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**BITS Encourages Consumers to Shop Online Safely this Season**

Washington, D.C. — November 28, 2011— BITS, the technology policy division of The Financial Services Roundtable, encourages consumers to shop online safely on Cyber Monday and throughout the holiday season.

“Whenever consumers engage in any online financial transaction, they need to be conscious of the security risks and protect their digital presence,” said BITS President Paul Smocer. “Consumers who choose to benefit from the convenience of shopping from a smartphone or laptop can improve their online safety exponentially by adopting safe computing practices.”

During the last quarter of the year, the duration of cyber attacks can increase as cyber criminals attempt to take advantage of online holiday shopping and the potential for greater financial impact. Consumers can go a long way in protecting themselves by using security and anti-virus software on their computer and keeping it up to date with the automatic update function. These two basic steps will improve online security significantly.

In addition, for safe cyber shopping this season, BITS recommends consumers:

- Shop secure sites. Look for web addresses with “https://” or “shttp://”. Secure sites are also designated by a secured padlock icon within the browser.
- Be aware of holiday shopping scams, including clicking on deals that seem too good to be true or emails suggesting an issue with an online purchase.
- Never open a suspicious link.
- Research the seller to ensure they are a reputable business.
- Don’t send cash or wire money when buying gifts online.
- Never email your credit card or checking account number.
- Monitor your credit card and bank accounts to make sure there is no fraudulent activity.

BITS supports the National Cyber Security Alliance’s STOP.THINK.CONNECT campaign and encourages consumers to visit [staysafeonline.org](http://staysafeonline.org) for tips and advice that will help consumers keep their machine clean, conduct transactions safely on a computer and mobile device, protect their digital self and contribute to a stronger national cyber infrastructure.

**About BITS**

BITS addresses issues at the intersection of financial services, technology and public policy, where industry cooperation serves the public good, such as critical infrastructure protection, fraud prevention, and the safety of financial services. BITS is the technology policy division of The Financial Services Roundtable, which represents 100 of the largest integrated financial services companies providing banking, insurance, and investment products and services to the American consumer. For more information, go to <http://www.bits.org/>.