Tech Topics

How To Stay Safe Online This Holiday Season

(NAPSA)—Many people look forward to holidays as a time to spend with friends and family, load up on Mom's turkey and sing their favorite holiday jingles. For savvy shoppers, this time of year also offers a chance to take advantage of major discounts, whether you're buying gifts for loved ones or yourself.

However, lured by the promise of getting the must-have toy of the season or the latest tech gadget at half the price, bargain hunters all too often fall for online scams to steal their personal and financial information. Although online shopping continues to be a popular and easy way for people to get their holiday shopping done, it can also open the door to scams from sneaky cybercrooks.

According to Norton, the leading online security company, holiday e-mails with taglines like "You Have Received a Christmas Greeting Card!" and "Cash for the New Year" have already started appearing in people's in-boxes. Although the messages can seem harmless, they may contain viruses and worms that will damage your computer or, worse, send you to websites designed to steal your e-mail and bank account information.

In fact, Norton recently found that 73 percent of Americans have been victims of cybercrime in their lifetimes. Follow these tips to stay safe this season:

•**Check your list twice**—If you receive a suspicious e-mail, whether it's offering discounts that are too good to be true or is filled with grammatical errors, delete the message. It could be part of a scam to trick you into downloading a virus or giving away your personal information.

•**Find out which websites are "naughty" and "nice"**—

If you receive an e-mail offering discounts that seem too good to be true, delete the message. They probably are.

When conducting transactions online, make sure the website address contains "https"—which indicates an added layer of protection. Also, scan the entire Web page for a trust mark, such as the VeriSign Trust Seal. These marks demonstrate that a trusted company has taken comprehensive measures to certify security, online business ethics and customer privacy standards.

•**Don't let scams turn your Black Friday into the blues**—Use trusted online security software, like Norton Internet Security 2012 or a mobile solution like Norton Mobile Security, to make sure you're protected against online threats and help ensure safe shopping, from home or on the go, this season.

For more information on how to stay safe online, please visit www.Norton.com.