

DMCA Takedown Services: How Brand Owners Remove Fakes at Scale

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A DMCA takedown removes an infringing listing. It does not, on its own, remove the seller behind it - so the same counterfeiter reappears under a new listing within days. That single distinction is where most brand owners lose weeks. You file notice after notice, the listings come back under new sellers, and half the time the thing you are fighting was never a copyright problem in the first place. This guide covers what a DMCA takedown actually does, how the process works across marketplaces, and how brands enforce at scale without burning out a compliance team.

\$2T+

Annual counterfeit goods sold globally **Human-Verified**

Every takedown reviewed by a person **Section 512**

The US safe-harbor law behind every DMCA notice **Tailored Pricing**

Takedown packages scoped to your volume and coverage

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What is a DMCA takedown?

A DMCA takedown is a formal request, sent under Section 512 of the US Digital Millennium Copyright Act, asking an online service provider to remove or disable access to material that infringes a copyright you own. The provider that acts on a valid notice gets legal protection, a “safe harbor”, from being sued for hosting the material. That trade is the whole engine of the system: platforms remove content quickly because doing so shields them.

The DMCA became law in 1998. Section 512, the part everyone means when they say “DMCA takedown”, was written for a web of hosts and message boards. It now runs the removal machinery of every major marketplace and social platform. Google alone reports billions of URLs requested for removal under the DMCA from its Search index.

Here is the part that trips people up. The DMCA is a **copyright** tool. It covers work you authored: your product photography, your marketing copy, your videos, your packaging artwork, your website text. It does not cover your brand name or your logo. Those are trademarks, and they run on a different track entirely.

What can a DMCA takedown remove, and what can't it?

Ask this before you file anything, because getting it wrong is the single most common reason takedowns fail. A counterfeit seller who copied your listing photos has infringed your copyright, and a DMCA notice will pull that listing. A counterfeit seller who made a fake version of your product and shot their own photos of it has not infringed your copyright at all. They have infringed your trademark, so a DMCA notice against them is the wrong instrument and a good marketplace will reject it. The one exception: if they've lifted your original design or artwork onto their own product and reshot it, that's still copyright infringement and the DMCA applies.

Infringement	Route	What it removes
Product photos, copy or artwork copied	DMCA (copyright) takedown	The listing
Brand name or logo copied	Trademark takedown	The listing
Patented design or feature copied	Patent takedown	The listing
Repeat or high-value seller worth pursuing	Schedule A / TRO (court action)	The seller

Most real counterfeit cases combine the first two rows: the fake copied your photos and your branding, so the listing can be pulled by a copyright or trademark takedown. But a takedown only clears the listing – the seller comes back unless the case is escalated to a Schedule A / TRO. That’s the piece brands miss. Brands that only ever reach for the DMCA notice are fighting with one hand. That is why “I keep filing takedowns and the fakes keep coming back” is such a common complaint. The tool was half-right, so it half-worked.

How does the DMCA notice-and-takedown process work?

A valid DMCA notice is not a strongly worded email. Section 512(c)(3) sets out exactly what it must contain, and a notice missing any of these can be ignored:

- Your physical or electronic signature, as the copyright owner or someone authorized to act for them.
- Identification of the copyrighted work you say has been infringed.
- Identification of the infringing material and enough detail for the provider to find it, usually the exact URL.
- Your contact details.
- A statement that you have a good-faith belief the use is not authorized by the copyright owner, its agent, or the law.
- A statement, under penalty of perjury, that the information is accurate and that you are authorized to act.

That “under penalty of perjury” line is not decoration. A false or careless notice carries real legal exposure. And under *Lenz v. Universal Music*, the case that started with a home video of a toddler dancing to Prince, the copyright owner has to consider whether the use is fair use *before* sending the notice. Fire off notices without that check and you are the one exposed.

The counter-notice:

A seller who believes their listing was removed wrongly can file a counter-notification under Section 512(g). If the platform accepts the counter-notice, it can restore the content in 10 to 14 business days unless you [file a court action](#). This is exactly why accuracy at the notice stage matters more than speed. A sloppy takedown does not just fail, it invites a counter-notice that puts the listing back and hands the seller a grievance.

Why does filing takedowns manually break down at scale?

One fake is a nuisance you handle in an afternoon. A hundred fakes across Amazon, eBay and Shopify, reappearing under fresh seller accounts every week, is a full-time job that no brand actually staffed for. This is the query we see most: a mid-size brand filing dozens of takedowns a month, watching it consume the entire compliance team, asking what can carry the load instead.

The failure is structural, not effort. Every marketplace has its own submission route, its own evidence rules, and its own rhythm for acting. Amazon runs its Brand Registry and IP report tools. eBay uses its Verified Rights Owner (VeRO)

program. Shopify has its own DMCA process. Filing the same complaint four different ways, four hundred times, is where compliance teams drown, and where the reappearing-seller problem wins by simple attrition.

So brands look to automate. Reasonable instinct. The catch is what “automated” usually means.

Important:

Fully automated, image-matching takedown systems remove more listings, but they also remove the wrong ones. An algorithm that flags a listing on a photo match cannot tell your authorized distributor from a counterfeiter, or a legitimate resale from a fake. Wrongful notices damage the sellers you rely on, invite counter-notices, and in volume can put your own account at risk. More notices is not the same as more protection.

What should you look for in a DMCA takedown service?

The buyer question underneath all of this is “which service actually works, not just files paperwork”. Here is the honest set of criteria, and where the trade-offs sit.

Approach	Scale	False-positive risk	Best for
Manual, in-house	Low	Low	Small or emerging brands where infringement is low and reports rarely exceed a handful a month
Fully automated detection and filing	High	High	High-volume brands willing to accept collateral damage
Automated detection, human-verified filing	High	Low	Established brands and large distribution networks with real infringement volume, who can’t risk wrongful notices hitting their own authorized sellers

The row that matters is the last one. Software is very good at finding suspect listings at scale across every marketplace at once. It is bad at the judgement call: is this a counterfeit, an authorized reseller, or a legitimate secondary-market sale? That judgement is where wrongful notices come from, and it is the one step you want a person making. So the service worth paying for is not the one that files the most notices. It is the one that finds infringement everywhere, then puts a human on the decision before anything gets sent. Ask a prospective provider a blunt question: who reviews a listing before you file against it, a person or a model?

The other thing to look for is what happens after removal. A takedown deletes a listing. It does not recover the revenue that listing took, and it does nothing about the next account the same seller opens. Enforcement that only removes listings is maintenance. Enforcement that maps the seller network, escalates repeat offenders through legal channels, and pursues recovery is control – a takedown clears a listing, but recovery comes from the court action, not the takedown. Our own [takedown work](#) is built around that difference.

Not sure which route you actually need?

Whether your problem is copyright, trademark, or patent infringement, knowing which of these problems you are facing is the first thing worth getting right, and it changes what you file and where. Tell us what you are seeing across your listings and we will point you to the right enforcement route. [Start the conversation here.](#)

How do DMCA takedowns fit into a full brand-protection strategy?

Treat the DMCA as one instrument in a kit, not the kit itself. A complete program runs four moves in order: detect infringement across marketplaces, domains and socials; verify each seller against your authorized-distributor records so you never hit a legitimate one; [escalate the cases worth pursuing to a Schedule A / TRO](#) (trademark mostly, but copyright too), and take down the rest – the listings not suitable for litigation, whether on territory grounds or because you want them gone immediately rather than waiting on a court; and stabilize the channel so the same sellers do not simply return next quarter. Takedowns use whichever right was infringed: copyright (DMCA), trademark (wordmark or logo mark), or patent (design or utility).

The DMCA notice sits inside the third step. It is powerful when the infringement is copyright and the notice is accurate. It is useless against a fake that used its own photos, and worse than useless when fired blindly. Pair it with trademark enforcement and a recovery track, and it earns its place. Rely on it alone and you get the treadmill: remove, wait, repeat, lose. For where copyright enforcement meets the wider picture, see our guide to [intellectual property infringement](#) and how we approach [brand protection](#) as a whole. If you sell on Amazon, our [anti-counterfeiting strategy for Amazon sellers](#) covers the platform-specific playbook.

Key takeaways

- **DMCA is a copyright takedown tool** – it removes a listing that copied your marketing material or artwork (photos, copy, video, designs). It clears the listing, not the counterfeit product or the seller.
 - **Most counterfeit cases need more than one route** – a takedown (copyright, trademark or patent) clears the listing; a Schedule A / TRO court action removes the seller.
 - **A valid notice has six required elements** under Section 512(c)(3), and a careless one carries perjury exposure and invites a counter-notice.
 - **Fully automated filing scales, but so does the collateral damage** – wrongful notices hit your own distributors and can backfire.
 - **The service worth paying for finds infringement by machine and decides by human**, then pursues recovery, not just removal.
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Frequently asked questions

What is a DMCA takedown service?

A DMCA takedown service files copyright removal notices on your behalf against infringing listings and content, usually across multiple marketplaces and platforms. The better ones also detect the infringement for you and verify each case before filing, so you are not just outsourcing the paperwork but the judgement too.

What is the best DMCA takedown service for ecommerce brands?

There is no single answer, but the right filter is simple. For an ecommerce brand dealing with fakes across Amazon, eBay and Shopify, look for cross-platform coverage, a human reviewing each case before a notice goes out, and a recovery track that goes beyond removing listings. A service that files fast but reviews nothing will remove the wrong sellers as often as the right ones.

Can a DMCA takedown remove counterfeit products?

Only indirectly. A DMCA notice removes a listing when the counterfeiter has copied your copyrighted material, such as your product photos or description. If the fake listing uses its own photos and only copies your brand name or logo, that is trademark infringement and needs a trademark complaint instead. Most counterfeit listings involve both, so both tools are used together.

How do you file DMCA takedowns across Amazon, eBay and Shopify?

Each platform has its own route. Amazon handles IP complaints through Brand Registry and its report tools, eBay uses its Verified Rights Owner (VeRO) program, and Shopify has a dedicated DMCA process. The complaint content is similar, but the submission path, evidence format and response times differ, which is why filing at volume across all three is so time-consuming by hand.

Can DMCA takedowns be automated?

Detection can and should be automated, since software finds suspect listings across marketplaces far faster than any team. The filing decision is where full automation causes problems, because an algorithm cannot reliably tell a counterfeiter from an authorized reseller. The strongest approach automates the search and keeps a person on the decision before a notice is sent.

How long does a DMCA takedown take?

There is no fixed statutory deadline. Section 512 requires providers to act “expeditiously” to keep their safe harbor, and in practice major marketplaces often respond within a few business days. A counter-notice from the seller can extend the process, since the platform may restore the content after 10 to 14 business days unless you take the case to court.

What happens if a seller files a counter-notice?

Under Section 512(g), a seller can dispute a removal with a counter-notification. If they do, the platform can restore the listing within 10 to 14 business days unless you file a court action to keep it down. This is why an accurate, well-evidenced notice matters more than a fast one, since weak notices are the ones that get challenged.

What does a valid DMCA notice need to include?

Section 512(c)(3) requires six things: your signature, identification of the copyrighted work, identification and location of the infringing material, your contact details, a good-faith belief statement, and a statement under penalty of perjury that the information is accurate and you are authorized to act. A notice missing any of these can be ignored.

Do I have to consider fair use before sending a DMCA notice?

Yes. Following *Lenz v. Universal Music*, a copyright owner must consider whether the use qualifies as fair use before issuing a takedown. Skipping that check can expose you to liability, which is another reason blind, high-volume filing is riskier than it looks.

How much does a DMCA takedown service cost?

Pricing models vary, from per-notice fees to monthly subscriptions. At Axencis, takedown work is priced on a tailored matrix – scoped to the volume and breadth of coverage you need, so you only pay for the work required. Performance Partnership, where costs are covered by recovered assets, applies to Schedule A litigation. The right question is not only the price but what you get for it: removal alone, or detection, verified filing and recovery.

Sources

- [U.S. Copyright Office – Title 17, Section 512 \(limitations on liability relating to material online\)](#)
 - [U.S. Copyright Office – Digital Millennium Copyright Act](#)
 - [Lenz v. Universal Music Corp. \(fair-use consideration before takedown\)](#)
 - [Google Transparency Report – Content delistings due to copyright](#)
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Filing takedowns and watching the fakes come back?

We find infringement across every marketplace, put a person on each case before a notice is sent, and pursue the sellers behind the listings, not just the listings. Copyright and trademark, detection through recovery.

[Talk to Our Enforcement Team](#)

About the author

Alex Wrexford is a guest contributor to Axencis and the author of *The Takedown*. He spent fifteen years investigating counterfeit networks for brand owners before he started writing about it – the test buys, the takedowns, the freight manifests that didn't add up, the patient business of tying a hundred fake shops back to one person. He writes on counterfeiting and intellectual property enforcement, and *The Takedown* is his true-crime investigation into how the world's counterfeiters get found, caught, and made to pay. More at alexwrexford.com. For questions about enforcement strategy, [get in touch](#).

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He is the author of The Takedown.", "image": "https://alexwrexford.com/images/about/alex-wrexford-portrait.jpg", "jobTitle": "Author", "knowsAbout": ["Counterfeiting", "Intellectual Property Enforcement", "Brand Protection", "DMCA", "Copyright"], "sameAs": ["https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q140139969"] }, { "@type": "Book", "@id": "https://alexwrexford.com/the-takedown#book", "name": "The Takedown", "author": { "@id": "https://alexwrexford.com#person" }, "url": "https://alexwrexford.com/the-takedown", "sameAs": ["https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0H4DJVBHG"] }, { "@type": "Organization", "@id": "https://axencis.com/#organization", "name": "Axencis", "description": "Axencis provides human-verified brand protection, anti-counterfeiting enforcement, and IP recovery services. 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