

Buying and selling on the internet

The internet is rapidly changing from a method of researching information and communicating via email into a medium facilitating the sale and purchase of goods and services.

Buying goods and services over the internet is a way of accessing a wider range than is available locally. Buying online means you are able to view a huge variety anytime of the day or night in any location around the world. Items purchased over the internet can be delivered to you with the cost of freight added to the purchase price if you are not able to leave Grenfell to pick the item up yourself.

As a business owner the internet is a way of selling your goods and services to a larger audience than will ever walk past your shop front during trading hours. By having an online presence potential customers are able to view your product anytime of the day or night in any location around the world. Selling items on the internet has potential for businesses in Grenfell as a way of introducing money to town originating from outside of the shire. The fees involved with trading online are reasonable compared to those associated with a traditional shop front and product delivery can be arranged through Australia Post if the customer is not able to come to Grenfell to pick the item up.

Selling items online is a logical progression from an existing website that solely provides information. This can be achieved through the installation of a PayPal shopping cart.

PayPal is a simple online method of payment. It is very secure using the world's most advanced fraud prevention systems. PayPal allows people to make purchases without sharing financial information with the seller. PayPal can be set up for credit cards, debit cards, bank accounts or money transfers to pay for purchases. PayPal can also be used when you are selling on the internet. When you sell an item you can give out your PayPal account rather than your actual bank details. All you need to start using PayPal is an email

address and a bank account, and it only costs you a small fee when you receive a payment through your PayPal account.

If you already have a website you can setup a PayPal Shopping Cart on your site to sell your products. This is free and easy to install provided you know how to edit your website. PayPal supply the buttons and codes so all that you have to do is copy and paste them on to your site. PayPal is a good payment method because it is trusted and many people have a PayPal account. If a customer doesn't have a PayPal account you could encourage them to get one as it only takes 10 mins to sign up at www.paypal.com.au.

Alternately if you don't have a website you can set up a store on eBay. eBay stores are a great way of selling your products online. Setting up a store costs less than \$15 a month. This fee provides you with a custom URL e.g. <http://stores.ebay.com.au/shopname> You can list your products or display them in your eBay storefront or use Merchandising Manager to create a slideshow at the bottom of your listings. eBay is linked to PayPal which makes it easy for customer to purchase from you.

When buying on the internet there are a few things you should check before you make a purchase. If you have to enter your credit card details or passwords for sites such as PayPal or eBay you should ensure the website starts with <https://> rather than <http://>. This means that the site is secure and encrypts data such as your credit card details. This gives you better protection against hackers.

If you find a site that seems too good to be true you can type in the name of the site plus the word 'fraud' into Google e.g. 'eBay fraud.' You will be able to determine if the site is legitimate or not, by reading through a couple of the websites which the search returns.

When buying online research any potential additional costs such as whether or not the price includes gst, whether postage and insurance are included and check you will receive a warranty on your item. Some online businesses offer free postage while others give postage discounts if you spend over a certain amount of money.

If you cannot determine from the photo and description whether the item you are looking at meets your requirements ask the seller about their return policy, to ensure you end up with the product you require. If you are purchasing items from another country check the currency to ensure you are comfortable with the price in Australian dollars.

You can sell items on the internet with just a description but customers will be more inclined to buy if they can see a picture. To sell on the internet you will need a digital camera or a scanner to put photos on your computer. You will need access to a broadband internet connection with at least two gigabytes of downloads per month. You will easily use this limit when viewing your ads and corresponding by email with your customers. I also suggest installing antivirus and firewall to protect your computer from hackers who may access your bank account, PayPal or website details. Two year AVG Internet Security licenses are available from the Grenfell Internet Centre for \$135.99

If anyone would like assistance learning how to use eBay or learning how to install a PayPal cart on an existing website, 'one on one' lessons are available from Josh Dawes at the new Grenfell Internet centre located in the new Community Hub building or by contacting him on 6343 1720.