



## **Accepting Credit Cards**

Accepting credit cards is vital for trading online. Internet shoppers will not expect to have to send a cheque in the post or make a bank transfer to buy goods from your website.

To accept credit cards, you need a merchant ID, however getting a merchant ID from your bank might not be as easy as you first think. It's worth shopping around with Banks, your current bank is always the first step, but if they reject your application, don't give up, another bank might accept it. Keep in mind that the bank is trying to protect itself from fraudulent claims and your business potentially going under, so if you have no trading history, or are selling a service online, it can get difficult and expensive to gain a merchant ID. Therefore if you are thinking of trading online, start off talking with your bank before your web developer.

Once you have a merchant ID, you will then need a Payment Gateway, unless you already have a PDQ machine. Many banks have a recommended Payment Gateway, however you can usually use any, and it's worth taking a look around as they have different charging structures which can depend on how many orders you get.

Some Payment Gateways allow your web developer to integrate your website directly into the Payment Gateway, this is a good idea, as your customer never leaves your website, which makes them feel safer about making the purchase. Chat to your web developer about integration, as they may have more experience using a particular Payment Gateway, which would probably reduce your cost for the integration code.

What if you can't get a merchant ID? Well, there is always Paypal (an online payment processing company where you use their merchant ID), however if you want your business to appear as professional, genuine and legitimate as possible, I would only go down this route as a last resort.