



Online Marketplace Scams Target Both Buyers and Sellers

Whether you're looking for a houseplant, a coffee table or a new gaming console, online marketplaces can be great places to start. But be careful. Anonymous listings and virtual transactions are ripe for online marketplace scams, which can take a variety of forms.

You May Not Get What You Paid For

If you pay in advance for something you have not seen in person, the item may not arrive as advertised. In fact, it may not arrive at all. A picture of a cute puppy or designer jewelry is easy to post in a marketplace, but if you pay without knowing the seller personally or seeing the product, the seller can take your money and disappear.

Payment Type Matters

Pay attention to listings that insist on an unusual payment method, such as gift cards. Gift card numbers are hard to trace, so if you don't get what you paid for and the seller's profile has disappeared from the marketplace, it will be very difficult to track them down or get your money back. Also keep in mind that with many digital payment methods, once you send a payment it often can't be reversed, making it even more important that you know who you are dealing with and what you are buying.

Scams Targeting Sellers

While many people are aware of scams targeting buyers on marketplace sites, sellers can get scammed too. One tactic is for scammers to fake payment receipts or confirmations with an amount that's higher than the asking price. The supposed buyer may claim to have purchased a product above your listed price and request a refund without actually having placed an order.

Another marketplace scam involves a fake email appearing to be from Zelle®, claiming that a transaction cannot be completed until your Zelle® account is upgraded. In reality, the



scammer is tricking you into paying them for an upgrade that doesn't exist. Zelle® does not offer account upgrades and should only be used to send money to others you know and trust.

Neither S&T Bank nor Zelle® offers purchase protection for payments made with Zelle® – for example, if you do not receive the item you paid for, or the item is not as described or as you expected.

Warning Signs – What to Watch For

Unreasonably Low Prices

Sometimes an incredibly low price is **literally** too good to be true. In most instances, it's best to pass on this type of offer unless you can inspect the product in person and ensure its authenticity.

Sales Pressure

If the seller creates a sense of urgency by warning that the item won't last long or many others are interested, take your time and think it through. Creating urgency is a technique to get you to act on impulse instead of logic, and it could lead you to overlook something suspicious.

Fake Profiles

Keep an eye out for telltale signs of a false profile, like a generic profile picture, only one friend or connection, or a profile name that does not match the name or email address on the invoice.

Slow Down, Ask Questions

When it comes to making safe marketplace purchases, remember to slow down and ask questions. If you suspect suspicious activity, report the user to your marketplace platform.

To learn more, visit <https://www.stbank.com/zelle/>.

