

Shopping Safely

At this point in the course, you may be asking yourself about **show groceries** shopping. How can you order from Amazon, privately and securely? What about physical stores? This is tricky because it's difficult to do. Stress on difficult, because it's not impossible! Let's go ahead and cover different techniques and methods we can use to make our shopping experiences, online and in-store, safer; keep in mind this is a more extreme lesson, so those of you who draw your convenience lines early may find this lesson out of your zone.

Promotional Spot

Let's start with in-person stores, leaving the digital-side out of the equation. Security-wise, we need to be careful, we don't know how stores handle your data. *Target has been hacked, Home Depot, Wendy's, Chipotle, Whole Foods, Sonic, Under Armor, Panera Bread, Sears,* and there are many more.

The best way to secure your information is by not giving your information. Here's how you do it:

- 1) *Pay with cash as much as possible. Neither the store or your bank can collect any data on your shopping habits.*
- 2) If a store doesn't take cash, you can use prepaid debit cards without your information. Purchase the non-reloadable *prepaid visa gift cards, like the Vanilla Visa,* and use falsified information if needed. The ideal is to purchase these **show cash** with cash, but if your threat model isn't as high, you can use your credit card to buy them. Watch out for reloadable cards, since they require your real name, address, birth date, and social security number. Keep in mind even when you buy prepaid cards, *there will be video cameras and other methods of tracking you within the store, not to mention your trip to the store is tracked as well,* so you'll need a private method of transportation --assuming your threat model is that extreme. A side note for EU viewers, *the website viabuy.com can get you a credit card without credit checks or links to your bank account.* Speaking of credit...credit bureaus are widely known to share and sell user data, which is why you may receive offers for other credit cards in the mail, you can opt out of this by visiting this website and opting out.
- 3) If you don't want to (or can't) use cash or prepaid debit cards in a store, and you're set on paying with your personal debit or credit card, at least implement basic security measures. Contact your bank to increase the length of your PIN to at least 6 digits, preferably 8. *Don't sign the back of*

your card, write "Ask for photo ID". And consider investing in an RFID blocking wallet or purse to protect your information from RFID attacks.

- 4) Avoid signing up for rewards programs and credit cards. If you do want to open a rewards account, you don't normally need to provide your real information. **cough**
- 5) And the final step, go into every store with a pseudo. You never know when people will ask for information, and if you're not prepared, you're going to give your real information. Be prepared, *like Japeth.*

That wraps up physical stores! But what about digital shopping? *Stores are being hacked left and right, phishing attacks are never-ending, and your personal information is constantly at risk.* Let's start with the site you care about most: *Amazon.*

*Amazon only requires an email and a name, both of which don't have to be genuine...*use a pseudonym. Remember to send packages to your pseudo's PO box or PMB. Now, everything is private except payment--you have two options if you don't want the purchase tied to you.

- 1) *The recommended payment option is to purchase an Amazon gift card at a local store with cash.* You can continue reloading your Amazon account with gift cards indefinitely.
- 2) The second option, if you insist on paying with a card, is seeing if your *bank offers virtual expendable cards to protect your actual card. If this isn't possible, services like privacy.com or Blur offer similar functionality.* But, I would always recommend the gift card route--it is significantly more private.

Congrats, you are now using Amazon privately and securely. Lucky for you, the rules are extremely similar on other sites--with one main difference. Lots of sites don't require an account to make a purchase; if you can checkout as guest, take that route. Rather than using Amazon gift cards though, use prepaid debit card and a pseudonym to make an account--if one is required. Don't forget to make purchases on a hardened browser, we covered this in section 3.

Queue Outro Promos

And that is how to shop safely. It's important you take control of your data because the places you shop don't have your security and privacy on their priority list. As always, thank you for watching, and I'll see you in the next *lesson: Lifestyle Changes.*