

**Prateek Agrawal's (Director, Ivy Professional School) quote in The Times of India – 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 09**

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## Going shopping? Just log on, say Kolkatans

Pallavi Guha | TNN

Kolkata: Online shopping is fast increasing in Indian metros and Kolkata is no exception. According to a survey by Assocham, e-shopping in Kolkata has increased by 15-18% in 2007-08 compared to 2006-07. Although the city has recorded online business of over Rs 250 crore, it is still going slow compared to other metros.

Speaking to TOI on the increasing trend, ASSOCHAM secretary-general D S Rawat said: "Books and consumer durables are favourites among buyers from Kolkata. E-shopping helps many to manage time better as shopping is done without stepping out of home or workplace."

Echoing the same, Ashish Vijn, head of e-commerce, indiatimes.com, said: "These kinds of growth rates are triggered by the value for money deals offered by shopping sites like Indiatimes and others, greater awareness of the medium and the irreplaceable convenience that internet shopping offers."

Among metros, Kolkata stands at number four with a share of 10-12% of the total online shopping in India, while Mumbai tops the chart with a share of 40%. "The confidence of using the credit card for online deals is still less in Kolkata. The credibility needs to be established," said Koteswar Dobhal of Assocham.

Online shopping also involves a certain amount of security.

"From security perspective, we categorize online buyers as novice, experiencing and experienced. For the novice buyers, it's an easy deal to submit credit card information and buy the product, without going into the security aspects of the website. The second category is aware of the threats but not conversant with the technical aspects while experienced buyers check the security settings of the website before making a purchase," **said Prateek Agarwal, a cyber security expert from Kolkata.**

"Work and odd hours hardly give me the time to shop. Online shopping has the flexibility of buying even post mid-night and all 365 days a year. It comes easy on my pocket, too, thanks to the discounts offered. I feel electronic goods are the best buy," said Somnath Ghosh, businessman and a regular eshopper.

The primary drive for online shopping is great deals and convenience, said Deepa Thomas, senior manager of Pop Culture, EBay. "Customers want value for money. As per our census conducted in 2007, shoppers from Kolkata are the largest buyers of loose diamonds in EBay. Online shopping can offer better rates as marketing is done by us and sellers save the cost of marketing and that of setting up a physic-

al shop. Buyer protection is a must for better business and security,” he explained.

**CHECKS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING**  
**As suggested by Prateek Agarwal**

t The online shopping portal must ask for registration before the buyer makes any purchase

t Only make purchases from well-known portals

t Buy only from portals that display a postal address and phone numbers on the website

t Check the security pad. Websites must flash message “Secured Zone” with the address featuring https instead of just http

