

INTA ANTICOUNTERFEITING COMMITTEE

TREND ALERT: Cash on Delivery (COD) websites

APRIL 2025

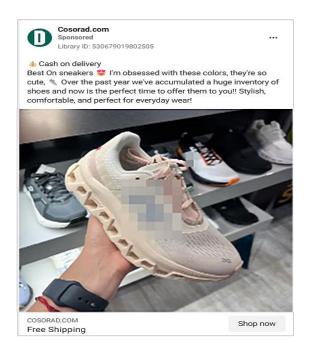
INTRODUCTION

This report draws attention to an ongoing trend (at operating for at least 12-15+ months) that counterfeiters and fraudsters are using "Cash on Delivery" (COD) services as a method to distribute fake products to consumers.

This guide will explain what is currently known about the COD trend's modus operandi with a walkthrough of examples and provide information on how to identify the consumer facing adverts and websites.

Counterfeiters and fraudsters use paid sponsored advertising to attract and direct consumers to third-party websites which offer products for sale where the only shipping option is "Cash on Delivery".

Shown are examples of sponsored adverts offering cash on delivery for well-known luxury and sport brands as well as power tools. Other adverts include consumer health devices, fashion and watches. Two of the advertiser profiles identified also used the name or logo of well-known legitimate retailers to provide false legitimacy to the adverts – see images below and top left.¹



These third-party ecommerce websites appear to have no legitimate connection to the brands and/or the retailers featured in them and often advertise products with improbable discounts, free gifts and accessories. As with many online shopping fraud schemes they may be harvesting the buyers contact information.





 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ More examples of the infringing adverts identified can be found in Appendix A and B.

INDUSTRIES IMPACTED



Consumer Electronics and Health monitoring devices



Power tools, machinery and storage accessories



Fashion, footwear, watches and accessories

JURISDICTIONS IMPACTED



Europe:

Spain Czech Republic Poland



Asia:

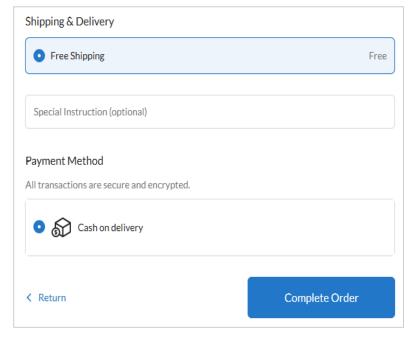
Malaysia India Japan Hong Kong SAR, China and Taiwan

WHAT IS "CASH ON DELIVERY" (COD)?

Definition: Cash on Delivery is a payment method where the recipient pays for goods or services at the time of delivery, rather than in advance.

- Order Placement: The customer places an order online or over the phone.
- Shipping: The retailer ships the product to the customer's address.
- Delivery: Upon delivery, the customer pays the delivery person or service.

The customer pays the delivery person using cash, card, or mobile payment. It is also known as "Pay on delivery".



Acceptance: COD is popular in jurisdictions with lower credit card penetration or where consumers prefer to see the product before paying.

HOW COUNTERFEITERS EXPLOIT COD

Avoiding Financial Trails



By using COD, counterfeiters can avoid creating a financial trail that could be traced back to them. It may also suggest efforts to avoid tax or launder cash money.

Minimizing Risk



They do not need to handle the product directly, instead providing it to a logistics, courier or "last mile" handler, thus reducing the risk of being caught in the possession of counterfeit goods.

Leveraging Trust



COD leverages the trust and familiarity consumers have in paying upon delivery, making them less suspicious of the product's authenticity.

COMMON TACTICS USED BY COUNTERFEITERS WITH COD

Fraudulent or Fake Websites and Sponsored Ads: Setting up fraudulent or fake e-commerce websites and sponsored adverts on social media that look legitimate and use genuine marketing assets stolen from official websites of well-known brands or retailers.

Manipulating Legitimate Delivery Services: Using third-party delivery and logistics that offer cashon-delivery services and may not scrutinize the contents of the packages or conduct robust know-yourbusiness customer (KYBC) due diligence.

False or Difficult Return Policies: Offering return policies that are difficult to claim, ensuring the counterfeiters keep the money or make it harder to know who was behind the sale of the counterfeit goods.

HOW TO IDENTIFY COD ADVERTS AND WEBSITES

- 1. Advert Keywords: "Cash on delivery" in advert text or a translation of the same concept in different languages, such as "pago contra reembolso y envío gratuito" (ESP), 代金引換 (JP), "płatność przy odbiorze" (PL).
- 2. Visually: Use of emojis in advertising or website text:





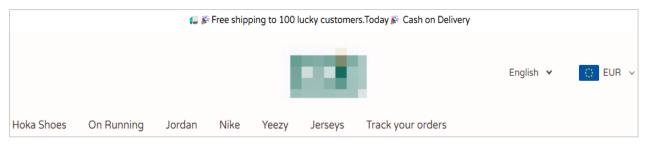


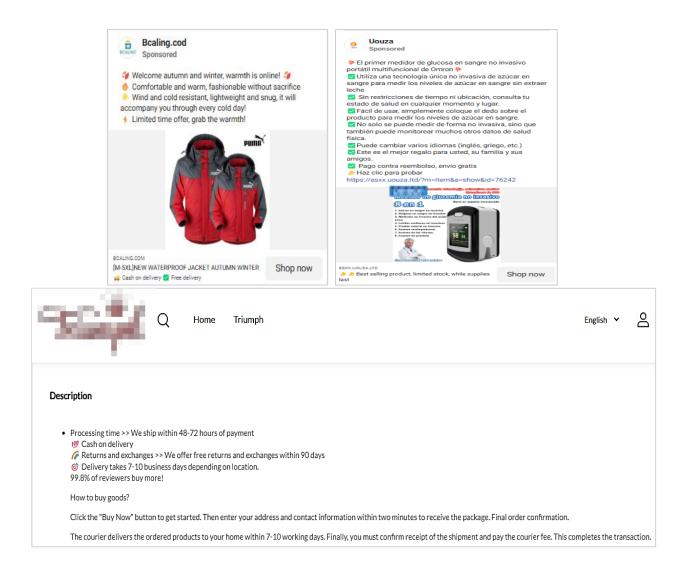






As shown in the examples below, adverts and websites offering COD heavily use emoji graphics to make the offer more visually appealing.

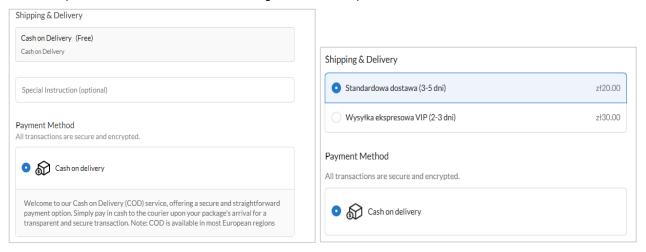




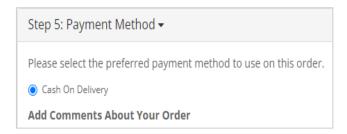
3. Website indicators: On the infringing destination websites, often the only delivery option available is "Cash on Delivery".

Many of the websites are built using the same website design, including the icons and text on the checkout page when buyers are required to provide their name, address, email and telephone number to complete the order.

Often they will be a simple one page website with the order form built into the main webpage. Below are examples of two different websites using the same template and icons.



In the example below there is only one payment option available "Cash On Delivery":



Below is a Cash on Delivery (COD) explanation provided on one of the counterfeit websites identified which explains that the service is available "in most European countries" and that buyers need to "prepare cash, as couriers accept cash payments only":

Welcome to our Cash on Delivery (COD) service, a simple and secure payment method. Pay directly to the delivery personnel in cash upon the safe arrival of your package, ensuring transparency and security in the transaction.

Please note that our COD service is available in most European countries, but some areas may fall outside our service range. Terms of delivery

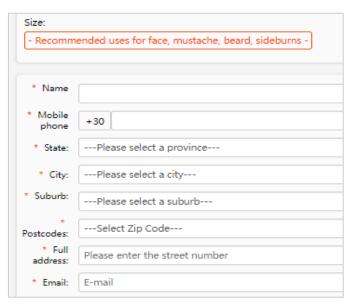
Once you complete your shopping and enter your shipping address, our team will quickly review your order. We'll immediately dispatch your package for Cash on Delivery (COD) delivery, arriving within 3-5 business days. Please prepare cash, as couriers accept cash payments only. We aim to ensure a smooth shopping experience for you!

Some of the websites even state that the reason for using Cash on Delivery (COD) is to prevent fraud from shopping websites:

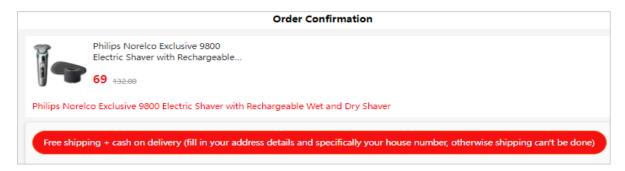
Important messages:

Many customers report that they were cheated when shopping online, so we no longer use online payment services to prevent fraud. Now, after placing an order, you do not need to pay, we will deliver the goods to your address. You can pay the courier when you receive the goods, and then choose payment by card or in cash. After receiving the goods, check the packaging for damage and if you are not satisfied, you can refuse the payment and contact us

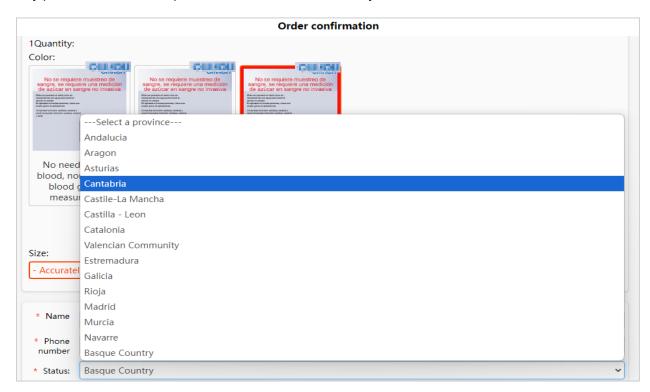
The websites offer the Cash on Delivery (COD) as a free shipping option and are often configured to only accept orders from one specific jurisdiction and with phone numbers with a specific country code, e.g. +30 (Greece) or +34 (Spain).



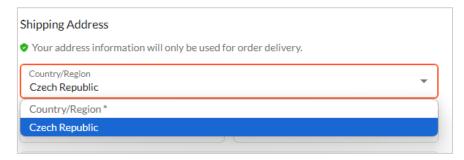
Buyers are not able to complete the order process without providing all aspects of contact information including the specific province or county which are configured depending on the target consumer audience of the website.



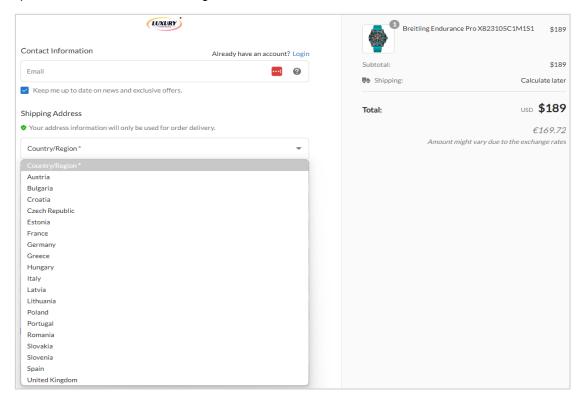
On the website shown below for blood glucose monitoring devices targeting Spanish consumers shows only provinces located in Spain available to select for the buyers address.



Below shows a website for sports jackets targeting Czech consumers shows only provinces located in Czech Republic are available to select for the buyers address.



Below shows a website offering luxury watches provides a cash on delivery to 18 countries in the European Union and the United Kingdom.



MODUS OPERANDI COMPONENTS

(i) Logistics and Supply Chain: Information presented on the websites about the processing ("about 3 working days") and delivery times ("20 working days") it suggests that the products are not held within Europe at the time of the order.

interpretation. About the delivery method

Cash on delivery support + free shipping + seven days no reason to return! Received goods have any questions, please contact our online customer service! Also don't hesitate to get in touch.

At the same time, please attach your name and contact information and order number in the mail, so that we can quickly give you timely processing, I wish you a happy shopping!! Do not hesitate to contact us!

Delivery time

After the order is successfully placed, we will agree to the order order in order to carry out the allocation of the goods, the allocation cycle of about 3 working days, the general arrival time of about 20 working days. How to request returns and exchanges Returns for quality reasons: from the date of receipt of the goods within 20 days, the aftersales service center plus customer service will receive information within 1-3 working days of accepting your request, returns and changes resulting from shipping costs borne by us.

Some websites identified provided details of the logistics companies used for deliveries as shown in the images below; while others only confirm this to the consumer once the order is placed.

⚠ LAST DAYS OF LIQUIDATION



Shipping Policy

Shipping within 24 hours in Spain.

Transport companies:

- GLS
- SEUR



Original Polish language website



English translation

Below is an example of the delivery information from a website targeting consumers in Hong Kong which claims to use the SF Express service's physical store locations to arrange collection of the product:

Delivery and freight

Hong Kong:

1. Free postage throughout Hong Kong, delivered by SF Express to your door or to an SF station (cash on delivery), because cash on delivery does not currently support SF lockers.

2.

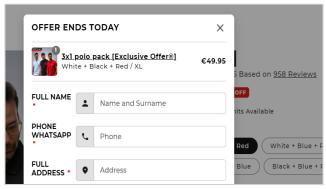
After the delivery time order is successfully placed, we will distribute the goods according to the order in which the order is placed. The distribution cycle is about 3 working days; unlimited time delivery and designated period delivery, and collection can be provided on Saturdays, Sundays and national holidays. Delivery service

- (ii) Communication: While buyers receive order confirmation by email, many of the websites were noted to use mobile private messaging applications for arranging shipping details and customer services. Below are examples of this practice:
- "Please keep your mobile phone open. Our shipper will contact you"

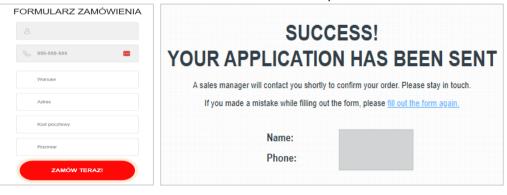
Hello, your order has been placed successfully. The product will be sent to you as soon as possible. Please keep your mobile phone open. Our shipper will contact you. ***Do not repeat your order***

Back to main page>>

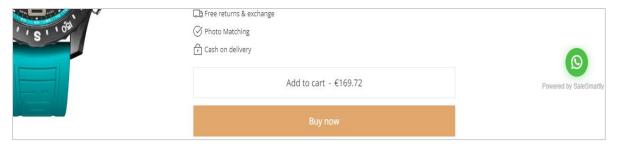
Order form requires "PHONE/WHATSAPP"



 The below website order form only accepts a phone number and address for delivery and no email address is required



When inspecting the embedded URL from a website's WhatsApp plugin, it was determined that the underlying phone number had a Hong Kong country code and was found to be using a WhatsApp business account²:



 $^{^{2} \ \}underline{\text{https://web.whatsapp.com/send/?phone=}} \underline{\text{852906139}} \underline{\text{XX\&text=I+am+browsing\%3A+https\%3A\%2F\%2Fwww.luxuryparadise.online\%2F}} \underline{\text{Attps://web.whatsapp.com/send/?phone=}} \underline{\text{852906139}} \underline{\text{XX\&text=I+am+browsing\%3A+https\%3A\%2F\%2Fwww.luxuryparadise.online\%2F}} \underline{\text{Attps://web.whatsapp.com/send/}} \underline{\text{Attps://web.whatsapp.c$

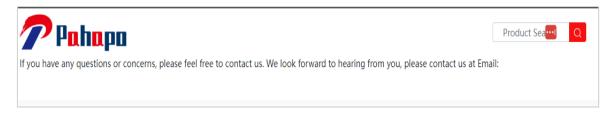
• The website below was identified using LINE Messenger to connect with customers (green icon on right side):



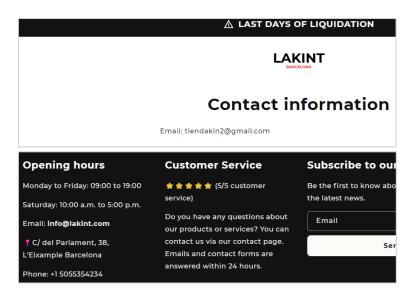
When clicking URL from the LINE Messenger plugin, it was determined that the underlying account appeared to be of Chinese origin based on the name of the account.



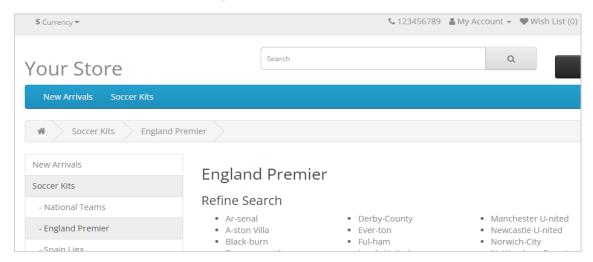
- (iii) Obfuscation of contact information: The Cash on Delivery websites identified during this research were found to regularly omit or provide incomplete or mismatched contact information. This is similar to the practice used by other counterfeit and fraudulent advertisers and website operators. Below are examples of this practice:
- Missing email address on Contact Us page with no other contact information provided



• Conflicting contact information with a free-email address, an email matching the domain name, +1 (USA) telephone number and an physical address in Spain:

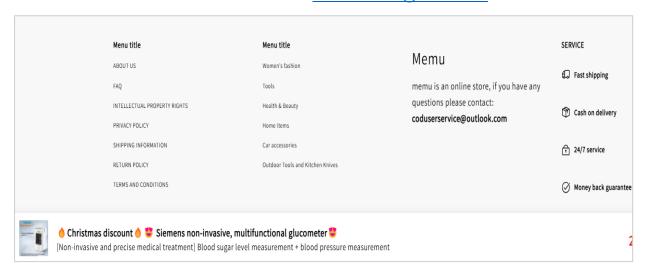


False contact information with telephone number listed as "123456789"

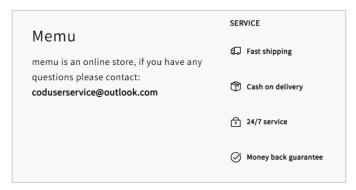


· Providing conflicting websites and contact information after customer service requests

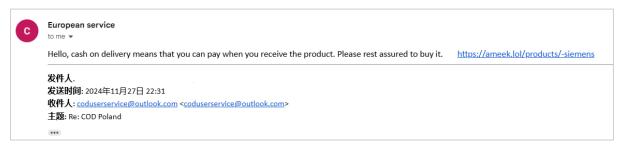
As part of the research of this report, a website³ offering a Blood Glucose Monitoring device was identified with the customer service email listed as coduserservice@outlook.com shown below:



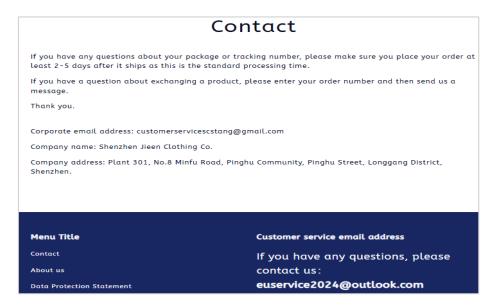
³ https://hnonplus.monster/products/glukometr-?sku=18067490800413158968471105



After emailing this address to enquire about the cash on delivery shipping, the following response was received providing a URL to a different website (note the earlier URL was not specified in the enquiry):



The website URL⁴ provided by the operator was found to have the same template with identical product listings and cash on delivery options, but different contact information on the Contact and About Us pages, even referencing completely different products to what was offered on the website itself:



About us

Magyar Otthon is an online store that offers Hungarian products of the highest quality to customers from all over the world. The aim of the store is to introduce the values and feelings of a traditional Hungarian home to the whole world. The aim of the store is to make customers feel the warmth of home and Hungarian hospitality by buying our products.

Products in the shop include famous Hungarian paprika, fine wines and traditional Hungarian handicrafts such as lace and embroidered tablecloths. Magyar Otthon is proud to offer high-quality

⁴ https://ameek.lol/products/-siemens

Despite further research, it was not possible to identify the true operator/merchant behind these websites or verify that the information shown on the websites belonged to the website operator. However, it shows that there are multiple versions of the same website operating the same infringing business model.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

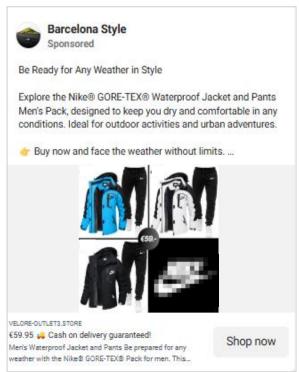
The "Cash on Delivery" modus operandi currently being used by counterfeiters and fraudulent advertisers illustrates the increasing sophistication of operations for the following reasons:

- It adds further complexity and obfuscation to the counterfeit supply chain for the consumer, but also for law enforcement and rights owners conducting investigations into such activities.
- It illustrates that counterfeiters have identified weaknesses in delivery and "last mile" courier services that accept a "cash on delivery" businesses and are able to consolidate counterfeit products in warehouses and logistics centers including within Europe.
- The scheme avoids due diligence and scrutiny from typical ecommerce transaction and payment service providers as payments are accepted in cash. It is currently unknown how the ultimate operators of these advertisements and websites collect the cash payments from the logistics providers when paid by the consumer at the doorstep or collection point.
- It highlights how private messaging is increasingly used by counterfeiters to facilitate interactions with customers.

We would also recommend a multistakeholder approach to address this key issue from rights owners, social media intermediaries, domain registrars, hosting providers and logistics companies and law enforcement.

If you have information into these websites or have successfully disrupted such operations, please share more details with INTA's Director of Anticounterfeiting, Alastair Gray (agray@inta.org) so that more awareness raising can take place and that details of this activity is shared with the appropriate authorities to dismantle this growing practice.

Appendix A – Examples of other Cash on Delivery Sponsored Adverts







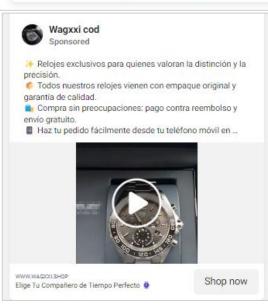
Translation of ad text: "We have 60 Casio square watches in stock, the G-SHOCK GMW-B5000, which have been out of stock for a long time. As this is the Casio 35th anniversary model, it will be back to its original price of 3,290 yen each, the lowest price today. Up to 32,900 in 2 hours! It has Bluetooth connection, is waterproof to 200 meters, and can be worn for 10 years without changing the battery. Fashion stars around the world are sure to have one, and now you can purchase it by clicking the link without pre-ordering. It will be delivered to your home from Yamako factory in Japan. (The destination website offers cash on delivery)"











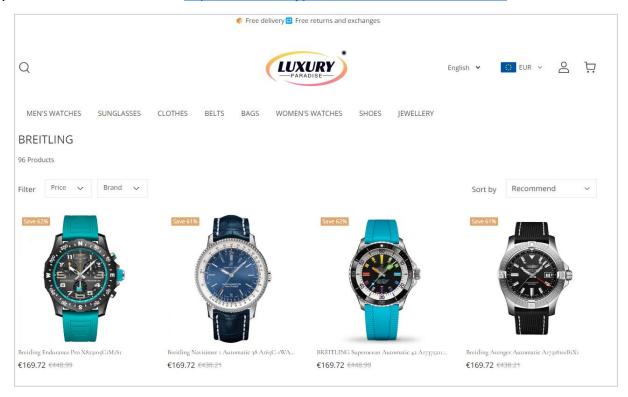


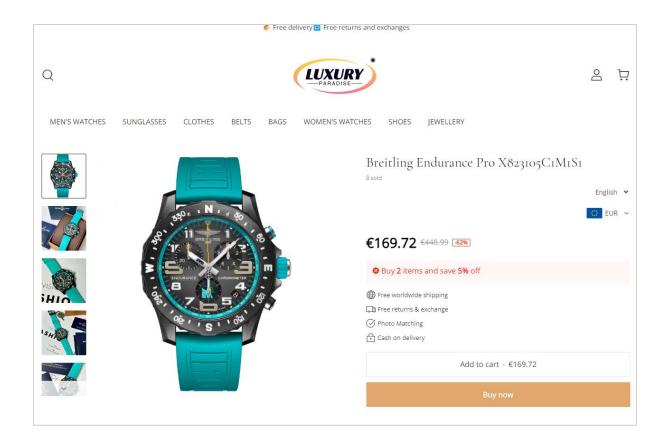
Appendix B - Sponsored Advert and Destination Websites

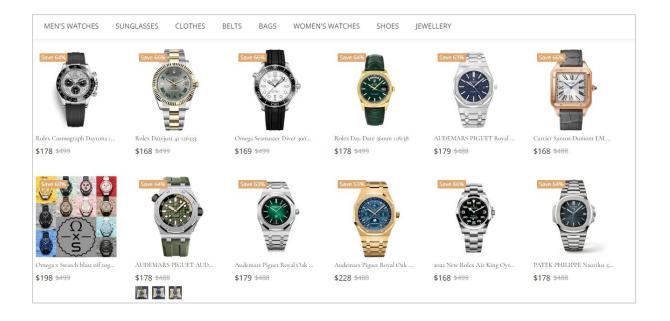
(i) Sponsored advert on social media



(ii) Destination website: https://www.luxuryparadise.online/collections/breit



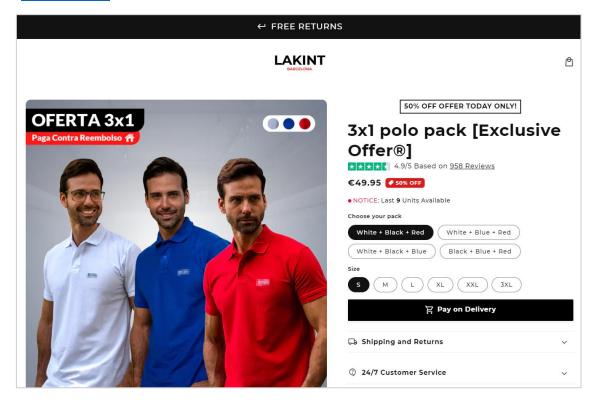




(iii) Sponsored advert on social media



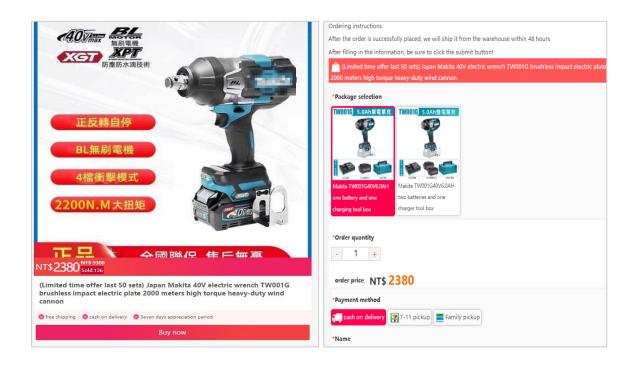
(iv) Destination website: https://lakintbarcelona.com/products/pack-polos-3x1-oferta-exclusiva-bcn



(v) Sponsored advert on social media



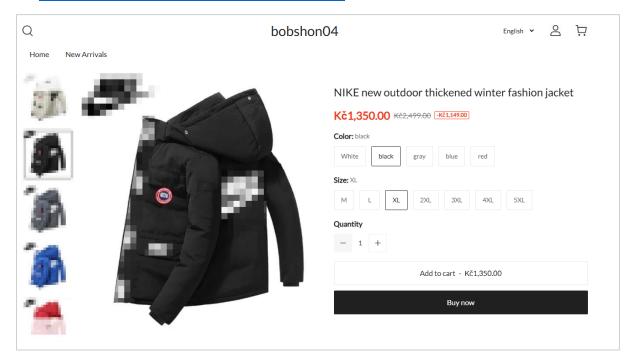
(vi) Destination website: https://csmo.store/8RwC5S-12?l=zh-tw&fbclid=lwY2xjawGoFDBleHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHUy3ZfMgfCglzsR3ThXGnesf4n3mSEjiDMinXuDhxxaPkR nbT1EmOyYkA aem H3FC1D8DBy0l3b1 bD4DAw (translated text)



(vii) Sponsored advert on social media



(viii) Destination website: https://www.bobshon.com/products/nike-nov-11-13?st=&fbclid=lwY2xjawGoHd5leHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHWWWEX39jxJShz2PQBwZXcNC_0stTM5HOzFlwl78VlmweyachZ6EJBKyYkQ_aem_0MnTXZXW5YH5kRkODTF3mg&variant=76913386-27b0-4652-8750-8858d043848f



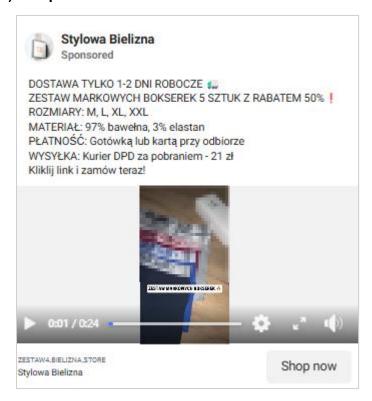
(ix) Sponsored advert on social media



(x) Destination website: https://zestaw2.bielizna-tommy.site/



(xi) Sponsored advert on social media



(xii) Destination website: https://zestaw4.bielizna.store/



(xiii) Sponsored advert on social media



(xiv) Destination website:

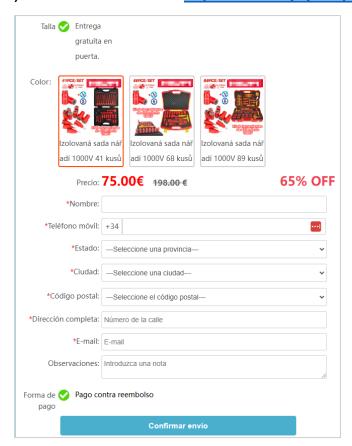
https://vupwiais.top/index/detail.html?sno=MTAwODU2MjUyOQ%3D%3D



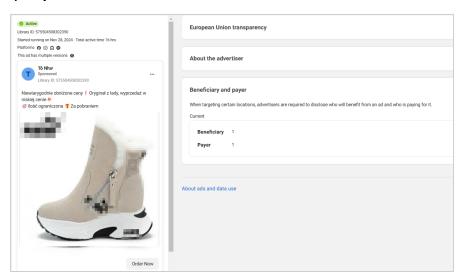
(xv) Sponsored advert on social media



(xvi) Destination website: https://esww.ktyky.shop/?m=ltem&a=show&id=76299



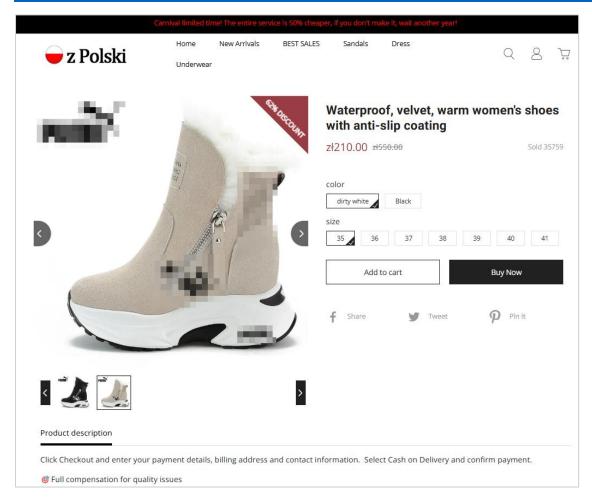
(xvii) Sponsored advert on social media



(xviii) Destination website:

https://www.feeg3.shop/products/wodoodporne-aksamitne-cieple-buty-damskie-z-powloka-

<u>antyposlizgowa?st&fbclid=lwY2xjawG2XlpleHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHalMNnK4J7vPJ8uyzt</u> EsVW-6HJtwPetl5KieOchywoFZtzBUOU0Mvc2t9w_aem_4WXFk2JUtNHsPkHhO3B4HQ

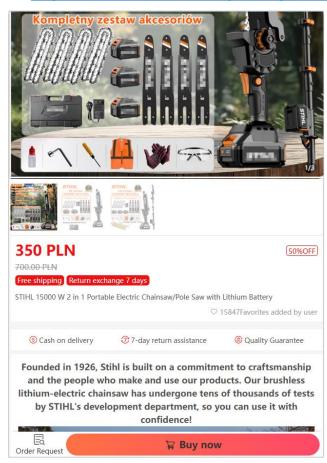


(xix) Sponsored advert on social media



(xx) Destination website:

https://yantithesisa.monster/?m=Item&a=show&id=152786&fbclid=IwY2xjawG2oNtleHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHQHhN-IQDT0EfB0baXr3f1RbvdH-mwj5Y1AZ5F2xklYlHMcOCGsjkZeLWg aem wuJR5ceN3CQv8zUUxpWYuQ



(xxi) Sponsored advert on social media



(xxii) Destination website:

https://hqce.top/product/c04fd962?fbclid=lwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR2GW0hF7vfonyOx E-lebp GNBHMJWfHvIEI-yMQpgh6qd5 9JiuGI-Sr1c aem DhyxyVQEFWQ5BNCazuaUEA



(xxiii) Sponsored advert on social media



Destination website: https://www.bbvinoe.com/products/triumph-3-ks-zakarova-krajkova-podprsenka-s-kosticemi-na-bocich?st=&variant=66b77cc7-11a1-4d62-a83b-3186634c807f

