

(Somewhat) Guilty Pleasure Series: **Let's Go Shopping!**

Shall we window shop on the web together?

Patient library staff take us for a spin around sites like Amazon, eBay, Craigslist, local stores, SFPL's subscription to Consumer Reports and Bay Area Consumer Checkbook, while sharing tips for being a savvy and safe online shopper.

Some Basic Online Tips

- § Be **miserly about sharing your personal information**.
- § Only make purchases or transmit confidential information from websites that you are sure are **legitimate, the address is typed correctly**, and have a **green padlock icon and https** in the address/URL.  <https://sfpl.org>
- § Be **careful of clicking links** in emails and websites. Rest the cursor over a link to **check the actual address** – you may be surprised, perhaps dismayed. It is generally better to type in an address directly (and accurately of course) or possibly use a link from a successful Google search. Create bookmarks / favorites for shopping and financial sites you use often.
- § **Don't download software unless you are certain it is legitimate and useful.** There is a lot of dubious, destructive, and downright dastardly software out there. Leave it out there, even if it sounds enticing.
- § Use **tricky to figure out passwords. Don't use the same password** for all accounts. **Update** them regularly. **Don't forget** them.
- § Consider using **password manager** software (but don't forget the password to that service). [LastPass](#) is a popular program that offers a free version.
- § Make sure that you **fully log out** from sites, close the browser, and possibly restart the machine when using a public or shared computer.
- § Use **Incognito / Private Browsing** modes if you would like your browsing history, etc. deleted when done with a session.
- § EFF ([Electronic Frontier Foundation](#)) has a great deal of information on privacy and security issues. They also have a free browser plug-in called Privacy Badger which can help **prevent sites from tracking you** when online.
- § Be **wary** of the seductive world of **consumerism**. Pause and consider if you really need (and can afford) an item before you click that buy button.
- § Is it an item that you can **borrow from friends, family, library**, etc.?
- § Is it something that you can **purchase locally**? Do you want to support local shops, spend time with others, and cut down on shipping materials, fuel, etc.?
- § Factor in **shipping costs** to the final price.
- § What is the **return policy**? Is there a restocking fee?
- § Will someone be available to **accept delivery** of the item?
- § If purchasing a used item, are you seeing a **photo of the actual item**?

Some SFPL / sfpl.org Shopping Resources

- **Consumer Reports**  Consumer Reports, sfpl.org/eMags, Longstanding non-profit that tests & reviews products & services. Available online & in print.
- **Bay Area Consumers' Checkbook**  CHECKBOOK, sfpl.org/databases, Nonprofit organization providing articles & reviews on products & services.

Some Online Shopping Sites

(Provided for educational purposes. SFPL does not promote nor endorse these services)

- **Amazon.com**  amazon, Massive company that sells things directly & from others, has own line of tablets and devices, has video & music streaming, etc.
- **Craigslist.org**  craigslist, An online community organized by location, where, amongst other things, you can buy and sell items and services.
- **eBay.com**  ebay, Online marketplace. Bid on or immediately buy a wide range of items from wide range of sellers. Affiliated with PayPal.
- **Thewirecutter.com**  wirecutter, A site which tests and reviews items. Has links to make purchases. Owned by the NY Times.
- **Bensbargains.com, Dealnews.com, Techbargains.com, & Slickdeals.net**, A few popular commercial bargain hunting websites.

Additional Technology Resources

- **Digital Device Drop-In**, Thursdays 4-5 PM, 5th Floor Computer Training Center, The Bridge at Main, Main Library, 100 Larkin Street, (415) 557-4388
- **SFPL Tech Classes Newsletter**, sfpl.org/thebridge or call (415) 557-4388 to sign up for an email each month of all SFPL technology classes
- **SF Public Library Calendar of Events**, sfpl.org/calendar, Check regularly to keep up with our ever-changing array of classes
- **SF Public Library Catalog**, sfpl.org, Search for books on various topics
- **SF Public Library FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)**, sfpl.org/faq, The scoop on many things, including the how to connect to our WiFi network
- **Lynda.com/LinkedIn Learning**,  sfpl.org/eLearning, large selection of technology tutorials, free for SFPL card holders
- **SFPL eLearning**,  sfpl.org/eLearning, large selection of resources to improve your technology and other skills, sign in with your SFPL card
- **gcflearnfree.org**, Free online tutorials on tech and more, from Goodwill