- Internet Shopping / Electronic Commerce (E-commerce)

Online Shopping Safety

Just Because You Don't Have to Worry about Parking Means you Don't Have to Worry

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Online shopping has transformed the way products are purchased and sold. Consumers are able to access more products and find unique offerings without needing to travel or fall in line. Sellers can display items and promotions to a larger set of buyers without setting up brick-and-mortar shops.

Over the years, virtual business transactions have caused some retailers to revisit the way they sell. Customers are also more knowledgeable as online buyers based on both pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Similar to the bad customer service consumers may get in stores, online shopping has also given shoppers reasons to get frustrated and regret their decision to buy online. Whether you are an avid online shopper or merely starting to explore its ins and outs, here are some problems some buyers have experienced and what you can do to avoid them or help you solve these concerns.

• Product problems.

Retailers present the best photos of their offerings online. Some even offer a complete view of the item by allowing you to zoom in and out of pictures to learn more about an item. Still, even after careful study, some buyers receive products that do not meet online promises quality-wise. If purchases are made from established retailers, customer service should include a system that allows you to give feedback and return or replace an item. But if a person buys from online selling groups that do not always require a system to address your concerns, he or she will just have to charge it to experience. Get to know brands or sellers before doing business with them. Read policies or group rules before you transact.

• Additional fees.

As a buyer, it is your responsibility to know not just what you are buying but also how you are buying. Aside from paying for an item's cost, you have to know if tax is included in the prices posted online. Before checking out an item, look at the summary page of your total bill to know how much you are being charged for packaging or shipping. This will help you decide if you are really saving money on what you earlier determined as a good purchase. As an added tip, in case you are using codes for discounts or offers like free shipping, see to it that these deductions are reflected on your final bill.

• Data security.

Falling victim to online stores who are only after getting your credit card information is the last thing we want to happen to you. Elect to purchase only from trusted websites. Check if their website address begins with an "https" instead of "http." The added "s" stands for "secure" and indicates that the page uses an SSL certificate that secures data as it is passed from a browser to the website's server. Additionally, you can check the address bar or your browser window for a small padlock symbol.

• Customer service.

This could either mean the absence of customer service or receiving very poor consumer assistance. Utilize all means necessary to provide feedback to a company. If their customer service phone services disappoint, send them an e-mail, or contact them via social media. As a consumer, you have the right to provide feedback to them. If you are doing so on social media, present the facts and protect personal information if you are posting details about your transaction. And always be respectful, no matter how upset you are. We aim to help improve one corner of the world – and not make it worse.

• Delivery issues.

If you bought an item for a particular occasion or date, schedule your purchase well ahead of time. Always consider possible delivery issues that can delay the delivery of your item. Keep this in mind, especially for overseas purchases. Weather disturbances, system problems of the store or courier services have inconvenienced some online shoppers in the past. Ensure that you have a tracking number with which to monitor your purchase anytime. Some stores offer e-mail alerts or have apps to allow clients to see where there items are, the next steps, as well as any reasons that are causing delays. .