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Girl's Guide: Credit cards scam users

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With all the hype about credit card debt and the stereotypes created by movies like “Confessions of a Shopaholic,” one would wonder why a woman should ever have a credit card.

While there are certain risks to having a credit card, it is possible to use it to build good credit.



Keven Yost, professor of finance, said having a credit card can be empowering for a female student.

“If she’s out on a date and things aren’t going well, she knows she can get a cab ride home, or if her car was broken down, she could get help and not have to worry about having cash on hand to make a payment for that sort of thing,” Yost said.

Yost said students must be careful when choosing a credit card.

When credit card companies offer zero percent financing, free credit transfers and free balance transfers, Yost said to look at the fine print.

“If it’s too good to be true, then it probably is,”

Yost said. “The credit card companies aren’t in business just to be nice and give you free stuff.”

Store cards and general cards have different benefits.

Yost said store cards have some benefits when the customer visits the store often, like Target.

“I don’t think you’d want to get one for every store you shop at just because you get 10 percent off the first time you use it,” Yost said.



Budgeting is important with a credit card. A credit card is not designed to give a customer more money than they have.

“ You want to make sure that you’re itemizing every transaction into your budget, so that you know where your money is going,” Yost said. “It’s not just that it’s going to Visa, but that it’s going to whatever the actual vendor is.”

Yost said it is also important to know the hidden fees that credit card companies may have.

Some cards have annual fees, which may be \$25-\$50 a year. Credit card companies are also beginning to charge inactivity fees, Yost said. If a customer does not use the card enough, the company can charge the customer a minimum monthly fee.

Sally Downs, senior in accounting, has two credit cards in her name.

“I like to use it for things that I know for sure I’m going to have to spend money on, so I like to put my gas and my groceries on it,” Downs said. “I try not to put spontaneous purchases on my credit card, because if that starts adding up, I lose track and I end up spending too much money.”

Downs said she keeps track of her balance online and has e-mail notifications sent to her when she reaches her limit.

“I think as long as you’re responsible with your money, it is a great idea just in building credit for future things like trying to get a mortgage and things like that,” Downs said.

Some students don’t want the risk and responsibility of a credit card.

“I don’t want a credit card because I would rather be wise and use money I already own,” said Susie Rogers, sophomore in collaborative special education. “I think it’s easier to keep track of your own money.”

There are risks and benefits to having a credit card, but Yost said responsibility is the most important factor in having a one.