

Shopping Carts Up Close

An essential part to making money online is the ability to provide a shopping experience and to take credit card information.

In previous discussions we talked about the different types of shopping cart systems. Today we are focusing on 3rd party cart systems.

I used to be of the mind set that 3rd party cart systems increased the monthly overhead cost of doing business online. After spending much time with off-the-shelf shopping cart scripts and building shopping carts from scratch, I think that it is best not to re-invent the wheel. Custom eCommerce is very expensive.

Reputable 3rd party shopping cart systems are actually more cost effective because for very little money you have a whole company dedicated to your ecommerce needs. Your cart is always up and you get upgrades automatically.

We are going to take a closer look at [1ShoppingCart](#). For only \$29 per month you get everything you need to sell products online from adding items to cart and checkout with tax and shipping calculations done automatically.



One of the unique characteristics about [1ShoppingCart](#) is that it is a “Button Only Cart” which means that we can design our web site any way we want. All we need to do is apply code to our “Add to Cart” buttons. This gives you complete freedom to arrange product content whether you edit your own site or if you have a webmaster helping you. It is really easy. I’ve had customers selling within 2 hours.

[1ShoppingCart](#) has an upgrade path if you would like to add more features like automatic emails that cross-sell or inform customers of new items. You can also upgrade to have affiliate tracking, and digital product downloads too.

As a comparison, [MonsterCommerce](#) was just acquired by Network Solutions. This is a good cart system too at \$50 per month.



However, in this scenario your web site and shopping cart are one in the same and have to be hosted on their proprietary system. There is nothing wrong with that if you are starting out fresh.

[MonsterCommerce](#) is also totally customizable.

Ability to Accept Credit Cards

These 3rd party shopping cart systems are just part of the eCommerce equation. You also need to have the ability to take credit cards online. Online transactions are underwritten differently than “Card Present” transactions because of the associated fraud risk.

Traditional eCommerce also includes a merchant account and a gateway. I always recommend that you choose who you want to use as your Merchant Account and then when applying ask the Merchant Banker to include [Authorize Net](#) for the Gateway.

The logo for Authorize.Net, featuring the text "Authorize.Net" in a blue, serif font, enclosed in a thin blue rectangular border.

There are a million merchant accounts and gateways out there. I am sparing you the shopping time by go with the best. If you have a business relationship with a bank ask them to help you get a Merchant Account for Online transactions. [Authorize Net](#) is the most recognized Gateway.

You can also use [Paypal](#) and just recently Paypal has introduced [Payments Pro](#), a \$20 per month upgrade from FREE that allows you to do transactions online. You can accept all 4 major credit cards. This is a less expensive than going with Traditional eCommerce Merchant/Gateway methods.

The logo for PayPal, featuring the text "PayPal" in a blue, italicized, sans-serif font, enclosed in a thin blue rectangular border.

With [Payments Pro](#) you get a Virtual Terminal so you can make product sales over the phone and you get an API (Application Programming Interface). Ok that just got real geeky. What the API does is help facilitate the connection with your shopping cart.

Using Payments Pro with [1ShoppingCart](#) provides a great shopping experience for your customers because they won't have to leave your site to complete the transaction.

Ad Tracking is standard on [1ShoppingCart](#) accounts and is a great way to see what ad campaigns are working for you.

If you have a limited budget and anywhere from 10-200 products I recommend using the Paypal Payments Pro with 1ShoppingCart solution. If you have catalog of 200-20,000 then I recommend the MonsterCommerce solution with you choice of Merchant/Gateway or Paypal method.

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