How You Can Spot a Fake Website

There's a good chance that you've visited a fake website without knowing it. Fake websites are commonplace these days and are used by cybercriminals to scam shoppers into giving up their credit card details or paying for items that never arrive.

Fake websites often look just like the real website – take a look at an example and seen if you can spot the difference between the two. Being tricked into giving up your personal details could prove a costly mistake, so you must be aware that they exist and understand what to look for. Here are a few tips to help you spot a fake website.

Incorrect web address

This is the easiest way to spot a fake website. However, changes in web addresses are usually so minor, for example adding or switching a single character, with the consequence that many people don't notice. Additionally, if it's a website you've never shopped on before, how can you be certain that it is or isn't spelled correctly?

Spelling and grammar mistakes

Even if a company has spent a lot of money getting the content on their website perfect the odd spelling or grammar error may still slip through. Nevertheless, if you see more mistakes than usual, there's a good chance that something isn't right.

Older logos and poor artwork

A good way to spot a fake website, one you've visited previously, is older logos or poor quality artwork. If there have been changes made to the logos and artwork and they're now of a poorer quality, it's highly likely that you've found a fake website.

Poor payment security

Not that you should ever make a purchase on a website that isn't protected by protected by a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) connection in the first place, but this is another sign that indicates there's a good chance the website is fake. Also, always ensure the padlock sign is next to the web address before you enter your card details.

Resells major brands illegally

Many major brands and labels do not allow their products to be sold on websites other than their own. This is an aspect of 'brand protection' that many labels practice, with a good example of this being the clothing label Abercrombie & Fitch. Check if you're not sure.

What you can do

Just being aware that fake website exist is a good start. However, there are many things that you can do to keep your personal information safe from cybercriminals, like applying simple common-sense when shopping online.

If an offer sounds too good to be true, chances are it is. There are often heavily discounted items available online, but if items are priced much lower than anywhere else it's safe to say something isn't right. The website may not be fake and your personal details not at risk, but their products could be counterfeit.

Be aware of the risks fake websites pose and be vigilant when shopping or banking online to avoid the costly mistakes that others have made.