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Beat the fraudsters when shopping online

1 Millions of us will go online to buy Christmas gifts this year, spending more than £5bn on home entertainment, gadgets, food and wine websites.

Yet , one third of consumers admit they are terrified of falling victim to internet crooks who steal card details .

5 Research shows that shoppers would probably double their spending online if they felt reassured that their details would be secure - and if there were tougher penalties for online fraudsters.

In a recent survey, almost half of shoppers said they would like to see the Government issue clearer guidelines for secure online shopping.

10 Many consumers have strong reservations about the safety of card details when shopping online .

'Internet shopping is incredibly popular, but it is up to Government, retailers and the payments industry to ensure it is a secure environment.' Graphic designer George

Cascarino, 38, from Edinburgh, is a frequent online shopper and plans to do most of 15 his Christmas shopping over the internet, but he says he tends to use the sites only of the big, established brands he recognises.

'Shopping online is often cheaper and also takes a lot of stress out of Christmas gift buying,' says George, who lives with his partner Debbie Collins, 38, a management accountant. Here are some tips to avoid fraud .

20 For example, always check that there is an address and landline phone number to contact the company's offices in case something goes wrong.

Jo Thornhill, Mail on Sunday
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