

Holiday Shopping on Smartphones Led to Strong Ecommerce Growth

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eMarketer Editors

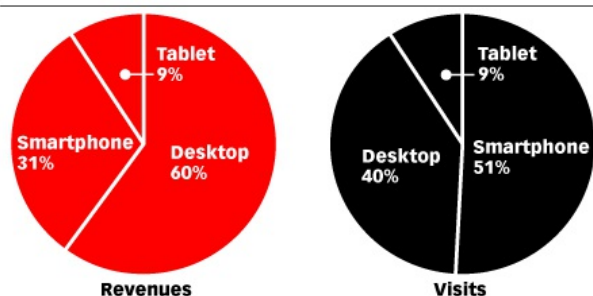
The 2018 retail holiday season was exceptionally strong, with the highest growth rates for brick-and-mortar and ecommerce sales since 2011. Online spending performed noticeably better than the industry's already optimistic expectations.

Pre-season predictions from Adobe projected that ecommerce spending would rise 14.8% to \$124 billion, but its final tally showed online sales jumping 16.5% to \$126 billion. Comscore forecast holiday season growth of 18% to 19% and saw results surpass expectations, growing 19.4% to \$115 billion.

Gains in ecommerce this season were fueled largely by the increase in mobile shopping and buying, particularly on smartphones. Mobile accounted for 60% of online shopping traffic and 40% of sales, with smartphones accounting for 51% and 31%, respectively, according to Adobe. Compared with last year, smartphone sales jumped 56% while desktop (5%) and tablet (4%) sales both increased by single-digit percentages.

Share of 2018 US Holiday Season* Retail Ecommerce Site Visits vs. Revenues, by Device

% of total



Note: represents activity on Adobe's platform, broader industry metrics may vary; *Nov-Dec

Source: Adobe, "Holiday Recap 2018," Jan 15, 2019

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"US shoppers have long since transitioned to smartphones as their primary digital shopping channel, and that activity only gets more pronounced during the frenzy of the holiday season," said Andrew Lipsman, principal analyst at eMarketer. "And yet, they're still more likely to complete their purchases on desktop, resulting in a mobile monetization gap. But that's changing now as shoppers grow more comfortable transacting on their phones, spurred by an overall improvement in retail apps, a more seamless mobile checkout process, and growing demand for click-and-collect transactions."

During the five-day period between Thanksgiving and Cyber Monday, 165.8 million US adults shopped across channels, according to an NRF survey conducted by Prosper Insights & Analytics. More than half of respondents (54%) shopped both online and in-store, and in a sign of the times, online-only shoppers (25%) outnumbered in-store-only shoppers (21%).

How Did US Internet Users Shop During Thanksgiving Weekend 2018*?

millions and % of total



Note: ages 18+; *Thanksgiving Day, Nov 22-Cyber Monday, Nov 27
Source: National Retail Federation (NRF), "Thanksgiving Holiday Trends Consumer Survey" conducted by Prosper Insights & Analytics, Nov 27, 2018

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Let's be clear: multichannel shopping has become the norm because of smartphones. They are the natural link between digital and brick-and-mortar shopping that equips customers with the information and fulfillment flexibility needed to complete their purchase. Retailers that have embraced omnichannel shopping are setting themselves apart from the rest of the pack.