

Online shopping

Christmas 2003 saw a rise in online shopping. Has buying on the Internet finally come of age?

- 1 Did you buy anything online last Christmas? Why is online shopping becoming so popular?
- 2 Guess the most popular item to be sold online last Christmas.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| a Canon Digital camera | c "Pirates of the Caribbean" DVD |
| b Apple iPod music player | d Nokia mobile phone |

- 3 Now read paragraph one of the article and check your answer in exercise 2.

E-tailing

"It's been a record Christmas for internet shopping" said a spokesperson for Tesco.com. UK households bought more food and drink online at Christmas last year than ever before. Apple's iPod MP3 player, which can download songs from the web and store over 20,000 tracks, has become the fastest-selling item on the Web, thanks partly to Apple's marketing campaign. Other popular presents include PlayStation 2 consoles and games, DVD players and digital cameras.

The electronics industry is responsible for much of the growth in internet shopping. New broadband services - fast internet connections in homes and offices - are another critical factor. Are we in the middle of a consumer revolution with many avoiding the busy high street rush for the calm of the World Wide Web? For many, however, traditional shopping cannot be replaced and some online shoppers complained of slow deliveries.

The current boom in online shopping could benefit smaller retailers. With very little marketing, these companies have competed on price and service. CDWow, for instance, now has more than 60 million customers. Free shipping and free delivery are sometimes offered as incentives. E-tailers rely heavily on word of mouth as a key marketing tool; reputation and recommendation are vital. Putting a link on another firm's site has benefits, because you can connect with exactly the right clients. Much new business still comes from search engines. Companies pay money to search engines like Google for guaranteed links to their site from certain keyword searches. Google are currently testing a new project called Froogle, where web retailers will be able to list their site, along with special offers, for free. Internet business leaders confidently predict that online shopping will continue to grow.

- 4 Match the words to form collocations taken from the article.

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|----------------------|----------|
| a internet | engine |
| b special | campaign |
| c high street | shopping |
| d keyword | offer |
| e search | search |
| f marketing | rush |

- 5 Discuss the following questions in small groups and report your ideas to the class.

- a** What are the attractions and drawbacks of online shopping?
- b** Does your company sell online? Does it use sponsored search engine results as part of its marketing strategy?
- c** Do you believe that online shopping will continue to rise in popularity? Why / why not?