
Online Shopping: History, Advantages And Disadvantages

Online shopping

The activity of buying and selling is as old as communities. People exchanged each other's goods till the concept of money was introduced. With the introduction of money appeared the process of shopping. People then exchanged goods for gold or silver coins. Later, paper money was used instead of gold and silver. With the development of communities and their economical systems, new forms of marketing appeared to facilitate the process of shopping.

Credit cards, bank accounts and world trading concept along with the massive development in the internet world made shopping online very easy and popular.

Using your mobile phone while having a cup of coffee in Kuwait, you can pickup a pair of sandals on the Chinese website Alibaba, pay with your MasterCard, track your shipment on Aramex and receive your item within a week delivered to your home.

This form of shopping is revolutionary as it changes the whole concept of shopping dramatically. 'The global retail eCommerce sales have increased 0.52 trillion US dollars only in a two-year period from 2014 to 2016.' (MAGEPLAZA, 2019)

In the following pages, the writer will discuss this new form of shopping, shed light on its history, highlight its merits and demerits, and give some recommendations on how to improve it.

Background and history

According to Kenny (2018), online shopping goes back to 1981 with Thomson holidays from the UK when first business to business transaction was made. In the following year, Mintel 'was used to make online purchases, book train tickets, chat, check stock prices etc.' Kenny (2018). It took about a decade when in 1991, the two e-commerce giants Amazon and eBay were born. They represented the first commercialized e-commerce. Amazon started selling books online and Pierre Omidyar founded eBay. Ever since then, the e-commerce burst and there are hundreds of online stores now which sell everything.

How it works

Almost all online shopping sites work in the same way. They provide a platform by which customers can surf the goods they are interested in. Once the customer likes something, heshe can add it to the shipping cart. The shipping cart pretty much works like the real one in a market. However, it has more options. The customer can add, delete or modify to the shopping list of the shipping cart any time. Then the customer proceeds to the payment. Here heshe provides his name, address and credit card information. Once the customer pays for his cart, an automatic recite is sent to his email which confirms the payment. Another copy of that recite is sent to the store which is supposed to prepare the goods for delivery to the shipping address provided by the customer. (MAGEPLAZA, 2019)

Arab shopping applications

OUNASS is an online shopping application that sells clothing, shoes, bags, accessories and fine jewellery of luxury brands like Gucci, Valentino, Balenciaga and Prada. Ounass was launched in 2016 as Al Tayer Group's first, exclusively digital, luxury e-commerce site. The application targets customers of the Middle East and is based in the new capital of fashion- Dubai. According to the policy of the owners, if you live in Dubai and make a purchase, delivery is guaranteed within two hours. The company also guarantees express delivery to the GCC countries. The application is quite popular as it was downloaded from the Play Store of Android more than 100 thousand times.

Carriage is an application of online food ordering and delivery in Kuwait and Bahrain. The application provides the food menu of over 200 restaurants of different cuisines, which customers can surf to pick up their favourite meals, snacks, desserts or drinks. The average delivery time of the orders according to the application is 40 minutes. The application also provides the ability to track the delivery of orders. After placing the order, the customer has the option to pay for the order by cash, debit or credit card.

Advantages of online shopping

There are a lot of advantages of online shopping. The first one is that figures show that it is very successful. Money transactions related to online shopping is vast and growing. The second advantage is that online shopping saves a lot of time and energy. One can buy whatever heshe likes in a matter of minutes. Instead of wasting time moving from a shop to another looking for a good pair of shoes or a nice T-shirt for the party, you can surf hundreds of products, compare models and price while enjoying a cup of coffee on your couch.

Another advantage is that online shopping is financially good for both customers and merchants. On one side, when it comes to merchants, on line shopping reduces the cost. No need to rent showrooms which are very costly. The virtual showroom on the website almost costs nothing. Another issue is the reduce of staff which means less salaries and social security and health care payments. These cuts in expenses drop the prices and increase the profit for the merchant. On the other side, these cuts also work in favour of the customer as prices go down.

Online shopping also provides working chances for a lot of individuals and companies. Many contracting parties benefit from an online shopping website. These include but limited to: programmers, advertising companies, credit card companies, delivery companies and the goods sellers or stores. Online shopping also paves the way to individuals to start their own projects with very little capital.

Disadvantages of online shopping

Despite the big advantages of online shopping, there are a few disadvantages had emerged. The first one is the threat of unemployment. A single online website means that tens of employees are replaced by a program.

Online shopping can also be harmful to local markets. Instead of buying local stuff -which is

good for the economy of the country- customers import goods from other countries which is harmful to the economy.

Another important issue is that online shopping encourages bad habits of consuming. It makes the process of buying too easy that people may buy what they don't need. People usually don't feel they pay 'real money' when they pay using their credit cards. This may result in future financial issues to individuals and families.

Online shopping also means less exercise done by people. Doing shopping the usual way means you have to go to the market, walk to pick up what you need and carry bags back home. This is a kind of sport that is lost when you buy your stuff online.

There is also a problem of socializing that is related with online shopping. When shopping the traditional way, people usually go with their family or friends. Customers interact with each others and with merchants. Online shopping is an interaction between a 'lonely individual' and the smartphone screen!

Another disadvantage is that online shopping can be disappointing. What you see is not necessary what you get. Photos can be deceptive. Merchants may lie or cheat about their goods.

One important thing is the threat of hacking. Despite the security measures of banks and credit card companies, this problem takes place from time to time. Personal information and banking account information are subject to hacking.

Conclusion

There's no doubt that online shopping has facilitated our life a lot. It has many advantages and some disadvantages. In order to overcome the disadvantages, people may incorporate the two types of shopping, traditional shopping and online shopping. This is to guarantee that people don't come too idle or unsocial. Extra security measures also must be taken to fight fraud.

Reference

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