**Online Shopping**

Online shopping, also called electronic shopping or e-shopping, is defined as using a computer, modem, browser, and the Internet to locate, examine, purchase, and pay for products.

Many businesses encourage consumers to shop online because it saves employee time, thus reducing staff needs and saving money for the company. For example, some major airlines offer special discounts to travelers who purchase their tickets over the Internet, and most are eliminating paper tickets altogether.

**Advantages of Online Shopping**

For the consumer, online shopping offers several distinct advantages over traditional shopping methods. Some of these conveniences include:

* More product information. At many online stores, you can find detailed information about a wide variety of products, an advantage often unavailable in traditional stores.
* Ease of comparison shopping. E-shopping allows you to quickly find comparable items at similar stores and locate those venues with the best quality and lowest prices.
* Convenience. With e-shopping, you can browse merchandise and make purchases whenever you want from the privacy and comfort of your home or office.
* Greater selection. Because they are not restricted by available shelf space, online stores can offer you an almost unlimited number of products.

**Online Shopping Venues**

Just as consumers can visit a variety of bricks-and-mortar retail outlets, such as stores and shopping malls, Internet shoppers can browse several types of online shopping venues, including online stores, superstores, and shopping malls.

**Online Shopping Safety Tips**

The number one concern about shopping online is security. The truth is, shopping online is safe and secure if you know what to look for. Following these guidelines can help you avoid trouble.

2. Never provide your social security number.

4. Find out the privacy policy of shopping sites before you buy.

5. Keep current on the latest Internet scams.

3. Look for sites that follow privacy rules from a privacy watchdog such as TRUSTe.

6. Answer only the minimum questions when filling out forms.

1. Only buy at secure sites.

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