PRESS RELEASE

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Holiday Shortcuts Open the Door to Scams, Norton Warns

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

Auckland, Oct. 17, 2025 – AI and social media will be fueling this year's holiday shopping rush, but Norton research shows the same shortcuts shoppers love are exactly what scammers are exploiting. According to the 2025 Norton Cyber Safety Insights Report: Holiday shopping, money-saving shortcuts, urgency-driven decisions, and overconfidence online are leaving New Zealanders vulnerable. Despite concern over AI-powered scams and shady sellers, more than half of Kiwis (51%) say they have given away their personal information to receive a discount.

To help consumers prepare for the peak of the Christmas shopping rush, Norton is once again marking November 30th as Cyber Safety Sunday, the day before Cyber Monday, as a reminder to pause and get behaviors, devices, and expectations tuned up for a safer and smarter shopping season in the age of AI.

Holiday Helpers or Hustler Havens? How Social Media and AI are Fueling Risky Shopping

Today's shoppers are increasingly turning to platforms and tools that promise speed and simplicity. More than a third (31%) of Kiwis have made holiday purchases through social media ads, and platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, are becoming digital gift guides for 32% of holiday shoppers. 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 emerging as a new Christmas shopping assistant. Nearly a quarter (23%) of Kiwis plan to use tools like ChatGPT to generate gift ideas this year. But trust hasn't caught up with usage: well over half (57%) say they're worried about falling for an AI-generated shopping scam.

"Convenience is irresistible. When you combine that with too good to be true deals you have a recipe for shopping disaster," said Mark Gorrie, Managing Director APAC for Gen Digital. "Scammers are leaning into both, and that split second when you drop your guard, they win. You fall for fake e-shops, bogus social ads, and lose your personal and financial details, and your money."

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

The holidays heighten urgency, and cybercriminals know it. More than half of respondents say they have given their personal information to receive a discount, and Millennials are among the worst offenders at 65%. Younger generations make themselves especially vulnerable through other behaviors: 48% of Gen Z are willing to take unconventional and risky steps to get high-demand gifts. These include clicking questionable social ads (22%) and buying from strangers on social media (14%).

However, these actions can lead to serious consequences. Twenty-one percent of Kiwis say they've been targeted by a holiday shopping scam before, and 39% of those targeted actually fell victim.

“The holidays create perfect conditions for fraud – pressure to buy now, never ending ads, calls to action, and emotional choices,” Gorrie added. “Scammers count on that tiny window when you stop double-checking and your guard drops. That is when they strike. The level of sophistication in modern scams means even switched-on shoppers can be caught out.”

The 2025 Norton Cyber Safety Insights Report: Holiday 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-powered Scam Detection, Norton 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/image/NCSIRHolidayGlobalReport2025.pdf.

About the 2025 Norton Cyber Safety Insights Report: Holiday
The study was conducted online within New Zealand by Dynata on behalf of Gen from 24 July to 13 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.

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