

Using Live Chat

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If you are sending something back to a shop, tracking down a delivery or querying an online bill. Live Chat is often the easiest way to do it.

We're all buying online these days and Live Chat is becoming increasingly popular on retailers' websites. It's sometimes the **only** way to get in touch online. The alternative is a long wait in a phone queue. Live Chat is a digital helpdesk, you type in a question and then after a short delay you will receive an answer or some more questions.

Some people are nervous of Live Chat, and nervous about security and reliability. Read our tips to help you feel more confident and let your fingers do the chatting

- **How safe is Live Chat?**

Chat functions are as safe as the websites they're on. The chat function on a reputable, established retailer, or an organisation like your bank, is completely safe and the people at the other end are properly trained and monitored. On a less reputable website, you need to be sensible about what you disclose. (We have full guides here about [staying safe online](#)). You shouldn't never disclose your payment details or passwords.

- **Before you start**

Have your details at hand, like your order number or delivery address. To get going, just start typing in the chat box, which normally displays in the lower right hand corner of the screen.

To begin a chat there is usually a speech bubble icon on a website, or a message might pop up asking if you want to start a chat. Click on the icon to start the chat.



- **Who answers the chat?**

Quite often, you start with an "automated assistant". It will ask for things like your order number and try to identify your issue so it can hand you on to the right people. Sometimes it can answer your query all by itself!

Some organisations make it clear that you are talking to a 'bot' not a person. Others can be a bit coy about it. If you think you're talking to a 'bot', be clear & simple. Type "delivery problem" rather than "I am concerned it isn't at my house when I was expecting it". That way, they can identify your issue quicker.

- **Who fixes my problem?**

You'll probably then be handed on to a real person to fix a problem. Usually they can then sort out your problem there and then, which is an advantage over email. If they do pass you onto another department, another benefit is that you don't have to repeat yourself every time - the new person can look back at the previous messages.

- **How long does it take?**

You sometimes have to wait for someone to become available, just like you do on the phone. Once you are chatting, you can wait for up to 45 seconds for a reply to each of your questions (as the operatives can be dealing with more than one person). If you are waiting for a response, don't close the chat window (as this will end the chat), you can however, get on and do other things on your computer with the chat box open at the side.

When you have finished chatting you may be offered the option to be sent the text of your chat. This might be useful for future reference if you are complaining about a service or returning an item.

Live Chat can be a very quick and effective way to solve small issues. Once you've done it once, it gets easier and easier!

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Hi George :wave:

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