

KEEP OUT! CAUTION! KEEP OUT!

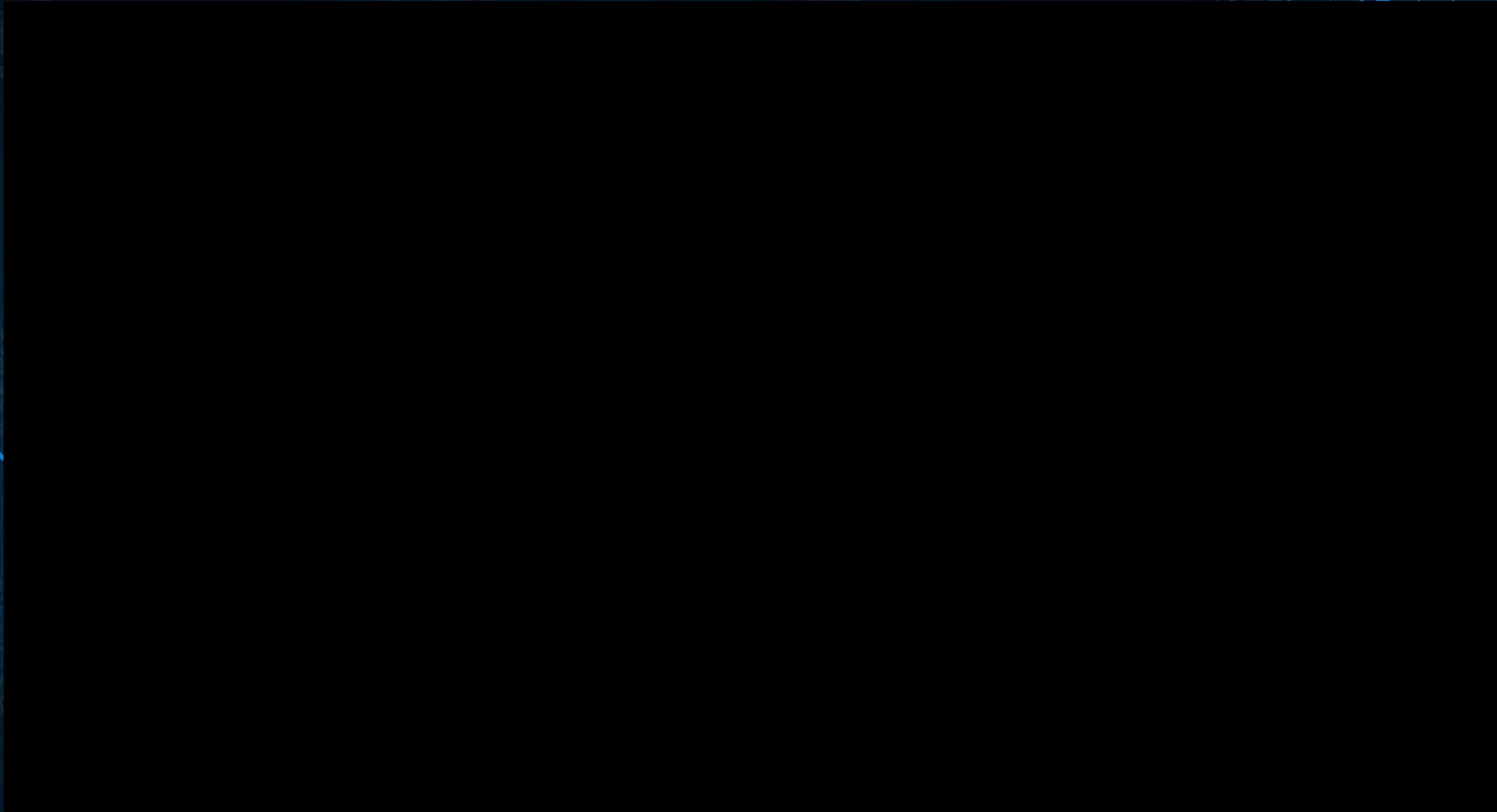
# Understanding Brushing Scam & Ways to Combat



KEEP OUT! CAUTION! KEEP OUT!



**Chandni Agarwal**  
National ICT Awardee



Have you ever received the order  
You have not ordered



It may be a Gift from unknown



# Are free gifts really free?



Posted by u/Amax2192 6 days ago

ok Scammers are getting more and more creative

Whole Foods Survey Instructional Memo

CHASE CASHIER'S CHECK

Pay To The Order On: [Redacted]

Pay: TWO THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED DOLLARS AND 00 CENTS

\$2,000.00

Posted by u/KantoKantoKanto 8 months ago

1 My husband received a same-day delivery package from Walmart that he never ordered. No charge on credit card. Is this a scam?

My husband received a package containing a bag of candies from Walmart today. The package was shipped to his name and our address. The bag of candies (very popular one) was sealed and didn't look altered in any way.

None of our credit cards were charged for it, everything looks perfectly regular on our accounts.

The funny thing is that yesterday evening I made a purchase on Walmart.com for the first time ever. I don't even own an account on the website, I checked out as a guest. I purchased a hair product that is supposed to arrive late next week. The package will be addressed to my name, and I don't use my husband's last name as I kept mine.

And then today, out of nowhere, a Walmart package pops up in our mailbox.

Should we get concerned? How does Walmart have my husband's information?

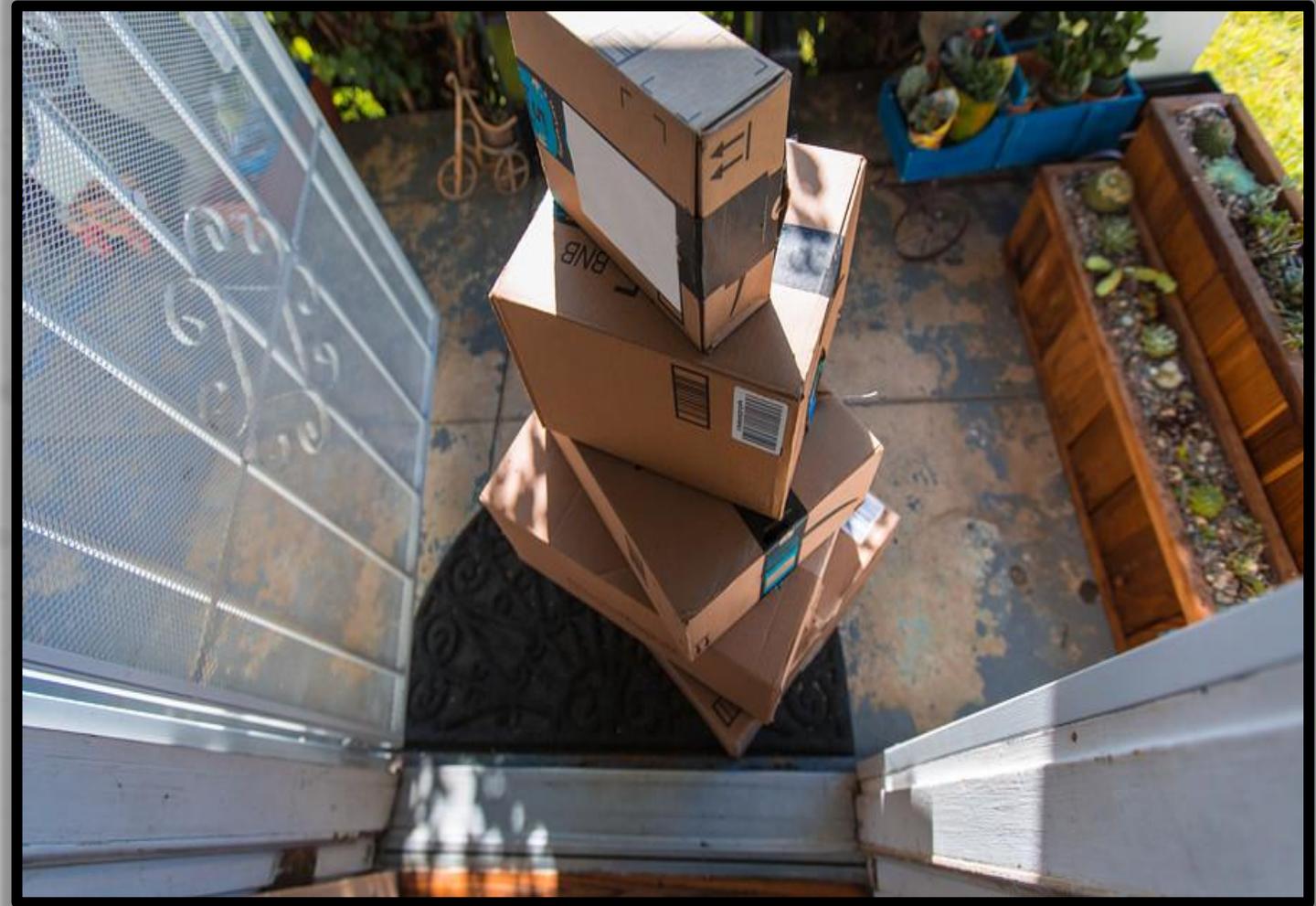
8 Comments Share Save Hide Report

67% Upvoted

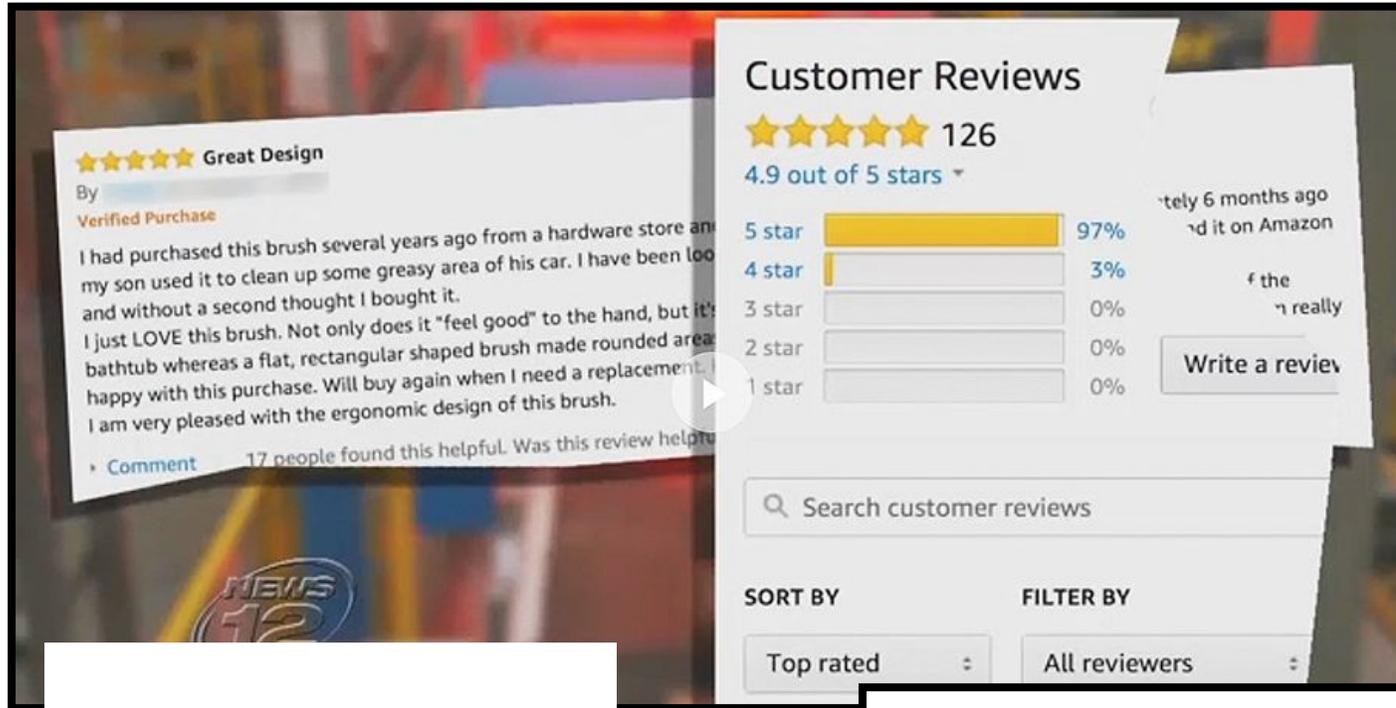


# BRUSHING Scam

- When someone sends you free stuff in the mail, or even sends you empty packages.
- A manufacturer might send you free stuff either to boost their sales or to be able to put in "fake" 5-star reviews about their product.
- An exploit by a vendor used to raise product ratings and increase visibility online by shipping an inexpensive product to an unwitting receiver and then submitting positive reviews on the receiver's behalf under the guise of a verified owner.

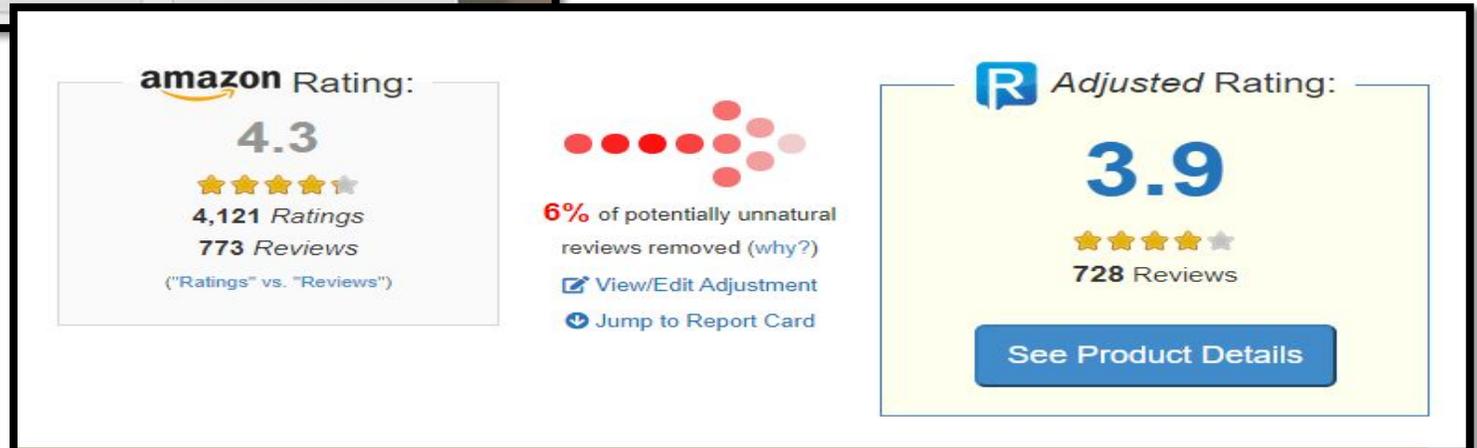


# Behind the Mystery Gifts...



The screenshot shows a product page for a brush. A customer review is highlighted with a white box. The review is titled "Great Design" and is a 5-star review. The reviewer is a verified purchaser. The review text reads: "I had purchased this brush several years ago from a hardware store and my son used it to clean up some greasy area of his car. I have been looking for a brush and without a second thought I bought it. I just LOVE this brush. Not only does it 'feel good' to the hand, but it's perfect for cleaning a bathtub whereas a flat, rectangular shaped brush made rounded areas. I'm happy with this purchase. Will buy again when I need a replacement. I am very pleased with the ergonomic design of this brush." Below the review, there are 17 people found this helpful. The review is from 6 months ago. The product has a 4.9 out of 5 stars rating based on 126 reviews. The star distribution is: 5 star (97%), 4 star (3%), 3 star (0%), 2 star (0%), and 1 star (0%). There is a "Write a review" button and a search bar for customer reviews. The sort by option is "Top rated" and the filter by option is "All reviewers".

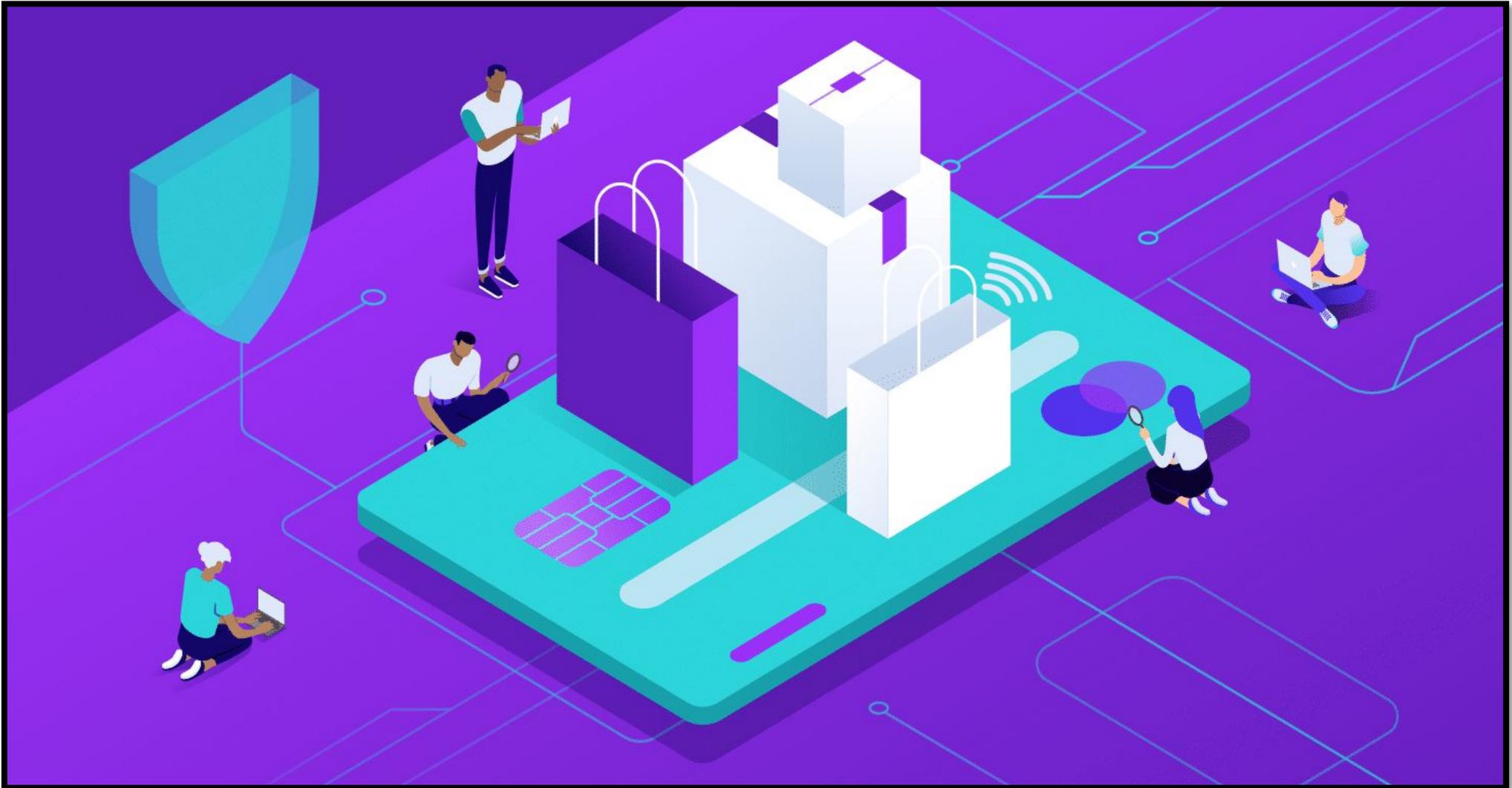
- Good rating can boost sales in seller market
- Items will appear at the top of search results on e-commerce sites.
- Positive rating or review, further artificially increase the credibility of the item



The image compares two rating systems for a product. On the left, the "amazon Rating" is 4.3, based on 4,121 Ratings and 773 Reviews. On the right, the "Adjusted Rating" is 3.9, based on 728 Reviews. A red dot matrix indicates that 6% of potentially unnatural reviews were removed. A button labeled "See Product Details" is visible at the bottom right.

Rating System	Rating	Number of Ratings/Reviews
amazon Rating	4.3	4,121 Ratings, 773 Reviews
Adjusted Rating	3.9	728 Reviews

# BRUSHING is an E-Commerce scam



# How brushing scams work?

- A method of shady businesses appearing more legitimate.
- Businesses to increase their items' ratings & better review.
- The seller creates fake accounts using other's personal information.
- This personal information could be from a data breach or could be publicly available online.
- Once the seller creates these fake accounts, they order their own products to the addresses.
- These fake orders allow the seller to leave positive reviews on their products.
- Victims of the scam only know something is wrong when unsolicited packages arrive at their door from a company they've never heard of.



# Samples – Brushing Scams



David Hafner  
@DavidHafnerx6

If you receive a mysterious package of seeds in the mail do not open them. This is happening all over the country, I personally know people who have received the seeds.

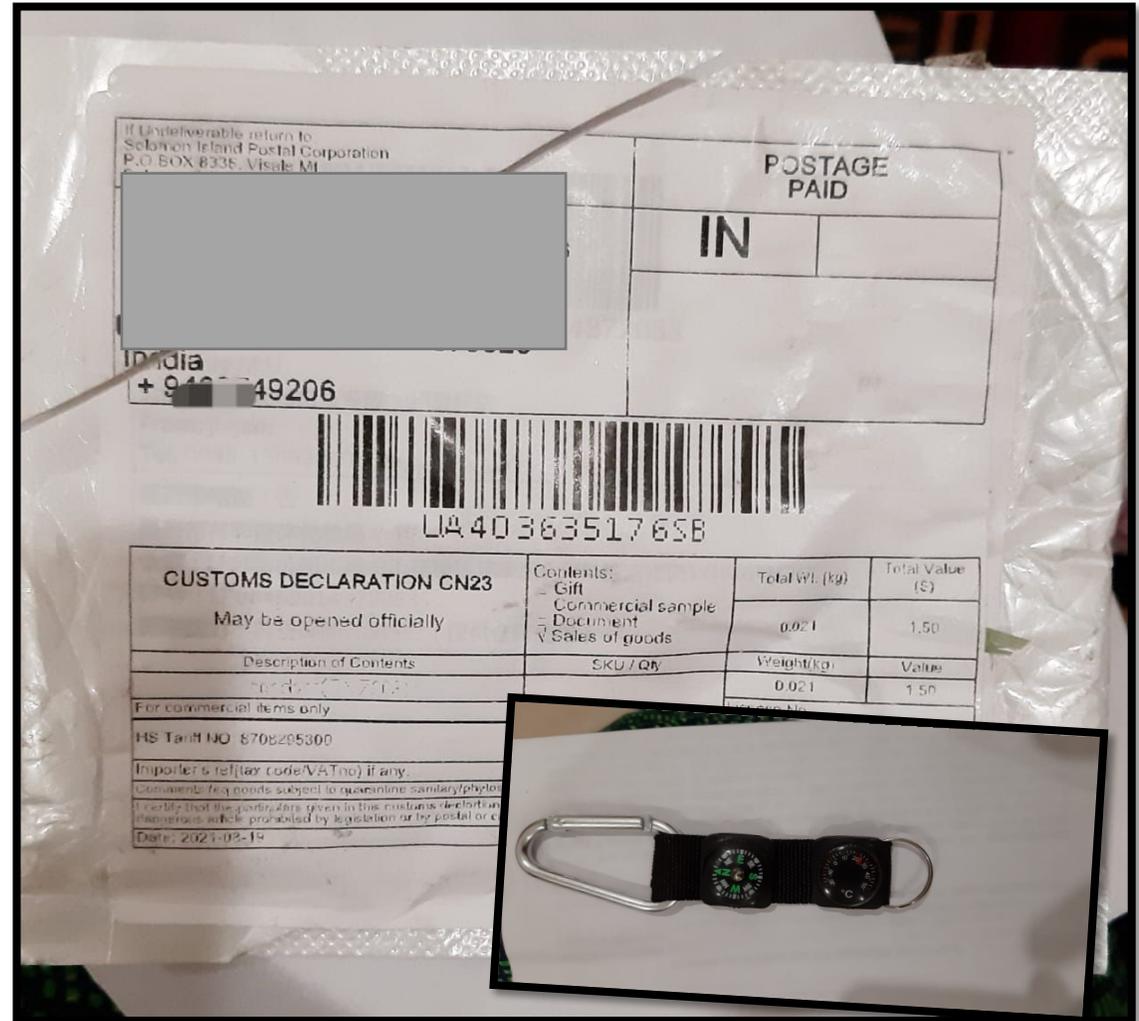
DO NOT PLANT THE SEEDS!

[fdacs.gov/News-Events/Pr...](https://fdacs.gov/News-Events/Pr...)



2:31 PM · Jul 28, 2020 from Florida, USA · Twitter for Android

These seed packages are a great example of a brushing scam. | Source: [Twitter](#)

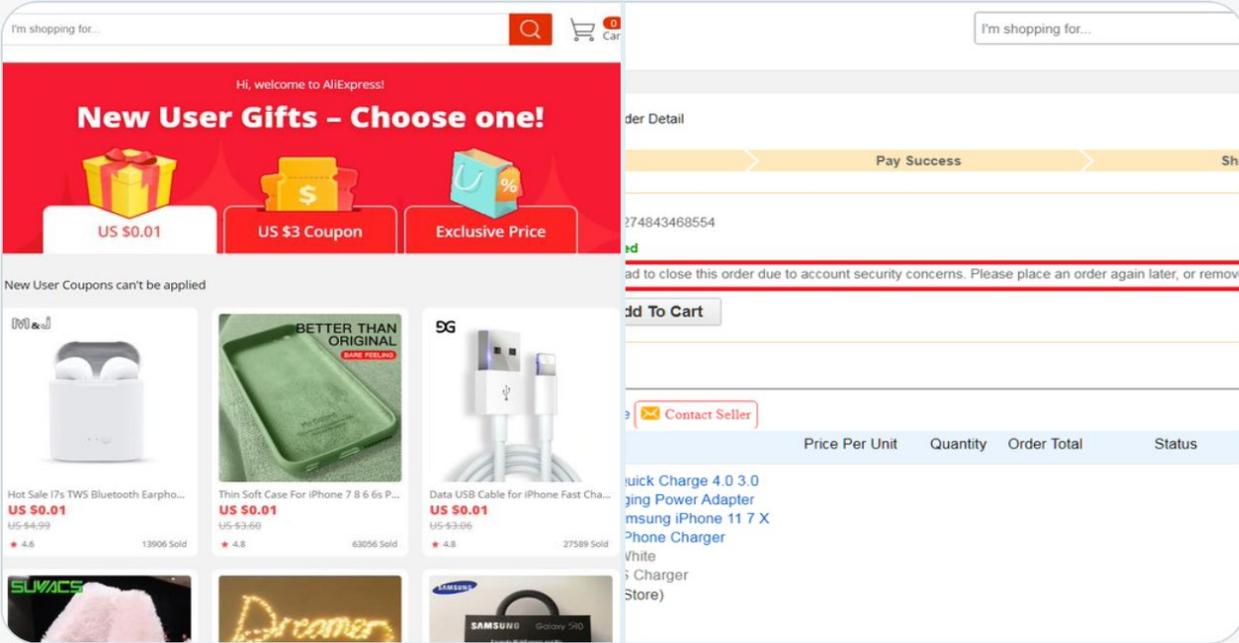


# Samples – Brushing Scams

 · Sep 6, 2020

[#brushingscam](#) [#Amazon](#) [#deliveryscam](#)

I was tricked by [#aliexpress](#) to sign up as new customer to purchase \$0.01 item. After the purchase, you received a notification your purchase is invalid with reason "account security concerns" Is this a scam to boost number sales to the seller?



 Aug 24, 2020

[#MondayThoughts](#)

Be careful about this "seed" scam

No doubt harmless, but its not worth the risk.

[#BrushingScam](#) [#SeedScam](#)

 **NHS Counter Fraud**  @NHSCFA · Aug 24, 2020

@BBCCornwall are talking about residents who have been receiving mysterious packets of seeds in the post

It is recommended that if you receive any - do NOT plant any!

This sounds like a "brushing"  scam - used to boost positive reviews on Social Media/Online.



[Show this thread](#)



GIF



[Redacted]

Aug 14, 2020



@AmazonHelp people need too look about for the [#brushingscam](#) I'm in the middle of it now and it's really stressful. I'm in contact with @AmazonUK trying to sort it out. But not getting very far [#scam](#) [#stressful](#)



[Redacted]

· Oct 2, 2020



@AmazonHelp

Dear Amazon Help

I am fed up with receiving unsolicited packages from your marketplace, so much so that I'm considering closing my account with you.

I have reported these deliveries 3 times but they still keep coming.

Really fed up with it now.

[#BrushingScam](#)

“

*If you think free stuff can't possibly be bad, think again...*

# Potential Risks

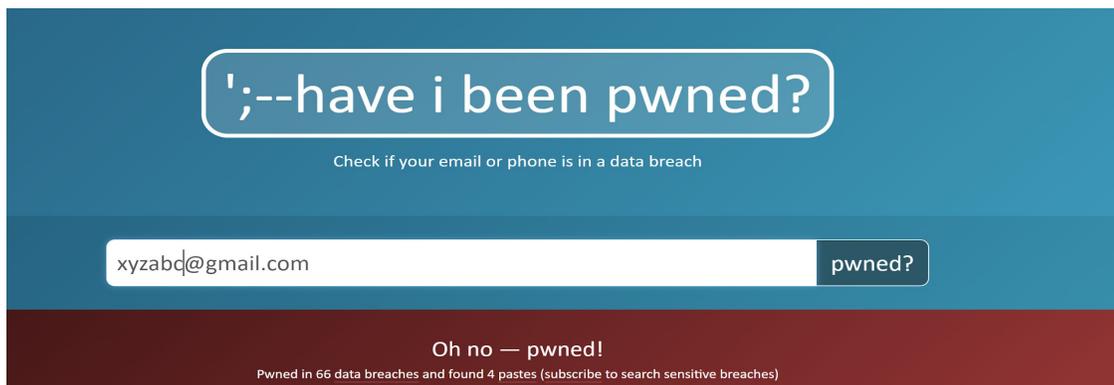


1. A fake review may encourage people to buy worthless stuff.
2. Your name and address (and who knows what else) are out there, and are being used by people.
3. Think about :
  - i. How did they get your information?
  - ii. Did they buy your details from a marketer?
  - iii. Did they get it through a hack?



# Data / Privacy Breach

A data breach is the intentional or unintentional release of secure or private/confidential information to an untrusted environment.



';--have i been pwned?

Check if your email or phone is in a data breach

xyzabd@gmail.com pwned!

Oh no — pwned!  
Pwned in 66 data breaches and found 4 pastes (subscribe to search sensitive breaches)

## Breaches you were pwned in

A "breach" is an incident where data has been unintentionally exposed to the public. Using the 1Password password manager helps you ensure all your passwords are strong and unique such that a breach of one service doesn't put your other services at risk.



**bigbasket:** In October 2020, the Indian grocery platform bigbasket suffered a data breach that exposed over 20 million customer records. The data was originally sold before being leaked publicly in April the following year and included email, IP and physical addresses, names, phones numbers, dates of birth passwords stored as Django(SHA-1) hashes.

**Compromised data:** Dates of birth, Email addresses, IP addresses, Names, Passwords, Phone numbers, Physical addresses



**Canva:** In May 2019, the graphic design tool website Canva suffered a data breach that impacted 137 million subscribers. The exposed data included email addresses, usernames, names, cities of residence and passwords stored as bcrypt hashes for users not using social logins. The data was provided to HIBP by a source who requested it be attributed to "JimScott.Sec@protonmail.com".

**Compromised data:** Email addresses, Geographic locations, Names, Passwords, Usernames



**Edmodo:** In May 2017, the education platform Edmodo was hacked resulting in the exposure of 77 million records comprised of over 43 million unique customer email addresses. The data was consequently published to a popular hacking forum and made freely available. The records in the breach included usernames, email addresses and bcrypt hashes of passwords.

**Compromised data:** Email addresses, Passwords, Usernames



**Nitro:** In September 2020, the Nitro PDF service suffered a massive data breach which exposed over 70 million unique email addresses. The breach also exposed names, bcrypt password hashes and the titles of converted documents. The data was provided to HIBP by [dehashed.com](https://dehashed.com).

**Compromised data:** Email addresses, Names, Passwords

# Identity Theft

Identity theft is the crime of obtaining the personal or financial information of another person to use their identity to commit fraud, such as making unauthorized transactions or purchases.



News / Technology / News / Over 27 million Indian adults experienced identity theft in the past 12 months, says Norton report

## Over 27 million Indian adults experienced identity theft in the past 12 months, says Norton report

*A new cybersecurity report records responses from a total of 1,000 Indian adults that around 60 per cent of them have been a victim of cybercrime within the last*

ADVERTISEMENT



# Check your Identity

The Telecom Analytics for Fraud management and Consumer Protection – Govt. Portal to check subscriber identity

Select Language ▼

**TAF COP**  
Telecom Analytics for  
Fraud management & Consumer Protection



The Telecom Analytics for Fraud management and COConsumer Protection

- Empowering Consumers Strengthening Security

Home

About

**[Currently this facility is available only to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh Consumers]**

Enter your Mobile Number

Request OTP

# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BRUSHING SCAM

**Don't Pay for the Merchandise**

**Return to Sender if return address is marked**

**If you like it you can keep the unsolicited delivery**

**Dispose off or Donate it if you don't wish to use**

# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BRUSHING SCAM

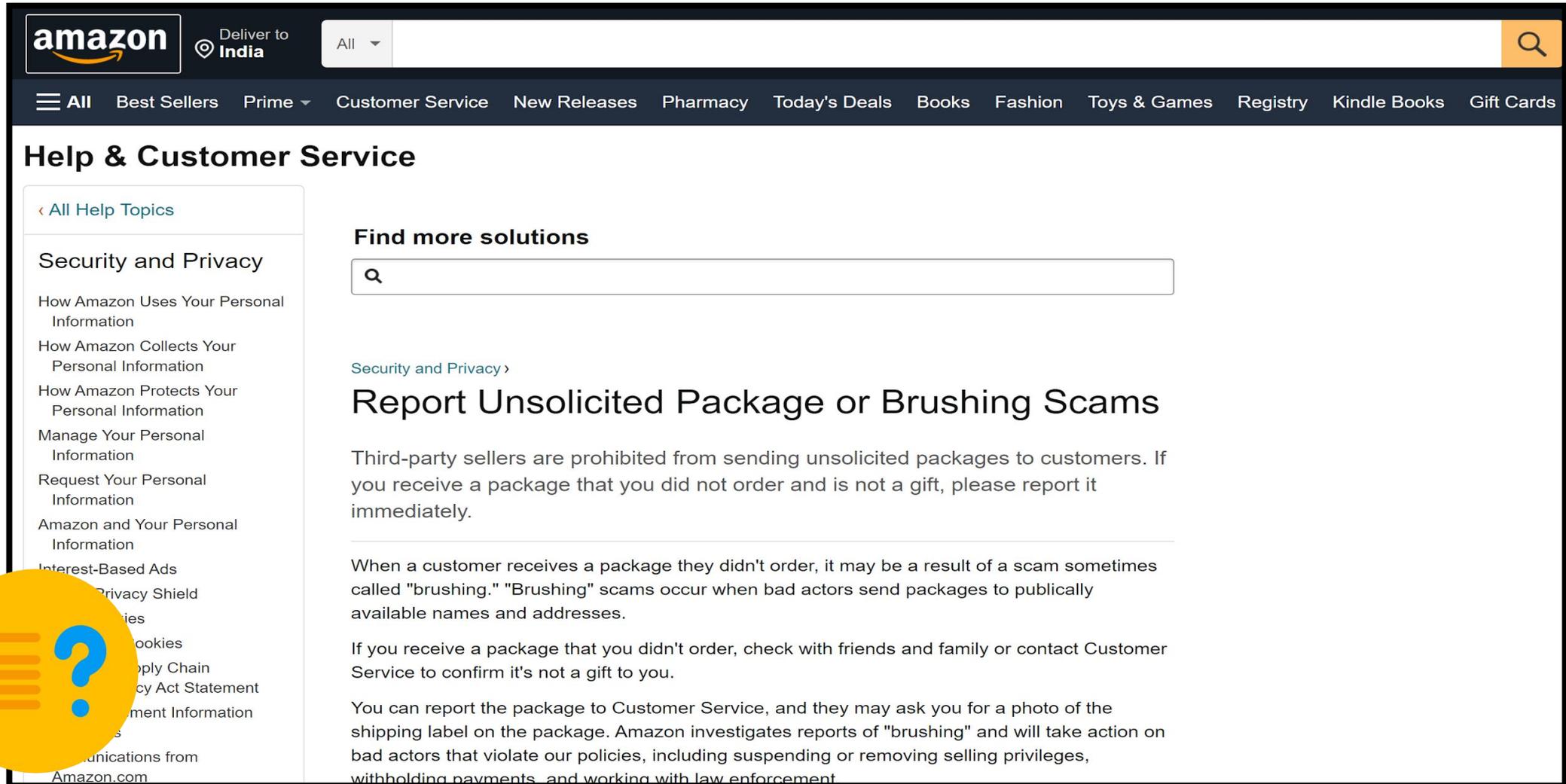
**Change your password**

**Closely monitor your credit card bills and reports**

**Notify Authorities if merchandise is organic**

**Notify the retailer and file a fraud report on company's website**

# How to report



The screenshot shows the Amazon India website's help page. At the top, the Amazon logo is on the left, and 'Deliver to India' is on the right. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links for 'All', 'Best Sellers', 'Prime', 'Customer Service', 'New Releases', 'Pharmacy', 'Today's Deals', 'Books', 'Fashion', 'Toys & Games', 'Registry', 'Kindle Books', and 'Gift Cards'. The main heading is 'Help & Customer Service'. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'All Help Topics' and a list of categories under 'Security and Privacy', including 'How Amazon Uses Your Personal Information', 'How Amazon Collects Your Personal Information', 'How Amazon Protects Your Personal Information', 'Manage Your Personal Information', 'Request Your Personal Information', 'Amazon and Your Personal Information', 'Interest-Based Ads', 'Privacy Shield', 'Cookies', 'Supply Chain', 'Privacy Act Statement', and 'Information from Amazon.com'. The main content area has a search bar and a section titled 'Find more solutions'. Below this is a link for 'Security and Privacy' and a large heading: 'Report Unsolicited Package or Brushing Scams'. The text explains that third-party sellers are prohibited from sending unsolicited packages and that such packages are often the result of 'brushing' scams. It provides instructions on how to report such packages to Customer Service and what information they may request, such as a photo of the shipping label.

amazon Deliver to India

All Best Sellers Prime Customer Service New Releases Pharmacy Today's Deals Books Fashion Toys & Games Registry Kindle Books Gift Cards

## Help & Customer Service

< All Help Topics

### Security and Privacy

- How Amazon Uses Your Personal Information
- How Amazon Collects Your Personal Information
- How Amazon Protects Your Personal Information
- Manage Your Personal Information
- Request Your Personal Information
- Amazon and Your Personal Information
- Interest-Based Ads
- Privacy Shield
- Cookies
- Supply Chain
- Privacy Act Statement
- Information from Amazon.com

### Find more solutions

Search

[Security and Privacy](#)

## Report Unsolicited Package or Brushing Scams

Third-party sellers are prohibited from sending unsolicited packages to customers. If you receive a package that you did not order and is not a gift, please report it immediately.

When a customer receives a package they didn't order, it may be a result of a scam sometimes called "brushing." "Brushing" scams occur when bad actors send packages to publicly available names and addresses.

If you receive a package that you didn't order, check with friends and family or contact Customer Service to confirm it's not a gift to you.

You can report the package to Customer Service, and they may ask you for a photo of the shipping label on the package. Amazon investigates reports of "brushing" and will take action on bad actors that violate our policies, including suspending or removing selling privileges, withholding payments, and working with law enforcement.



