

New Trend Micro Survey Shows Economic Strain and Overconfidence put Holiday Shoppers at Greater Risk of Online Scams

From job losses to rising costs, consumers are spending less, but risking more as they chase online deals too good to be true

DALLAS, November 19, 2025 – [Trend Micro Incorporated](#), a global leader in cybersecurity, today released its *Holidays, Scams, and AI* study, which surveyed over 6,500 consumers across six countries (United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Taiwan). The 2,100 U.S. participants revealed a worrying disconnect: people believe they can spot a scam, but many admit to already having been targeted by scammers. The findings come as consumers face mounting financial pressures, rising living costs, and a flood of AI-fueled scams that are increasingly difficult to detect.

A majority (56%) of Americans indicated that they are either very or extremely confident in their ability to spot a scam. Additionally, nearly half (43%) of Americans said they've already seen what they believed to be a scam promoting discounted prices for holiday gifts or travel this season. One-third (33%) of respondents reported that they had already seen an online advertisement, email, text message, social media post, or website related to holiday gifts or travel this year that was fraudulently impersonating a well-known brand.

But consumers' behavior tells a different story: 86% of U.S. respondents would consider buying a gift or booking travel from a seller they've never heard of because it was a very good price. Additionally, over half (54%) of respondents plan to spend more time looking for end of year holiday shopping and travel deals – widening the attack range for cybercriminals.

Lynette Owens, VP of Consumer Education & Marketing at Trend: "People are under real pressure this year: Consumers are working with tighter wallets, higher anxiety, and a false sense of digital confidence. Scammers know this and are using age-old manipulation tactics together with AI to exploit shoppers faster and more effectively than ever before, raising the urgency for consumers to fight back and protect themselves from scams."

Even as they appear increasingly vulnerable to scams, consumers are not increasingly cautious. Fewer Americans in 2025 (54%) reported being at least "moderately worried" about getting scammed compared to similar Trend research from 2024 (58%). Americans are also potentially at greater risk this year, with nearly a quarter (23%) reporting they had already been victims of an online scam in 2025, compared to 17% reporting the same in the 2024 study. Interestingly, 32% of those who earn at least \$150,000 a year report having been scammed this year, the highest income group surveyed. This suggests that while some groups may be looking harder for bargains online, everyone could be a target regardless of income.

The study also uncovered some wide differences by age. 70% of U.S. respondents aged 18-44 claim they feel very confident in being able to spot a scam, but the number drastically decreases with age, with only 36% of those aged 65+ saying the same. Moreover, younger groups are more likely to participate in risky online shopping behavior, with 54% of those aged 25-44 willing to purchase from a brand they had never heard of before, while only 24% of those aged 65+ say they would do the same.

The increasing prevalence of AI further complicates safe holiday shopping. Over half of U.S. respondents (52%) said they are definitely or are considering using AI technology (a tool, browser, and/or shopping assistant) to help them with holiday shopping this season. Additionally, a staggering 82% of consumers believe they will see AI generated images or videos online during the holiday season. Today's scammers are using AI to formulate multi-step, multi-channel, and hyper-personalized scams. This new generation of scams doesn't come as one-off messages. They unfold as stories designed to lure victims step-by-step.

To help quell this growing trend, Trend developed Scam Radar, a new feature within its [ScamCheck](#) tool, designed to proactively scan for scam signals across texts, calls, websites, and social media links. Instead of reacting after the fact, Scam Radar connects the dots in real time, issuing early alerts before consumers engage with the tactics employed by scammers. Trend also recently released a research paper titled ["Reimagining Fraud Operations: The Rise of AI-Powered Scam Assembly Lines"](#) that details how cybercriminals are using AI to make old scams faster, smarter, and more convincing than ever.

"While consumers see the upside of AI to help, AI is also being used to cause them harm. Scammers are employing it to develop sophisticated scams that take advantage of consumers who are looking for a bargain while under financial stress," said Owens. "It is increasingly difficult for even AI-savvy shoppers to detect fake products, websites, or advertisements, raising the urgency to use tools like Scam Check to fight back."

In addition to ScamCheck, Trend suggests several tips to empower consumers to fight scams this holiday season:

- Check before you click: Always verify deals in emails, social media posts, or text messages, especially if deals look too good to be true.
- Be wary of package delivery texts: 68% of U.S. respondents reported receiving scam delivery messages. Check directly with the seller for delivery status.
- Use trusted payment methods: Nearly a third (31%) of consumers have been asked to pay for gift or travel purchases with gift cards – a telltale sign of a scam.

- Use ScamCheck with Scam Radar: It proactively alerts users to scam patterns in real time.

This year, holiday scams are more convincing, more automated, and more personal than ever. But with the right awareness and tech tools, consumers can protect themselves, their loved ones, and their wallets.

The *Holidays, AI, and Scams* survey was conducted online from October 31 – November 10 among 6,536 consumers in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

To learn more about holiday scams, visit trendmicro.com.

About Trend Micro

Trend Micro, a global cybersecurity leader, helps make the world safe for exchanging digital information between people, governments, and enterprises. Trend leverages decades of security expertise and the power of AI to protect more than 500,000 enterprises and millions of individuals worldwide. As a leader in consumer cybersecurity and the fight against scams, Trend delivers industry-first and award-winning products to protect millions of consumers from modern online threats. With 7,000 employees across 70 countries, Trend Micro enables organizations to simplify and secure their connected world. Learn more at www.trendmicro.com.

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