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Lazy and thrifty consumers find haven online

BY KELLY PREISER
The Battalion

It seems as though technology is slowly taking over every aspect of American lives. People have remote controls for everything, including their televisions, stereos and even their cars.

People have the option of ordering food from their homes for delivery and buying exercise machines that do the work for them and now they do not even have to leave the house to purchase their groceries.

With Websites like Albertsons.com and Walmart.com, one can purchase the bare essentials and have them delivered to their doorstep. American's daily practices have been revolutionized.

Nielsen/NetRatings found that the number of Internet users increased 22.7 percent in 1999, bringing the total number of users from 97 million to 119 million. It is possible that this rise is because the Internet allows users to search for the latest and cheapest in technology, gives them a chance to compare prices online and saves them time by avoiding busy shopping malls and long lines.

Online shopping is quickly becoming one of the most favored ways to shop. According to an eMarketer survey conducted online, among 541 shoppers at eMarketer.com, 90 percent rated the Web better than catalogs and stores, and 72 percent said they would shop online throughout 2000.

Despite problems such as items being out of stock or delivered late, 73 percent were more satisfied with the Internet than with stores.

Why are people turning to the Internet to make their purchases? One might think it is because people do not want to leave the convenience of their homes. Jeremy Carpenter, a junior industrial engineering major, said he agrees with this theory.

"Americans [shop online because they] are inherently lazy," he said. However, not everyone agrees. Courtney Buie, a temporary campus representative, has a different view.

"Some people shop online when they can't find what they need at conventional outlets and others shop online because they can find better prices, don't have to wait in lines and can have

a good experience," he said. Holland thinks people shop online because of convenience. He chose to buy his books online because the prices of the books he was looking for were going to be cheaper.

Many people choose to shop online because of the competitive prices. "Shopping online not only provides purchasers with more choices, but it provides a level of price-saving that is attractive to most people," Gershoni said.

"Online shopping does get you a better deal. Since their overhead is lower, they can charge lower prices. They usually don't charge sales tax, and most companies don't charge shipping with a minimum purchase," Buie said.

Online shopping also gives the consumer a chance to find the best deal without having to go from store to store. People can compare prices with the click of a button. Buie adds, "Shopping online can be a huge time-saver when you need to look around and compare prices — you can do all that sitting at your computer."

There are sites on the Web dedicated to comparative shopping. Gershoni suggested students looking for a good deal could go to special site to find comparisons of online book companies.

Many sites offer a variety of items such as apparel, books, health and beauty supplies, consumer electronics and groceries. Certain sites offer a comparison of credit card rates to help consumers find the best rate for them and can also help one in calculating the cost of their debt.

In contrast to all the benefits of online shopping, there may also be some

"I don't like to shop online because I don't trust anything I can't do in person."

— Jeremy Carpenter
Texas A&M junior

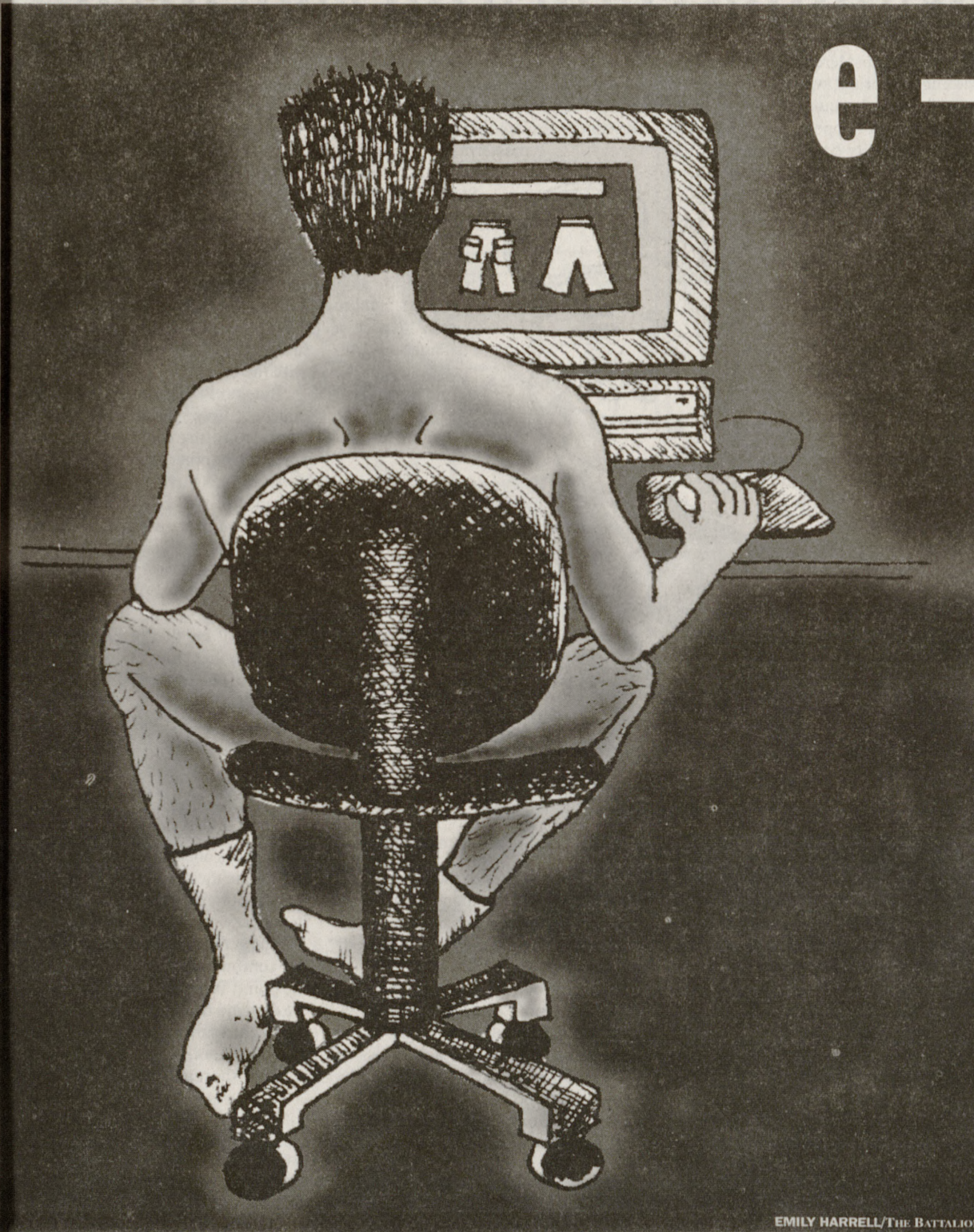
the items delivered to their doorstep," Buie said.

Jodi Gershoni, Communications Director for VarsityBooks.com, said, "I believe the Internet has brought efficiencies to inefficient markets."

David Holland, a junior engineering technology major, chose to buy his books online this semester.

"It was pretty easy and straightforward, they delivered it on time. It was

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