

Online Shopping – Where do I start?

Shopping online for the first time can be daunting so familiarize yourself with a bit of window shopping by looking at various sites and getting comfortable with finding your way around before you begin.

Start off by opening your web browser, usually Chrome, and simply type along the search bar with what you are looking for. You can search by store or by product and be as general or specific as you wish. For example:

- Silk scarves
- Hicks butchers
- Photo frames
- Personalised t-shirts Dundrum
- Gifts for Men Dún Laoghaire
- Indian takeaway Cabinteely

To support your local stores, try adding 'near me' or a neighbourhood location as shown above so that the results you see are tailored to local businesses. Remember that the first few results are usually paid ads so you may need to scroll down to see the businesses you are after. If ordering food, order direct from the restaurant rather than an intermediary so that the restaurant doesn't incur the cost of a commission unnecessarily.

Each website presents slightly differently, but all will display the products available along with an option to add the item to your shopping cart or basket. Once you have selected the item(s) you want, click on the shopping basket icon to checkout.

At this point you will need to confirm your name, email and the delivery address and select the delivery type (express delivery is likely to cost extra). Some businesses will also offer a 'click and collect' service to allow you to call to the premises and collect the item personally.

Finally, you will need to provide your credit/debit card details. The site will look for the long card number, the expiry date and the 3-digit CVV code on the back of the card.

Once you have placed the order, you will get an order number which you should take note of. You will also receive an email confirmation of the order.

Remember that your consumer rights are the same whether you are shopping online or in person, including the right to return items (although you may incur shipping charges in some instances). The EU have provided a practical guide in this regard [How to Shop Safely Online](#) which also recommends buying from reputable stores and being wary of unfamiliar web traders in order that you can successfully exercise those rights if necessary.

Lastly, be shrewd about the websites you choose, you can make a real difference to your local area by supporting your neighbourhood businesses, helping to ensure those businesses survive and thrive into the future. And you will have an extra level of comfort if there is a later problem with the item you received.