

gucci bags cyber monday

About 4% of worldwide online reviews are fake, according to the World Economic Forum. That may not sound like much, but the organization estimates that those fake reviews cost \$152 billion in online spending annually. And even if the fake reviews don't cost consumers directly, they can influence purchasers who may choose another product based on a negative review, to the tune of \$791 billion in e-commerce spending in the United States alone, the group said.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta, a Democrat, said in an interview his state joined the suit against Roomster because it is "facing a housing crisis out of proportion. If there's an app, they [consumers] are going to trust it ... especially when they are seeing all these letters of support." But he said it's not just about Roomster or apartment platforms.

In a statement to news organizations, Roomster said the allegations are not true and are an example of "overreach" by the FTC.

Rich Cleland, assistant director of the FTC's Division of Advertising Practices, said in an interview the agency is looking at new rules to "shore up our potential to secure civil penalties." He said the department partnered with the half dozen states in the Roomster case because states are able to obtain monetary damages - a consequence taken away from the feds last year in a U.S. Supreme Court case.

Also last year, the FTC put more than 700 companies on notice that if they used false endorsements, the agency was ready to take action.

Cleland and the other experts said consumers, meanwhile, can do a few things to temper their reliance on online reviews, such as checking a variety of sources for reviews, and checking whether certain reviewers have reviewed lots of other unrelated items and what they recommended, studying the language of the reviews to check for generalities versus specifics and viewing them all skeptically, especially overly positive or negative ones.

But even with the monitoring and curation of companies, consumers still are the ultimate arbiter of what they buy, and they should be constantly skeptical, said

Teresa Murray, director of the consumer watchdog program of the U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

"Even if the FTC really puts the hammer down and starts imposing large fines ... you have to be a little cynical," she said. "If a review is completely over the top, or if it's humongously negative, or it's dropping profanity and wishing the people at the company had never been born, that could be a clue that it's not accurate."

However, on January 13, 2021, a placeholder bill (SB 146) was filed in Connecticut that specified that the tribes would be in charge.

Thankfully renewed efforts in 2021 were finally able to achieve results.

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