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## E-coupons posed for popularity

Tech Now by Paul Brent  
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Coupons, coupons. Who takes the time to use coupons?

Coupon use has fallen off in recent years, but may be about to experience an upswing thanks to technology.

ICOM of Toronto reported that about one per cent of us will use coupons, down from 1.6 per cent in the last decade.

However, as tougher economic times deepen, the survey also said more people commented they would use coupons more often. Fifty-eight per cent said that if they could get coupons online, particularly if the coupon can be electronically linked to frequent shopper or rewards cards, that they would be more likely to use them.

If you do a search online for consumer coupons you will be swamped with sites offering the latest and greatest deals. It is also interesting that ICOM found that 18- to 34-year-old consumers are most likely to use coupons.

ICOM says the average family of four could save 25 per cent on their grocery bill alone. Keep in mind U.S. retailers traditionally offer much more than Canadian firms.

Why?

I was told by a marketing person that we Canadians will use coupons offering cents off while Americans won't bother unless the coupons offer dollars off.

"Marketers have the opportunity to discard the old-school thinking about coupons and be smarter this time around," said ICOM vice-president marketing Peter Meyers.

He said using technology allows coupons to be focused more tightly and offered to those people who could in fact use them on products they already buy. A word of warning: many sites require you give them a lot of personal information in order to access coupons — it's to help them market more material based on your interests. Be careful of what information you give up in order to save money.

California company Snaptell.com has put a new twist on coupons. Use your cellphone to snap an image of a product or ad, send the image to Snaptell and they send back product information and in some cases, e-coupons.

Coupon sites to consider include [RetailMeNot.com](#), [DealLocker.com](#), [FreeShipping.com](#) and [Save.ca](#) in Canada.

Website of the week:

[www.freerice.com](#). Play a word game to test your knowledge of words. For each correct answer, 20 grains of rice goes to the UN World Food Program. Thirty billion grains of rice were donated in six months.

>> This Sunday on TECH NOW, a special look at pumping carbon underground to produce oil and reduce carbon pollution.

*Paul Brent hosts 'Tech Now' every Sunday as part of CTV Ottawa's News at 6:00. 'Tech Now' looks at the Capital's technology sector along with the global industry.*



According to recent ICOM research, using coupons could save a family of four 25 per cent on their grocery bill.