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## Electronic Commerce Assurance: Attitudes toward CPA Webtrust

Yankelovich Partners

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA)

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<http://www.aicpa.org/webtrust/yankel.htm>

Electronic Commerce Assurance:  
Attitudes Toward CPA Webtrust

Prepared for:  
The American Institute of  
Certified Public Accountants

Prepared by:  
 Yankelovich  
Partners

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## Study Objectives and Methodology

- In order to understand the views of online users toward purchasing products on the Internet, and the concept of a new electronic assurance service called CPA Webtrust, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants commissioned Yankelovich Partners to conduct a survey among 1,003 Americans who:
  - are 18 years old or older
  - subscribe to an online service either at home or at school
  
- Interviews were conducted between July 7-20, 1997.
- The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1%.
- Specific topics addressed include:
  - Online behavior and participation in online activities
  - Openness to providing personal information over the Internet
  - Shopping and purchasing behavior over the Internet
  - Comparison of online and traditional methods of purchasing products
  - Attitudes toward CPA WebTrust

- [Key Findings](#)  
[Detailed Findings](#)

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## Key Findings

1. Online users are receptive to buying a variety of products over the Internet but often do not do so because of security fears.
  - A large majority of online users say they would not provide information about their income (91%) or give out their credit card number (85%) when shopping online.
  - Large majorities are even hesitant to provide their phone number (74%) or address (67%).
2. A lack of security is the number one reason given by nonbuyers for not purchasing products online.
  - It is also the number one concern among current online buyers.
3. This research indicates that having credible assurance about the security of online transactions would greatly increase online purchasing of products and services, especially:
  - Hotel or airline reservations
  - Computer hardware or software
  - Subscriptions of online information
  - Records, tapes, CDs and videos
  - Gifts for others
4. More than three-quarters of online users have a favorable

impression of CPA WebTrust a new seal assuring that web sites are secure and that the companies running them are legitimate.

- Significantly, nearly half of online users say the CPA WebTrust Seal would make them more likely to purchase products and services online.
5. The fact that CPAs are providing this seal of assurance is a key factor in creating user acceptance of CPA WebTrust.
- A majority of online users particularly those currently or most likely to shop online say CPA endorsement makes this service more trustworthy, useful, and important.

[\[Go to Detailed Findings\]](#)

Detailed Findings



## Online Users Are Open to Purchasing Online



Online users are open to purchasing a variety of products and services online, especially:

Hotel or airline  
reservations

Computer hardware or software 66%

A subscription to online information 54%

Records, tapes, CD's and videos 47%

Gifts for others 46%

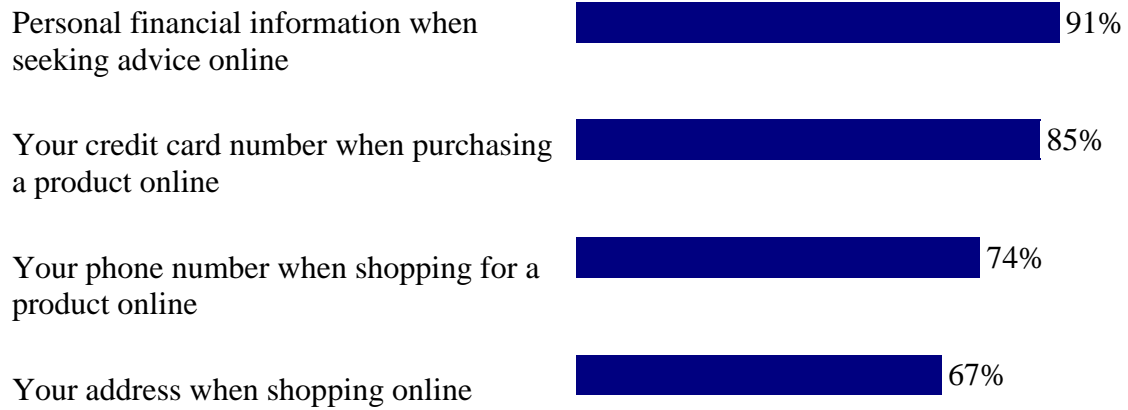
## Detailed Findings



### Online Users Are Reluctant to Provide Information



Online users are reluctant to provide the information needed to shop online.



## Detailed Findings

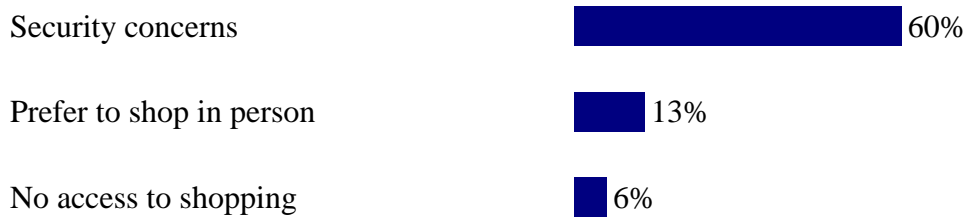


### Security Concerns Scare Non-Purchasers Away



Security concerns are the number one reason why online users who have not made a financial transaction online have avoided doing so.

top three reasons why online users have not made a financial transaction online:



## Detailed Findings



### Non-Purchasers' Security Concerns: Verbatim Comments



"They're not secure. No software has been proven to be secure, to protect my personal information."

"I trust that the transaction is secure, but I don't trust how they may store that information."

"I don't want the whole world knowing my business."

"I have major reservations about the security. Someone like AOL announces they are going to make my number available that's a major invasion of privacy."



Detailed Findings

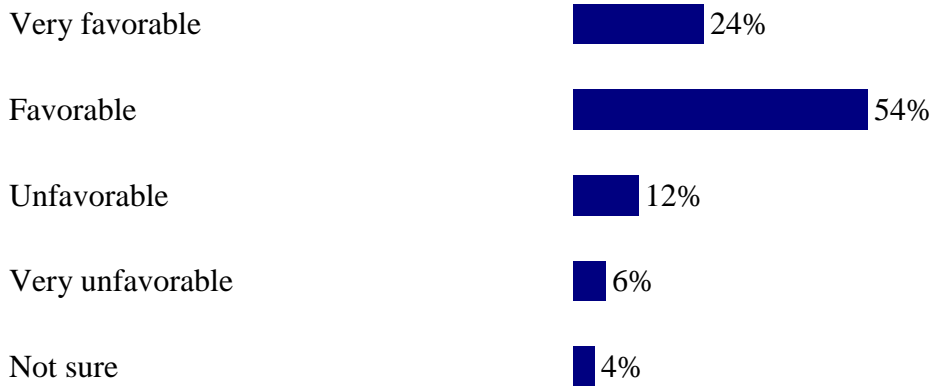


CPA WebTrust Appeals to Online Users



More than three quarters of online users have a favorable impression of CPA WebTrust, a new seal of assurance designed to improve security and accountability on the Internet.

What is your initial reaction to this Seal of Assurance?



## Detailed Findings

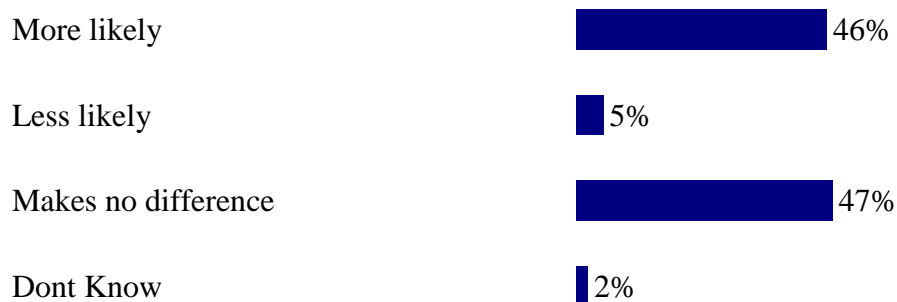


### WebTrust Has the Potential to Increase Purchasing



The potential impact of the CPA WebTrust Seal on online purchasing is impressive. Nearly half of online users (46%) say that, if a web site received the CPA WebTrust Seal, they would be more likely to conduct an online transaction.

Would the fact that a web site had received the CPA WebTrust Seal make you more likely to conduct an online transaction, less likely to conduct an online transaction, or would it not have any effect on you?



## Detailed Findings



### CPAs Are Important to CPA WebTrust's Appeal



The fact that CPAs are providing this service is a key factor in creating user acceptance of CPA WebTrust.

Percentage of online users who say CPA involvement in CPA WebTrust makes them more likely to feel the seal is:



