E-commerce is the retail phenomenon of the twenty first century and also - although it attracts less publicity - constitutes the medium within which many commercial transactions take place. This chapter will examine legislative initiatives in the United Kingdom and European Union that are designed to address some of the legal issues and problems that arise from on-line transactions. The main goal is to promote e-commerce both by means of conferring rights on consumers – as epitomised in the Distance Selling Directive that gives rights to inspect and return goods ordered on line- and give some businesses engaged in the sector a degree of immunity from some forms of legal liability. Key here is the notion of an “information society service” and provider as specified in the E-Commerce Directive. A further issue that arises in many e-commerce transactions is that consumers are able to contract with a supplier located in a different jurisdiction. Booking hotel accommodation is a
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frequently used example. Questions need to be resolved in this case which legal system and which courts will govern the transaction.

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