



**BWN COMPUTER**  
Repair/Service/Upgrade  
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# NEWSLETTER



## Stay Safe Shopping Online This Holiday Season

Retail research tells us that over 75% of people are shopping online each month, and, with the holiday season upon us, you're likely to be one of them. But don't let the appeal of convenience distract you from the need to stay safe when shopping online.

The number of digital buyers is steadily climbing. In 2020, according to Statista, more than two billion people purchased goods or services online. During the same year, e-retail sales surpassed \$4.2 trillion U.S. dollars worldwide.

Retailers are embracing the change in consumer behavior. But do you know who else is taking advantage? Cybercrooks. Before you buy, consider these strategies to stay safe.

### #1 Question that great deal

If a deal looks "too good to be true," it probably is. You're not going to get a new Apple laptop for \$29.99, or the latest Beats headphones or Xbox gaming console for under \$20. Anyone offering you that price is trying to lure you to their site to enter your payment details, so don't be surprised when your product never arrives!

### #2 Review seller feedback

While scrolling social media you see adverts for perfect gifts for someone on your list. And it's so easy to click the link

and buy! Still, before purchasing, take the time to research the seller.

Read the feedback from other buyers on independent sources. It adds only a few moments to check sites such as Trustpilot and Google My Business.

### #3 Research the business domain

Think about it: who are you more likely to trust with your sensitive data? Someone who has been in business 10 years or someone who set up shop 10 days ago? Quickly check how long a business website has been around. Enter the URL into the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers' lookup tool [<https://lookup.icann.org>].

### #4 Watch out for email scams

Before clicking on any offer links in emails, check the URL. You can hover over the link before actually redirecting there and check the target. Double-check that the address is to the site you're expecting.

Also, slow down and be sure that the address doesn't have any typos or atypical endings. You don't want to confuse [www.nike.com](http://www.nike.com) with [www.n1ke.co](http://www.n1ke.co) and end up a victim of identity theft instead of the proud owner of the latest Air Max.

### #5 Check payment site security

There are several ways to verify the security of a payment site. These include:

- verifying that the site uses an SSL certificate – it will start with "https" instead of "http";
- checking for a physical address and phone number – call the contact number to confirm its not fake;
- reviewing Terms and Conditions and Return and Privacy policies – any reputable brand has these!

### #6 Pay with Online Payments

When you do decide to buy, prefer to pay using PayPal or another online payment tool. You won't be giving the seller your credit card details. If you can't take this approach, use a credit card from a credit account rather than debit. You will have more protection this way. You can start a chargeback through your credit card company when the item isn't as advertised, and the seller's customer service doesn't help.

Before online shopping, at any time of the year, update your operating system, and keep your anti-virus software current, too.

**Our IT experts are here to help keep your technology safe and secure. Contact us today at 940-282-0290.**



## The New PC Tune Up

How exciting! You got a new computer for Christmas. It's sleek, shiny, and so much faster than what you had before. That's great, but it doesn't mean you should leave it untouched. This article shares several steps you might take to secure your data and keep that new device in tip-top shape.

First things first. Before even logging into personal email or other top sites, you'll want to update the operating system (OS). Yes, most computers come out of the box with Windows, but you can't know when that item was boxed. There could be important updates that you don't want to miss.

You'll also want to install the latest drivers. Different hardware on your computer can need specialized drivers from the manufacturer. Gamers, for instance, may want to ensure they download the latest to boost performance.

While you're doing all this uploading and upgrading, also look to removing bloatware and junkware from the manufacturer.

You might not have any need for the tools that come already installed. Meanwhile, they slow down your computer. Remove the clutter to improve your computer's processing. Head to your PC's Control Panel and look to uninstall programs and utilities that you don't want. Be careful, though. Just because you don't know what it is doesn't mean it's not serving a valuable purpose.

Starting out on a new computer is also a great time to set up the free software. For many of us this includes:

- Mozilla Firefox – the internet browser;
- VLC – a multimedia player;
- LibreOffice – Office Software
- Foxit Reader – to create, edit, sign, and secure PDFs;
- 7Zip –for archiving files.

### Involving an IT expert

If you had a great sales experience, you may not want to seek IT help with your new computer. Still, it can prove useful.

Your new computer may also need BIOS updates. Again, the hardware was current when your computer was boxed up but may be lacking the latest by the time it gets to you. A note of caution: this is not an update to do alone. BIOS updates don't add new features, security patches, or performance improvements, but they may fix a bug with a piece of hardware or add support for your central processing unit (CPU). These updates can be risky if done incorrectly, so work with an IT tech.

Talk also with an IT tech about the best data backup plan for your needs. You'll want to make sure your important data is kept secure.

IT support will also suggest the best security tool for you to use to protect against malware. With so many free and fee-based third-party alternatives to Windows Defender, you may want help deciding on the best one.

**We're here to help you get the most out of your new computer. Or, if you're not sure yet which one to buy, we can consult with you on that, too. Contact us today at 940-282-0290.**