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Amazon brings anti-counterfeiting tech to Europe, India

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Amazon is bringing Transparency outside the U.S. Image credit: Amazon

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Ecommerce giant Amazon is expanding its product serialization service in a concentrated effort to protect brands and consumers from counterfeits.

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Despite Amazon being extremely popular among consumers due to its accessibility and convenience, luxury brands have been reluctant to fully invest in the platform due to widespread counterfeit issues. By beginning to offer its Transparency service outside of the United States, Amazon is demonstrating its commitment to finding technological solutions to inauthentic goods.

"The program is a big step in anti-counterfeiting efforts by Amazon," said Rania Sedhom, founder/principal of [Sedhom Law Group](#), New York. "Transparency, if it performs as hoped, is a great tool because it can be utilized by both brands and consumers in tandem.

"Amazon has tried, and failed, to attract luxury brands to its platform," she said. "By launching Transparency in Europe, Amazon is likely courting the luxury brands that gave it the cold shoulder.

"Counterfeit products dilute brand presence and retrench a luxury brands' strive for excellence."

Transparency technology

Amazon's Transparency will now be available in France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, India and Canada. In the U.S. alone, more than 4,000 brands are already enrolled in the program.

Transparency creates a unique serial code that can be placed on every product a brand manufactures. When these items are ordered at an Amazon store, the codes are scanned to confirm only authentic products are sold.



France's Louis Vuitton is often the target of counterfeiters. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

Consumers can also scan codes and verify product authenticity through a mobile application.

In addition to ensuring authenticity, brands can include the manufacturing date and place and other details within their Transparency serial numbers.

According to Amazon, enlisted brands have already generated more than 300 million unique codes. This year alone, the system has prevented more than 250,000 fake versions of Transparency-enabled products from reaching shoppers.

Transparency is part of Amazon's Project Zero, which aims to completely eliminate counterfeits through solutions powered by technology and machine learning.

Through Project Zero, brand partners provide Amazon with intellectual property such as logos and trademarks, and an automated process scans the product listings looking for potential fakes. Brand partners can now remove suspect Amazon listings themselves, while Amazon uses the data from the removed product listings to help guide its own recognition of counterfeits ([see story](#)).

Fighting fakes

While Amazon and others are leveraging technology in their fight against faux goods, counterfeiters are also using technology to improve the quality of false products.

Luxury fashion brands and secondhand retailers need to be as vigilant as they can be in regards to fake and counterfeit goods. "The State of the Fake" report by handbag authentication platform Entrupy reveals that while Louis Vuitton is one of the most frequently authenticated brands, it is also the most often duped.

Secondhand sellers are taking more accountability for the accuracy of their products and consumers are becoming more vigilant about discovering authenticity as well. For these retailers, brands are cracking down harder than ever on the sale of counterfeited items, which means more pressure for the sellers to excel in reducing duplicates ([see story](#)).

In 2018, Chinese ecommerce platform Secoo began using blockchain for luxury products, leveraging the decentralized technology to help prove the authenticity of merchandise and prevent fakes. Secoo sees blockchain as an opportunity to build more trust among consumers as they purchase on ecommerce.

Similarly to Amazon's Transparency, specific luxury goods are identified with anti-counterfeiting information, which is stored on blockchain. Through Secoo's mobile application, consumers can look up products to view information about them, creating traceability for merchandise ([see story](#)).

"If Transparency proves itself as a tautology for authentication, Amazon can license the technology to other resellers; counterfeiters can finally be challenged head on," Ms. Sedhom said. "While counterfeiting may not be eliminated, Transparency has the ability to make a significant dent in the counterfeiting world."