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Online Banking

Online Banking – “Life in the Fast Lane”

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In today’s day and age, everything is geared for the busy American lifestyle from 15-minute oil changes to fast food restaurants, but nothing has kept up with us more than the Internet. No more searching for weather, phone numbers, movies or plane tickets the hard way; with the click of a mouse, it’s all at your fingertips. Online banking and bill payment are services that banks provide, to continually make banking convenient for their customers. Online or Internet banking, as it is also called, is here to stay.

What is Online Banking?

With the inception of the Internet and growing popularity of personal computers, banks and other financial institutions are now able to automate millions of daily transactions. Online banking services have become an incredibly convenient and secure way for customers to manage their finances. Online banking gives us the option of by-passing more time consuming methods of paper-based (or traditional based) banking, so that finances can be managed more quickly and efficiently. Online banking not only saves customers’ time, but also allows banks to handle transactions and staffing more efficiently, while keeping banks competitive for your business.

What Online Banking can do for Customers

Online banking gives customers the ability to access their checking, savings, and money market accounts, all from the convenience of their home. Customers can look at account balances, watch as checks are cleared, view copies of written checks, make notes regarding deposits, upload monthly information and make transfers from account to account. The Bill Pay feature of Online Banking allows the scheduling of future or recurring payments to process automatically. Imagine, no more check writing, running out of stamps, or incurring late charges needlessly.

Advantages of Online Banking

The advantages to banking online are numerous. You can bank online from your home, office, while you’re on vacation and even if you’re out of the country. It’s convenient and access is instantaneous. If a financial issue arises, you can log on and take care of business at anytime of day. Transactions are quicker than that of ATM processing. Managing your financial accounts is done with great efficiency, and all can be done from one secure site. Online banking may offer e-statements, in an effort to go paperless. Many banking sites offer sophisticated banking tools that include stock tips, rate alerts and portfolio managing programs. Most online banking programs are compatible with money management programs such as Quicken and Microsoft Money.

Online Banking Safety

Banks understand the need for safe banking practices over the Internet. The banking industry has established a number of safeguards that help customer information stay secure. Multiple passwords, key codes, and secure locking technology encrypt information and keep it out of other people’s view. The online software that banks use has the ability to detect transactions that are out of the normal pattern, thereby aiding in the detection of identity theft and fraud. Although financial institutions go to great lengths to ensure a safe and secure environment, the customer

plays an important role in making their Internet banking safe. Do not keep your passwords near your computer or in your wallet, and change your password at regular intervals. Passwords should contain both letters and numbers and you should never use your account name as its password. Desktop computers are more secure than wireless laptops and other systems. Keep all other browser windows closed while banking online, and never disclose any personal information online, unless you know whom you are dealing with and the reason for providing information. Always check your online banking statements every month and keep up to date records. Stay current with antivirus software and back up key files. Exit the banking site immediately when you have finished banking online.

Online Banking is Here to Stay

Projections show one third of all U.S. households will bank online by the end of 2007. This is proof that convenience banking is here to stay and will continue to advance long into our technological future. If you haven't tried your bank's online banking product, now is the time. Most online banking modules have a free demo of all the current features and how they work. They are continually adding features, such as the ability to apply for loans or open accounts online. The initial time investment you make up front will more than pay off down the road. Having the latest copies of your statements in hand will help in setting up bill payment accounts, probably one of the most used online features. If you're considering switching banks, online banking services should be evaluated just as you would look at a checking and savings account. Online banking offers unparalleled conveniences that can simplify your life; just give it a try, and you'll be convinced.