

Trustpilot Transparency Report

Table of contents

An introduction	3
Protecting and promoting trust	6
How we operate	8
— We're open	9
— Our transparent approach	10
— Our freemium business model	11
— When a review is written	12
Reviews in numbers	13
How we safeguard our platform	16
— Our automated fraud detection software	17
— Our reviewer community and whistleblowers	18
— Misuse of the flagging tools	24
Fake reviews and how we combat them	25
Enforcing our integrity	28
— How do we stop misbehaviour and misuse?	29
Reviews about Trustpilot	32

An introduction

Peter Holten Mühlmann, Founder and CEO

The internet is a powerful platform for progress that has helped educate, entertain and innovate, as well as creating jobs for millions of people around the world.

However, of late, it has also become a place of misinformation that has fuelled mistrust for too many. Geo-politics of division and social unrest have been seeded through fake news by those that seek to subvert the truth and distort trust. Rediscovering that lost trust - in all its guises - is a defining issue of our time.

As increasing numbers of us rely on the internet to research and buy products and services that we rely on every day, the need for trust has become ever-more acute. Retail growth that benefits society can only be sustained if there is trust. If consumers do not get accurate information about the businesses they purchase from, and smaller businesses fail to demonstrate that they can offer superior products and services to larger, better-known businesses and brands, then the potential benefits may diminish.

I started Trustpilot back in 2007 to bring businesses and consumers together; to foster that trust and inspire collaboration.

Back then, the internet offered choice and convenience that enabled shoppers to click and buy in minutes. This revolution was exciting but pretty daunting for most of us. Entering credit card details into the internet, to pay a faceless company for a product or service that we really needed was not always a comfortable experience. We could search the internet for help but with so many opinions out there - on all sorts of media channels - it was a minefield of information. How many of these places offered truly objective advice? It was often hard to tell.

We've always relied on family, friends and colleagues to give us advice on what to buy, and



from where. And when we want to know more, we can always visit a shop, a branch or a showroom, and make our own judgements based on the quality of the face-to-face advice we get.

These things remain true today and always will. But, with more and more people researching and shopping online for the convenience, choice and value; and a combination of innovation and commercial pressures taking more businesses online; how do we get close to the same level of trust online, as we get with friends, or in the workplace with colleagues?

You can't replicate those human relationships or physical experiences, but what we can do at Trustpilot is bring the very real experiences from consumers - from all around the world - into one place.

Trustpilot is a public platform where consumers and businesses can share and respond to honest feedback. Critically, the platform is free to use and open to everybody, where nothing is hidden. Information is no good to any of us if it is bought

Trust is in our name, and trust is at the heart of all that we do as a business; if we are to be successful, we have to be more open, more transparent and honest in the way that we work.

— Peter Mühlmann, founder and CEO

or edited to suit the commercial needs of any given brand, product or service. Consumers will only save time and money - and get the products and services that they want - if they can trust that the reviews and content they are being served come from people just like themselves, who want to share their genuine experiences and help others.

As more people use the platform, the reviews and content become richer and more useful to consumers and businesses alike. Thirteen years on from launch we are now ranked in the top 320 most visited websites in the world. We have received more than 120 million reviews - of over 520,000 business websites - that include every imaginable brand, product and service on our site today. But no matter how popular our platform gets, those principles of openness and transparency will remain our guiding light.

There is no doubt that the global Covid pandemic has been a key driver in the accelerated growth of e-commerce in 2020 and in turn, the number of reviews that consumers are writing and reading. In fact, we experienced a 25% increase in reviews being written globally, with company views across the platform also increasing by 29% when

comparing March to October 2020. Whether you're a consumer or a business, being online has become a necessity, not just a convenience.

If online reviews and content are to continue to rise in popularity, they must have the objectivity, transparency and the quality that will instil confidence in consumers, and inspire more businesses to deliver what customers really need and want.

Trust is in our name, and trust is at the heart of all that we do as a business; if we are to be successful, we have to be more open, more transparent and honest in the way that we work. That is why we want to publicly hold ourselves to account.

My [‘Trust Promise’](#) was an open agreement with the world to say that Trustpilot will do more to ensure that consumers and businesses can continue to benefit from their interactions on the Trustpilot platform and that they can trust the integrity of the content they see. I'm proud to say that we achieved all the things we set out to do in 2020, but we'll not be stopping there.

With this Trustpilot Transparency Report, we continue to open up the workings of our business. It includes data that has never been released publicly before and provides more insight into the actions we are taking to protect and promote trust online.

We've come a long way, and this work will never end. We've got the right blend of people, technology, experience and ambition and are putting integrity at the heart of everything we do.

More openness, transparency and ultimately trust isn't just about reviews, it's what the world needs right now. I hope, wholeheartedly, that our approach continues to make everyone's world a better and more trusted place.

Tusind tak / Thank you

Peter

Protecting and Promoting Trust

Carolyn Jameson, Chief Trust Officer



“Our focus and commitment to protecting and promoting trust online is unabating. This coming year we’re continuing to push the boundaries with new initiatives that will ensure online reviews on Trustpilot remain a trusted source of information.”

— Carolyn Jameson, Chief Trust Officer

Our current focus areas include:

- Strengthening trust within the review community by exploring new ways to use existing technology for consumer validation
- Taking action to tackle fake reviews at their source
- Further protecting consumers by including more relevant and useful information from third-parties such as public authorities and regulatory bodies
- Improving our business validation through increased checks and balances
- Ongoing improvements to the Trustpilot platform, to bring even more clarity to consumers and businesses, including more on how we calculate our TrustScore

How we operate

We're open

'Open' means everyone can have their say.

We believe strongly in consumers having their voice heard on our platform without interference.

We allow everyone to share their experiences on Trustpilot at any time, and any businesses can also encourage more feedback by proactively inviting their consumers to review them and engage with that feedback.

Consider the example of a general election. In a democracy, everyone gets a vote. Asking only those 'invited' to vote simply wouldn't be inclusive and would skew the result. That's exactly the same way we think about reviews at Trustpilot.

The alternative is a very 'closed' approach. Other pay-to-access review platforms do exist where companies collect reviews solely through invites, and can 'unpublish' those reviews they don't like. Either after the fact or by pre-screening. We don't agree with this way of doing things. It doesn't give consumers the full picture nor businesses the full insights they need to improve.

Reviews on Trustpilot are published without interference, other than being run through our technology to filter reviews with a strong likelihood of being fraudulent.

It should not, however, be misconstrued that an open platform is one of complete perfection. Openness also does not mean there are no rules. We have clear [guidelines](#) for both consumers and businesses that govern the platform.

Sadly, there will always be those who will try to manipulate consumers, or try to use the platform in a manner that doesn't meet our guidelines. These threats are real and are constantly evolving, and we are, in turn, constantly adapting to meet emerging challenges.

“Reviews cannot remain a trusted source of information if businesses can pre-select a more favourable view of themselves - it's misleading. Our open approach provides everyone with the ability to have their say without interference, giving a more holistic and authentic view of what's really going on.”

— Carolyn Jameson, Chief Trust Officer

Throughout 2020, we made a number of changes as we continued to tackle fakes and fraudulent behaviour by investing heavily in our technology and people, including launching a new [R&D Hub in Edinburgh, UK](#), to bring greater innovation and expertise to tackle trust online.

We've also updated [how businesses can collect their reviews](#), to encourage increased automation and discourage any selective inviting. The use of incentives has also been banned. We're always looking at new ways to educate everyone on the way Trustpilot should be used and use our public alerts when we see behaviour that consumers should be warned of, including spikes in reviews which are triggered by issues trending in the news or on social media.

Open means, everyone can have their say if the feedback is based on a genuine buying or service experience.

Our transparent approach

Transparency is a key driver of trust. This means having clear and consistent communication about what we do, and why we do it. The report you are reading is one such example of us sharing more insight into how we uphold our platform's integrity. We constantly ask ourselves questions like "Do people understand this feature? How can we guide them? And how can we do this better than anyone else in the industry?". It's asking these types of questions that inspired us to launch business transparency pages, which gives consumers increased visibility into how a business is using Trustpilot.

Business Transparency

Our Business Transparency boxes and pages give an overview of how businesses are using Trustpilot.

"The integrity of reviews and how they're managed differs greatly across the internet. At Trustpilot, we're surfacing what we do and giving everyone more understanding and greater confidence in the information on our platform. We want people to continue to trust what they see."

— Carolyn Jameson, Chief Trust Officer

This information is on every company profile page and we're constantly looking at ways to develop it further.

Everyone can now see how each business obtained its reviews*, how their review star ratings differ by source, how many times they've flagged reviews ('flagged' means a review has been highlighted for investigation by Trustpilot's Content Integrity Team), and whether those flagged reviews did actually breach our guidelines. For more information see [here](#).

For the vast majority of businesses who use Trustpilot and their reviews in the right way, this information is yet another proof point to build trust with their consumers. For those who don't, it's an opportunity for consumers to see that too - perhaps they're reporting an abnormally large volume of reviews. If we have evidence to suggest that any business is trying to mislead consumers through misuse of our flagging tools, then we will take action.

TrustScore

Each company profile page includes an overarching TrustScore and star rating. The TrustScore is an overall measurement of reviewer satisfaction, based on all the reviews a business receives on Trustpilot. A star rating is the TrustScore visualised. Each time a new review is posted and a reviewer rates a business, the overall TrustScore is recalculated. The formula for calculation considers three factors: time span, frequency, and Bayesian average. You can read more detail about the TrustScore and these three factors [here](#).

Our TrustScore gives greater weight to reviews written more recently. The frequency with which reviews have been posted therefore also

*Reviews can be written either by a consumer without an invitation (Organic), via an invitation sent by the business (Invited) or via a link they have clicked on the business's website (Redirect)

plays a part given more recent reviews have a greater weight. Our use of the Bayesian average automatically includes the value of 7 reviews worth 3.5 stars each in all TrustScore calculations. We use this to ensure businesses with fewer reviews don't instantly end up with a high or low score. For example, if a business had only two 5-star reviews and the TrustScore used a normal average it would instantly make the business look 'excellent', but this would only be based upon two experiences. The same would be true if the business had only received two negative reviews. The Bayesian average allows the overall score to remain more balanced until more reviews and experiences are shared.

Our freemium business model

We operate what's commonly called a 'freemium' business model. Consumers have the ability to use Trustpilot at any time completely free of charge. Businesses can use our basic services free of charge to invite their customers to review them, respond to reviews and report them. In fact, around 92% of businesses use our platform for free. We make most of our revenue from businesses choosing to subscribe to our software services including our automated invite system and review insights tools, as well as additional tools which help businesses showcase their reviews. Advertising makes up the rest.

Everyone is treated equally

All reviews are treated equally regardless of who wrote them or which business they are written about - and all consumers and businesses using the platform must follow our guidelines.

However, as a revenue-generating business, it is sometimes suggested that we allow paying businesses additional favour or sway on our platform. This is not correct. We would never jeopardise the integrity of our platform in this way.

Analysis of companies across our platform shows that being a paying customer has no material impact on the TrustScore and star rating on Trustpilot. Paying businesses that actively invite their customers to leave reviews have an average review star rating of 4.39, and active businesses on our free plan have an average review star rating of 4.38 (as at December 2020).

It is true that companies who ask their customers to review them regularly have a higher average star rating than those who don't. The very process of inviting can encourage a broader range of experiences to be reflected, including those writing positive reviews who might not take the time to write those reviews otherwise. What matters is if a business is actively inviting customers to leave a review or not - which any business can do for free - and of course, whether they are providing a good customer experience. Businesses regularly inviting are also getting more feedback with which to improve their business.

When a review is written

Trustpilot reviews can start in three ways:

Organic Reviews

Consumers who've had an experience with a company can create a Trustpilot account and write a review, at any time. We call this an **organic review**. There were **10,131,725** organic reviews written in 2020.

Invited and Verified Reviews

Businesses can also ask their customers to leave a review for them on Trustpilot. Invitations can be sent to customers via a business' own systems or collected using Trustpilot's review collection services. Where reviews are collected by a business using a method that automatically triggers an invitation to be sent via Trustpilot's systems following an experience with the business, we label those reviews as **verified**. Otherwise, we label the reviews a business has asked for as **invited**. All businesses inviting customers must ensure their invitation process and the language used is fair, neutral and unbiased. Businesses received **28,421,171** reviews via invitations in 2020.

Redirected Reviews

We introduced this new category on 1 September 2020 to bring greater transparency to consumers. Where we detect that a reviewer has clicked a link from a business's website and subsequently written a review on Trustpilot, we label the review as **Redirected**. Since being introduced there have been **134,652** reviews labelled as redirected.



Reviews in numbers

Consumers writing reviews in numbers

*all reviews data taken from Trustpilot.com

120,720,646

Total number of reviews written on Trustpilot from 2007 to 2020




38,687,548

Total number of reviews written on Trustpilot in 2020

19,306,929

Total number of consumers writing their first review on Trustpilot in 2020

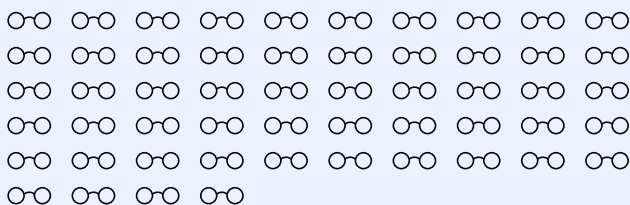
Total number of reviews grouped by star rating in 2020

-  **71.12%** | 5 star reviews
-  **8.97%** | 4 star reviews
-  **3.36%** | 3 star reviews
-  **2.66%** | 2 star reviews
-  **13.89%** | 1 star reviews

Consumers viewing reviews in numbers

540,836,477

Global number of company profile page views on Trustpilot in 2020



Where reviews are written - top 10 countries - in 2020



United Kingdom
13.8 million

United States
5.4 million

France
2.6 million

Denmark
2.2 million

Germany
1.9 million

Netherlands
1.8 million

Italy
1.5 million

Sweden
878k

Australia
809k

Spain
781k

Businesses in numbers

529,219

Total number of business websites with reviews on Trustpilot since its establishment



314,275

Total number of reviewed business websites on Trustpilot in 2020

153,089

Total number of business websites reviewed on Trustpilot for the first time in 2020

How we safeguard our platform

Trustpilot invests considerable resources in the preservation of the integrity of the content on our platform; it is in our interests to do so. If consumers and businesses were unable to rely on the feedback they see there, public trust in our platform would be undermined.

We combine customised fraud detection software with an international team of dedicated analysts, investigators and agents who work with reviews every day. The techniques adopted by those who want to manipulate the content on the platform constantly evolve, and therefore we must also constantly adapt to stay ahead.

Our automated fraud detection software

Our bespoke, automated fraud detection software has been developed over many years to identify and remove fraudulent reviews.

The first step, after any review is posted on the Trustpilot platform, is that it is run through this technology, which looks at multiple data points, such as IP addresses, user identifiers, device characteristics, location data and timestamps, to determine if it exhibits patterns of suspicious behaviour.

Our automated systems on average analyse over 100,000 reviews every day. Whenever our software detects clearly fraudulent reviews, the review is moved offline and we send an email to notify the reviewer (we won't send an email if the review is clearly advertising or promotional content). This provides reviewers with an opportunity to correct any false positives (which occurs in 14.7% of reviews taken offline). However, if we have

100%

of reviews on Trustpilot are screened by our automated fraud detection software

overwhelming evidence that the review is fake, we won't reinstate it.

Our intelligent systems also learn constantly from hundreds of millions of data points. This enables us to use machine learning to constantly improve the accuracy of our automated software. Thanks to our technology, our fraud protection programme is becoming more precise with every review, and our approach enables us to act at scale, to combat content or behaviour that undermines the integrity of the platform.

Our reviewer community and whistleblowers

In addition to our automated software, we invite businesses and members of our reviewing community to flag any suspicious reviews on the Trustpilot platform.

Anyone can flag a review if they believe it breaches our guidelines. We refer to reviews that are flagged to us as **reported reviews**.

We take our responsibility to uphold the trustworthiness of our platform very seriously. Every reported review is considered by our specially trained Content Integrity Agents who have access to powerful tools that help them manually examine review patterns for anomalies. These systems highlight any unusual and persisting patterns using a range of data. Our team can use these factors to investigate and decide whether exceptional patterns indicate problems or have a logical explanation.

As we consider reported reviews, they are assessed identically, considering our guidelines and any relevant legal context. There is, however, always an unavoidable element of subjectivity when real people assess reviews. We make no distinction between companies that subscribe to Trustpilot's business services and those that do not, nor do we differentiate between businesses and consumers.

How reviewers and businesses can flag a review to us

Consumers can flag a review by clicking the flag icon displayed on every review on Trustpilot. The total number of reviews flagged by consumers in 2020 was 88,412. Of these flagged reviews 10,985 were deemed as accurate by our Content Integrity Team which means consumers had an accuracy rate of 12.4%.

Businesses can flag a review via their Trustpilot Business account, or if they don't have a business account, by getting in touch with our Content Integrity Team. Our whistleblower function is another way for people to confidentially report any

problems to us. The total number of reviews flagged by businesses in 2020 was 469,107. Of these flagged reviews 294,564 were deemed as accurate by our Content Integrity Team, meaning businesses had an accuracy rate of 62.8%.

There is a noticeable difference between the accuracy rates of both consumers and businesses flagging reviews. Businesses generally have more time to look into the reviews being written about them and also more information at their disposal such as purchasing records, for example. Consumers, by comparison, only have the written information in the review itself. We also find that if a consumer has had a bad experience with a business they may look to report all positive reviews on a businesses page. Upon further investigation we often find these reports to be inaccurate - a very clear example that behind every review is an experience that matters.

Reviews can be flagged by both consumers and businesses where they:

- contain harmful or illegal content;
- contain personal information;
- contain advertising or promotional content;
- are not based on a genuine experience;
- are about a different business (only businesses can report for this reason).

We don't notify reviewers every time their review is flagged. We'll only send an email to the reviewer if we determine that their review does breach our guidelines for the reason flagged, and we'll let them know what they can do to address the issue.

Encouraging more collaboration between businesses and consumers to resolve issues

If a business suspects a reviewer hasn't had an experience with them, they must reach out to the reviewer for more information using our ['Find Reviewer'](#) tool before they can flag the review.

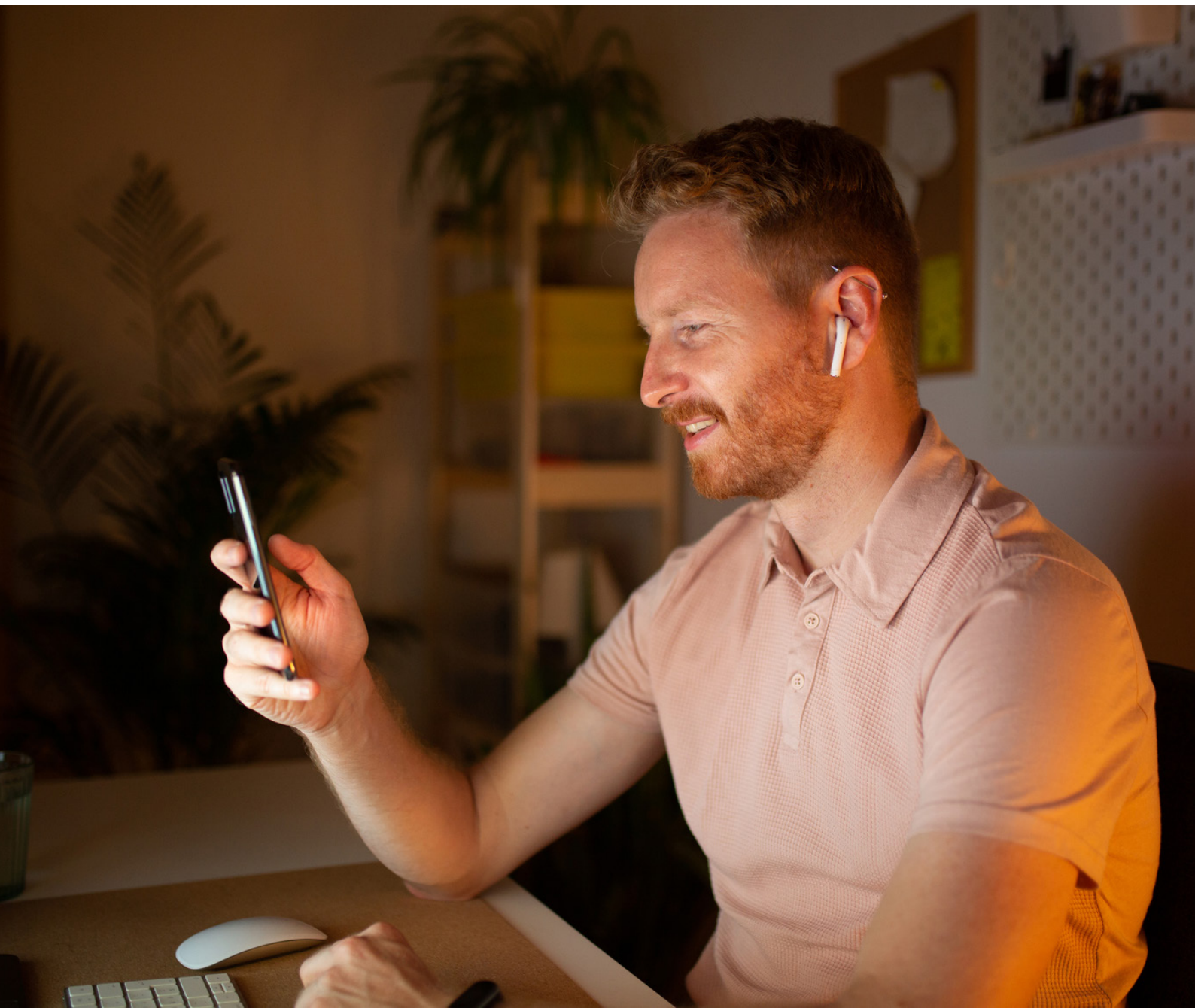
The Find Reviewer tool helps businesses to ask reviewers for more information, to more easily identify and resolve any issues.

From December 2020 we also encourage businesses to send a request to reviewers when

they want to flag a review for containing: personal information, advertising or promotional content or being about a different business.

Where businesses and consumers cannot find a resolution to an issue within 3 days, businesses can then continue to flag the reviews for our Content Integrity Team to investigate.

We do all we can to resolve any issue as quickly as possible, and our first response times in all markets globally is currently within 48 hours.



Consumers



Flagging reviews
in numbers

Consumers flagging reviews in numbers

88,412

Total number of reviews flagged by consumers in 2020



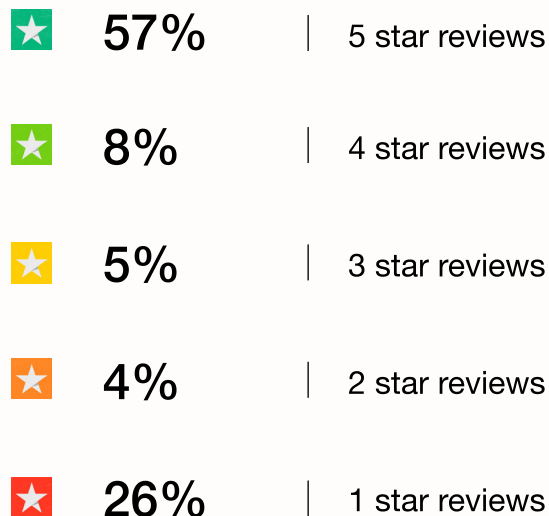
10,983

Total number of reviews validly flagged and taken offline in 2020

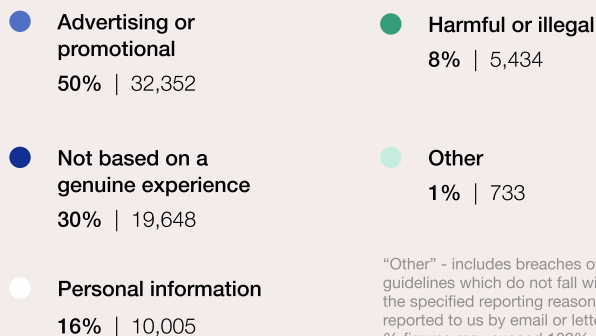
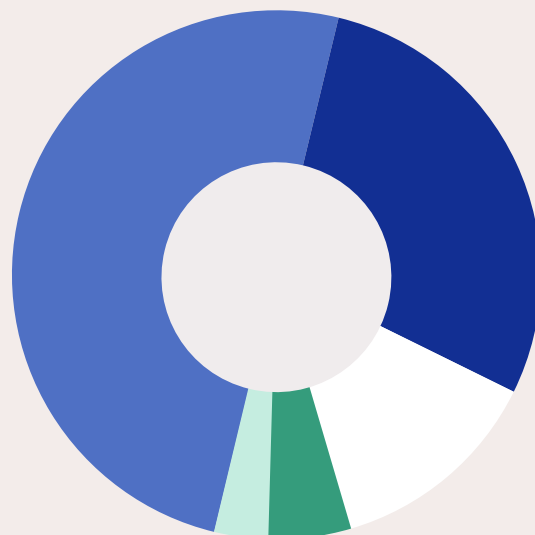
12.4%

Consumer flagging accuracy rate in 2020

Number of reviews flagged by consumers - split by star rating



Number of reviews flagged by consumers - split by reporting reason



"Other" - includes breaches of our guidelines which do not fall within the specified reporting reasons, reported to us by email or letter. % figures may exceed 100% as reviews can be reported for multiple reporting reasons.

Number of reviews flagged by consumers - split by review source

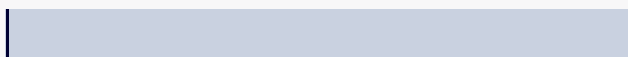
Organic 73% | 67,408



Invited 26.8% | 20,500



Redirected 0.2% | 504



Businesses

A close-up photograph of a person's hands typing on a silver laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a light blue shirt. The background is softly blurred, showing green foliage and a white wall. The overall mood is professional and focused.

Flagging reviews
in numbers

Businesses flagging reviews in numbers

469,107

Total number of reviews flagged by businesses in 2020



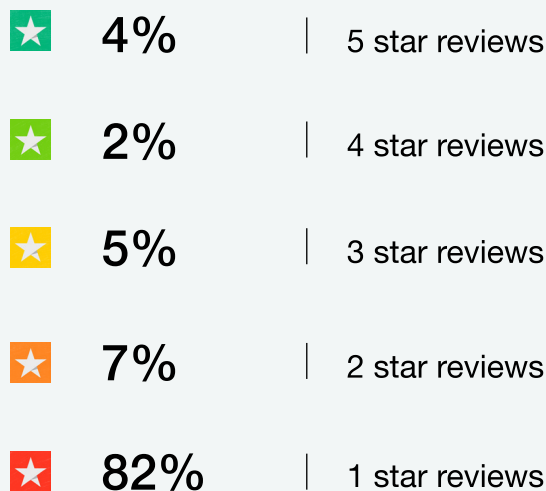
294,564

Total number of reviews validly flagged and taken offline in 2020

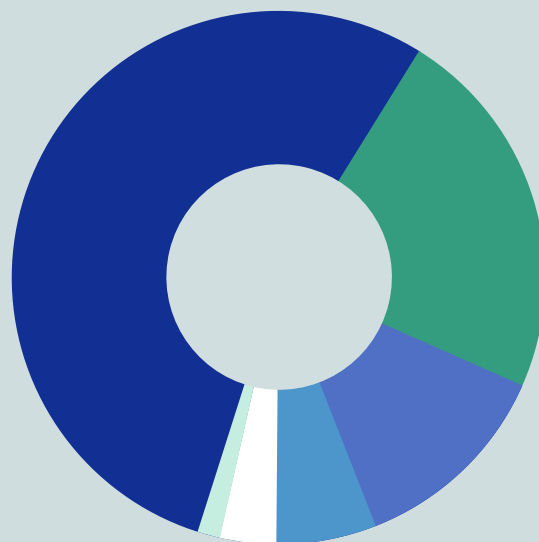
62.8%

Business flagging accuracy rate in 2020

Number of reviews flagged by businesses - split by star rating



Number of reviews flagged by businesses - split by reporting reason



Not based on a genuine experience
55% | 191,963

About a different business
10.5% | 37,068

Harmful or illegal
23% | 79,647

Personal information
4% | 14,123

Advertising or promotional
12.5% | 43,366

Other
1% | 1,491

"Other" - includes breaches of our guidelines which do not fall within the specified reporting reasons, reported to us by email or letter. % figures may exceed 100% as reviews can be reported for multiple reporting reasons.

Number of reviews flagged by businesses - split by review source

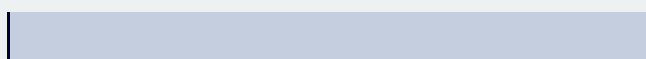
Organic 80.9% | 426,855



Invited 19% | 39,530



Redirected 0.1% | 2,722



Misuse of the flagging tools

Occasionally, we see our flagging tools being misused through inconsistent flagging or unfairly flagging reviews that don't breach our guidelines.

Examples of misuse of our reporting tools include:

- Rapidly flagging reviews — this would indicate that the reviews are not being properly considered or assessed;
- Flagging a large proportion of genuine negative reviews in an effort to get them removed;
- Flagging the same review over and over again to try and get it removed.

Business users will receive an in-app and email warning if they breach these guidelines. Continued misuse of our flagging tools will result in automated restriction on their ability to flag any reviews for 48 hours in the case of rapid flagging, and a 14 day block on reporting reviews for repeatedly flagging genuine reviews. Further and continued breaches of our guidelines in this respect will result in action, which may include a formal notice to the business, termination of any paid subscription and a Consumer Warning on their Trustpilot profile.



Fake reviews and how we combat them

Trustpilot invests heavily in combatting and catching fake reviews and taking action against those responsible. In 2020, we removed 2,209,230 fake reviews from our platform. This is 5.7% of the total reviews written in 2020 and 1.7% of all reviews written since 2007.

What is a fake review?

When we talk about fake reviews, we mean reviews that don't reflect a genuine service or buying experience with a business, and have been left in an attempt to manipulate consumer perception or negatively target a particular business. Reviews that give an account of a genuine experience, even if elements of that account are regarded as unfair by the business in question, are not fake.

The type of reviews we consider to be 'fake reviews' include:

- a business leaving a review on its own Trustpilot profile;
- a review that has been paid for in an effort to manipulate a business's rating on Trustpilot;
- a review left on a competitor's Trustpilot page in a deliberate attempt to undermine their rating on Trustpilot;
- advertising or promotional messages of any kind that are disguised as reviews;
- a review that has been removed from the platform because it contains harmful or illegal content;
- a review that is not based on a genuine experience or is not about the business being reviewed.

How we spot fake reviews

Fake reviews are identified through a number of sources; through our automated software, through our flagging tools, and by our dedicated Fraud Analysts.

Our Fraud Analysts use a variety of tools to detect and validate if a review is a fake review. This includes using the insight from our anomaly detection model. This model analyses behavioural patterns using data points such as how reviews are submitted and collected by businesses over time and response rates by consumers. Any changes in the behavioural patterns we recognise are highlighted, and then used to carry out further investigations. This technology is being developed into an early warning system, flagging suspected breaches of our guidelines to help our fraud analysts and investigators take proactive and swift action.

We also use a dedicated data analysis tool to identify clusters of suspected fake reviews. This tool uses natural language processing, machine learning classifiers and cluster detection techniques to analyse large numbers of reviews and their associated behaviours across our platform, and the internet more broadly. The tool casts a wide lens across all of the reviews submitted to the platform and identifies links and associations amongst reviewers and businesses. This insight helps us to identify existing and emerging behavioural patterns linked with fake reviews. In turn, we use this information to take enforcement actions such as blocking user accounts that have submitted fake reviews, or as the basis for action against businesses actively trying to manipulate content on the platform.

Fake reviews in numbers

2,209,230

Total number of fake reviews removed in 2020



1,549,683


Fake reviews removed automatically by our technology in 2020


659,547


Fake reviews manually removed by Trustpilot's Content Integrity Team in 2020

Fake reviews removed by star rating

 42% | 5 star reviews

 13% | 4 star reviews

 12% | 3 star reviews

 10% | 2 star reviews

 23% | 1 star reviews



Enforcing our integrity

Thankfully, the majority of businesses and consumers use Trustpilot in the way it was intended. The vast majority realise that trying to game your way to being a trusted brand or deliberately leaving misleading feedback is a very short-sighted strategy. Constructive feedback helps businesses engage with their customers and improve their service experience; and this benefits everyone.

However, there will always be a small minority that try to manipulate our systems and undermine the integrity of our platform to influence people's opinions.

How do we stop misbehaviour and misuse?

Where we identify attempts to undermine the integrity of, and trust in, reviews and businesses on Trustpilot, our dedicated team of Fraud and Investigation Agents will investigate and take some, or all, of the following actions:

Warnings

We usually send a warning to a business where we detect misbehaviour or misuse of the platform (depending on the severity, we may also go directly to sending a formal notice).

These warnings are sent automatically following detection by our automated systems, or they are manually sent after being checked by our dedicated teams. In 2020, we issued 38,957 warnings linked with misbehaviour and misuse on the platform.

Formal Notice

Where a business continues to engage in misbehaviour after receiving a warning, we'll send a

formal notice demanding that they stop. In 2020, we issued 1,030 formal 'cease and desist' letters.

If a business has been sent a formal notice for breaching our guidelines, we record this in our internal systems, and make sure they can't sign up for a paid subscription on Trustpilot until the behaviour causing the breach has stopped. For businesses with a paid subscription, we'll place restrictions on their account so they can't change plans, upgrade or renew a subscription until breaches of our guidelines have stopped.

Ending our relationship

If a business has a paid subscription with Trustpilot, and it continues to breach our guidelines after we've sent them a formal notice, we'll terminate their subscription. In 2020 we terminated 122 contracts.

At this point we'll also downgrade the functionality of their accounts to the bare minimum, meaning they can only respond to and flag reviews; they'll still need this ability because we rely on our community, including businesses, to flag reviews which breach our guidelines. We do this for all businesses, whether they had a paying subscription with us or not. These businesses are prevented from sending review invites via our platform, and they are prohibited from displaying the Trustpilot logo, branding, TrustScore, star rating and review content on their site or in their sales and marketing materials.

Consumer Warnings and Alerts

As part of our commitment to consumers, when a business breaches our guidelines and doesn't stop the behaviour causing the breach, or continues to undermine the integrity of our platform, we'll place a public [Consumer Warning](#) on their company profile page.

A Consumer Warning is a prominent notification explaining how a business has been misusing Trustpilot. There were 522 Consumer Warnings live on Trustpilot by the end of 2020.

We'll keep Consumer Warnings on a profile page for a fixed time, and will review it to see if a business is continuing to misuse our platform. We don't remove a Consumer Warning until all misbehaviour has ceased, and a reasonable amount of time has passed: this helps to ensure that consumers have been made aware of a business's attempts to mislead consumers, or otherwise misuse our platform.

We also use public Consumer Alerts when there hasn't necessarily been misuse, but we think there is information users should be made aware of. For example, if a business has been subject to significant media attention, or is being investigated by a regulator.

We keep Consumer Alerts on a business's profile page for as long as necessary to raise awareness. There were 157 Consumer Alerts added in 2020.

Blocking Reviewer accounts

Where a reviewer repeatedly breaches our Guidelines for Reviewers, such as posting fake or harmful reviews, or threatening businesses in any way, we'll suspend or block access to their Trustpilot user account.

Block search engine data

When we place a Consumer Warning on a business's profile page on Trustpilot, we'll also stop sharing any information with search engines about that business. This means that we'll stop sharing data like the TrustScore, star rating and other

review data that search engines may display in their search results, or otherwise use to index and rank businesses in search.

Further action

Depending on the nature and severity of the misuse and behaviour causing us to take action, and the risk to our community, we may also take the following action(s) to prevent harm to consumers and ensure trust in our platform:

- Legal action, including court proceedings;
- Sharing information with law enforcement agencies, regulatory bodies or the media to raise awareness;
- Sharing information with third parties, where it is reasonable and proportionate to do so.

Platform integrity enforcement in numbers

38,957

Number of warnings issued in 2020

522

Number of Consumer Warnings
active in 2020

157

Number of Consumer Alerts added in
2020 (new system added August 2020)

122

Contracts terminated in 2020

1030

Number of formal 'cease and desist'
letters issued in 2020

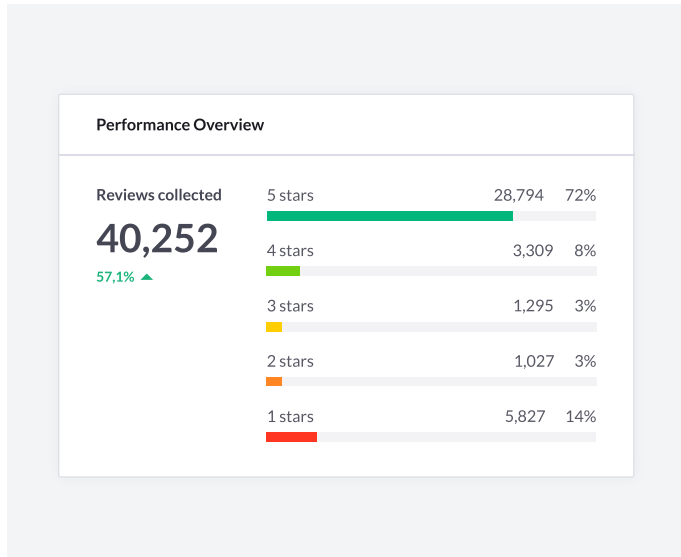
522

Number of businesses where Trustpilot
has stopped sending reviews to search
engines in 2020



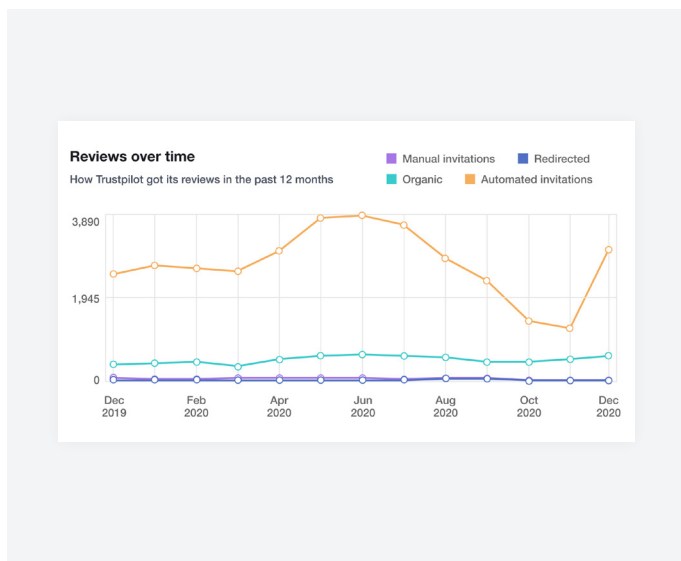
Reviews about Trustpilot

Both consumers and businesses who use our platform can write a review about their experience with Trustpilot. All our reviews are shared publicly on [our company profile page](#). Much of the information below can be seen live on Trustpilot’s own Business Transparency page.



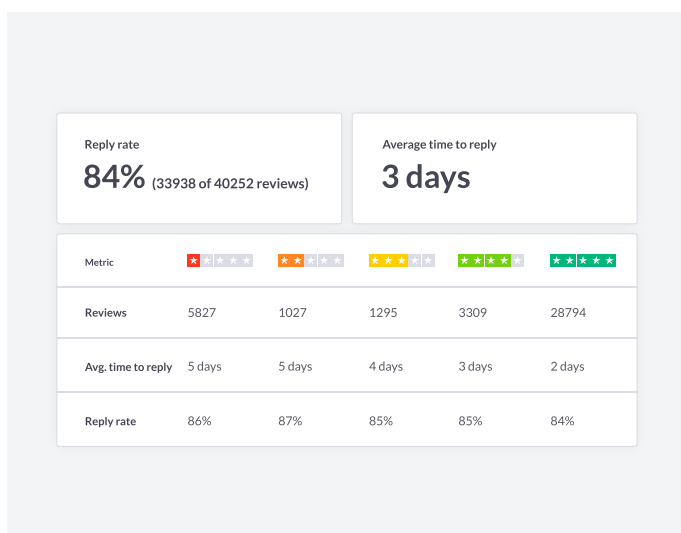
General overview of reviews of Trustpilot received in 2020

In 2020 we received over 40,252 active reviews, the majority (80%) being 4 and 5 stars. 14% of the reviews were 1 star.



How we’ve collected and received our reviews in 2020

Anyone can leave a review about Trustpilot on our profile. We also automatically invite businesses who claim a free profile on the Trustpilot platform (after a two-week period), those who subscribe to our services (after a two-week period) and consumers who may have written a review on the Trustpilot platform for any business.



Our response rate to reviews in 2020

We replied to 84% of our reviews in 2020. It’s good, but we’ll be doing more in 2021 to bring this reply rate up even further, and to reduce the average response time.

Here's a breakdown of flagged reviews by star rating



Our flagging processes

We flag reviews written about Trustpilot across a range of star ratings. A high majority (99%) of the reviews flagged are because they are written about other businesses. We flag them so our Content Integrity Team can reassign them to the appropriate company profile page.

Rachel wheeler
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Great place!
 I love that you guys allow people to post their honest opinions of companies. Most reviews will leave out the negative reviews and the company will only allow the positive reviews to be posted.

Customer Eve
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Trust pilot the problem sorter
 Trust pilot get the company your dealing with sit up and answer your problems promptly

Geraldine jones
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
I'm so glad we used Trustpilot for our...
 I'm so glad we used Trustpilot for our company. The reviews are open and honest, customers mention it all the time. It helps your customers to trust your business.

Review Insights

Our 5-star reviews indicate that the majority of consumers who use Trustpilot think it's an extremely useful platform. Consumers mention its ability to make businesses listen as well as helping consumers to make better choices. Businesses mention its ability to bring them closer to their customers and build trust.

Edward Davison
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Trustpilot & negative reviews
 Removing reviews that are negative, it seems you don't like genuine negative reviews, you removed my review of produceshop on their not despatching good from GB as advertised but from Italy, I have notived I am not the only person to have their negative reviews removed, please explain why this is happening.

Mr Russell Smith
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Rubbish site leave great reviews and...
 Rubbish site leave great reviews and gets removed

Andy
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Great service, but my negative reviews got removed
 However - my negative experience review was removed without obvious reason. "Content integrity" department sent me an automated letter, that they can't verify authenticity of my review, so it was removed.

 I wrote them back - but still no reply. I want to provide them all possible proofs of my review authenticity and make it visible again. Hope for quick issue resoval.

By comparison, there are two key themes that come through in our 1-star and 2-star reviews. These include, how we treat 'flagged' reviews and our response times to those who have flagged them to us.

1. “Trustpilot has greyed out or taken down my review and/or appears to be allowing businesses to censor me”

Previously, when a review was flagged by a business, our policy was always to temporarily move the review offline while we investigated it.

Once investigated, the review was either:

- Reinstated (the report was either invalid or was valid but the issue was addressed by the reviewer) or it;
- Remained offline (if the report was valid but the reviewer was unable or unwilling to resolve the issue).

Even if a review remains offline, it is never deleted, allowing reviewers to address concerns at a later date.

Many consumers have a perception that this process censors their voice, or worse still, that Trustpilot is deleting their comments unfairly. Though this would never ever be the case, we understand why people might think this.



2. “Trustpilot’s response times are too slow when I flag a review”

Some people have criticised us for being slow to respond or address reviews that have been flagged.

Challenges in responding to people quickly enough has left many people feeling like we’re either not addressing the issue they’ve raised, or worse still, that we don’t care.

However, this is not our intention.

Our action in 2020

As of December 2020 we addressed this concern.

All flagged reviews will now remain online while they are being investigated, except for content flagged as “harmful or illegal”, which we must continue to hide whilst we investigate in order to protect the public and comply with regulation.

Our action in 2020

Through a combination of process improvement and increased investment in people and technology, we were able to meet the target we set for ourselves of ensuring that by year-end 2020 all reported reviews were responded to by our Content Integrity agents within 48 hours of them having first been flagged.

