Amazon testing video calls to verify third-party sellers

Amazon is testing using video calls to verify third-party sellers as it attempts to minimize the amount of fraudulent accounts and listings on its platform, the company has announced. The live verification initiative initially used in-person meetings when it began earlier this year, but pivoted to video conferencing as the COVID-19 pandemic made social distancing measures necessary.

“As we practice social distancing, we are testing a process that allows us to validate prospective sellers’ identification via video conferencing,” an Amazon spokesperson said in a statement, “This pilot allows us to connect one-on-one with prospective sellers while making it even more difficult for fraudsters to hide.”

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In recent years, Amazon has faced intense scrutiny over the products sold by third-party sellers on its platform. Last year, for example, an investigation by *The Wall Street Journal* found thousands of items for sale on Amazon that were mislabeled, banned, or had been declared unsafe by federal agencies. There have also been reports of counterfeit goods being sold on Amazon. Last year, Amazon announced that third-party sales account for over half of items sold on its platform.

The new live verification process is currently being trialed in countries including the US, UK, China, and Japan, and involves an Amazon associate checking that a seller matches

their ID and the documents they've provided as part of their application. It does not involve using any facial recognition technology to verify their identity, Amazon confirmed to *GeekWire*. The call also provides an opportunity for the associate to answer questions about the application process. Amazon says that over 1,000 prospective sellers have gone through the pilot program so far.

Amazon says its existing verification process for third-party sellers uses a combination of machine learning and human review to weed out suspected bad actors. The company said these processes stopped 2.5 million accounts from listing items for sale in 2019.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/4/27/21238026/amazon-seller-verification-video-calling-fraud-third-party-sellers