

"I said to my four-year-old daughter, let's write to Santa Claus." She said, "Can't we just text him?" Ulrika Johnsson

TOP OF SANTAS CHRISTMAS WEBSITES*

www.amazon.co.uk
www.argos.co.uk
www.boots.com
www.currys.co.uk
www.dixons.co.uk
www.gadgets.co.uk
www.firebox.com
www.fingleaves.com
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www.houseoffraser.co.uk
www.iwantoneofthose.com
www.johnlewis.com
www.marksandspencer.com
www.presentsformen.co.uk
www.play.com
www.redletterdays.co.uk
www.shopsafe.co.uk
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Christmas

SURFING

MAILING PRESENTS FOR Christmas? You may already be too late.

November 2nd is Hong Kong Post's last day to post surface mail to the UK in time for Christmas. So if you've already missed it or you hate queuing at the post office, online shopping's the way to go...

Just one in five adults enjoy Christmas shopping, according to a UK survey by MORI. Unsurprisingly, women were found to spend the longest time shopping for presents while one in six men admitted they spent less than an hour - and in some cases no time at all - shopping for Christmas presents.

Shoppers are shunning the high street to do Christmas shopping from the comfort of their own home, with a recent poll finding that 93% of people in the UK plan to buy some of their presents online and 71% saying they would use the internet for up to half of their Christmas shopping.

The convenience of online shopping is obvious but it's worth making a few checks before you get your credit card out. Consumer Direct, the UK Government's consumer advice and information website, recommend that before making any online purchases you should always check that the retailer is legitimate. Choosing brands and companies you're familiar with is a good idea and beware of companies that only use PO box numbers as their address.

Michele Shambrook, operations manager at Consumer Direct, says, "If you're shopping online for Christmas,

make sure you have a guarantee that your presents will be delivered in time." In the UK, online retailers have up to 30 days to deliver goods unless otherwise agreed.

In addition to your normal statutory rights, you also have extra protections when shopping online. In most cases, you have seven working days after delivery to change your mind for any reason and get a full refund, including the original delivery charges. You may be asked to cover the reasonable costs of return carriage but these must be made clear in the terms and conditions.

It's also a good idea to pay using a credit card, rather than a debit card, if the purchase is for more than £100 and paying by credit card may give you protection if the supplier goes bust. Consumer Direct say, "buying items costing more than £100 and under £30,000 on a credit card can offer significant consumer protections, as the credit card provider may be liable for any breach of contract, even if you buy from abroad".

And if you're unhappy with any presents you receive, swapping Christmas gifts online is becoming increasingly popular. Recent research says that 5.5 million people in the UK exchanged goods in 2008 and sites like www.recycleagift.com have had thousands of registrations from people hoping to get rid of unwanted gifts.

Luke Taylor, head of PlayTrade that run the site, said "We never expected it to be so popular. It was set up as a gimmick to show that you can easily recycle your unwanted gifts and get what you wanted instead. It's great to think that the presents are actually finding a home rather than just gathering dust."

