

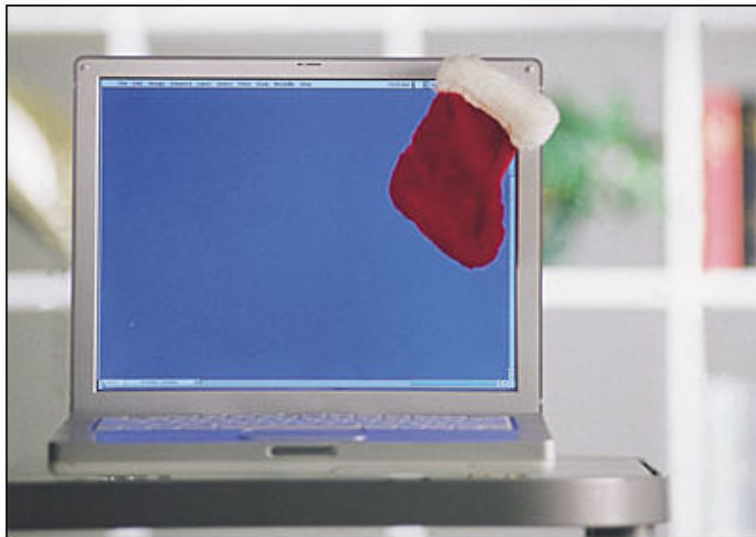


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In Pictures: Caveat Emptor Online



Holiday time is prime season for online shopping--and for online thieves. A Jupiter Research study shows that among those who don't shop online, a lack of faith in the security of Web transactions is the most-cited reason. Here are some tips from security pros Richard Rushing of AirDefense and Marwan Forzley of ModaSolutions on how to help ensure that online purchases stay secure.



Watch Out, Wireless

Wireless devices, including laptops, have the least security and are susceptible to hackers. Keep the firewalls on, and turn on that lock at the bottom of the page.



On-The-Job Shopping

At work, only use wireless access points approved by the company's IT staff. Don't risk getting fired for shopping on the company's dime.



Skip Public Hotspots

Never shop online while on a business trip. Airport lounges, hotel lobbies and the local Wi-Fi hotspots like **Starbucks** (nasdaq: [SBUX](#) - news - people) are breeding grounds for hackers.



Accept No Imitations

Stick to who you know. Major retailers' Web sites, like [BestBuy.com](#) or [WalMart.com](#), are generally thought to be secure. But be sure to type in the URL to go directly there; clicking on links sometimes leads to fraudulent imitators.



Alternate Payment Methods

Not comfortable giving up your credit or debit card number? More retailers are accepting services like PayPal, BillMeLater.com and e-checks, which allow you to make direct electronic checking account payments.



Stay Wired

Stick to a wired environment, such as a desktop PC from home, especially if you live in a sparsely populated area.