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new channels to resell stolen goods.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Apr. 25, 2023



Organized retail crime (ORC) is a perpetual and burgeoning problem for the U.S. retail industry, and evidence suggests it is growing in both scope and complexity, according to a new report by the National Retail Federation. The report, *[Organized Retail Crime: An Assessment of a Persistent and Growing Threat](#)*, was conducted in partnership with K2 Integrity, a global risk advisory firm.

“Organized retail crime has been a major concern for the retail industry for decades, endangering store employees and customers, disrupting store operations and inflicting billions in financial loss for retailers and the communities they serve,” said NRF President and CEO Matthew Shay. “These concerns have grown in recent years,

as criminal groups have become more brazen and violent in their tactics and are

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Key findings in the report include:

- ORC groups largely target everyday consumer goods — which offer a favorable balance between ease of theft, monetary value and ease of resale. Only 11% of the ORC groups examined in the report targeted luxury goods.
- The median ORC fencing operation handled about \$250,000 in stolen merchandise prior to being apprehended by law enforcement.
- ORC fencing operations rely on online marketplaces as one resale channel. About 45% of ORC groups for which fencing information was available used online marketplaces for resale operations.
- ORC fences that conduct online resale operations appear to be shifting away from third-party online sellers and toward peer-to-peer websites that facilitate direct engagement among buyers and sellers.
- ORC groups rely on advance planning to ensure the success of their theft operations.
- There are significant deficiencies in the availability of consistent and consolidated data regarding ORC across national, state and local authorities, as well as the retail industry.

“Organized retail crime is growing as a real threat to the safety, operations and bottom line of retailers across the nation and now forms a part of the criminal and illicit financing landscape,” said Juan Zarate, global co-managing partner and chief strategy officer at K2 Integrity. “The ORC industry will grow more dangerous, complex and profitable, and its illicit proceeds will fuel more organized criminal networks and operations in the United States, globally and virtually, if more concerted action is not taken to disrupt these trends. We are proud of the role we played in developing an assessment of ORC and look forward to our continued partnership with NRF.”

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