

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Enhanced E-commerce Guidelines to Safeguard Consumer Trust and Foster Competitive E-commerce Market

1. The Technical Reference 76 on Guidelines for electronic commerce (“**e-commerce**”) transactions (“**TR 76**”)¹ has been enhanced to address emerging challenges in Singapore’s e-commerce market, providing e-commerce marketplaces (“**e-marketplaces**”² and **e-retailers**”³) with updated guidelines to enhance consumer trust and promote market competitiveness.
2. Developed by a multi-stakeholder Working Group appointed by Enterprise Singapore, through the Singapore Standards Council, the revision of the TR 76 represents an industry-led effort to uplift industry standards in the e-commerce sector. The Working Group⁴ comprises industry experts from the e-commerce sector, such as representatives from online marketplaces (including Shopee, Lazada and FairPrice), the Consumers Association of Singapore, the Singapore Retailers Association, the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (“**CCS**”) and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

¹ First published in 2020, the TR 76 equips e-commerce businesses with industry best practices on key activities relating to online transactions. The TR 76 was revised in 2022 to include additional anti-scam guidelines for e-retailers and e-commerce marketplaces, to offer better protection for consumers transacting online.

² “E-marketplaces” refer to online intermediaries or platforms that allow participating merchants to exchange information about products or services with customers to enter into an electronic commerce transaction, which may or may not provide information or services about payments and logistics.

³ “E-retailers” refer to individuals or organisations selling products or services directly to customers through their own online platform such as website or mobile application.

⁴ Working Group members include: Amazon Asia-Pacific Holdings Private Limited, ByteDance Pte. Ltd., Carousell Pte. Ltd., Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore, Consumers Association of Singapore, Facebook Singapore Pte. Ltd., FairPrice Group Holdings Pte. Ltd., Institute of Technical Education, Lazada Singapore Pte. Ltd., Lee & Lee, MasterCard Asia/Pacific Pte. Ltd., Ministry of Home Affairs, Personal Data Protection Commission, RSM SG Technology Consulting Pte. Ltd., Shopee Singapore Private Limited, Singapore Institute of Retail Studies, Singapore Retailers Association, and TUV SUD PSB Pte. Ltd..

Background

3. The e-commerce market in Singapore has experienced significant growth, with e-commerce revenue in the services sector reaching \$393.9 billion in 2023.⁵ As more businesses venture online to grow, diversify and reach new customers, e-marketplaces have become critical in connecting Singapore consumers with merchants.⁶

Updates to the TR 76

Enhancing Consumer Trust

4. With more consumers turning to online shopping for their everyday needs, robust consumer protection measures in the e-commerce space have become increasingly important. The way products are presented to consumers, such as headline descriptions and search rankings, significantly influence and shape consumer purchasing decisions. Emerging issues like fake reviews⁷ and misleading design features (such as subscription traps⁸) can undermine consumers' ability to make informed choices and erode consumer trust in the e-commerce space.
5. The enhanced TR 76 addresses these concerns by providing guidance on displaying information (including discounts and promotions) in product listings accurately, and for consumers to be able to readily access the relevant terms and conditions of merchants. The enhanced TR 76 also includes guidance in relation to addressing fake reviews and misleading user interfaces.

Promoting a Competitive E-commerce Market

6. Merchants increasingly depend on e-marketplaces to reach consumers. The way in which e-marketplaces interact with merchants on their platforms can significantly impact the business of merchants and affect the ability of new and existing e-marketplaces to enter and compete fairly and effectively. For instance, e-marketplaces may restrict their merchants' ability to sell their products on other competing platforms or impose onerous and unfair listing conditions for merchants. E-marketplaces may also accord preferential treatment to their own product or service listings, or those of their affiliates,

⁵ Source: Department of Statistics Singapore, Report for the "E-Commerce Revenue of Services Sector 2023".

⁶ "Merchants" refer to individuals or organisations that sell products or services to customers through an e-marketplace or e-retailer.

⁷ Fake reviews refer to fabricated or manipulated reviews that do not reflect the genuine opinion or experience of consumers.

⁸ Subscription traps refer to design features that mislead a consumer into signing up for a subscription by using a pre-ticked checkbox or situations when businesses make it easy to start a subscription, but unnecessarily difficult or confusing for consumers to cancel thereafter.

creating an uneven playing field that disadvantages other merchants on their platforms.

7. To keep Singapore's e-commerce market open and competitive, the TR 76 has been updated with guidance for e-marketplaces and e-retailers on engaging merchants fairly (such as fair listing conditions and allowing businesses to use multiple e-marketplaces), promoting transparency in their dealings with merchants and providing effective dispute resolution mechanisms.
8. The TR 76 also guides industry players on the appropriate use of automated tools and artificial intelligence. In deploying such tools, e-marketplaces and e-retailers should ensure these systems operate transparently and fairly, and consider how to manage any risks appropriately (such as compliance with competition, data protection, cybersecurity and other related laws).

Enhanced Anti-Scam Measures

9. The anti-scam guidelines in the TR76 have also been updated to recommend that e-marketplaces and e-retailers:
 - a. Conduct due diligence on merchants and verify their identity against government records or with internal business tools, where applicable.
 - b. Implement measures, including the suspension or termination of a merchant's account and enhanced identity verification, to protect customers upon detection of fraudulent activity.
 - c. Implement processes to identify suspicious content and account(s) and receive information from regulatory authorities for the purposes of identifying suspicious content and account(s).
 - d. Respond to regulatory requests expeditiously within 24 hours or the stipulated deadline (where provided). Note that this does not apply to stipulated deadlines in legal orders, for which platforms are legally required to respond or comply within the legally stipulated deadline.
 - e. Facilitate investigations, remediation and tracing of suspicious transactions by developing mechanisms to keep records of relevant account and transaction information.
10. Please refer to the **infographic** and **Annex A** for details on the key amendments to the TR 76.
11. Ms Choy Sauw Kook, Director-General (Quality and Excellence) at Enterprise Singapore, said: "As Singapore's e-commerce ecosystem and digital economy continue to mature, it is crucial that we continue to build trust among consumers

and maintain a transparent, competitive playing field for businesses. That is why we conduct regular reviews, in consultation with industry stakeholders, to ensure that our standards remain relevant and can support businesses' needs in emerging areas. With the enhanced TR 76, e-commerce players can more effectively build consumer trust, compete fairly on e-marketplaces, and navigate the use of new technologies.”

12. Chief Executive of CCS, Mr Alvin Koh, said: “The enhanced TR 76 represents a major step forward as it now covers more comprehensively the different aspects of a consumer’s purchasing journey, starting from pre- to post-purchase. We also now provide guidance to businesses operating in the online space so that they contribute to a fair and open environment. CCS encourages online businesses to incorporate these updated guidelines, which will help build greater trust and efficiency in our e-commerce ecosystem for the benefit of both consumers and businesses.”
13. Director, Policy Development and Security, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ms Loh Yuh Yiing, said: “E-commerce scams have more than halved, from about 7,200 cases in the first half of 2024, to about 3,200 cases in the first half of 2025. This significant improvement is in part due to the collective effort and close collaboration between the Government and industry. We urge the e-commerce industry to implement the enhanced TR76 guidelines to make online marketplaces safer for their users.”
14. The TR 76 may be purchased from the Singapore Standards eShop at www.singaporestandardseshop.sg. A PDF copy may also be purchased at the Singapore Standards eShop.

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About the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore

The Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (“**CCS**”) is a statutory board of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Our mission is to make markets work well to create opportunities and choices for businesses and consumers in Singapore. CCS administers and enforces the Competition Act 2004 and the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act 2003, to guard against anti-competitive activities and unfair trade practices. Additionally, CCS ensures that businesses observe fair trade measurement practices by administering the Weights and Measures Act 1975, and ensures the supply of safe consumer goods by enforcing and implementing the Consumer Protection (Trade Descriptions and Safety Requirements) Act 1975 and its associated Regulations.

For more information, please visit www.ccs.gov.sg.

About Enterprise Singapore

Enterprise Singapore is the government agency championing enterprise development.

The agency partners committed companies to build capabilities, innovate, and go global. It drives growth – empowering local businesses and shaping industries, anchoring Singapore as a trade and startup hub, and establishing trust in products through quality and standards.

Enterprise Singapore is here for wherever businesses are growing. Visit www.enterprisesg.gov.sg for more information.

About Singapore Standards Council

The Singapore Standards Council (SSC) facilitates the development, promotion and review of Standards and Technical References in Singapore. This work is done through partnerships with the industry, academia and government organisations, under the national standardisation programme overseen by Enterprise Singapore.

Visit www.enterprisesg.gov.sg/standards for more information.

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Annex A

Factsheet on Enhanced Technical Reference 76

The enhanced TR 76 introduces additional guidelines in relation to three areas: enhancing consumer protection and trust, keeping the e-commerce market open and competitive and strengthening anti-scam measures. These enhancements are intended to create a robust framework that protects consumers, while fostering innovation and healthy competition in Singapore’s e-commerce market.

E-marketplaces and e-retailers⁹ (collectively, “**Platforms**”) are encouraged to review their business practices based on the guidance set out in the enhanced TR 76.

Themes	Key Recommendations (non-exhaustive)
Enhancing consumer protection and trust	<p data-bbox="451 815 866 848"><u>Transparency for consumers</u></p> <ol data-bbox="504 898 1390 1778" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="504 898 1390 1059">1. Platforms should reasonably disclose information to allow customers to understand how products are recommended and displayed to them (such as whether listings are sponsored or advertised content).<li data-bbox="504 1111 1390 1525">2. Platforms should provide accurate information on their product or service listings, such as prices, returns and exchange policies and mandatory fees not included in the price.<ol data-bbox="600 1323 1390 1525" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="600 1323 1390 1525">a. For listings consisting of multiple products or services, or a range of applicable prices, user interfaces should be designed to allow listing information to be presented accurately <i>before</i> customers click on the listing.<li data-bbox="504 1576 1390 1778">3. Discounts and promotions listed should not be misleading (i.e., represent genuine savings to a customer), and applicable terms and conditions should be presented clearly, such as the time period of the discount or any qualifying terms.

⁹ E-retailers may also wish to consider implementing these best practices, where applicable.

	<p><u>Accessibility for Consumers</u></p> <p>4. Information on terms and conditions should be presented to customers in an accessible manner (i.e., accurate and easily understood), and material changes should be notified to customers with sufficient lead time.</p> <p><u>Fake Reviews</u></p> <p>5. Platforms should not modify customer reviews for commercial or promotional purposes, unless there are legitimate reasons to do so (such as to delete abusive or offensive content). Merchants and e-retailers should also not manipulate customer reviews, such as copying positive reviews from other sellers of the same product or service and presenting them as reviews of their own offerings.</p> <p><u>Misleading Design Features</u></p> <p>6. Platforms should design their platforms to present information in a clear, accurate and fair manner, so that consumers can make informed purchasing decisions.</p> <p>7. User interfaces should be designed to avoid the following misleading practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Misleading consumers to sign up for subscriptions; b. Unnecessarily complex cancellation processes that make it difficult to unsubscribe; c. Urgency tactics (such as misleading countdown timers or scarcity warnings); d. Misleading stock availability displays, which would pressure customers into hasty purchases.
<p>Keeping e-commerce market open and competitive</p>	<p><u>Engaging Merchants Fairly</u></p> <p>1. Platforms should set reasonable conditions for merchants using their service including policies for removal of listings and account termination, taking into account their legitimate</p>

	<p>business interests. Such conditions should also be communicated and accessible to all merchants.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Unless objectively justified, merchants should be allowed to list and sell their products/services without being required to use other services provided. Merchants should generally be allowed to list and sell their products/services across other Platforms. 3. Platforms may offer their own products or services which compete with merchants or third-party service providers on their platform. In such situations, platforms should operate reasonably and not undermine competition. One example of how competition harm could arise would be if an e-marketplace treats its own retail listings more favourably in search and rankings, as compared to similar goods offered by merchants.¹⁰ <p><u>Recourse for Merchants</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Platforms should generally communicate reasons for removing a merchant's product listings or account in a timely manner. 5. E-marketplaces and e-retailers should have appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms to handle complaints and appeals by merchants. <p><u>Transparency over Badging, Search and Ranking</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Platforms should disclose information to allow merchants to understand how products are presented on the platform's interface (which includes factors that impact product recommendation, search rankings and awarding badges and labels). <p><u>Accessibility for Merchants</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Information on terms and conditions should be presented to merchants in an accessible manner (i.e., accurate and
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¹⁰ Whether there is sufficient harm to competition to warrant potential concerns under the Competition Act 2004, would depend on the specific facts and circumstances of each case.

	<p>easily understood), and material changes should be notified to merchants with sufficient lead time.</p> <p><u>Use of Automated Tools (Artificial Intelligence and Algorithms)</u></p> <p>8. Platforms should use automated tools in ways that are explainable, transparent and fair; and manage legal risks from using such tools, including competition law, data protection and security.</p>
<p>Strengthening anti-scam measures</p>	<p><u>Merchant verification</u></p> <p>1. E-marketplaces and e-retailers should conduct due diligence and identity verification against government records and/or with internal business tools and external verifications, where applicable.</p> <p><u>Protection of customers from fraud</u></p> <p>2. Implement measures to protect customers upon detection of patterns consistent with fraudulent activities. These measures may include the suspension or termination of a merchant’s account and the conduct of enhanced identity verification.</p> <p>3. Take enforcement measures upon receiving information from law enforcement agencies that a merchant is a fraud risk on their platform. These measures may include blacklisting the merchant and restricting the merchant’s activity.</p> <p><u>Enhancing fraud detection</u></p> <p>4. Implementation of processes to identify suspicious content and accounts and to proactively remove such content and accounts if assessed to be fraudulent.</p> <p>5. Implementation of processes to receive information from regulatory authorities for the purposes of identifying suspicious content and accounts.</p> <p><u>Provision of information for follow up action</u></p>

	<p>6. Respond to regulatory requests expeditiously within 24 hours or the stipulated deadline (where provided). Note that this does not apply to stipulated deadlines in legal orders, for which platforms are legally required to respond or comply within the legally stipulated deadline.</p> <p>7. To facilitate investigations, remediation and tracing of suspicious transactions, E-marketplaces and E-retailers should develop mechanisms to keep records of relevant account and transaction information. This includes chatlogs, merchant account information, and device information.</p>
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