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**No let up by fraudsters as online card spend soars
Fraud prevention specialists reveal Britain's top UK card fraud hotspots**

Many of Britain's high street shops may have been affected by the economic downturn, but millions of consumers have been more than happy to spend their money online and through mail order with their favourite retailers. However, once again the dark side of card usage is revealed as fraud specialists, the 3rd Man, unveil the extent of criminal card activity and in particular the worst places in Britain for attempted card fraud.

An analysis of the 3rd Man's comprehensive and detailed records shows that between August 2008 and August 2009, shoppers spent an estimated £46 billion using their cards in 'card not present' transactions, the term used to describe purchasing when, for example, a customer is buying online or by phone. Of this figure, fraudsters have tried their best to relieve retailers of more than half a billion pounds worth of goods.

"Although Britain has been in a serious recession, it appears that many consumers have been happy to spend their money over the Internet, which is good news," says Andrew Goodwill, fraud specialist with the 3rd Man.

"However, fraudsters show no signs of giving up. They know that online shopping has become big business and they try every scam imaginable to dupe retailers. More and more honest people are using their cards to buy over the Internet, but unfortunately more and more fraudsters are also upping their game."

"However, it's not all bad news," he adds. "In fact, using your card online or by mail order has never been safer. When your card is used by a fraudster, it is unlikely your details have been obtained as a result of an Internet transaction. Furthermore, as so many retailers have better fraud detection and prevention systems in place, and they are working very closely together to deter the unwanted custom of single criminals and organised gangs."

Britain's card hotspots

The 3rd Man's analysis of card fraud hotspots reveals the following places to be the most densely populated areas of criminal activity involving cards. Once again, London tops the league of fraudulent card transactions with South East London, and particularly Woolwich, Plumstead (SE18) and Thamesmead (SE28), gaining notoriety as the places with the most fraudulent concentration of 'bad' card activity in the UK.

Based on an analysis of over 85 million 'good' and 'bad' card transactions over the past 12 months (August 1st 2008 to August 1st 2009), the findings focus on fraudulent activity by postcode. The figures show that 'bad' transactions amounted to more than £85 million during this period. The 3rd Man monitors around a fifth of all card transactions in the UK.

In these South East London postcode districts alone, there were more than one million transactions overall, 66,000 of which were deemed fraudulent at a value of more than £18 million.

Outside of the capital, other hotspots (defined as having the most bad transactions in terms of their value in pounds) in the top ten places include Manchester (4th) Nottingham (3rd), Romford (6th) in Essex, Coventry (8th) Birmingham (9th). Erith Marshes (10th), North and South West London occupy the other places.

As a percentage of good versus bad transactions, Ilford in Essex also makes it into the top ten as over 7,000 bad transactions amount to more than £2 million in fraud. Similarly, London EC makes it into the top ten in this category with high levels of fraud versus bad versus good transactions (more than three per cent). Enfield also makes an appearance with more than 1% of all transactions fraudulent.

Again, the least fraudulent places in Britain are Lerwick in the Shetland Islands (14 bad transactions), Kirkwall in Scotland (34 bad transactions) and Taunton in Somerset (79 bad transactions).

Although Liverpool had an improved year, between 2007-08, the City's fraudsters once again were in action pushing levels of fraudulent card activity up to £835,000.

Ends



the 3RD man

Editors notes

About the 3rd Man

About The 3rd Man Group - www.the3rdman.co.uk

The 3rd Man provides card not present fraud screening, card fraud analysis and consultancy services to some of the UK's leading retailers, including Argos, Halfords and Ticketmaster.

The 3rd Man reliably detects in excess of 95% of fraudulent attempts including organised and casual fraud.

The 3rd Man also provides its GateKeeper secure online data reporting and analysis tool that enables clients to search for and display transactional information instantly, performing complex analysis to identify fraud rings quickly.

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