

10 Tips for Safe Shopping Online on CYBER MONDAY

Cyber Monday is often thought of as a tacked-on afterthought to Black Friday. Last year, however, online shoppers in the US spent a combined \$10.8 billion – making Cyber Monday 2020 the most lucrative e-commerce event in human history. Even in the UK, where year-on-year sales actually fell, an estimated £2.5 billion changed hands in cyberspace. Clearly, figures of that magnitude are always likely to attract unscrupulous individuals looking to make a dishonest profit from excited online shoppers.

Here's National Online Safety's top ten tips for protecting yourself (and your money) while hunting down the deals this Cyber Monday ...

1. MAKE SURE THE SITE IS SECURE



When you're buying online, look for a padlock icon near the address bar – or check if the URL includes "https" or "shttp". The extra 's' or the padlock mean you can rest easy: you're sending your card details and personal info via a secure channel.



2. TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS



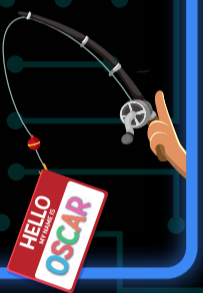
It's safest to stick with well-known, reputable retailers. If a site doesn't look professional, or has weird pop-up ads, it's best to steer clear – no matter how tempting their prices. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is!



3. WATCH OUT FOR PHISHING ATTACKS



Email inboxes are flooded on Cyber Monday by retailers publicising their deals. Hackers often try use this traffic as camouflage – take care when you're blitzing through all your sale emails that you don't click on something before you're sure what it is!



4. PLAN YOUR SHOPPING



Make a list of what you're looking for before you go online – and stick to it. With enticing deals everywhere you look, it's easy to get carried away bargain hunting and run up a massive total spend by the time you log off.



5. CHECK IT'S A REAL "DEAL"



Consumer group Which? found that 85% of Black Friday and Cyber Monday "bargains" had actually been on sale at the same price (or cheaper) in the previous six months. Check other retailers or price comparison sites to see if an item really does have money off.



6. CHECK THE SMALL PRINT



Make sure you check out details like a seller's returns policy. It's so easy to shop impulsively on Cyber Monday and then be stuck with things you don't want because of a very small window for returning goods.



7. READ THE REVIEWS



We've all bought something which sounded amazing online, only for it to be far less impressive when it actually arrived. Take time to read other buyers' views on an item – and think twice about anything that only has a small number of comments about it.



8. LOOK OUT FOR LOOT BOX SALES



If your child can buy things through their devices (making in-game purchases, for example), it's wise to talk to them in advance. Gaming companies also offer Cyber Monday deals, and it's easy for young people to be swayed by seemingly unbelievable prices.



9. CREATE SECURE PASSWORDS



On Cyber Monday, there's more chance of you needing to create accounts on sites you've not used before. Use a different, strong password for each – mixing upper- and lower-case letters, symbols and numbers. It might seem like a chore, but it will be harder work for hackers, too.



10. IGNORE INFLUENCER PRESSURE



Influencers can be great for finding out where the best deals are. But don't forget that sometimes they're being paid by retailers, and they can often cause people to feel under pressure to buy something – anything – just because it's Cyber Monday.



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