

## Eligibility

Would you like to help us understand online shopping behavior? We are a team of Harvard and Boston University researchers who study e-commerce and its value to consumers like you. We want to understand consumer shopping and how it is affected by the choices that e-commerce platforms make.

By fully completing this study, you will earn at least \$30 and up to \$180 if you also win lotteries throughout the study. We will ask you to complete two surveys: one now, which will take about 40 minutes to complete, and one in 8 weeks, which will take about 10 minutes. For the 8-week study period, we will also ask you to install a browser extension vetted by Harvard University and to share information about your online shopping.

Click below if you want to know more and discover if you qualify!

We have a few quick questions before we start.

We would like to collect your answers to some questions about yourself and your shopping habits for the purposes of our research study. The information collected will be linked to research data only if you later decide to participate in the full study, otherwise these answers will remain anonymous and will not be linked to you in any way. It is your choice to participate.

Do we have your permission to collect your answers?

Yes

No

Do you live in the United States?

Yes

No

What is your age? Please write a number.

What gender do you identify with?

Male

Female

Non-binary / Third-gender

Prefer not to say

What is 12 minus 4? Please write a number.

What is the language you primarily speak? Select all that apply:

English

Spanish

 Other [Which?]

How frequently do you shop on Amazon?

Never

Less than once a month

Once a month

Two to three times a month

More than three times a month

When shopping on Amazon, which device do you primarily use?

Laptop computer

Desktop computer

Ipad or another tablet

Phone

Other

When shopping on Amazon, which web browser do you primarily use?

Chrome

Internet Explorer

Firefox

Safari

Microsoft Edge

Other

Do other members of your household also use your primary device to shop online?

Yes

No

Do you currently work at one of these companies?

Google

Apple

Microsoft

Amazon

Facebook

None of these companies

## **Not Eligible – Thanks**

Thank you for your answers! Unfortunately, you do not qualify to participate in our study.  
Have a great day!

## **Consent**

Congrats! You are qualified to participate.

Participants like you are crucial to the study. Together, we can understand and improve digital shopping!

If you complete the study, we'll pay you using gift cards that you can redeem at many retailers and buying products that you select.

Click "Next" to proceed.

Thanks!

## Consent Form IRB21-1677

### Study Overview

We're glad you want to know more about our study. The following is a summary with key information to help you decide whether you want to participate.

#### ***Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?***

We invite you to take part in this research study because you are a frequent online shopper based in the United States.

#### ***What should I know about a research study?***

Research studies are conducted to better understand the choices we make. Whether or not you take part is completely up to you. Your decision will not be held against you. You can ask all the questions you want before you decide. You can even agree to take part and later change your mind.

#### ***Why is this research being done?***

We want to understand consumer shopping behavior online and how it is affected by the choices that e-commerce platforms make. Not only this will allow us to understand how people like you and us shop online, but it will also help us understand whether and how we should limit the control that e-commerce platforms have over how they choose which products to show us.

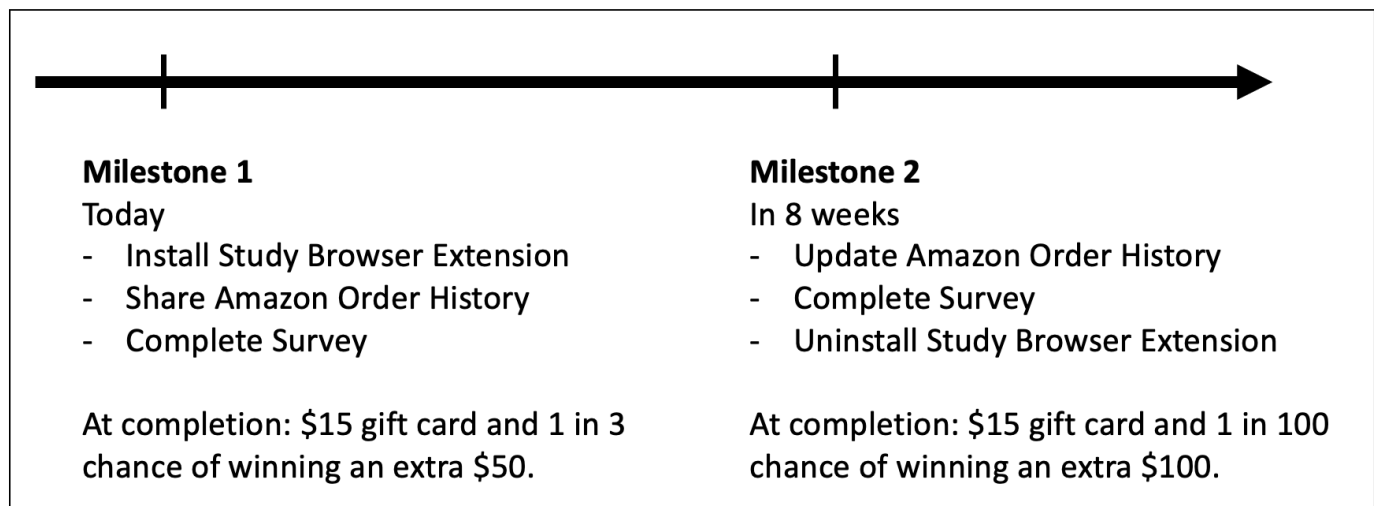
#### ***How long will the research last and what will I need to do?***

The study will last 8 weeks, but we will only ask you for at most 1 hour of your time. Everything we ask you to do can be done from the comfort of your home. If you choose to participate, we'll ask you to:

- Install the study browser extension, which is an application we developed for this study. We will have instructions for you on how to install the extension.

- Complete two surveys. We'll send you the first survey today (it will take about 40 minutes to complete) and the next survey in eight weeks (it will take about 10 minutes to complete). The first survey will ask you to create a wishlist on Amazon to which you can add products that you would like to purchase. Again, we will provide you with instructions on how to create an Amazon wishlist and share it with us.

Here is the timeline at a glance:



The study browser extension will record and may tweak your browsing experience on Amazon.com. The extension will also track whether you visit other e-commerce websites without tracking what you do on those websites. The extension will not record any of your activity outside of e-commerce websites. We'll ask you to keep this extension installed for eight weeks.

### ***Will I be compensated for participating in this research?***

Yes. We will pay you at least \$30 for completing the two milestones presented in the timeline above. Payments will come in the form of gift cards sent to your email address. Some people will earn more because:

- At completion of milestone 1, in addition to the \$15 payment, you will have a 1 in 3 chance to win an additional \$50 in value divided in two parts:
  - We will buy a product from your wishlist for you;
  - We will send you the difference between \$50 and the price of the purchased item as a gift card. For example, if you selected a product that costs \$31.50 (tax + shipping included), we will purchase that product for you and send you a gift card for an additional \$18.50.
- At completion of milestone 2, in addition to the second \$15 payment, you will have a 1 in 100 chance to win an additional \$100.

We will pay you with electronic gift cards that you can use at over 60 retailers, including Amazon, Starbucks, Target, and Walmart.

***Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?***

There are some risks you might experience from being in this study. The study browser extension may tweak the information displayed to you while using certain e-commerce websites. This may change the products you purchase or how long you spend searching for products. If the products you purchase are worse, more expensive, or if you search more, then this may be bad for you. We do not know whether our tweaks to your shopping experience are good or bad for you. We will not compensate you for these differences.

Since we may collect personal information, there is a risk of breach of confidentiality. We have worked hard to minimize this risk. For example, we have ensured that we are not storing the name, mailing address, or payment information that you use on Amazon. We will encrypt any data before storing it. Before accessing the data for analysis, we will also permanently delete all personal information except for your email address, which will be stored separately from all other data.

***Will being in this study help me in any way?***

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. It is possible, however, that our tweaks to your online browsing lead to a better (or worse) online shopping experience.

**Detailed Information*****Withdrawing from the Study.***

You can leave the research at any time; your decision will not be held against you. We may use the data you have shared with us prior to withdrawing as part of the study. We will provide simple instructions for how you can withdraw. Researchers can remove you from the research study without your approval. Possible reasons for removal include not complying with instructions to install the study browser extension or intentionally avoiding data tracking through the extension.

***Privacy.***

Data security and privacy are important to us. We will ask for your email address to send you payments and other communications. During the course of the study we may collect other personal information. The personal information that we know we are collecting will be deleted immediately, except for your email address. Other personal information that we inadvertently collect will be stored but removed after we finish collecting data.

We cannot promise complete secrecy, although efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information. Data will be encrypted and stored on secure servers and cannot be accessed by anyone outside the research team. At no time will study information be available over any public or private network in an unencrypted state.

In the future, when we publish our research, we will post anonymized data from this study in a data repository so that other researchers can reproduce our results. By then, no information that can identify you personally will be available, to us or others. We will not sell data from the study or share data for any commercial or marketing purposes.

***Who can I talk to?***

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, do not hesitate to reach the research team at [webmunk\\_study@hbs.edu](mailto:webmunk_study@hbs.edu).

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Harvard University Area Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). You may talk to them at (617) 496-2847 or [cuhs@harvard.edu](mailto:cuhs@harvard.edu) if your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team; you cannot reach the research team; you want to talk to someone besides the research team; you have questions about your rights as a research subject; you want to get information or provide input about this research.

Please indicate below whether you agree to participate in the study. Agreeing to participate means you are willing to install the study browser extension, provide your email address, and complete the surveys.

I agree to participate.

I do not agree to participate.

## **Not Consent – Thanks**

Thank you for letting us know you do not want to participate. Have a great day!

## **Willingness**

Thank you for your interest in participating in our study!

For this particular study, it is especially important to gather high-quality data. Will you do your best to carefully answer each question on our surveys?

Yes

No

## **Not Willing – Thanks**

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. Since we need to be able to gather high-quality data, you do not qualify to participate. Have a good day!

## Subject Info

Thank you for your willingness to carefully answer our questions!

What is your preferred email address? (We will use this email to send you payments.)

To confirm, please enter your email again:

We'll ask you to install the study browser extension next.

## App Installation

### Study Browser Extension Installation Instructions.

To install the study browser extension, please **use Chrome** on the computer (or computers) that you use for online shopping:

- Click [here](#). This will open a new window from where you can install the browser extension.
- Click "Add to Chrome."



[Home](#) > [Extensions](#) > Study Browser Extension

## Study Browser Extension

★★★★★ 0 ⓘ

Productivity

38 users

[Add to Chrome](#)[Overview](#)[Privacy practices](#)[Reviews](#)[Related](#)

- When prompted, click “Add Extension.”



### Add "Study Browser Extension"?

It can:

Read and change all your data on all websites

[Cancel](#)[Add extension](#)

- You will be asked to add your email address. Please use the email address that you shared with us earlier.

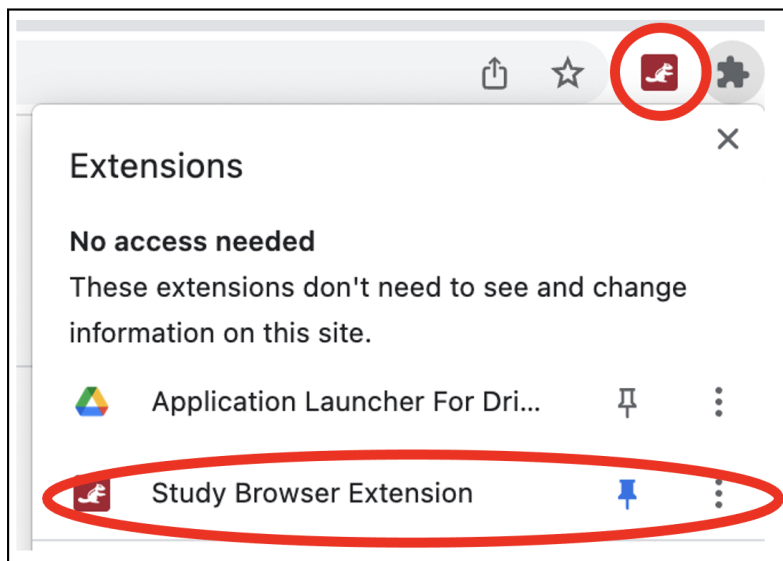


## Get Started

Please enter your e-mail address to get started:

[→ CONTINUE](#)

- You should now see the browser extension icon on the top right corner of your browser. If you don't see it, it may be hidden under the puzzle icon, which is visible in the upper right corner of the screenshot below.



- You are all set.

If you have trouble installing the study browser extension, please email us at [webmunk\\_study@hbs.edu](mailto:webmunk_study@hbs.edu) and we will help you with additional instructions.

Were you able to successfully install the extension?

Yes

No, but I have emailed you

What difficulties have you encountered installing the extension?

**Thanks**

Thank you! Please check the browser extension pop-up window for the next steps. A link to the initial survey will appear shortly.

If you have any questions in the meantime, or if the initial survey does not appear in the browser extension window within the next 15 minutes, please email us at [webmunk\\_study@hbs.edu](mailto:webmunk_study@hbs.edu).

We really appreciate you for participating in this research!

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