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Introduction to E-commerce

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The Internet is dramatically changing the way we shop. In years past, our shopping practices consisted of driving to a local mall or department store, walking through the aisles until we found an item we wished to purchase, and then making the purchase and driving home. Today, it is becoming more common to find shoppers doing their shopping via the Internet. Shopping on the Internet brings with it some cautions that we should observe when we shop. Here are some basic rules to follow when shopping on the Internet.

When you are asked to enter information on your order, do not disclose personal information unless it is needed for shipping your order to you. Be sure you know who is collecting this information, why it is needed, and how it is going to be used. Be certain that the information asked for is actually necessary for the purchase. For example, there are few instances when your password should be disclosed.

You should always verify that the company from whom you are purchasing has secured the purchasing procedures. You will often be asked to enter your credit card number to complete the purchase. Be certain that the transfer of this information is made in a secure environment. Also, be certain that you know the exact cost of the item for which you are being charged. The company from which you are purchasing the item should have a built-in calculator so that you know at all times how much your purchase will cost you, including all necessary shipping and handling charges.

Understand exactly what you should do if you encounter a problem with your purchase online. Is there an easy way to contact the company? Does the company have an e-mail address you can use to contact a customer relations representative? Does the company's order page include a telephone number that you can call if you have questions about your order?

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