

Argentina tightens controls on Internet commerce

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People head into and out of the Galerías Pacifico shopping mall in Retiro, Buenos Aires on June 18, 2009

Argentina has toughened restrictions on Internet purchases from foreign sources, part of an attempt to stem capital flight.

As of January 21, Argentines who want to shop outside the country via the Internet must fill out a [tax form](#) "which will have the character of a

sworn statement," the government's tax office said.

Purchases made through foreign websites and valued at \$25 or more already are subject to a 50 percent tax.

The government followed up on Wednesday with a regulation limiting untaxed purchases of items costing less than \$25 to two per year.

The measures were the latest in a series aimed at halting capital flight, as Argentina experiences a sharp decline in international reserves.

Argentines' access to US dollars has been curtailed, imports face restrictions, and credit card purchases outside the country are taxed here at 35 percent.

According to the head of the country's Chamber of Electronic Commerce, Patricia Jebson, Internet transactions accounted for 13.5 percent of foreign retail [purchases](#) by Argentinians last year, up from 7.5 percent the previous year.

However, no figures are available on how much that represents in dollars.

Argentina's foreign currency reserves have fallen sharply over the past three years, dropping from \$52 billion to less than \$30 billion.

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