

Tech Medics Tech Notes

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How to shop online securely

The Holiday Season is here and that means shopping! The internet is a great way for us to get our holiday shopping done quickly and conveniently, but there are some things you have to keep in mind when shopping online.

Unfortunately, especially during this time of year, there are thousands of not-so-reputable stores online looking to cheat you out of your money and even steal your information.

However, if you follow these simple guidelines, you'll have a merry shopping experience!

If possible, only shop from online stores that you know and trust. If you want to purchase from a site, but aren't sure about the company, there are things you can look for and resources to find out more about them. Read through the site's terms and conditions for sales, returns, warranties and guarantees. Do a quick search for them on the BBB. The BBB tracks many online stores. Do a search for the company and look for other peoples' reviews.

If you then decide they are a good company to buy from, look on their site for important security features. The web address, or URL (ex. <http://www.Google.com>), should have certain elements in it to show you that a site is secure. Look for a lock symbol and an URL that starts with "https://". These elements usually only apply to the secure areas of the site such as your account information and the checkout. This means your information is encrypted and only you and the merchant can view this information. It is best NOT to provide any sensitive data if the connection is not secured.

Read the website's Privacy Policy to find out how your information is used and if it shared with any third parties. Any reputable company will have that information readily available.

Try contacting the company, either by phone or email. If they don't respond in a timely manner, it may not be a good idea to shop with them.

Once a purchase has been made, keep your receipt and save and/or print your order confirmation. If any issues arise after the sale and you have trouble dealing with the company, contact your credit card provider. They can be a valuable tool in getting your money back if there is an instance of fraud or theft.

Shopping online can be a great time and money saver and, with these tips, will be a secure experience too!

Want more information or have questions? Contact TechMedics@socen.com or call (888) 826-4211