

Amazon will let parents hand over shopping keys to the kids

October 12 2017, by Charisse Jones, Usa Today



Amazon says parents can hand over the shopping keys to the kids, though they'll still have the power to put up a red light.

For the first time, teenagers will be able to independently log into Amazon and shop as long as they are linked to their parent's accounts.

The new program, launching Wednesday, allows up to four kids in a family, between the ages of 13 and 17, to browse the Amazon app on their mobile device, make purchases with a payment method chosen by their parents, and have packages delivered to an address pre-selected by mom or dad.

Parents will have their say throughout the transaction. Before the purchase is finalized, they will get a text or email showing a picture, description and price of the item. If the parents approve of the purchase, they can text 'Y' for yes. If they don't respond at all, the order will be automatically canceled in 48 hours.

If the teen suspects that mom and dad may hesitate to OK a purchase, he or she can include a note in their order "explaining why all of their friends have the video game and they're the only kid at school who doesn't have" it, says Michael Carr, [vice president](#) of Amazon Households.

Parents can also opt out of green lighting every purchase, setting a spending limit instead that can vary from child to child. Mom and dad will still get messages about every [purchase](#), and they can cancel or send the item back if they choose.

"This is something ... families of teenagers need," Carr says. "Today you're either giving the teenager your credit card or you're giving them the password to your account ... This is the only way where the [teenager](#) has the independence while the [parents](#) are still in the know."

Parents who are members of Amazon Prime, the program that enables shoppers to get free two-day shipping, Prime Video, and other perks for a monthly or annual fee, can also pass along those benefits to their kids without paying extra.

It makes financial sense to loop in the teens and tweens who make up Generation Z. The group influences \$600 billion of family spending, outnumbers Millennials, and will make up 40% of consumers by 2020, according to the retail strategic firm HRC Retail Advisory.

"There's a short term uplift of the sales that come incrementally through

the teen," says Gene Alvarez, a managing vice president of research for Gartner Inc. "And then there's the long term impact. Think about telling teenagers, 'just get your stuff on Amazon.' When they transition to college, that spending pattern will still be there and when they're in the workforce, they've kind of grown up on Amazon."

Apple showed such a strategy could be very successful when it put its computers in schools years ago. "If I can raise you with my product," Alvarez says of the mindset, "I'm hoping to have you as a lifetime customer."

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Citation: Amazon will let parents hand over shopping keys to the kids (2017, October 12)
retrieved 18 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-10-amazon-parents-keys-kids.html>

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