
xbox 360 sales Avoid Wholesale Scams - 14 Easy Ways to Outwit Fake Exporters

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Unless you have been living on Mars for the last few years, you may have noticed that there has been an explosion of online auction sites that suddenly rocketed out of cyberspace and into our living rooms; changing forever the way we shopped and how much we paid for anything our little hearts desire. All of a sudden, everybody had the chance to be their own boss. Importing for resale was not something limited only to those with their own stores, warehouses and mansions, it was something we could all do for fun and money. Unfortunately, along with the deluge of inexperienced importers that flooded the market came the unscrupulous and less fortunate creatures that crawled out of the wormholes with their hand out. Many and varied are the stories of thousands of dollars simply vanishing into a digital void leaving us with no sign of our precious merchandise or clever fakes instead of guaranteed authentic items. In New Zealand, we have nowhere near the wholesale resources that others enjoy within their own countries. Because we are so far away we have become accustomed to making our wholesalers leap through burning hoops followed swiftly by the crack of our whips that follow them halfway round the world before we part with our hard earned cash. These are the rules I set for myself that had to be ticked off before my half closed eyes opened, my creased brow smoothed and my money was prized from my fist with a virtual crowbar. As everyone knows, Chinese sources are the ones that will save you the most money before you buy, but taking the step out of your comfort zone can be a trying, if not terrifying step. This checklist is just as valid to anyone else who wishes to source items from unfamiliar, not necessarily English speaking parts of the world.

1. Find out as much information as you can. Do as much research as you can to ascertain the credibility of the seller. Find out the physical address of the company and give them a call to verify it actually exists. Enter the phone number here to check it matches the country of origin. You can look up the white pages of that country at www.yellow.com/international.html. Check the company is actually registered in the country that they say by asking the seller to provide you with a valid registration, or do a search of that country's companies registrar. You can do this by going in through their country's government website. In NZ you click on Government Services - Business and Trade - Companies and through there you can search the company's registrar. It is fairly similar worldwide. There is a small fee for a detailed search, but it is free to find out basic information. If a company claims to be in any European country they need a VAT ID in order to do business. Asking for this will usually send fraudsters scampering.
2. Never go with a seller who provides you with just an email address or website alone. If a website looks legitimate by all intents and purposes, check their domain information by typing it into a whois, this will tell you where, by whom and when the website was registered. Be wary of sites that are registered in a different country or sites that have been set up very recently. Be wary also of sellers who provide you with a yahoo or hotmail address as legitimate companies will almost always have sel...@company.com addresses.
3. Carry out background checks. Make use of online credit services to make sure that the seller isn't registered with them. Obtain all the seller's contact details, including their bank's phone number and a fax of any personal identification, tell them no offence, but for your own peace of mind you need to check them out. You can then sign up to someone like www.records-registry.com to check their credit history. Call the bank and make sure the bank account number matches the company or person you are dealing with. Get in contact with their local credit agency for information about their local dealings with other companies.
4. Get it on paper. Prepare an in-depth sales contract and list your conditions of sale, how you have agreed to pay, a complete inventory, shipping details etc. For a directory of INCOTERMS (International Commercial Terms) - a universally recognised set of definitions of international trade terms, visit www.iccwbo.org so there is no discrepancy as to which shipping method you have agreed on. Fax it to them and get them to sign it. If you can't do this yourself, ask family members and friends if they know a lawyer or law student to draw one up for you.
5. Use an Escrow service. www.escrow.com acts as a secure third party to protect the Buyer and Seller. Beware of sellers trying to convince you to use other Escrow services, it is very easy to set up a fake website or engineer fraudulent emails. Insist on setting up your own transaction, only with Escrow.com.
6. Try to use safe methods of payment. Credit Card: This is a relatively safe method as credit card companies will usually refund you if you are a victim of fraud. Wholesalers may be cautious of taking credit card orders because if the card or number is stolen, then the funds are deducted from their bank account to refund the victim after they have already sent the goods to the fraudster. It is up to the wholesaler to ascertain whether or not the order is fraudulent, this is why most companies will only ship to the address on the card. A Letter of Credit: This is where the bank acts as an Escrow service for you. It is an exchange of documentation where the bank acts as a guarantor for you, agreeing that they will pay the supplier when the goods arrive and are inspected, you will need to convince your bank that you are good for the full amount. Make sure you check every detail on the letter of credit issued to you. Cash On Delivery: Although it is fairly remote they are going to go with COD anywhere but their own country, you can give it a bash.
7. Choose other methods of payment carefully. www.PayPal.com is fairly safe, as long as the seller is verified; check their buyer/seller number alongside their verification to confirm their number of transactions. Never deal with unverified sellers. PayPal will freeze an account if you report a scam so only make credit card payments, never e-cheque or cash from your bank account.
8. Try to avoid Telegraphic or Wire Transfers. A TT or wire transfer is when the full or part payment is made directly into the seller's bank account. This is a bit of a grey area as most legitimate businesses prefer TT to get a deposit, or require the full amount in advance as it is the least possible risk to them. But if they absolutely will not go with a safe method of payment be very wary, there is no reason for legitimate wholesalers to have a problem with them. Don't be pressured into going with TT for a first time transaction, it should only be regarded as a fast and cheap method of payment between buyers and sellers who have built up a mutual trust.
9. Avoid Western Union like the plague. Never, ever use it. Western Union is only safe if you are sending money to a relative and it is a favourite of many internet scammers. Flatly refuse to use Western Union in any other case; it just isn't worth the risk. It may seem like the deal of a lifetime but you are almost guaranteed to lose the full amount. Visit Western Union's Consumer Fraud Awareness page for more

information. 10. Have a holiday. If you are going to spend \$10,000 - \$20,000 on merchandise and you've been thinking you would quite like to see a bit more of this wonderful world we live in, then go to these countries and establish your own trade contacts. See that the shipment is loaded onto the boat and act as your own buying agent. If you already run your own business, claim this holiday back as an expense. If you don't have time for a holiday, do a search for buying agents in that country and pay someone to go and make sure the shipment gets on the boat for you. 11. Trust your own judgment. Use your own common sense. If a deal seems altogether too good to be true, there's a fairly good chance that it is. Apple ipod 6Gb Nanos simply do not sell wholesale for US\$110 nor will you find an xBox 360 for US\$200. That said, most scammers set off multiple alarm bells fairly quickly. I visited a website that claimed to be based in London, they showed a beautiful building that would have astronomical overheads, yet their website was quite obviously hosted free. You would think that they would have enough money to set up hosting that didn't plaster ads all over their site if they were legitimate. 12. Check everything you are told. Check every detail that the seller tells you before taking their word for it. I had a company in 'Italy' inform me that they would forward the items to DHL (a worldwide shipping company), DHL would then hold and inspect the shipment for me. I was to forward the money to DHL, they would hold the money until the goods arrived, DHL would then release the money. This is basically the service provided by escrow.com, never in my knowledge has a shipping company ever offered this service. I was thrilled; it was the answer to my prayers, a shipping company that acts as an Escrow service for free?! Hallelujah! I rang DHL to confirm the good news, and was informed that they never have or will act as an escrow service, they have never looked inside a shipment unless commanded by customs and would never consider doing so. Her exact words: We just send the cartons to the address on the top, we're not that keen! The address they gave me was hyphenated ie: dhl-shipping.com, as many scam addresses are. This was an msn homepage and the correct address is www.dhl.com. I emailed the address anyway just to see what would happen, I expected at least a copy of a DHL email but received a disappointing, plain text effort. Just, check and recheck everything they tell you before parting with your hard earned cash. One website worth visiting is Data-Wales; there is a wealth of information about internet fraud and security. Once I received a printing order for my graphic design business from West Africa requesting that I print them an amount of business cards with a specific slogan on them. I emailed Data-Wales and they informed me that fraud was so rampant in this part of the world that it was almost guaranteed to be a scam, the cards were destined for fraudulent activity and I should forward the email complete with headers to them so they can post it at their website. Feel free to ask them for advice. 13. Order samples. A genuine wholesaler will not have a problem sending you a sample of their merchandise and should not take offence to you needing to ascertain the authenticity of the items you wish to order. Be prepared to pay a little more for these but you can't put a price on peace of mind and it really is nothing up against what you stand to lose. 14. Learn from someone who has been there. The easiest and best way to learn how to safely import your product line is to get advice from seasoned importers. Ask around friends and family for any help they may be able to give. I spend quite a bit of time on importer messageboards where we have discussed all of this information. At my website - More Than Just Wholesale Sources there is a complete guide to importing small amounts of your chosen product, including sources, staying safe, promotion - everything I have used to obtain cases of top selling electronic products. If you would rather let someone else do the sourcing for you, we highly recommend Salehoo.net.nz. All the work of finding and making sure the suppliers are safe has been done as Salehoo.net.nz no longer accepts wholesalers into the directory that do not offer safe methods of payment. As most know, Asian sources save you the most money before you buy so Salehoo.net.nz now has a secret section for Chinese suppliers. That's how I do it, and it couldn't be easier. Happy wholesaling! Instant and Unlimited Access to 8,000 Pre-Screened Legitimate Wholesalers : <http://wholesaletmn.url-site.com/>

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