



# Christmas cards

## Giftly takes the guesswork out of giving

**F**or some of us, the Christmas shopping season starts in two days. Sitting in traffic, fighting crowds, standing in long lines and wandering aimlessly around the mall, hoping the “perfect” gift for your loved one will miraculously pop off the shelf into your hands, is the part of the holidays I like the least.



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*InSites*

People who get up in the middle of the night to wait for the doorbuster sales on Black Friday are a complete mystery to me. Because of my aversion to shopping, I usually wait until the last possible moment in order to postpone the agony and get it over with as quickly as possible.

### Never leave home again

Fortunately, the Internet has made it possible to do your Christmas shopping without ever having to stand in a single line. While online shopping is nothing new, it's constantly evolving and offering new ways to buy and send gifts.

And gift cards have been another boon to the shopping challenged. They take away the guesswork and let the recipient get what he or she actually wants. **Giftly.com** combines the convenience of Web shopping with the flexibility of gift cards.

The site allows you to create custom gift cards for restaurants, stores, theaters, spas, venues or any place that accepts credit cards or PayPal. You could buy a date night for a couple on your list by combining dinner at their favorite restaurant, a movie at the local theater and drinks at their favorite bar all on one card. The card can be sent via email, text or Facebook, or printed out to mail or deliver in person.

### Pay it forward

Here's how it works. You prepay for the gift, along with a nominal service fee, on Giftly with your credit card and send the card to your chosen recipient. He or she purchases whatever gift you selected and pays for the merchandise or service with a credit card. There's no need to show, or even mention the gift card, because the merchant has nothing to do with Giftly. The recipient then visits the Giftly site on a smart phone, mobile device or computer and indicates that the card has been redeemed. Giftly then credits the recipient's card for the amount of the gift.

The transaction requires a little effort on the part of the giftee to visit Giftly.com and redeem the card, but I imagine most people wouldn't mind doing this. People have become very comfortable interacting with mobile devices and computers for so many minor tasks. Going online for a few minutes to

check a box for a free dinner or pair of shoes won't seem like a chore.

Besides customizing the gift on your card, you also can customize the look of it. Giftly has hundreds of icons representing different gift themes, such as holidays, birthday, meals, etc., that you can put on the card. Or you can take a photo of the actual gift or destination and put it on the card. If you want to print the card, the site has an envelope template you can print as well.

Giftly lets you keep track of your gifts on the site to see when they are redeemed. Recipients also can say thanks on the site, or post photos of themselves enjoying their gifts. There's also a Facebook interface that alerts you to friends' birthdays and other special events.

### Local flavor

The site has prebuilt cards for numerous local merchants to help with your gift selection. Coney Island Lunch, Mickey Gannon's, Maroni's Pizza, Duffy Accessories and Steamtown National Historic Site are just a few of the hometown establishments on the site.

Giftly.com is very well designed and easy to navigate. It features a soft color palette with elegant typography and tastefully designed icons, cards and envelopes.

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