



Managing Your Finances

Online



Financial Tip Of The Day: Viewing And Paying Bills Online

(NAPSA)—With the start of the new year, millions resolve to improve the everyday things of life. You may not know that you can streamline the conventional process of paying bills: sorting bills, writing checks, buying stamps, licking envelopes, making the trek to the mailbox and sometimes paying late fees.

Waiting for your bills to arrive in the mail, then opening each envelope to see how much the bill is for and when it is due can also be a tedious and time-consuming chore—except for those who have already discovered electronic bill payment and presentment services. Receiving and paying bills online, including common monthly expenses such as cable and telephone bills, has never been easier. By signing up for the secure, electronic bill payment and presentment services of a local financial institution or other service provider, consumers streamline the monthly chores of reconciling bills and expenses.

It's easy to see why electronic bill payment and presentment services are gaining popularity and piquing the curiosity of the consumer seeking a simplified bill payment process. The advantages of online bill-presentment solutions at your fingertips offers convenience and flexibility 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No more waiting for the statements to arrive in the mail.

Once logged on using your individually-selected ID and password, access to the electronic bill payment and presentment service is granted. Depending on the level of service available through your financial service provider, you can view the bills that have arrived and when they are due. In addition, some services provide a record of when past bills have been paid or the added convenience of setting up automatic



An increasing number of Americans are eyeing the convenience of paying bills online.

monthly payments for common recurring bills, like insurance premiums. The pre-authorized payment amount is determined by the consumer and can be a fixed dollar amount in a quarterly, monthly or weekly time frame, or it can fluctuate like a phone bill. The service is flexible and the choice is yours; any user can stop automatic payments at any time or employ this bill-payment method indefinitely.

Recent research indicates the average U.S. resident receives, on average, 12 bills each month, for a total of 21 billion bills nationwide each year. It's also estimated that about 90 million households use the Internet in some form, making it possible for most consumers to access the benefits of electronic bill payment and presentment.

To learn more about electronic bill payment and presentation services, ask for additional details at a bank or financial institution. Account fees may apply in certain instances. A new, free brochure about online bill-payment and bill-presentation services is also available from MasterCard by sending an e-mail to billsonline@mastercard.com.