No, you can’t get a 16TB SSD for a hundred bucks

If you’ve searched for external SSDs on Amazon.com recently, you may have noticed something weird: mixed in with the 1TB and 2TB drives from brands like Samsung and SanDisk are a bunch of listings for 16TB SSDs, mostly around $100, and with surprisingly high user ratings. Every single one is a scam, even if they’re shipped by Amazon.

The Verge confirmed that several fake 16TB drives showed up on the first page of results for “external SSD,” and over half the results for “16TB SSD” were fakes — the rest were either 16TB enterprise hard drives, multi-drive enclosures, and one actual 16TB external drive, which costs $2,400 and contains two 8TB SSDs. While the top fake had a 3.6-star rating, the next two were 4.8 and 4.2, respectively. How are such obvious fakes getting such high ratings?

It’s the scam Hendrickson calls “review merging,” and *Consumer Reports* calls “review hijacking.” As Hendrickson explains, some third-party sellers take old listings and replace them with new items, leaving the reviews but changing everything else. A quick scan of one fake 16TB drive listing showed five-star reviews for laptop chargers, basketball backpacks, stickers, screen protectors, Mardi Gras beads, and mousepads. The sellers gather good reviews for cheap generic products, swap in a more expensive fake, and then take it down when bad reviews start piling up.

Hendrickson says he reported the fake SSD to Amazon and is awaiting their response. While some of the listings became “unavailable” after linking Amazon to them, though, some were still up. One was replaced by a new product altogether.

This isn’t a new trick. In 2019, an Amazon spokesperson told *Consumer Reports* they’d spent over $400 million to address the problem in one year alone. “Last year, we prevented more than 13 million attempts to leave an inauthentic review and we took action against more than five million bad actors attempting to manipulate reviews,” they said at the time.

And yet, nearly four years later, it continues to be an issue.

“The old maxim remains true: if it’s too good to be true, it probably isn’t,” warns Hendrickson. “If you’re unsure, check the reviews closely. Do they match up to the product? If not, run.”

A 16TB SSD for $100? Too good to be true. But you can get a really fast 1TB external SSD for about $100. Just stick to reputable storage brands like SanDisk, Samsung, and Western Digital. And don’t forget to read the reviews.

https://www.theverge.com/2023/1/16/23557569/amazon-scam-review-merging-16tb-external-ssds