

## Click and collect - the new way to go shopping by Harry Wallop

The Internet retail revolution has taken a surprising turn – in which independent store owners can play a happy and prosperous role.

How late did you leave your Christmas shopping ? I thought I was cutting it fine with some emergency Terry's chocolate oranges for my children's stockings, bought just after lunch on Christmas Eve.

But one man picked up his final Christmas parcel at 10.43pm at Esso service station in Hanworth, Middlesex.

The unknown customer was not buying, merely collecting something he had already purchased on the Internet. He is one of many millions of people who have embraced "click and collect". [(...)]

Internet shopping was meant to revolutionise how we bought things, but it didn't work out like that because delivery services were not up to scratch. Which is where click and collect comes in.

The concept is very simple and very counter-intuitive. You, the customer, buy something online. Then, you go to the shop and collect it yourself.

Illogical as it sounds, most shoppers would actually prefer to incur the cost and hassle of going into town and picking up the pair of trousers or food blender than wait at home or visit the shop, unsure that it will be in stock. Among click and collect's attractions is the certainty that your item will actually be there, waiting for you. [(...)]

The other key advantage to the corner-shop model is that the customer has somewhere they can easily return items that they don't like. It brings some of the benefits of online shopping back into the hands of independent traders. Internet shoppers are finally getting the sort of service and convenience they were always promised. About time too. (258 words)

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