

EFSA launches Africa's first e-commerce Trustmark

The Ecommerce Forum South Africa has launched its [Safe.Shop](#) Trustmark. The EFSA provides the Trustmark badge to e-commerce platforms that have been confirmed as being compliant with EFSA's South African Code of Conduct Checklist, covering the appropriate regulations required of online shops in SA (eg. CPA, POPIA, ECTA).



Alastair Tempest and Mpho Sekwele from EFSA.

Introduced at a breakfast gathering in Johannesburg yesterday, the Trustmark launch comes after a successful six month testing period with the Edcon websites following a "vigorous verification process" through the legal firm, Legalese.

Building consumer trust online

An e-commerce Trustmark is a seal, image or logo found on an electronic commerce website that indicates that the site is a member of a professional organisation or has passed security tests. The Trustmark is used to show approval branding of a well-known third company.

Displaying an e-commerce Trustmark helps online businesses show customers that they are a member of a professional accreditation organisation, or show they have passed security and privacy tests.

"In the context of the current realities of ethereal online shopping, hit-and-miss regulators and savvy consumers, ensuring that one's online commerce platform operates lawfully, is vitally important," state the companies in a press release.

Thomas Reisenberger of Legalese adds, "The EFSA Trustmark operates to bring honest, consistent and reliable confirmations about the lawfulness and trustworthiness of e-commerce stores in SA, allowing e-consumers to shop in solace knowing that such a Trustmark has only been appended to a platform which adheres to the salient requirements of SA consumer law."



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Trustmarks were introduced in the 1990s in the USA (eg. VeriSign) and Europe as e-commerce started to grow.

"Research has shown that a trustmark would be welcomed in South Africa and hopefully on the rest of the continent. As we embark on the journey towards the African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), an Africa bound trustmark is a positive move towards creating trust amongst ourselves and e-commerce," notes Mpho Sekwele, a board director at EFSA.

Compliance process

In order to ensure that an applicant's e-shop is compliant with the EFSA's SA Code of Conduct, Legalese legal advisory conducts all such verifications on the EFSA's behalf. As part of the verification, Legalese checks each applicant platform against the requirements of the SA Code of Conduct, and then drafts a report for EFSA to decide whether the platform is entitled to acquire the Trustmark, or not.

The applicant platform is then informed about the outcome by the EFSA, whereafter the platform is either approved to carry the Trustmark to its platform, or is advised to make changes in order to be compliant.

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