

Amazon so far unfazed by delivery scam

BY TALI ARBEL

Associated Press

NEW YORK - News of an alleged Amazon theft ring involving contract delivery drivers is unlikely to make a dent in the online shopping giant's massive business. But it may make people more wary of letting deliveries into their house when they aren't there - a nascent project from both Amazon and Walmart .

WhathappenedwithAmazon?

The theft ring, according to an FBI search warrant affidavit, involved Amazon contract drivers stealing items that were being shipped to customers or returns. Then they resold them to pawn shops, which shipped the items to Amazon warehouses and resold them on Amazon's sites using the sellers 'Bestforyouall' or 'Freeshipforyou.' No charges have been filed yet.

Will people stop shopping at Amazon?

Regular customers probably won't stop **buying** from Amazon. People still use Amazon even after having their packages stolen by 'porch pirates,' even though that is a big problem.

'It's almost an inevitability that people will use the site to dispose of ill-gotten gains,' said Neil Saunders, managing director of Global-Data Retail. 'Amazon is the largest marketplace; it's going to have the biggest problem.' But the thefts could alter shoppers' behavior in other ways. Negative press could tank

retailer services that might seem intrusive, such as ones that deliver packages directly into your house, said Jon Reily, a former Amazon executive now at the digital consultancy firm Publicis Sapient.

Those in-home delivery services already have raised touchy questions about privacy. Reily said he suspects that they haven't gained much traction, although a separate Amazon service that makes deliveries to people's cars seems more popular.

The news could boost interest in options that let people pick up their packages at stores rather than having them delivered, a service that has become more seamless in the last few years, Saunders said.

Amazon said in a statement that it does not tolerate fraud and it prohibits inauthentic or stolen goods from being offered in its store.



'Porch pirates' can be an issue for Amazon customers, but a service allowing deliveries inside homes is cause for wariness.

ROBERT BUMSTED | Associated Press