

## **Employers face losing 28.7 million man hours due to online Christmas shopping<sup>1</sup>**

British businesses could stand to lose an estimated 28.7<sup>2</sup> million man hours over the festive season from online Christmas shopping, reveals YouGov research commissioned by software security company So Protect Me. This statistic is based on those employees who admit to shopping online at work (45%) spending an average of just 22<sup>3</sup> minutes a week making internet purchases.

Internet shopping is becoming a real concern for employers, with almost half of the British workforce admitting to researching or making online purchases during business hours. The addictive nature of online shopping and auction sites is leaving employers facing productivity losses which are only set to grow over the festive season.

57% of online shoppers anticipate spending additional time shopping online in the run up to Christmas with those that buy online planning to spend, on average, an extra thirty minutes<sup>4</sup> per week shopping.

The UK click and buy culture is on the rise with more than 26.4 million people now turning to the internet for their purchasing needs.<sup>5</sup> An estimated 372 million transactions were undertaken last year, with online sales expected to rise to £40 billion this year<sup>6</sup>. The UK is expected to spend £13.8 billion online during the festive season alone, according to reports from Forrester research.

Security software company So Protect Me commissioned the research into the online shopping habits of employees prior to the launch of the Payment Blocker – a tool that can be used to enforce company policies on internet usage in small and large companies.

“With the internet offering so many bargains, it is unsurprising that people will shun the crowded high street and spend more time shopping online in the run up to Christmas,” said Raj Curwen, CEO of So Protect Me. “Those companies that do not want their staff using the internet for shopping during working hours

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<sup>1</sup> Research conducted by YouGov using an online panel

<sup>2</sup> 13million x 22 x 6 = 17.22.6 million minutes (28.7 million hours)

\* 13 million employees who shop online during working hours: based on 45% of the 29 million employees in the UK (figure from the National Office of Statistics).

\*22 minutes: median average calculation of time spent shopping online by the 45% of employees who admit to making online purchases in the workplace

\* 6: number of shopping weeks left until Christmas

<sup>3</sup> Median average calculation used

<sup>4</sup> Median average calculation used

<sup>5</sup> Statistic issued by APACS for 2006

<sup>6</sup> Based on figures from the Office for National Statistics

need a way to enforce their policy, and it would be impossible to block every retail website.”

“While most companies will not want to stop online shopping outright, it is important to put acceptable internet use policies into place,” continued Raj. “These policies can be backed up by tools like the Payment Blocker, which will stop employees’ credit and debit cards being used to make purchases online during core business hours.”

The Payment Blocker costs £14.99 and is available from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November at [www.soprotectme.com](http://www.soprotectme.com)

For further details contact Inferno PR on 020 8434 5530 or [SoProtectMe@infernopr.com](mailto:SoProtectMe@infernopr.com)

#### **Company Overview**

So Protect Me Ltd is a new security software company founded in 2006 and based in the North West of England. Using advanced sensing technology, So Protect Me provides software with unique security features for both home and business users. The company’s first product, the Payment Blocker™ provides a simple and effective way to block credit/debit card use on computers in the home, in a business (on and off the corporate network), and wherever computers are used by multiple users such as shared accommodation, libraries, schools or University sites.

#### **The Payment Blocker**

The Payment Blocker protects credit cards from fraudulent use by those other than the cardholder. Protection is independent of the website, application or card used. Card history logs help to keep track of all transactions, providing historical records so that spending can be monitored. Vulnerable users of any PC or laptop are immediately protected from unauthorized online purchases and the use of online services such as gambling in both the home and business environments.

The Payment Blocker helps to deal with issues such as internet-based domestic fraud and can be used to prevent the payment of goods/services through corporate credit cards. To prevent loss of productivity in the business environment to online shopping, the Payment Blocker can be used to restrict online shopping completely or limit it to more suitable times during the working day.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,118 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 7th - 9th November 2007. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).