

One in Four Gen Z and Millennial Consumers Buy with Bots

Research from Netacea reveals that 26% of under-35s are using bots to buy in-demand goods and tickets

MANCHESTER, UK, November 15, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Netacea, the bot detection and response specialist, today announced the results of its new research into how malicious automation is harming online shoppers. Despite legislation created to stop the problem, around half of buyers suspected so-called “scalper” and “grinch” bots were snapping up in-demand goods before they could get them, forcing many to either pay inflated prices or use bots themselves in desperation.

The report, *How are Bots Changing Buyer Behavior?*, surveyed over a thousand people across the US who regularly buy popular goods and services online. It reveals 47% of respondents believe bots have stopped them getting in-demand goods and services online. Many of those affected (58%) were trying to buy tickets for a live event, but buyers of fashion items (35%), consumer goods (39%) and travel (20%) also suspected high levels of interference.

This has a range of negative effects on people’s behavior. Some are reacting by making bots part of their shopping toolkit—with nearly 1 in 5 (17%) admitting they resorted to using one in the last year. Scalper usage is most common amongst Gen Z and millennial consumers, with 24% and 27% respectively admitting to using one over the last 12 months. Even 5% of over 65s say they use a bot to get what they want online.

Bec McKeown, Cyber Psychologist and Founder of Mind Science, said: “Automation is now part of the public consciousness and the barrier to entry for consumers has significantly lowered. Scalper bots, in particular, are an acknowledged money-maker.

“This creates the underlying conditions for confirmation bias. In essence, bot users only ever see the upside in their actions: They reason that no one will come to any harm. It’s very easy for this to happen when mediated by the internet as the morals and principles people hold go out of the window as the consequences aren’t immediately apparent.”

Bot-induced scarcity is also forcing many to pay significant markups for everyday items. Despite already being far worse off due to inflation, people admitted they are still willing to pay scalpers, on average, 13% more, with medicine (17%) and event tickets (14%) seeing the highest price

increases. The report notes this pales in comparison to the markups on high-demand items such as the Playstation 5 (19%) and Yeezy sneakers (168%). By comparison, US inflation was, at its peak in June 2022, only 9.1%.

Despite these inflated prices, more than half (57%) still bought products on secondary markets even though over 90% feared being sold fakes or having their data compromised.

The Better Online Ticket Sales (BOTS) Act aims to restrict the use of bots by outlawing the purchase of tickets by circumventing security measures, with potential fines of up to \$16,000. The proposed Stopping Grinch Bots act aims to apply this more widely, tackling those bots that buy up goods around the holiday season. Those surveyed agreed with the need for action, with 89% saying retailers should act and 82% wanting government policy.

“Bots are leaving consumers with a dilemma. Either they pay inflated prices on reseller sites, with all of the risks involved, or they get involved with the murkier business of using bots—a case of if you can’t beat them, join them,” said Andy Still, Co-Founder, Netacea. “In their eyes, the government, retailers, and even the brands behind the goods and tickets they want, share the blame. Without addressing the problem, more people feel the need to turn away from official channels to get what they want.”

The full report can be downloaded here: <https://netacea.com/research-and-reports/how-are-bot-changing-buyer-behavior>

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About Netacea

Netacea, a bot detection and mitigation platform, takes a smarter approach to bot management and is a recognized leader for its innovative use of threat intelligence and machine learning. Netacea’s Intent Analytics™ engine analyses web and API logs in near real-time to identify and mitigate bot threats. This unique approach provides businesses with transparent, actionable threat intelligence that empowers them to make informed decisions about their traffic.

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