

26 October 2021

Shop local, shop smart, and shop safely this Christmas — Guaranteed Irish and .IE

- **Consumers advised to shop local but stay vigilant this festive season as part of a joint campaign from Guaranteed Irish and .IE**
- **.IE CEO: “Christmas, coupled with increased online spending, can be a perfect time for opportunistic cybercriminals looking to take advantage of the festive frenzy.”**

Shoppers buying online this Christmas are being encouraged to support local businesses by buying Irish, but they have been warned to stay vigilant to ensure a safe and positive online shopping experience.

With more and more Irish consumers spending online, which was accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, there naturally comes more concerns for online security and safety from opportunistic cybercriminals, personal data breaches and online transactions.

Encouragingly, 81% of consumers believe buying Irish is important¹, so Guaranteed Irish and .IE have joined forces to share some top tips and advice for consumers to help them shop safely and securely this Christmas.

1. When it comes to buying gifts online, shop with trusted retailers and recognisable brands. If you are suspicious, do your research to see if other shoppers have the same concerns or have had bad experiences.
2. Before making a purchase online, check the address and location of the retailer. Websites with a .ie address are the easiest way of finding businesses with an Irish connection. Though it might not be physically located on the island of Ireland, all .ie websites must have a proven connection to Ireland. 91% of .ie websites are registered by businesses and individuals that are located here.
3. If prices seem too good to be true, they most likely are! Avoid clicking on unsolicited links and use your common sense when it comes to deals and prices.
4. Always look for delivery details so that you know all the costs associated with the delivery of your items, including taxes and charges. This information is usually found on the FAQ, help, shopping cart areas of a website. If it is not available, email or phone customer service for clarification.
5. Shop early to avoid disappointment! In the lead-up to Christmas, there can often be delays in receiving items due to increase in demand, potential supply issues, and delivery delays. Shopping early helps to ensure you will receive your items on time.
6. Always look for the returns policies so that there are no surprises or hidden costs if you need to return the item later.
7. Shop with websites whose addresses begin with a https:// (as opposed to a http://). In simple terms, look for the lock icon! The lock icon ensures your data is protected and your transaction is safe.

Comment from David Curtin, Chief Executive of .IE

David Curtin, Chief Executive of .IE said: “By using common sense and obeying basic security rules, online shopping is a safe and convenient experience. However, Christmas, coupled with increased online spending, can be a perfect time for opportunistic cybercriminals looking to take advantage of the festive frenzy.

“When it comes to buying gifts online, shop with trusted retailers and recognisable brands. If you're suspicious, check online to see if other shoppers have had your concerns. Avoid downloading apps and clicking on unsolicited links that promote deals and prices that seem too good to be true—they probably are.

“At the online checkout, make sure your web address bar has a lock or shield icon; this means your connection is safe and can't be intercepted by a third party. If you don't see it, don't buy.

“Over the Christmas period, keep account of every payment you make online and compare it with your bank statement. If you think your account has been compromised, contact your bank immediately.

“Finally, if you are a business, we would urge you to be upfront with information for customers by making all terms and conditions visible and accessible on your website to avoid any unnecessary confusion and disappointment later.”

Comment from Bríd O’Connell, CEO of Guaranteed Irish

“We welcome this initiative with .IE, which not only reassures consumers they are shopping securely but supports our local economy and communities and shortens the supply chain, which ensures less damage to our environment.

“Every €20 spent on a Guaranteed Irish gift this Christmas is worth €100 to the Irish economy. This helps our Irish producers, makers, and suppliers to keep trading while giving the consumer a feeling of solidarity in supporting our exceptional local businesses. We are encouraging everyone to look out for the Guaranteed Irish symbol and .ie websites for a local, secure, and seamless online purchasing experience.”

Keeping these tips in mind, all that’s left to do is start your e-window shopping through guaranteedirishgifts.ie. With lots to inspire, you’re sure to find something for everyone on your Christmas list.

Visit GuaranteedIrishGifts.ie for hundreds of gift ideas this Christmas. Shop local on a trusted .ie website.

¹[.IE Digital Health Index](#)

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About .IE

.IE is the national registry for .ie domain names and the trusted and progressive guardian of Ireland’s unique online .ie address. Our purpose is to enable and empower people, communities, and businesses across Ireland to thrive online.

We operate the domain name system ([DNS](#)) for the .ie namespace, facilitate an [independent dispute resolution service](#), and operate a public [WHOIS](#) lookup service for .ie domains.

In cooperation with our Registrars, technical partners, and stakeholders, we help advance Ireland’s internet ecosystem. Good governance is evidenced in our [policy development](#)

[process](#) for the .ie namespace, which follows a bottom-up, consensus-driven approach through a multi-stakeholder Policy Advisory Committee.

At .IE we are committed to digital advocacy for SMEs and for local communities. Through stakeholder engagement initiatives such as [.IE Digital Town](#), we work with and support SME organisations to improve their members' online presence and e-commerce capabilities so they can unlock the power of the internet to boost sales to local consumers.

We also produce fact-based research for the business community and policymakers, such as the [.IE Domain Profile Report](#) and the [.IE Tipping Point](#), which charts the attitudes to digital of Irish SMEs and consumers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There are over 328,000 .ie domain names registered. Since March 2018, it is easier and faster to register a .ie domain. As part of the domain registration process, every applicant must provide tangible evidence of a connection to Ireland.

www.weare.ie

About Guaranteed Irish

Guaranteed Irish is a business membership network championing business based in Ireland since 1974. The Guaranteed Irish symbol is the national symbol of trust in business in Ireland. The official Guaranteed Irish licenced mark is awarded to businesses based in Ireland that support sustainable jobs, contribute to our local communities, and are committed to Irish provenance. Guaranteed Irish currently backs over 1,900 business members, employing 100,000 people across Ireland, generating an annual combined Irish turnover of €12.9bn.

www.guaranteedirish.ie

www.guaranteedirishgifts.ie

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