn't right for them – leaving businesses who play by the rules missing out.

We're pleased that Facebook and eBay are doing the right thing by committing to tackle this problem and helping to keep their sites free from posts selling fake reviews.

This CMA action is part of a wider programme of work tackling fake and misleading online reviews, which will include looking into the role of review sites.

The CMA is not alleging that Facebook or eBay are intentionally allowing this content to appear on their websites and is pleased that both companies have

fully co-operated.

Notes to Editors

1. The [Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008](#) (CPRs) contain a general prohibition on unfair commercial practices, requiring traders to exercise professional diligence towards consumers. They also prohibit commercial practices that are misleading or aggressive and set out 31 'banned practices' which will be unfair in all circumstances, regardless of their effect on consumers. For example, it will always be unfair where traders falsely claim or create the impression that they are not acting for their business purposes, or where they falsely represent themselves as a consumer.
2. Data on the number of people who use online reviews is available in [Ofcom's Adults' media use and attitudes report, 2017](#)
3. Information about the CMA's previous work on online reviews and endorsements is available on the [online reviews and endorsements page](#)
4. All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk, or by phone on 020 3738 6460.
5. More information can be found on the [fake and misleading online reviews case page](#).