

# Bargain Hunters Warned Over Bogus Internet Offers

Submitted by: FreebieList.com

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Bargain-hungry Web surfers have been urged to be on the lookout for bogus 'freebies', offers and bargains. The warning comes amid growing concerns over credit card fraud, 'spam' and identity theft.

With the current economic turmoil, more people than ever are attempting to save money by searching for free offers and bargains on the Web, but as in the brick and mortar world, there is often a catch.

According to Andy Varley, founder of [www.freebielist.com](http://www.freebielist.com), a site specialising in reviewing free products and services (<http://www.freebielist.com>), many offers warrant closer inspection;

"It is good advice to be wary of any offer purporting to be free, especially on the Web. Few words are more attention-grabbing than 'free', but in the vast majority of cases there is often a catch.

"People need to be cautious otherwise their details could fall foul of a marketing scam, or perhaps worse. My advice has always been to do the research before committing yourself to an offer. If something looks too good to be true, it probably is."

Despite the minefield of bogus offers available online, legitimate freebies and great savings can be found safely and easily. Tangible items such as make-up, hair products, DVDs, magazines, food and drink, and fragrances can be requested via the Internet, completely free of charge and with no catches. Digital freebies, such as software, games, fonts and free reminder services, can also be obtained. Free money-off coupons, suitable for obtaining discounts at top stores and restaurants, are also popular at the minute.

But not all suppliers have good intentions in mind. In more sinister cases companies can sell the data to third party companies.

This month, nearly 20,000 Visa, MasterCard and American Express card numbers were published on the Web, sparking fears over credit card fraud and identify theft. But a story such as this doesn't mean you should avoid all offers, and there are some great ones to be had, says Varley;

"Although they are rare, genuine freebies do exist online, and the majority are from big name cosmetic and beauty giants like Olay, Nivea, and fragrance houses like Hugo and Coty. It is worth taking the time to investigate the numerous legitimate freebies out there on the Web, and you'll save plenty of money in the process."

The follow advice is suggested for avoiding dodgy Internet offers:

- 1) Be on the lookout for a Privacy Policy. This outlines how the company intends to use personal information.
- 2) If an offer looks too good to be true – avoid!
- 3) Reputable sites should always provide an 'opt out' feature for their e-mail newsletter mailings.
- 4) Beware of false advertising claims. 'Free' is not always what it seems and frequently there is a catch!

- 5) Sites advertising free iPods and PlayStations are not what they seem, and should be avoided.
- 6) Do the research and always read the small print - this will help you establish the validity of an offer.
- 7) Never be tempted to enter your credit card information to obtain a freebie since you may be unwittingly charged. Only make purchases from discounted suppliers attaining positive reviews.
- 8) Set up a secondary, free e-mail account from a company such as yahoo.com or hotmail.com, and use this to request freebies and other offers, rather than your personal or work account.
- 9) Ensure your computer is secured with a regularly updated anti-virus and anti-spyware program.

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#### NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Launched in 1999, FreebieList.com (<http://www.freebielist.com>) is an award-winning UK Web site to provide reviews of freebies on the Internet. The site takes a 'no scams', 'no spam' approach and has received a large number of commendations, including appearances in The Sun, The Mirror, Web User, Webactive Magazine, .net Magazine, The Irish Times and other publications.

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