

# Warning for online bargain hunters this Christmas: Dont be scammed by SPAM

Internet bargain hunters should be wary of unsolicited e-mail offers and Web sites touting offers that seem too good to be true this Christmas holiday season to avoid becoming victims of scams, the Business Software Association of Australia has warned today, releasing the results of a global study on SPAM e-mail along with shopping tips for safe and secure online shopping.

More than a quarter of Australians are expected to shop online this holiday season, and many will be tempted by unsolicited e-mail touting unbelievable savings on well-known brands of commercial software. Be careful. The software programs may be a pirated version rather than a genuine product, said Jim Macnamara, Chairman of the Business Software Association of Australia (BSAA).

Consumers should be aware that the majority of these offers originate from unscrupulous vendors, some of whom are involved in other forms of illicit activity. Indeed, the largest number of SPAMs has been traced to an organized group operating out of Russia, said Mr Macnamara. International authorities are in the process of identifying and shutting them down.

Shopping online at well known auction sites is also a popular way of buying new and second hand goods, including software. But be careful, because even with checks carried out by auction sites, you run the risk of purchasing illegal software, said Mr Macnamara.

The BSAA is warning consumers and businesses about these holiday rip-offs and arming them with important information that will guide them in making sensible, educated purchase decisions, continued Mr Macnamara. If you plan to shop online this holiday season, our tips can help you protect yourself from SPAM scams.

The BSAA's top eight online shopping tips are as follows. Consumers can also visit [www.bsaa.com.au](http://www.bsaa.com.au) to download three free guides to online shopping, buying second hand software and purchasing at online auctions.

## SAFE ONLINE SHOPPING TIPS

1. Recognise SPAM and delete it dont reply.
2. Ask questions. If the offer sounds too good to be true it probably is! Deals that are considerably cheaper than street prices may not be good deals at all - it is likely to be illegal software.
3. Steer clear of compilations and back-ups. Compilations of software titles from different manufacturers, or backup copies, are a clear indication that the software is not legitimate.
4. Check out the dealer. If the online dealer seeking to sell you software isnt listed on that software manufacturers website, then beware
5. Do your homework. Look for a feedback section on the site and look for comments on the seller based on previous transactions.
6. Get the sellers address. If you cant find a physical address, then be suspicious.
7. Keep receipts. Print a copy of your order number and sales confirmation and keep them.
8. Report piracy. Buyers suspecting pirated or counterfeit software and/or fraud should contact the BSAA on 1800 021 143.

## Forrester Data Global Study

In the United States and five other countries (Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom), computer software tops the list of one of the most purchased items through spam, according to Forrester Data, whose online survey asked 1,000 Internet users in each of the six countries about their attitudes toward unsolicited email.

According to the study, although more than 90 percent of U.S. Internet users receive a variety of spam and only read about a fifth of it, about 21 percent of consumers admit to having purchased computer software through spam. Only apparel and jewelry rank slightly higher at 22 percent. The research findings also reveal that 40 percent of online consumers say software for sale via spam raises concerns about online security and exposure to a computer virus.

\* Spam is defined as unsolicited email that is sent to large numbers of people

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More information:

Toll-free hotline for public inquiries (anonymously if preferred): 1800 021 143

BSAA Web site: [www.bsaa.com.au](http://www.bsaa.com.au)

Note to Producers:

Broadcast quality audio grabs from Jim Macnamara are available at [www.mediagame.com.au](http://www.mediagame.com.au). If you would prefer to interview Jim Macnamara directly please contact Pru Quinlan on 0405 100 585

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The Business Software Association of Australia (BSAA) is affiliated with the Business Software Alliance (BSA), which operates globally in 65 countries.

BSAA members include Adobe, Apple, Autodesk, Borland, Macromedia, Microsoft and Symantec.

BSA ([www.bsa.org](http://www.bsa.org)) members develop the software, hardware and the technologies building electronic commerce. Principal issues include copyright protection, cyber security, trade, e-commerce and public policy initiatives that impact the Internet. BSA members include Adobe, Apple, Autodesk, Avid, Bentley Systems, Borland, Cisco Systems, CNC Software/Mastercam, Dell, Entrust, HP, IBM, Intel, Internet Security Systems, Intuit, Macromedia, McAfee, Inc., Microsoft, RSA Security, SolidWorks, Sybase, Symantec, UGS Corp. and VERITAS Software.

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