

How to Spot a Fake Review on Amazon

By Jason Cohen, pcmag.com, Updated May 12, 2021

Amazon and other e-commerce websites are flooded with bogus reviews. These online tools will help you identify a fake review and save you from choosing a product that's not worth your money.

As wonderful as the internet can be, it also lies to us every day. Fake reviews—seemingly legitimate assessments created by a seller or someone paid by them—are becoming harder to spot. With online shopping continuing to [skyrocket](#), fake reviews are big business, but they can end up costing you serious money.



In a survey of 1,000 US shoppers who planned to buy tech on [Amazon Prime Day](#) last year, only 16% of respondents were very confident they could detect fake Amazon product reviews; 24% were confident they could do it. Most—33%—were somewhat confident they could suss out bogus write-ups; the rest were not confident or not at all confident they could pick out the fakes.



Why is this important? In that same survey, 78% of people said Amazon product reviews play a big role in their purchase decisions. If we can't trust these online reviews—and the recent discovery that over 200,000 people were involved in a [fake reviews scheme](#) with third-party Amazon vendors suggests we cannot—how are we supposed to decide what to buy?

We would, of course, recommend that you consult [our comprehensive reviews across multiple categories](#) before making a tech purchase. We review more than 2,000 tech products a year and have experts who know their markets inside and out. However, outside of that, there are a few telltale signs a review may not be genuine. And if you really can't tell them apart, you can turn to some helpful online tools to help clear things up.

What to Look For

Customer Review



★★★★★ Love it

Reviewed in the United States on September 9, 2019

[Color: Sandstone](#) | [Configuration: Echo Show 5](#) | **Verified Purchase**

Nice screen size

Helpful

Report abuse

Permalink

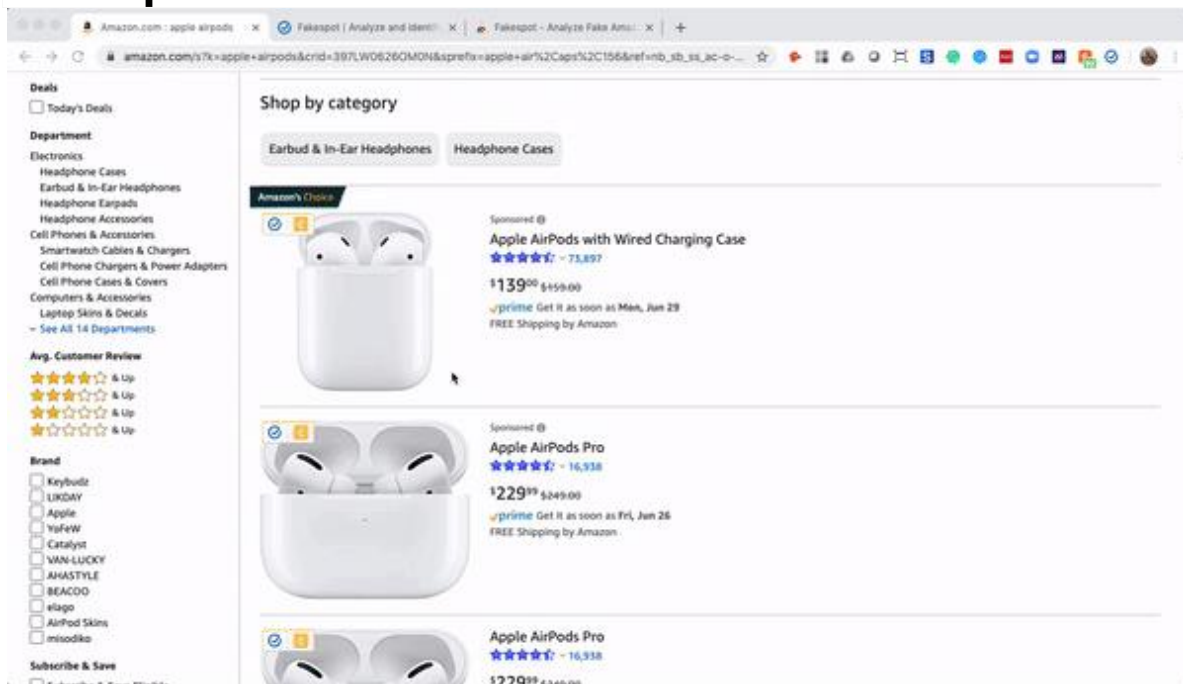
As you peruse Amazon, be on the lookout for reviews that actually provide context for the rating that is given, don't plug competitor products, and use natural-sounding language.

Reviews that are overly positive or negative without offering enough detail can be suspicious. Very brief five-star and one-star reviews, particularly if they're all posted on the same day, may also denote suspicious activity.

In order to combat fake reviews, Amazon adds a Verified Purchase label to reviews where the reviewer has actually purchased the product. However, this does not take into account schemes where reviewers are compensated for legitimate purchases.

If you happen across a review you believe is fake, you can report it to Amazon, and mark it for investigation and possible removal. Just click the **Report abuse** under the review.

Fakespot



Fakespot rates how reliable product pages are on Amazon, Best Buy, eBay, Sephora, and Walmart. Fakespot's algorithm looks at reviews and reviewers, analyzing language, previous reviews, and purchase history to determine trustworthiness.

Just copy the URL of the page in question and paste it into the **Fakespot Analyzer** to investigate a link. For this story, we'll test the listing for the **Amazon Echo Show 5**, a PCMag Editors' Choice award winner. Once the Amazon link is added, Fakespot spits out a grade that should tell us whether the page has reliable information.



Introducing Echo Show 5 – Compact smart display with Alexa - Charcoal

Analyzed on [amazon](#) 375,158 Total Reviews Amazon Devices [Share](#)



Company Review Grade: [Amazon](#)
2,924 Total Products

FAKESPOT REVIEW GRADE

C

What does this mean?

Fakespot Adjusted Rating

★★★★☆

Amazon Rating

★★★★☆

Highlights BETA

This feature is in BETA, meaning the algorithms used to provide

Quality

It works well with the sengled smart bulb.

Positive Review

Trusted Partner

Fakespot Verified Deals

It also filters out reviews considered fake in order to create a more reliable product rating. Amazon users have given this product a 4.7-star rating, but after running it through [Fakespot](#), the adjusted rating is closer to 3.5 stars. Fakespot also gave the URL a C review grade, signifying the reviews on this page may be at least somewhat unreliable.

A [Chrome extension](#) allows online shoppers to analyze web pages with the push of a button, as well as access seller ratings and other benefits. Fakespot is also available via [iOS](#) and [Android](#) apps, which analyze mobile web page URLs users plug in.

ReviewMeta

Echo Show 5 -- Smart display with Alexa – stay connected with video calling - Charcoal [More product info](#)

From Amazon



[View product on Amazon.com](#)

amazon Rating:

4.7



378,144 Ratings

21,023 Reviews

("Ratings" vs. "Reviews")



87% of potentially unnatural reviews removed (why?)

[View/Edit Adjustment](#)

[Jump to Report Card](#)

Adjusted Rating:

4.1



2,767 Reviews

[See Product Details](#)



Our extension is available for your browser!

See our Adjusted Rating without having to leave Amazon.

[+ ADD TO CHROME](#)

Paste an Amazon URL into the [ReviewMeta](#) search bar, and the website will eliminate reviews it deems unreliable and replace Amazon's aggregate rating with one from ReviewMeta. So our 4.7-star [test product](#) is cut down to 4.1 stars after 87% of potentially unnatural reviews are removed.

ReviewMeta provides a report card that evaluates certain criteria on a Pass, Fail, or Warn basis. There are also detailed breakdowns—complete with graphs—for the factors contributing to the adjusted rating. Keep in mind that this website can only process a product's first 10,000 reviews because Amazon hides all additional reviews from view.

This tool also offers the unique ability to tweak ReviewMeta's algorithm in order to weigh certain criteria more or less than the default configuration. After the website analyzes a page, click View/Edit Adjustment to go into the grading mechanics and adjust how categories are weighted.

Add the browser extension for [Chrome](#), [Firefox](#), or [Edge](#) to quickly analyze a web page and receive a Warn/Pass/Fail grade. Analyze pages from your phone with the [iOS](#) and [Android](#) apps.

TheReviewIndex

The screenshot displays the TheReviewIndex interface for an Amazon product. On the left is a navigation menu with icons for Overview, Review Summary, Spam, Specs, and Reco. The main content area features a product title: "Echo Show 5 stay connected and in touch with Alexa Charcoal". Below the title is a summary of review statistics: a score of 8.0/10, 998 total reviews, 0 old reviews, 17 unverified reviews, and a "PASS" spam test result. A "Review Analysis" section indicates 981 recent, verified reviews and includes a "Detailed Mode" toggle. A "DEVICE COMPATIBILITY" section shows a bar chart with a green segment for +69% and a red segment for -31%, with a search icon and "193" results. On the right, a product image shows the Echo Show 5 with the text "Introducing echo show 5 Alexa can show you things". Below the image are social media icons, a "Go To Store" button, and a "Yes FM RADIO" feature indicator.

[TheReviewIndex](#) is a simple online search tool focused on aggregating tech product ratings on Amazon, but it can still determine if a product's score has been boosted by fake reviews. [Chrome](#) and [Firefox](#) extensions that make the process easier.

Paste the URL into the site and TheReviewIndex breaks the product out into different categories based on the words it parsed from reviews. At the same time, TheReviewIndex runs a spam test to ensure that the reviews are authentic, providing a Pass/Fail grade at the end.

Looking at our [test product](#), The Review Index gave it an 8/10 score and a passing spam grade, but only analyzed the most recent 998 reviews. You can then read through pulled clips—both positive and negative—that fit under the different product categories, and view the factors that go into spam testing.