Introduction

Twenty-eight years ago, Amazon set out to become Earth’s most customer-centric company, and a critical part of that mission is earning and maintaining customers’ trust. When a customer makes a purchase in our store, they trust they will receive an authentic product, whether the item is sold by Amazon Retail or by one of our millions of independent selling partners. And when small businesses choose to sell in our store, they trust we will provide a great selling experience free from competition with bad actors. These drive us to continue to innovate on how we ensure a trustworthy shopping and selling experience every day for our customers and selling partners.

In 2022, we continued to advance our brand protection efforts with investments in industry-leading technology and expert people. We invested more than $1.2 billion and employed over 15,000 people—including machine learning scientists, software developers, and expert investigators—dedicated to protecting customers, brands, selling partners, and our store from counterfeit, fraud, and other forms of abuse.

Reflecting on the past year, I am encouraged by our team’s continued progress in raising the bar in four strategic areas critical to brand protection: (1) powerful and highly effective proactive efforts to protect our store, (2) industry-leading tools enabling rights owners to partner with us to better protect their brands, (3) advances in holding bad actors accountable, and (4) improved customer protection and education.

Here are a few highlights from our 2022 Brand Protection Report that stand out as examples of that progress from the last year:

1. **Our innovations in seller vetting are deterring bad actors from attempting to create new selling accounts.** Our robust seller verification, including connecting one-on-one with prospective sellers through video chat, coupled with continued advancements in our machine learning-based detection, are deterring bad actors from even attempting to create new Amazon selling accounts. The number of bad actor attempts to create new selling accounts decreased from 6 million attempts in 2020 to 2.5 million attempts in 2021, to 800,000 in 2022.

2. **While our store and number of products available for sale have continued to grow, the number of valid notices of infringement submitted by brands has decreased significantly.** We continued improving our automated protection technologies, which leverage our partnership with brands enrolled in Brand Registry and the data they provide us. This reduced the need for brands to find and report infringements. In 2022, adoption of our brand protection programs continued to grow and, at the same time, the absolute number of valid notices of infringement filed by brands in Brand Registry decreased by over 35%. 
3. **In partnership with brands and law enforcement, we have been able to hold more counterfeiters accountable—stopping them from abusing our and other retailers’ stores across the industry.** Our efforts to identify and dismantle counterfeit organizations are working and making a positive impact. In 2022, Amazon’s Counterfeit Crimes Unit (CCU) sued or referred for investigation over 1,300 criminals in the U.S., U.K., EU, and China. We continued to partner with brands and law enforcement to not only stop these bad actors, but we also worked to go upstream from the counterfeit signals we detected to identify, seize, and appropriately dispose of over 6 million counterfeit products. This prevented them from being resold anywhere in the supply chain.

4. **We have been able to help educate more consumers than ever about the harm and dangers of counterfeit products.** In partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, we built marketing campaigns that helped educate consumers about how to shop safely and ensure they were purchasing authentic products, while also ensuring they understood the harm and dangers of purchasing counterfeits. These campaigns reached over 70 million consumers in the U.S.

We are proud of the progress we have made this past year, and we will continue to invest and innovate until we drive counterfeits to zero in our store. We also appreciate the growing industrywide partnership and collaboration in the fight against counterfeiting. While the industry still has a long way to go in driving the right public and private sector partnerships, we are excited about our progress and what we can do together to hold bad actors accountable to ensure the entire industry is rid of counterfeits.

I invite you to read our 2022 Brand Protection Report, where we provide more detailed updates on these four strategic areas critical to brand protection.

Thank you,

Dharmesh Mehta  
Vice President  
Worldwide Selling Partner Services  
Amazon
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Our Commitment to Brand Protection

We strive to deliver the world’s most trustworthy shopping experience, offering customers the widest possible selection of authentic products. To earn and maintain our customers’ trust, we strictly prohibit the sale of counterfeit products, and we continue to invest in innovations that ensure only authentic products reach our customers.

Our brand protection strategy focuses on four pillars:

1. Proactive Controls
2. Powerful Tools to Protect Brands
3. Holding Bad Actors Accountable
4. Protecting and Educating Customers

We are proud to share our progress and latest innovations in this Brand Protection Report.
Selling in Amazon’s store opens a world of opportunity for entrepreneurs. We make it straightforward for entrepreneurs to set up a selling account, but very difficult for bad actors to do so.

Through our continued investment in advanced machine learning techniques, we have improved our proactive controls, automating and scaling our intellectual property protection and counterfeit detection systems. These systems operate continuously throughout every step of the process—from the moment someone tries to register a new selling account, create a listing, and update a product listing. This includes incorporating the feedback we get from customers, brands, and others.

Our proactive controls are working. The number of bad actor attempts to create new selling accounts decreased by more than 50% year over year.

The number of bad actor attempts to create new selling accounts decreased from 6 million attempts in 2020 to 2.5 million attempts in 2021, to 800,000 in 2022.
Continuous Monitoring

We continuously monitor our store for potential infringement. From the moment a seller lists a product for sale in our store, our advanced technology continually scans for potential counterfeit, fraud, and abuse—including future changes submitted for the product. We use the data and learnings gathered throughout these processes to innovate and improve our proactive protections. When we receive a valid notice of infringement or a customer complaint, our machine learning algorithms use this information to learn, improving our proactive detections and scaling protections for brands.

99% listings proactively blocked or removed

Our proactive controls found more than 99% of blocked or removed listings before a brand ever had to find and report it. These listings were suspected of being fraudulent, infringing, counterfeit, or at risk of other forms of abuse.

8 Billion listings scanned daily

Amazon’s automated technology scanned over 8 billion daily attempted changes to product detail pages for signs of potential abuse.

Seller Verification

Amazon has built industry-leading tools to verify potential sellers’ identities by using a combination of advanced technology and expert human review. Our risk-based models and processes for verifying potential sellers are the first line of defense for our robust proactive controls. Prospective selling partners are required to provide a government-issued photo ID, taxpayer information, and details about their identity, location, bank accounts, credit cards, and more. Our proprietary systems analyze hundreds of unique data points to detect and mitigate potential risk, including relationship to previously identified bad actors.

Continuing to innovate to stay ahead of bad actors, we require live verification, connecting prospective selling partners with Amazon employees through video chats or in-person appointments to verify identity and documentation, making it difficult for bad actors to register new selling accounts.
Powerful Tools to Protect Brands

Key Insight

We continue to improve the automated protections for brands in Brand Registry. While the number of brands in Brand Registry continues to grow, we have seen a more than 35% reduction in the total valid notices of infringement submitted by all brands in Brand Registry from 2021.

Brand Registry

In 2017, we launched Amazon Brand Registry, a free service for brand owners regardless of whether they sell in our store. The service gives brands the ability to grow their brand with Amazon, and better manage and protect their brand and intellectual property rights. Through the Report a Violation tool, brand owners can search for, identify, and report infringements and subsequently track their submissions within the dedicated Submission History dashboard.

Brand Registry also allows Amazon to more effectively safeguard brands through automated protections that leverage machine learning and the data provided in Brand Registry. Our automated protections continuously scan Amazon’s stores to stop potentially infringing products. Starting in 2022, based on feedback from brand owners, Brand Registry users can now view details of the number of listings that were proactively removed by store, brand, and category within the Impact Dashboard.

“Working together with Amazon is bringing us efficiency in fighting counterfeits and protecting our customers. We look forward to our continued collaboration with Amazon, developing effective ways to fight against counterfeiting worldwide and making it difficult to manufacture, sell, or purchase counterfeit goods.”

Canon
In addition to brand protection tools, enrolling in Brand Registry unlocks a suite of brand-building tools only available to brand owners, including Brand Stores, Sponsored Brands, Brand Analytics, and many more powerful features.

Valid notices of infringement decreased over \(35\%\)

In 2022, through continued improvements in our automated protections, brands found fewer infringing products in Amazon’s store. The number of valid notices of infringement submitted by brands in Brand Registry decreased by more than 35% from 2021.

I’m so impressed with all the brand protection tools Amazon provides. We couldn’t have scaled our business to millions of dollars in sales without Amazon and their brand protection programs.

Leslie Pierson
President, Hot Taco Inc.

See the full Taco vs. Burrito case study
Stopping Fraudulent Trademarks in Partnership with the USPTO

For several years, Amazon has been working with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) to prevent fraud and abuse in the trademark system.

In 2022, we continued to enhance our collaboration with the USPTO. Amazon directly receives and acts upon information from the USPTO regarding registration status and parties that have been subject to USPTO sanctions, including attorneys that have been blocked by the USPTO. This is to ensure that fraudulent trademark applications and registrations are not used to enroll in Brand Registry. We leverage this information to remove false and otherwise abusive brands and share trends within our store with the USPTO to support their investigation of potential fraud by their applicants and registrants.

Our partnership with the USPTO has allowed us to identify over 5,000 false or otherwise abusive brands and remove or prevent them from enrolling in Brand Registry.

Amazon Patent Evaluation Express (APEX)

We launched APEX in 2018 to give utility patent owners a forum to effectively resolve patent infringement disputes at a much faster speed than the traditional court system. Because of the technical complexity of many utility patents, a patent infringement lawsuit often lasts several years, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars or more. APEX allows brands to request evaluations for disputes of utility patents and track the decision process through the Report a Violation tool. The APEX process invites a neutral third-party expert evaluator to determine if a product is infringing, reducing the time it takes to obtain a decision to an average of six weeks. This is significantly faster than the two years it takes for the average U.S. patent lawsuit to get to trial. The APEX process also ensures that the winning party does not pay any of the legal costs.
IP Accelerator

Amazon’s IP Accelerator helps small businesses efficiently obtain intellectual property rights, offering a trusted and cost-effective way for business owners to protect their brands. IP Accelerator connects businesses with a vetted network of trusted IP law firms in 39 countries and 13 languages, offering high-quality trademark registration services at competitive rates.

IP Accelerator expedites a brand’s access to Brand Registry, jump-starting Amazon’s protection tools and brand building benefits.

16,000 brands using IP Accelerator

In 2022, IP Accelerator’s network of small- and medium-sized businesses continued to grow more than 16,000 brands using IPA to enroll in Brand Registry since the program’s launch.

IP Accelerator gave us the protection we didn’t know we needed. I have peace of mind now. And it’s actually fun to work on growing the business because I don’t have to worry about someone else reaping the benefits. Plus, the process was really simple!

Ayush Kothari
CEO and founder of Woodsala

See the full Woodsala case study
Project Zero

Project Zero combines Amazon’s advanced technology with the sophisticated knowledge that brands have of their own intellectual property and how best to detect counterfeits of their brands. This happens through our powerful brand protection tools, including automated protections, product serialization capabilities, and the unprecedented ability we give brands in Project Zero to directly remove counterfeit listings from our store.

Project Zero saw continued adoption in 2022, with the total number of brands enrolled increasing to over 22,000.

Project Zero proved to be an amazing tool, becoming a core part of Arduino’s structured trademark protection strategy. It has generated multiple positive effects for our global community and for our business.

Sara Therner
Trademark and licensing manager, Arduino

See the full Arduino case study
Transparency

Transparency is a product serialization service that prevents counterfeits from reaching customers by using codes to uniquely identify individual units of enrolled products. These codes can be scanned throughout the supply chain and by customers to verify authenticity using the Amazon Shopping App or Transparency App, regardless of where the products were purchased. Amazon verifies these codes to ensure that only authentic units are shipped to customers.

In 2022, we launched a Transparency badge that is placed on product detail pages within the Amazon store when the product is enrolled in Transparency. When a customer shops in our store, the Transparency badge highlights that each item has a unique code applied by the brand that we verify before shipping. This badge is part of Amazon’s mission to proactively prevent counterfeiting and allow customers to verify that a product comes from the brand.

**40% Increase**

Transparency saw continued adoption in 2022, with the total number of brands enrolled growing to over 33,000, an increase of 40% since 2021.

**900 Million**

Transparency product serialization protected more than 900 million product units across the supply chain.

> The Transparency program has helped us completely eliminate bad actors and counterfeits and it has helped us build our reputation for authenticity and quality. We’ve been able to increase our sales without having to worry about losing out on profits to bad actors.

Gaurav Katiyar
Senior manager of Online Business, MuscleBlaze

▶ See the full MuscleBlaze case study
Holding Bad Actors Accountable

Key Insight

Amazon took more than 6 million counterfeit product units out of the global supply chain and pursued more than 1,300 criminals through litigation and criminal referrals.

Amazon’s Counterfeit Crimes Unit

Behind the scenes with our Counterfeit Crimes Unit

Our Counterfeit Crimes Unit is a global team that includes former federal prosecutors, FBI agents, expert investigators, and data analysts. CCU, customs agencies, and law enforcement share information to track down counterfeiters, shut down bad actors’ accounts, seize counterfeit inventory, and prosecute those involved. CCU has disrupted counterfeiters and their networks through civil suits, joint enforcement actions, and seizures with law enforcement worldwide, including against suppliers, logistics providers, social media influencers, fake invoice providers, and more.
When Amazon identifies an issue, we act quickly to protect customers and brands, including removing the problematic content or listing and, where appropriate, blocking accounts, withholding funds, and referring bad actors to law enforcement. Bad actors are constantly trying new tactics to attempt to evade our detection—for example, we have recently found a number of instances where they list generic products in Amazon’s store while purposefully promoting the same listings as counterfeits via social media. We continue to innovate to stay ahead of counterfeiters, and we work with brands and law enforcement to hold bad actors accountable. Our goal is to protect our store and customers and stop counterfeiters for good.

Amazon is the benchmark for collaboration with respect to brand infringement online. Official and licensed WWE products, branded by our IP, are trusted by our fans around the world, and we go to great lengths to protect consumers from counterfeits and other types of infringements. It’s our hope that other companies look at Amazon’s Counterfeit Crimes Unit as a model of how to partner with companies of any size to help combat this relentless threat.

Matthew Winterroth
Vice president of Intellectual Property World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc.

Disrupting Counterfeit Networks Across the Globe

In 2022, CCU worked with brands big and small, including Cartier, World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), FELCO, General Electric (GE), King Technology, and many others to pursue more than 1,300 criminals through litigation and criminal referrals.
Amazon shared information with several Public Security Bureaus in China that helped law enforcement raid counterfeiting operations across multiple provinces, seizing more than 240,000 counterfeit items and dismantling three major counterfeiting networks.

German law enforcement acted on intelligence from Amazon against nine suspected members of a German-based counterfeit printer ink and toner ring that attempted to deceive customers by selling fake toner cartridges that were marketed as genuine products.

Amazon supported anti-counterfeiting activities undertaken by the Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) of the City of London Police. Amazon’s CCU joined the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) to provide detailed information to the City of London Police about a large-scale counterfeit CD operation. PIPCU’s actions, including raids at three different locations, led to the seizure of more than 32,000 counterfeit CDs.

Removing Counterfeits from the Supply Chain

The fight against counterfeits is a global one, with bad actors operating across many retail channels. When we find a counterfeit, we go beyond our store, going upstream to identify the warehouses and distribution network involved in the counterfeit production so we can prevent the counterfeit products from re-entering the supply chain. This protects and benefits customers whether they are shopping on Amazon or elsewhere.

6 Million counterfeit items appropriately disposed

Amazon identified, seized, and appropriately disposed of more than 6 million counterfeit items, completely removing them from the supply chain.
Blueprint for Public and Private Sector Partnership to Stop Counterfeiters

We are proud of the progress and results of our brand protection strategy outlined in this report, but counterfeiting remains a problem throughout the retail industry around the world. While we have made progress in partnering with other public and private sector participants, eliminating counterfeiting will require more investment and progress together. In 2021, we published a blueprint for public and private sector partnership to stop counterfeiters, which identified three areas where increased collaboration provides opportunities for improvements in stopping counterfeiters. In 2022, we have made progress but still have a lot of work to do in all three areas:

**Exchanging information about counterfeit activity to help stop counterfeits at the border:**
We have expanded our work with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to mutually exchange information. In 2022, Amazon provided leads to CBP about confirmed counterfeiters, and CBP provided information to Amazon that allowed us to stop counterfeit goods destined for our fulfillment network and remove infringing listings from our store. We are pursuing similar programs with customs agencies across the globe, including a memorandum of understanding with Japan Customs that is already producing positive results. We are encouraged to continue these partnerships with customs agencies to speed interventions around products, provide greater aid to law enforcement, and better protect customers. These partnerships prevent counterfeits from reaching Amazon customers and stop products from crossing borders and entering domestic supply chains so they are not sold through any retailer or store. We continue to support all marketplace and logistics service providers that share information on counterfeit activity with customs agencies to aid in their detection and seizure efforts, and to strengthen law enforcement’s ability to dismantle the criminal networks behind these illicit goods.

**Sharing information about blocked counterfeiters to help the industry stop more counterfeiters earlier:** We saw positive results from our 2021 pilot where we exchanged information about counterfeiters with other retailers and are proud to have expanded this first-of-its-kind effort in 2022, intended to make shopping safer for all consumers. Through this partnership, retailers are better equipped to prevent counterfeiters from moving across multiple stores to sell their fake goods, minimizing counterfeiting risks across the industry. Amazon stands ready to collaborate with others in the private sector—such as retailers, payment processors, transportation intermediaries, and others that share our dedication to stopping counterfeiters. We continue to believe that the private sector can identify and stop counterfeiters sooner if we are able to share our blocked counterfeiter data with each other. The private sector can lead the way in creating a scalable solution for real-time information sharing on confirmed counterfeiters, and we encourage more companies to work with us in building these partnerships in the future.
Increasing resources for law enforcement to prosecute counterfeitters: Amazon acknowledges and respects the hard work of law enforcement and prosecutors in fighting counterfeitters around the world. We are proud of our partnerships with agencies to combat these criminals and will continue to share information regarding confirmed counterfeitters blocked from selling in our store. We will continue to go further and provide authorities with in-depth criminal referrals and evidence to enhance authorities’ ability to hold counterfeitters accountable and dismantle the criminal networks behind these illicit goods. The reality, however, is that for too long, prosecution of counterfeitters has not received the level of resourcing and attention that is needed to stop counterfeitters. This past year, we were encouraged that several governments increased funding for anti-counterfeiting efforts, including the U.S. increases in funding for the Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center and the EU prioritization of IP crime in the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) framework. These are positive steps, and we look forward to continuing to work with policymakers worldwide to ensure law enforcement has the resources needed to pursue these bad actors.

Sharing Best Practices and Continuing to Improve Together

Amazon works with leading industry associations and nonprofit organizations to get feedback that helps us continue to improve our programs, share our best practices to help others be more successful, identify trends, pilot new capabilities, and ultimately better protect customers and brands. We highlight a few of those partnerships below.

In 2022, Amazon partnered with George Mason University’s Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC) to sponsor the Bring Down Counterfeiting Policy Hackathon. This first-of-its-kind event was an opportunity for over 250 researchers from across 25 universities to engage directly with law enforcement officers, policymakers, and IP practitioners to develop exciting policy solutions to global counterfeiting challenges. Eleven finalist teams competed for more than $52,000 in research grants and other prizes. These teams showcased their ideas on improving law enforcement policies, tools, and techniques in the areas of public-private data sharing, advanced data analytics, and supply chain integrity technology to verify and track raw materials and products. In 2023, Amazon and TraCCC will continue the partnership with another event focused on further developing the winning ideas and supporting their translation into real-world solutions.

“
This was just a transformational moment in the way we’re approaching counterfeiting. There will be research opportunities as a result of this. There will be impacts on national policy. There will be public outreach for people to better understand the severity of this critical problem.

Louise Shelley
Director, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center
The IACC–Amazon partnership was a first of its kind when it launched the IACC-Amazon Program in 2018. Through the years, our respective teams have collaborated with brands to provide resolution to unique enforcement issues they face in a constantly evolving ecommerce landscape. We have seen the program grow in many ways, including increased participation from rights-holders. We look forward to expanding our partnership in even more meaningful ways in the year ahead to bring more value to brands and the IP community as a whole.

Bob Barchiesi  
President, International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition

We have a long-standing collaboration with Amazon Italia in fighting infringing geographical indications in the agri-food sector. This is an extremely relevant compartment for the country economy and for which Italy is renowned worldwide, and we are deeply committed to protecting operators and consumers alike. We have found a partner in Amazon on this. Both proactively and reactively, Amazon works to make sure that its store is a safe place to shop, and we look forward to further strengthening our collaboration.

Felice Assenza  
Chief of the Central Inspectorate for Fraud Repression and Quality Protection of the Agri-Food Products (ICQRF) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests

Criminal counterfeiters have taken advantage of unsettled financial conditions across the world to generate profit through the sale of cheap and ever more dangerous fake goods online. Together ACG and the Amazon Brand Protection team and Counterfeit Crimes Unit (CCU) have been continually working in partnership to understand and combat the threats, to ensure consumers and businesses are properly protected from this insidious form of criminality.

Phil Lewis  
Director general, Anti-Counterfeiting Group

At Licensing International, we are consistently impressed by Amazon's deep commitment to working with brand owners and manufacturers, and educating consumers about counterfeits and infringements. [Amazon's] ongoing activities, in many cases working with brand owners and manufacturers one-on-one, demonstrates how seriously its commitment to taking down unlawful goods is.

Maura Regan  
President, Licensing International

We'd like to express our profound respect for Amazon's passion and efforts on brand protection, and we will continue to work together with Amazon to protect customers.

Takayuki Okazaki  
Internet project team leader, International Intellectual Property Protection Forum
Section 4

Protecting and Educating Customers

Key Insight

Amazon partnered with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Customs and Border Protection to reach over 70 million people and provide them tips on how to shop confidently and avoid counterfeit products.

Customer Guarantee

For decades, our A-to-z Guarantee has ensured that customers are covered and eligible for a full refund for any item they purchase if the customer isn't happy with the condition or timely delivery of that product. This protects customers whether they bought the item from Amazon or an independent selling partner. Over the last few years, we went even further. Even if a customer doesn't contact us, if we identify a customer purchased a counterfeit product, Amazon proactively contacts the customer, informs them they purchased a counterfeit product, and fully refunds their purchase. No customer action is necessary.
Customer and Industry Awareness

On World Anti-Counterfeiting Day 2022, Amazon partnered with the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries Associations to raise awareness through a social media campaign. The campaign focused on developing industry best practices to remove counterfeit medicines sold online.

Before the 2022 holiday shopping season, we partnered with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Customs and Border Protection to reach over 70 million people and provide them tips on how to shop confidently and avoid counterfeit products.

We recognize the importance of educating young consumers about the risks of counterfeit goods. In 2022, we continued our partnership with the International Trademark Association’s (INTA) Unreal Campaign, a consumer awareness initiative that teaches young consumers about the value of intellectual property and the dangers of purchasing counterfeit products. Amazon team members across the globe engaged with INTA’s Unreal Campaign, reaching students with illustrative, relatable presentations through schools, youth-oriented events, and social media. Youth education programs like INTA’s are among the most impactful steps in our collective effort to limit the reach of counterfeit goods.
## At a glance

### Amazon's Brand Protection Efforts

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<th><strong>1.2 Billion</strong></th>
<th><strong>99%</strong></th>
<th><strong>5,000</strong></th>
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