

**New York Daily News - <http://www.nydailynews.com> Buying's just a click away**

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Start clicking now. Shopping is about to get as easy as pressing a little button on your TV's remote control.

Home shopping channels, cable companies - and even TV networks - are looking to flip the switch on the next chapter in retailing that will allow shoppers to order products without ever leaving their sofas.

"Interactive television is exploding," said Molly Alton Mullins, spokeswoman for the Electronic Retailing Association. "There's virtually no end in sight to the possibilities of improving the consumer's shopping experience."

"Click to buy" is already big in Europe and the U.K. and now it's heading here. Experts say they expect this no-fuss mode of shopping - it takes less than a minute to make a purchase - to be available across the country within the next year and a half.

Home shopping giant HSN is leading the way. The TV retailer whose merchants include Wolfgang Puck, designer Nicole Miller and singer Patti Labelle, is looking to launch its thumb-pressing service within a matter of months.

"We have the infrastructure in place, we're ready to go," said John McDevitt, vice president in charge of business development for HSN. "This will create a great customer experience and they will keep them coming back for more," he predicted.

While Katherine Brennan of Manhattan, a regular HSN customer described the prospects as "great," she said "it could be dangerous for some people. This is impulse-buying to begin with, it will make compulsive shoppers buy more."

Rival home shopping giant QVC says it has customers clicking away at a "healthy" pace in the U.K. and is looking to add the service here. Shop NBC is testing the service in several cities around the country.

All of these electronic retailers must first secure the cooperation of cable and satellite companies. Negotiations are going on behind the scenes over fees and timetables for launching the service.

The home shopping networks are betting the remote control sales will keep their \$10 billion industry on the upswing. Last year the business rose 25%.

In the meantime, cable companies are exploring their own interactive commerce ventures.

Cable giant Cablevision is working on adding click-to-buy applications on its systems. It has already launched two interactive shopping channels, Optimum Autos and Optimum Homes, which let shoppers look at pictures and request product information, though they can't buy yet.

Time Warner Cable offers interactive services to its customers in Hawaii and is looking to expand.

Eventually, even the TV networks are expected to start selling this way, said Scott Newnam, CEO of technology company GoldPocket Interactive, which provides interactive software to networks like CBS, CNN, the Game Show Network, TBS and HSN.

"Let's say you're watching 'Survivor' and you say, I like that shirt," said Newnam. "You would be able to click and buy it."

To get in on remote-control shopping, you must have digital cable service or satellite TV. Customers pre-register their mode of payment as well as their mailing addresses.

The new shopping trend still faces some hurdles. Shop NBC chief technology officer Steve Craig said he's seen customers hit buttons and buy products they didn't want.

"They didn't realize they were ordering a \$100 ring," he said.

He also cited security and privacy concerns. But QVC vice president of application Eric Gregg noted that each customer registers with an identification and password that is there's alone.

"It's a very easy method," he said. "It literally takes seconds."