

## IS YOUR SHOPPING CART COSTING YOU MONEY?



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By **Shannan Hearne-Fortner**

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They was a time when doing business on the internet simply meant hanging out your electronic shingle and raking in the profits. Then it became necessary to build your online credibility through reciprocal linking and membership in organizations like <http://i-Cop.org>. Then organizations like <http://www.paypal.com> and <http://zzz.clickbank.net/r/?shannan0> became necessary to accept payments without waiting for the proverbial "check in the mail".

One of the latest innovations of internet marketing is the shopping cart program. Basically, this let's visitors to your site prepare an online order just like they would fill out an order form from a catalog and submit it directly to your business. Some programs are so advanced they also calculate payments, coupons, shipping, and inventory.

But are they a good thing?

Many online business people are finding that the fancy shopping cart program they have used to design or re-design their website is costing them business. Why?

Because these programs are not search engine friendly. They omit meta tags, they contain long and cumbersome universal resource locators (URLs), and they inhibit the attainment of high search engine rankings.

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So what can the online business person do? Is there no way to have a friendly merchant environment? And stay visible in the search engines?

Yes, there is. And its relatively simple. Take for example, a generic gift site. You might have a front page with a link to main category pages that each flow down like a graph to specific products. But you cannot place each of these pages directly into your shopping cart program. Create a regular front page which sits right on your domain, [www.mygifts.com](http://www.mygifts.com). Create category headings for your main product groupings that also sit directly on your domain, [www.mygifts.com/group1.html](http://www.mygifts.com/group1.html), [www.mygifts.com/group2.html](http://www.mygifts.com/group2.html) etc. Keep these pages off the secure shopping cart server and system. From the category heading pages, then move into the shopping cart system.

While your individual products may never see the light of day in search engine rankings – your front page and your category headings will. In this way, you have a site which is shopper and search engine friendly.

Shannan Hearne–Fortner is the president and wizard of <http://www.SuccessPromotions.com>, an internet marketing information and service company. Part author, poet, mother, WAHM, and wizard, Shannan is the marketing manifestation of Guerilla marketing techniques from Jay Conrad Levinson, One–to–One Marketing, grass roots campaign development and internet wizardry combined with the Eastern–Western philosophies of such gurus as Deepak Chopra, Shakti Gawain, and Alan Watts. Seasoned with the thoughts of theological greats like Billy Graham and WAHM oriented authors like Priscilla Huff. Her marketing experience contains over ten years of online and off–line campaign development for products and services ranging from alarms to pottery, software to hardware, jewelry to clothing, consulting to designing, and everything in between. Always insightful, often humorous, and occasionally downright delightful.

Shannan Hearne–Fortner, President and Wizard  
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### **Good Shopping Cart Scripts**

**By Vincent Murphy**

You may be wondering what a shopping cart script is, could it be a script for a movie about shopping carts - not likely. Scripts track what a consumer chooses to buy from your online store. The scripts will track their choices all the way through to the checkout process. Often online consumers think that the shopping cart is a neat little icon that holds all their purchases until they are ready to checkout - just as

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they do in a real store but this is not the case. The shopping cart icon is used as the first part of the financial transaction. Then a gateway will send the information to the area where the customer will pay for the items that they have chosen. This process is completed through a secure connection.

The payment gateway will then send the requests, which have been processed thus far along with various other transfers throughout the financial networks as necessary. This includes the Internet merchant account that your bank has with the online store. When this is completed, the gateway will then send confirmation or denial to the shopping cart software. How do you know which shopping cart package is appropriate for your business? There are literally hundreds of packages to choose from, searching through them all can be time consuming as well as confusing, and then it may become more difficult to determine what is best for your online business.

**Free or Premium Shopping Carts:** Before you begin to look at what is available make sure you have a clear idea of what it is you want the shopping cart to accomplish. Look at your online business and the products you are offering. If you are just beginning, you may not need all the fancy extras that come with a high-end shopping cart package. If that is the stage you are at in your business, you may want to consider a lower end package. However, remember, nothing is ever truly free is it? Always read the fine print and acknowledgments before you decide on anything.

**Free e-Commerce Solutions:** Paypal is a great e-commerce solution. The services that Paypal offer have become quite popular among the Internet businesses. Paypal integrates the necessary shopping cart functions with the payment gateways and includes the merchant account. This is very convenient. The drawback is that your consumers are required to use Paypal and become Paypal account holders, this is not difficult because when they purchase your product they will automatically be taken to a page that will have them set up their Paypal account. The only cost to you is a small percentage that is taken out of each transaction and you pay no monthly fees for this service.

Vincent Murphy can help you to find the best home based business ideas and opportunities so you can work at home visit:

<http://www.HomeGrail.com>

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