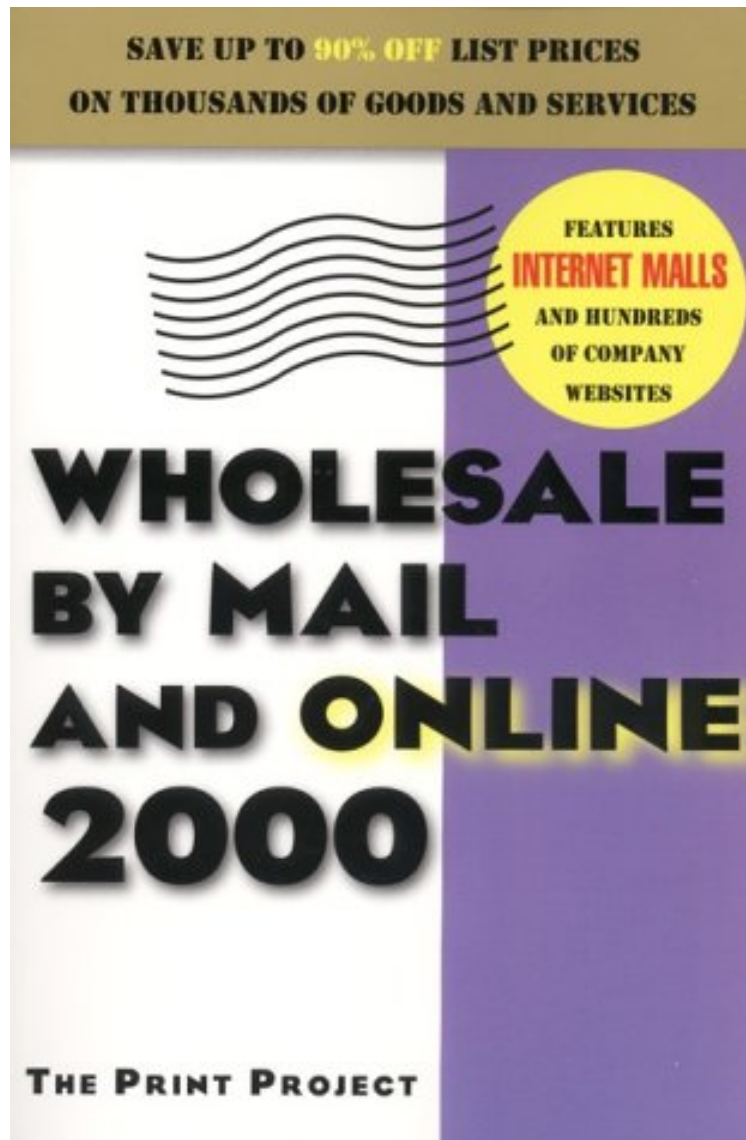


## Wholesale by Mail and Online 2000

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Why pay retail prices when you don't have to? No matter what you're looking for, you can get it cheaper with Wholesale by Mail and Online: kitchen gadgets, caviar, furnishings, designer clothing and shoes, musical instruments, jewelry, computers, leather goods, stereos, CDs, cameras, pet supplies, art materials, garden tools, medicine, toys, coffee--and almost anything else you want. Here you'll find 500-plus catalog and Internet vendors carefully researched and screened. They represent the "best of the best": little-known gems consumers wouldn't otherwise discover; online vendors with incomparable deals; unusual companies selling hard-to-find items; and of course the all-around best businesses with the best bargains in every category. This 22nd edition also boasts a user-friendly arrangement, a company index, a "Find it Fast" feature, cross-indexed products and vendors for each chapter, a new "Luxuries" chapter so you can buy everything from cigars to diamonds at bargain prices, and a brand new "Gift Guide" presenting hundreds of ingenious and sometimes quirky items--most under \$40--for the creatively challenged gift giver.

Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction With the advent of the new millennium, virtually everyone in the print, radio, and television media is taking the opportunity to look back over and comment upon the last 100 years. It got me thinking about this book and how it too has evolved over its long life. Few books in the publishing world have survived as long as this one. It's hard to believe that the, The Wholesale by Mail Catalog, as it was then called, began in 1978, nearly a quarter century ago, and has been published and updated annually ever since. Back in the 1970s, shopping by mail was a revolutionary idea, a concept about as novel, seemingly ill fated, and even ominous to most folks as shopping over the Internet would seem twenty years later. Vendors were discovering they could sell goods to consumers a heck of a lot cheaper through the mail because they could avoid some of the overhead associated with owning a store-front or dealing with middlemen. Consumers, for their part, realized the benefits of shopping this way as well: avoiding sales tax, having goods delivered right to their front door, and enjoying the convenience of shopping at home, to name a few. The trick was getting these vendors and buyers together. Wholesale was the first book to present this hard-to-find information to consumers. Hard to find? you say. Absolutely. People weren't getting barraged with mail-order catalogs each month in those days. In fact if you wanted to buy something by mail, you'd have to do quite a bit of detective work to dig up vendors willing to sell this way. We even had to convince some retailers to offer mail order service just to fill out our categories! The Wholesale by Mail Catalog was the first book of its kind, and the fact that its popularity continues twenty-sonic years later is a testament to its intrinsic value and smartness. The message we're getting is: Readers of all kinds still love this book. The 2000 edition includes some important changes that parallel those in the direct-mail industry. To be successful in mail-order retailing today, companies have to keep up with the latest consumer trends--namely, consumers increasing interest in and demand for Internet shopping opportunities. (I myself shopped for and bought snow tires on the Internet this year--a first for me!) In just a year we I've seen the percentage of companies with websites jump threefold. Therefore, readers of Wholesale by Mail and Online 2600 will find a great number of vendors in every category offering high-quality products to consumers at discount prices on the web. Does this mean print catalogs will become extinct? No. I Just as there are people who prefer the tactile experience of handling the goods they buy, there are also those who prefer to pore over catalogs, look at the pictures, and dog-ear the pages. And then there are the impatient, insomniac 3 A.M. shoppers--busy people who don't have the time or desire to go mailing and who can't stand "junk mail" filling up their trash bins. For those of you who like Internet shopping, you'll enjoy this book. If you're a holdout and still don't own a computer, never fear. There are plenty of companies in this, edition that still prefer to sell their goods the old-fashioned way: by chatting with the customer on the phone or by getting to know you through mail correspondence. We've also spent time and thought making this edition of Wholesale by Mail and Online fun to read and more consumer-friendly. Among other things, we've added some new chapters--"Luxuries," for instance, where you can indulge all your senses at bargain prices. And we've greatly expanded others--take the new and improved "Travel" chapter, for one, which has really novel and exciting companies that can broaden your horizons without busting your wallet. We also reorganized and redesigned the table of contents and greatly expanded the "Find It Fast" and "Related Products/Companies" sections throughout to anticipate your query "Now where would I find?" We aim to keep our book as fresh and fast-paced as the buying times so it will remain your bible to discount shopping by phone, mail, and online for at least another quarter century. Finally, if you're creatively challenged when it comes to figuring out what to give your college-aged kid, your father-in-law, or your darling but demanding wife, check out "The Gift Guide," new, this edition. Each year I have a lot of fun reading hundreds and hundreds of mail-order catalogs--in print and on the Internet. I get a tremendous kick out of some of them, and have often wished I could tell readers about specific products that sparked my imagination. Many times I'd think, Wow, my mother would flip for this, or I must get one of these for my son or I've gotta tell my bestfriend about this--her husband will love it. Eureka: "The Gift Guide" was born. I guarantee you'll

be entertained and inspired by it. My eventual goal is to do all my shopping in pajamas. I hope this book helps you do the same. -- G.B.