

Coupons Online: Using Your Computer to Save Money



Click, Cut, Save!

Long a standard of Sunday newspapers, coupons are moving into the fast-paced arena of technology. Today's coupon clippers have a wide range of options available to them. You can "clip" coupons from websites such as www.coupons.com or download them directly onto a shopping card from a website such as www.pgeveryday-solutions.com. You can even get some coupons on your smartphone or iPod touch when you are on the go.

Coupon usage rose 27 percent in 2009, the greatest spike in usage since 1992, according to <http://couponinfo.com/coupons> (sponsored by Inmar). Consumers redeemed more than \$3.5 billion dollars' worth of coupons. Companies, on the other hand, issued more than 367 billion coupons equaling \$528.5 billion in an effort to increase customers' brand loyalty.

Finding Coupons

Printable Coupons

The websites below offer online coupons that you can print and take with you to the grocery store. Be sure to follow the Staying Safe Online guidelines in this publication when you visit the sites.

- www.coupons.com
- www.couponcabin.com
- www.coupon.smartsource.com
- www.afullcup.com
- www.thekrazycouponlady.com
- www.couponmom.com
- www.hotcouponworld.com
- www.fatwallet.com
- www.savings.com
- www.redplum.com
- slickdeals.net

Company Websites

Many companies make coupons available on their corporate websites. Just a handful of companies make most of the nonfood products you use in your home every day. Look at the items in your home and figure out which company produces them.

Coupons allow companies to increase their brand recognition and strength even in tough economic times. Many companies will ask you to sign up for updates and e-newsletters in order to receive coupons. Here are a few companies you might be interested in:

- Johnson & Johnson
www.healthyessentials.com/printable-coupons
- Arm & Hammer
www.armandhammer.com/Resources/SavingsCenter.aspx
- Proctor & Gamble
www.pgeveryday.com/tag/printable-coupons
- Colgate-Palmolive
www.colgate.com/en/us/oc/special-offers
- Kellogg's
www.kelloggsfamilyrewards.com/en_US/coupons.html
- Campbell's
www.campbells.com/kitchen/coupons/
- Purina Pet Foods
www.purina.com/coupons/sign-up
- Hallmark
www.hallmark.com/offers/

Social Media

With more than 1.86 billion users on Facebook alone, companies are making sure they have a presence on social networks. Check out your favorite company on Facebook to see what deals, samples, and coupons they are currently offering.

Companies are also advertising coupons on Twitter. Many companies tweet discount codes. Follow your favorite companies' tweets and save money.

Grocery Store Coupons

In Mississippi, only a few grocery stores offer coupons online that can be downloaded directly to your shopper card. However, this method is becoming more popular.

- Kroger
www.kroger.com/coupons
- Upromise
ecoupons.upromise.com/

Who's Using Coupons?

The Food Marketing Institute (FMI) found that, in 2009, shoppers spent an average of \$98.40 per week on groceries. The Nielson Company found that households earning more than \$70,000 a year are the heaviest users of coupons, but households with an annual income of \$100,000 spurred the huge spike in coupon usage in 2009.

Less affluent households in rural areas or struggling urban areas were found to use fewer coupons. Nielson also found that male-only households, African Americans, and Hispanics tend to use coupons the least, while young white women tend to use them the most. ICOM Information Communications found that one in five shoppers was embarrassed about using coupons.

Tips for Shopping with Coupons

- ✂ Make a list of commonly used household items and how much you paid for the items (or simply keep your last receipt).
- ✂ Visit the company's website to see if they have a coupon you can use on your next trip.
- ✂ Plan meals around the coupons available.
- ✂ Organize coupons in the order that you shop in the store.
- ✂ Shop circulars to find sales and then look for coupons to further reduce prices.
- ✂ Use coupons for diapers and toys to offset baby shower gift expenses.
- ✂ Keep your coupons handy for unexpected shopping excursions.
- ✂ Trade coupons you don't use with someone else.
- ✂ Be sure to check with local stores to see if they have policies about coupons.

What Does Your Coupon Say about You?

Quite a lot, actually. The bar code on coupons printed from the web can contain this information:

- The IP address of the computer from which it was printed.
- Search words used to locate the coupon.
- The time the coupon was printed.
- The time between when the coupon was printed and when it was used.

Staying Safe while Searching for Deals

- ✗ Do not pay for coupons. Paying for coupons is usually a violation of the manufacturer's coupon.
- ✓ Most coupon websites will require you to register in order to obtain coupons. You will receive a lot of spam mail after you register. Consider setting up a separate email account for couponing. You can use a free service such as Yahoo!, Google, or Hotmail.
- ✗ Never give out personal information such as social security numbers, bank account numbers, or your mother's maiden name when registering for coupons. At most, you should only provide the following: first and last name, mailing address, and email address.
- ✓ Many online coupon websites require an add-on, such as a toolbar or coupon printer. If your computer begins to run slow, remove those programs or run Spybot Search & Destroy (available from safer-networking.org).
- ✗ Do not click on ANY pop-ups. If a pop-up appears on your screen, simply close it from the taskbar at the bottom of the screen or press ALT + F4 to close the window.
- ✓ Delete temporary Internet files and cookies after couponing.
- ✓ Run Spybot Search & Destroy after couponing.

Publication 2667 (POD-03-17)

By Dr. Mariah Smith Morgan, Assistant Extension Professor, Extension Center for Technology Outreach.



Copyright 2017 by Mississippi State University. All rights reserved. This publication may be copied and distributed without alteration for nonprofit educational purposes provided that credit is given to the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Produced by Agricultural Communications.

We are an equal opportunity employer, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. GARY B. JACKSON, Director