PRESS RELEASE

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Brits Risk a Christmas Con: Norton Warns Holiday Shortcuts Are Playing Into Scammers' Hands

Shoppers and Scammers Turn to AI and Social Media to Check Off Their Wish Lists

TEMPE, Ariz. and PRAGUE, Oct. 16 2025 – AI and social media are transforming holiday shopping in the UK but new research from Norton shows the same shortcuts shoppers love are exactly what scammers are exploiting. According to the 2025 Norton Cyber Safety Insights Report: Holiday Shopping, Brits are increasingly turning to social feeds and AI chatbots for inspiration, but with dodgy sellers, fake sites and scammy ads lurking in the mix, it's a recipe for festive fraud. Despite concern over AI-powered scams and shady sellers, two-thirds of UK millennials (66%) and Gen Z (63%) admit they are willing to take unusual, and often risky, steps to bag a high-demand gift.

Doomscrolling for Deals: Social Media and AI are Driving a Surge in Shopping Scams

Scrolling for gift ideas is increasingly becoming second nature. This year, nearly half (43%) of Brits plan to turn to social media to help find gift inspiration, up from 36% last year, with Gen Z (71%) and millennials (66%) leading the charge. And it doesn't stop at window shopping: four in ten (40%) have already bought holiday gifts straight from a social media ad. Unfortunately, according to a recent Gen Threat Report, these same platforms are ripe for scams: fake online shops and ads make up over 50% of all scams detected on social media.

Meanwhile, artificial intelligence is stepping into the role of Christmas helper. One-third (33%) of Brits plan to use tools like ChatGPT to generate gift ideas this year, nearly double last year's 18%. Millennials (55%) and Gen Z (50%) are the biggest adopters, with 34% of all UK consumers now planning to rely on AI to help them shop this holiday season. Despite nearly two-thirds (64%) reporting that they're worried about falling for an AI-generated shopping scam, almost half (45%) admit that the recommendations they receive from these AI tools enhance their shopping experience.

"From AI tools to social media ad clicks, people are leaning into convenience," said Leyla Bilge, Director of Scam Research at Norton. "But scammers are leaning in too, just like hiding a spare key under the doormat, the habits people underestimate are the very ones that make them most vulnerable."

More Than You Bargained For: Holiday Deals Can Come at a High Price

The holidays heighten urgency, and cybercriminals know it. When shoppers feel the pressure to snap up the season's must-have gifts before they sell out, it is easy to cut corners and ignore red flags. That urgency is exactly what cyber criminals rely on: more than a quarter of Brits (27%) admit that they take

more risks shopping online during the festive season than at other times of the year, up from 18% last year.

Younger generations are the most likely to push their luck: 2 in 3 millennials (66%) and Gen Z (63%) are willing to take unconventional, and oftentimes risky, steps to bag a high-demand gift. That might mean paying £40 more than the market price (18%), purchasing from unknown sellers or websites (11%), taking a chance on a stranger on social media (9%) or even settling for a counterfeit (8%). Chasing the season's must-haves often comes at a cost. Over a third of Brits (38%) admit they have wound up on a dodgy-looking website while trying to secure a trending gift. And for many, it doesn't stop there: nearly three in ten (28%) have even been targeted by a holiday scam. Of those, 42% actually fell victim, with half (50%) saying that the scam took place on social media.

"Scammers thrive on pressure, distraction, and emotional decision-making, and the holiday season delivers all three in spades," Bilge added. "Scammers aren't waiting for you to slip up. They're counting on you to be busy, stressed, and in a rush. And the moment you let your guard down, they're ready. Nowadays with the sophistication of scams, even if your guard is up, they're ready."

The 2025 Norton Cyber Safety Insights Report: Holiday Shopping reveals a clear trend: while technology is transforming holiday shopping for the better, it's also expanding the attack surface for scammers. From AI tools to social influence to lightning-fast deal culture, vigilance is more important than ever.

Norton 360 with AI Scam Detection, Norton Secure VPN, and Norton Mobile Security help protect shoppers by blocking fake websites and ads, spotting phishing attempts, and keeping personal and payment information safe this holiday season. For tips to help you and your loved ones shop smarter this holiday season, visit Norton.com and read the full report here: https://newsroom.gendigital.com/Norton-Cyber-Safety-Insights-Holiday-2025

About the 2025 Norton Cyber Safety Insights Report: Holiday
The study was conducted online within the United Kingdom by Dynata on behalf of Gen from July 24th to 12th August, 2025 among 1,000 adults ages 18 and older. Data are weighted where necessary by age, gender, and region, to be nationally representative.

About the Gen Threat Labs
Gen Threat Labs is the Cyber Safety research team within Gen, focused on uncovering and analyzing the latest digital threats and scams worldwide. Rooted in data, research, and technical expertise, the team identifies patterns and risks that shape the evolving cyber landscape. Their insights power the security technologies that protect people across Gen's portfolio of trusted brands, including Norton, Avast, LifeLock, and others.

About Norton
Norton is a leader in Cyber Safety, and part of Gen (NASDAQ: GEN), a global company dedicated to powering Digital Freedom with a family of trusted consumer brands. Norton empowers millions of individuals and families with award-winning protection for their devices, online privacy, and identity. Norton products and services are certified by independent testing organizations including AV-TEST, AV-Comparatives, and SE Labs. Norton is a founding member of the Coalition Against Stalkerware. Learn more at https://us.norton.com.