

## A magazine article

1 Read the article. Which are the most popular online purchases in the Gulf region?

# Shopping: just a click away?



In the twenty-first century, online shopping has become very popular, as busy people now shop online for convenience and to save time and money. Online shoppers can read consumer reviews to get information about products, and shop around to get the best deals. The consequences of this change in shopping habits have been disastrous for some small businesses, and even some bigger companies have suffered.

However, the popularity of online shopping varies from country to country. Dubai is one of the top shopping destinations in the world, and is a city of shopping malls. The UAE also has one of the highest percentages of internet use in the Middle East and tablets and smartphones are becoming increasingly popular, especially with young people. But, surprisingly, online shopping is still comparatively new here compared to other countries.

Although online commerce is growing in the UAE, it's likely that people will continue to enjoy shopping at traditional 'bricks and mortar' shopping venues. One important reason is that malls aren't just places to buy things. They are a place to socialise, especially for young people and families. And the fact that new malls are still being built, for example the huge new shopping complex 'The Mall of the World' in Dubai, suggests that this type of shopping environment isn't going to disappear any time soon.

Other reasons that make shoppers from the Middle East reluctant to shop online include security concerns. Online fraud and credit card theft have been widely reported in the UAE. People also like to see products before they buy, which isn't possible with online purchases. Another drawback is the cost, speed and delivery of items. Delivery can be expensive and slow, especially in a region where there is no standardised postal system. For this reason, using a 'click and collect' service is more popular. This means people can shop online, and then collect the goods at a time convenient to them.

The products that perform best in online sales in the region are airline tickets, hotel reservations, movies and games. Electronics, cosmetics and clothing are also becoming increasingly popular.

Successful online companies in the region include:

- **JadoPado** – Founded in 2010, the \$4 million business sells and delivers gadgets and electronic goods to customers in the Gulf region and to 160 countries worldwide.
- **EmiratesAvenue** – was set up in 2009, and mainly sells electronic gadgets. It offers a 24-hour delivery service and accepts payment of cash or credit card on delivery as well as payment online.
- **Souq.com** – a Dubai-based shopping portal that has 6.2 million registered users. It sells electronics, but also offers fashion, cosmetics, watches and books.
- **Namshi** – has a wide selection of clothing and accessories for men, women and children and has partnered with the shipping service Aramex to offer free delivery on goods.



**2 Read the article again. Choose the correct answers.**

- 1 Over the last 15 years people have changed ...
  - a the way they shop.
  - b their businesses.
  - c products and shopped around.
- 2 People visit Dubai to ...
  - a shop online.
  - b use mobile devices.
  - c go shopping.
- 3 Shopping centres in the UAE ...
  - a have more than one purpose.
  - b have different types of environment.
  - c are becoming less popular.
- 4 Some people worry about ...
  - a buying stolen goods.
  - b the safety of buying things online.
  - c where to collect products from.
- 5 Emiratesavenue.com ...
  - a will deliver on the same day that you order.
  - b hasn't been operating for as long as JadoPado.
  - c offers several ways to pay for products.

**3 Answer the questions about the text.**

- 1 According to the article, what are the advantages of shopping online?  
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- 2 Why is it perhaps surprising that online shopping isn't more popular in the UAE?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What is attractive to people in the Gulf region about shopping in malls?  
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- 4 How does a click and collect service solve some of the problems of online shopping?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 In what way might namshi.com be more popular than some of the other online companies?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4 Answer the questions with your own ideas.**

- 1 Which online companies do you know? Have you ever bought something online? If so, what?  
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\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Do you think you can find out more about a product on the internet or in a shop? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Do you think we will do all our shopping online within the next 10 years? Why / Why not?  
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