

Holiday shopping? Bring these four money-saving apps with you

November 23 2016, by Joseph Pisani



This June 18, 2014, file photo shows the app that links to shopping on Amazon.com on an Amazon Fire Phone, in Seattle. If you're looking to save a few bucks at the mall, there are apps available that can help find you coupons, compare prices or price match. (AP Photo/Ted S. Warren, File)

If you're looking to save a few bucks at the mall while holiday shopping, charge up the smartphone and bring these apps with you. The four apps,

which I've been using all year, can help find you coupons, compare prices or price match. All are available for Apple and Android devices and are free to download:

AMAZON

You'll need the Amazon app to try to make sure you're not paying more than you have to. While in a store, you can scan the barcodes of items you want to buy and see how much they cost on Amazon. This is handy because many stores, including Best Buy, Target, Toys R Us and Walmart, will match prices if an item sold and shipped by Amazon is cheaper. You'll need to show the cashier the app with the price of the item. And make sure to check each store's price-matching rules, which are posted online. Many, for example, won't allow you to price-match from Thanksgiving Day through the following Monday.

CARTWHEEL BY TARGET

If you plan to shop at Target, download this separate coupon app. You can browse through the hundreds of coupons or use the app to scan the barcode of every item you throw in your cart. When you do that, Cartwheel will tell if you if there's a coupon you can use or suggest a similar product that does have a deal. When you get to the register to pay, just show the app; there's a barcode the cashier will scan to apply the discounts. Recent deals include 25 percent off the latest "Call of Duty" video game and 30 percent off a set of wireless headphones. Other stores, such as Macy's and Kohl's, post deals in their apps too, so it may be worth downloading apps for other stores you shop at often.

FLIPP

If you like to flip through promotional flyers to compare prices, try Flipp. The app collects paper flyers for stores near you and makes them

digital. You can quickly scroll through them or digitally "clip" coupons that are saved in another part of the app. And the design of the app makes it easy to quickly see the latest flyers from stores you frequent the most. This app is a keeper beyond the holidays because it pulls flyers from a wide range of shops, including local grocery stores, pharmacies and large department stores.

RETAILMENOT

Open up this app at every store to make sure you're not missing any deals. RetailMeNot lets you search by store, or you can turn on location services on your phone and have the app ping you when you're near a shop with deals—if you're not annoyed by alerts. For each store, RetailMeNot lists any coupons you can use either in the store or online. This is helpful because if there's no in-store coupon, but there is an online one, you'll know to just purchase it from the website. Gap, for example, recently had a 40 percent online coupon but none for in-store shoppers. Keep in mind that most of the stores on RetailMeNot are national chains, so if you like to shop at smaller stores you likely won't find much.

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