

ISSUE 37

Shopping on the Web

The internet has changed our lives in countless ways. We can keep in touch with friends and acquaintances around the world, virtually instantaneously. We can gain access to any library or public data base, find a job, or look for a date. But it has also opened up the world of on-line buying. No matter what sort of item we are seeking, we can look for it in the comfort of our own home, compare prices globally, and buy it with our credit cards with very little bother. Of course, one of the downsides to this is that we may be cheated or, even worse, the information we provide could be used to perpetrate identity theft. Another negative quality is the increased isolation it may bring: instead of leaving our homes and mixing with others in the marketplace, we may decide to avoid human contact altogether.

Why do you shop on the web?

- (1) It is easy and convenient.
- (2) It is cheaper.
- (3) It saves time.
- (4) Returning unsatisfactory items is easy.
- (5) Quality is guaranteed.
- (6) I don't like crowds.
- (7) Purchasing options are seemingly infinite.
- (8) I rarely buy anything on-line.



Sample Answers

(A) I don't like shopping by internet. I prefer to do all my buying in person, so I can feel, smell, and see the product directly. If it is an item of clothing, I want to be able to *try it on* before I get it. And, besides, shopping is one of my major social occasions — why would I want to *pass it up*?

(B) We have to be very careful about buying something *sight unseen*. The quality may not be as good as we were led to believe, and it may be a real *hassle* to return an item by mail. But, otherwise, I very much enjoy the experience of buying on-line, mainly because I can do it anytime I want to. I don't have to worry if the store is open or not, I don't have to find a place to park, and there isn't any sales clerk pressuring me to purchase something. I love it!

Speak Your Mind

1. How often do you shop on-line? What kinds of goods do you most often purchase?
2. In your opinion, what's the difference between shopping on- and off-line? Which do you prefer?
3. What do you worry about most in terms of on-line shopping?
4. Did you ever return anything you had purchased on-line? If so, why? Was it easy to do?
5. Shopping centers are still very popular even though on-line shopping is usually cheaper and more convenient. Why do you think this is so?

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

1. How often do you shop on-line? What kinds of goods do you most often purchase?

(A)

I do almost all my shopping on-line, except for food. Mostly, I get CDs and jewelry. If I need something "right now," I buy it in person, but if it's something that can wait till later to get, I much prefer doing it in the privacy of my own room.

(B)

I shop for *dates*, books, music, and clothing — just about everything, in fact. Last year I bought a car on-line, and right now I'm in the process of looking for a new apartment. I get something on-line nearly every day.

2. In your opinion, what's the difference between shopping on- and off-line? Which do you prefer?

(A)

I'm old-fashioned, I guess, but I enjoy the process of buying in person. No matter what it is, I like to get to know a product before I *put down my hard-earned* money for it. If I shopped on-line, I know I would miss the *haggling* and the shared experience of going to a store and mixing with the crowd. As far as I'm concerned, the more shoppers there are, the better! It's a very *vibrant* experience, to be part of a crowd of like-minded individuals instead of just a *lone* individual acting *anonymously*.

(B)

I enjoy going on a shopping *spree* with my friends, and I also enjoy buying items locally, where the shop clerks know me and are friendly toward me. But I also like to buy on-line because of the selection and lack of *hassle*. I'm glad that both options are readily available.

3. What do you worry about most in terms of on-line shopping?

(A)

My biggest worry is the loss of my identity or the destruction of my good credit. I hear tales all the time of people being victimized because of their on-line purchases. I don't know personally anyone who this has happened to, so I wonder if these are mainly *urban legends*, but, still, these stories are enough to *give one pause* about the consequences of using the computer to buy things.

(B)

I've had very positive experiences shopping on-line. Once in a while, some item has not arrived or I've been disappointed in its quality, but I've never had any problems *straightening the matter out*. Nevertheless, I hesitate to make any expensive purchase on-line, out of fear of being *ripped off* by some *unscrupulous* seller and not having any *recourse* if that were to happen.

4. Did you ever return anything you had purchased on-line? If so, why? Was it easy to do?

(A)

I return things all the time, and I've never had any problem. I just make sure that I buy from a reputable retailer and not from a private individual, because major stores already have a consumer-friendly returns policy. Even the postage is covered by them!

(B)

Once I got a sweater that was the wrong color, the wrong size, and the wrong price. I contacted the seller right away, but we never did work out a satisfactory method of exchange. Eventually, I gave it away as a gift, but the experience *soured* me on ever buying anything else on-line forever.

SPEAK YOUR MIND

Speak Your Mind Helpers

5. Shopping centers are still very popular even though on-line shopping is usually cheaper and more convenient. Why do you think this is so?

F : Let's go shopping!

M : Why? What do we need?

F : Maybe we don't need anything, or maybe we'll find something that we just can't do without.

M : If we need something, we can just order it on-line.

F : You *miss the point*. Going out is a kind of adventure! Shopping is just an excuse to get out of the house and be with people. We can *make a day of it*, grab something to eat, get some fresh air....

M : But I have a lot of work to do, and I'm tired. I go out every day to work. I really want to enjoy my time off relaxing at home.

F : Don't be so lazy! Let's go out and enjoy life. The department store down the street is having a big sale, and I'm sure we'll find some good deals. And besides, we'll probably *run into* some friends we haven't seen in a long time.

M : When we go shopping together, you never pay much attention to me. You just want someone to carry all your packages!

F : Oh, if you really think so, I'm sorry. I guess I just *get carried away* by all the excitement. I promise that won't happen today. Let's go.

-**miss the point** : fail to understand

-**make a day of it** : spend the whole day doing (sth) enjoyable

-**run into** : meet or find (sb) by chance

-**get carried away** : become so excited that one loses control of one's feelings or behavior

M : I would love to spend more time with you, but I hate going shopping. If we use the internet to get what you need today, then we'll have lots of extra time to see a movie or do something else together tonight.

F : *Catching* a movie sounds good. How about going to a fancy restaurant, too?

M : Why don't we download something good to watch and order out? That way we can spend our time together more intimately.

F : *Intimacy* is good. But you just don't understand! I feel *cooped up*. I want to get out! All you want to do is stay in this boring house.

