



Recent articles have looked at predictions. We also need to stop and take a look at where we are and consider how life has changed. Sixty years ago self-service and supermarkets were new and our lives were adapting to absorb any benefits from change. Sixty years on and supermarkets are still opening.

The Internet arrived in 1990 and soon carried the World Wide Web. In a few short years the technology became affordable and much easier to use. Twenty years or so ago selling via the web took off and has grown rapidly ever since.

It took a while for some people to overcome their concerns about the security of buying on-line, but the volume of shopping now done on-line is enormous and growing. Even if you don't use them personally, you must be aware of the popularity of Amazon and Ebay and there are a lot more businesses like them.

Even tiny businesses can afford to have an on-line presence for niche products without the establishment expense of a bricks-and-mortar shop or the reliance on passing trade. The world is changing again and Mike F talked to us about it and how we can take advantage of the fastest growing sector in retail.

The timing is appropriate in the run-up to Christmas when on-line shopping is due to break all previous records. He went through the pros and cons.

#### **Reasons for NOT shopping on-line.**

- You are unable to handle the goods before buying.
- Possible delivery charges
- You do not make a personal selection of items such as fruit.
- You can rarely speak to an employee for advice
- No coffee and Danish with a friend.

#### **Weigh those against the Pros**

- No parking problems
- No travel costs or fuss
- No going into the cold
- Free or cheap delivery
- Choose delivery address (e.g. deliver a present to the recipient's address)
- Items can be returned
- Possible gift wrapping
- LOTS of shops/sites
- Secure payment – even more secure with a bank card
- No kids, buggies, trolleys
- Less car pollution
- Click and Collect means you can buy on-line but collect the goods and pay in store

The process provides maximum comfort (at home) and no walking between shops. Simply use your preferred search engine to browse your options and find the best price. There are some price-comparison sites that help reduce the time taken to search. Check all charges before payment.

Mike showed results from organisations on-line that separate the good shops from the poor ones service-wise. After identifying where and what you want to buy there are sites where you can improve your deal without hassle.

The final topic was a look at the shopper's rights under the Distant Selling Regulations.