



Shopping for Bargains on the Internet

Presented by Phil Goff
Area 2, Branch 116
November 20, 2008



Things to Consider Before Making an Internet Purchase

- Look for the Best Price
- Check the Shipping Costs
- Check whether you pay California Sales Tax
- Stay with Reputable Retailers
- Pay with a Credit Card (rather than Direct Debit)



Where to Start on the Internet?

- For almost all items a good place to start is **Amazon.com**
 - Amazon is by far the largest internet retailer
 - They have free shipping for purchases over \$25 and no sales tax. (If it is shipped from them. They partner with many other retailers who charge shipping and possible sales tax)
 - When you search Amazon, you can specify only to see items shipped by Amazon
 - Amazon's return policies and customer service are very good.
 - Whether you are looking for Cameras, Jewelry, Power Tools, etc, start with Amazon.



Always Check eBay

- Many if not most items sold on eBay are new. “Buy it Now” at a fixed price is very popular.
- eBay gives you a window to the very small retailers (all over the world).
- Shipping costs tend to be high, so small purchases often aren’t competitive with retail stores.
- Sometimes sales tax will be charged.
- eBay watches it’s sellers pretty carefully, so you are unlikely to have a bad experience.



Scan the Internet for Best Pricing

- **Once you've found an item that you like, you may wish to scan the internet for better pricing**
 - Enter the item name into **Pricegrabber.com** or **NexTag.com**
 - These sites will scan other internet sellers for best prices.
 - Often they will list an internet retailer that is unknown to you. They list number of stars for customer satisfaction, but proceed carefully.
 - If the price is well below everyone else, it may be a bait and switch routine. Internet retailers headquartered in Brooklyn are notorious.



Alternative Shopping Sites

- **There are many sites that sell “Refurbished” items.**
 - These are generally electronic items that have been returned and cannot be sold as new. They are under warranty and can be a good buy.
 - **TechForLess** and **RefurbDepot** are places to look.
 - **Overstock.com** has both refurbished and new “overstocked” items.
 - Dell and HP have sections dedicated to “refurbished” and “Open Box” items.



Coupon and Promotional Codes

- Some websites (especially electronic) offer deals with a “coupon code” Dell always has some coupon or the other outstanding.
- Visit **CouponCabin.com** or **MyCoupons.com** to see if there are deals available.
- Other sites are **SearchalIdeals.com** and **Retailmenot.com**.



Surfing for Deals

- **A fun site to watch is SlickDeals.net**
 - Participants report great buys on a wide range of items.
 - Most items are electronic, but often you will see clothing, tools, etc.
 - Deals are posted daily, so you have to check in frequently.



My Favorite Sites

- Start with the Mother of all Internet Shopping - Amazon.com
- eBay is also a must visit
- Costco and Walmart carry a broad spectrum of goods.
 - Costco online purchases can be returned at local store.
- Computer and Electronics
 - Newegg is the largest. They charge sales tax, but their pricing and customer service is the best on the internet.
 - Fry's is an alternative to Newegg. They charge sales tax.
 - Buy.com carries many items but customer reviews are mediocre.
 - Tigerdirect is not as complete, but they don't charge sales tax.
 - BestBuy, Dell, HP, CircuitCity are all possibilities.



My Favorite Sites

- **Power Tools and Home Improvement**

- Toolking, Sears, Lowes, HomeDepot

- **Clothing**

- LandsEnd, TravelSmith, and Zappos (Zappos has every shoe ever made and pays shipping for returns)

- **Sporting Goods and Golf Supplies**

- Try discounters such as **RockBottomGolf** and **DiscountGolf**

Miscellaneous Favorite Sites

- **Miscellaneous Sites Which I have used**
 - **1000bulbs.com** sells compact fluorescents, xmas lights, etc.
 - **USMint.gov** has coin sets which make nice gifts
 - **Xump.com** has science toys for children



Paying for Internet Purchases

- **Credit Card purchases are quite safe.**
 - Statistics show that far more credit card numbers are stolen in stores, restaurants, etc, than on the internet.
 - If you are one of the extremely rare cases that has their card numbers stolen, then Credit Card companies will protect your losses.
- **Paypal is a standalone company dedicated to processing internet purchases.**
 - They are quite good and only charge the seller.
 - They would like you to use your checking account for direct debit, but I prefer a credit card for safety.



Fun Shopping Suggestions

- **Black Friday is coming (Day after Thanksgiving)**
 - There will be all kinds of deals in retail stores and on the internet. (Many stores offer the same price on sales items on the internet as in the store)
 - Google “Black Friday” and you will see all kinds of forums about sales planned for that day.
 - It’s more fun to shop in front of your computer with a cup of coffee in your hand than stand in line at a store.