Fake-Shop Detector

Real-time protection for Austrian online shoppers

Online shopping offers great opportunities but also carries risks. Fake online stores cause millions in damages in Austria each year, affecting hundreds of thousands of consumers. The Fake-Shop Detector (FSD) protects users directly while browsing by identifying and warning against fraudulent online shops before any purchase is made. By combining artificial intelligence, human expertise, and privacy-compliant technology, the tool provides the first comprehensive, proactive protection against online shop fraud.

Quick Facts

- Solution area: **Organisations, Processes, Quality assurance and certification, Technological innovation**
- Administrative level: **State, Federation**
- Solution process: **Digitization and technology, Public service, Science and research**
- Technology: **Artificial Intelligence, Automation and robotics, Information technology, Networks**

How it works

The Fake-Shop Detector uses a blacklist of over 26,700 known fraudulent shops in German-speaking countries and analyzes unknown websites in real time using artificial intelligence. Over 22,000 features are included in the risk assessment, enabling highly accurate predictions of a shop's trustworthiness. Each detected shop is displayed via a traffic light system: red indicates known or suspicious shops. The quality of the assessments is continuously reviewed by experts from Watchlist Internet – a human oversight essential for security-critical applications. The FSD is available as a browser plugin and in the mobile Watchlist Internet app, ensuring protection on both desktop and mobile devices. Privacy is ensured through a "Privacy by Design" approach: no personal data is stored, and all assessments are performed locally or using plug-in data only.

The Big Picture

By combining AI and human expertise, the Fake-Shop Detector enables safe online purchases and reduces economic damage from fraud significantly. Consumers can instantly identify and avoid suspicious shops, while reputable operators receive a quality seal that builds trust. Authorities, such as police and judiciary, also benefit from the technology, supporting more effective combat against online fraud. FSD is therefore a showcase project for responsible, secure, and innovative digitalization in consumer protection. The tool was awarded the State Prize for Digitalization 2024 and was evaluated and certified by the independent system testing provider AV-Comparatives as the most effective security product against fraudulent online shops.

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