



£120m to be spent Online on Christmas Day 2009 Many retailers' sales to start on Christmas Eve Boxing Day to be the busiest online shopping day?

Tuesday 22nd December, 2009. This Christmas an estimated 4.3 million shoppers will go online and spend £120 million, at an average of £27.90 each, says IMRG.

£102m was spent online on Christmas Day 2008, with retail sites such as Marks & Spencer, John Lewis, Boots, Debenhams, Play.com and M&M Direct all starting their sales on Christmas Day. There was a 39% increase in traffic from Christmas Eve to Christmas Day 2008 and a further 22% up to Boxing Day 2008 which ended as the busiest day for traffic to online retailers. This trend is expected to continue this Christmas as more and more shoppers turn to the internet for their shopping fix and take advantage of the Christmas Sales. The year on year growth in sales value for December 2009 is expected to be around 14% and already we have seen strong sales performances across the online industry in the run up to Christmas with around £5.2bn expected to be spent online this month.

"Last year Christmas Day was the seventh busiest online day of the year for online retailers, while Boxing Day was the busiest," commented Robin Goad, Research Director at Experian Hitwise. "Over the last few years the importance of these two days has been increasing, and we see no reason for it to be any different this Christmas. We have already seen that shoppers are willing to hold out longer for a bargain this year, with 'Cyber Monday' moving a week closer to Christmas. This behaviour is likely to carry through to the post-Christmas period, with people logging on after Christmas lunch to find the best discounts before hitting the high street and shopping malls the following day."

Brian McBride, Managing Director of Amazon.co.uk Ltd said: 'In 2008, we saw a 150% increase in sales on Christmas Day compared to the previous year. One of the great things about the advent of internet shopping is that you now have stores that are open 24/7, every single day of the year. We saw high volumes of gift certificates being redeemed on Christmas Day as well as a substantial number of MP3 tracks being purchased, with people presumably logging on to get content for the MP3 player that they had received as a gift earlier that day. This year, we are expecting another busy Christmas Day with people visiting to check out the great offers available as part of our January Deals promotion.'

Sales data from Christmas Day 2008 showed that it took just a few hours for Brits to lose the Christmas spirit, with families planning their New Year escapes. Andy Washington, Head of Travel at lastminute.com comments, "At 3:30pm lastminute.com will experience a real spike in customers logging on to the site and heading straight for our holiday products. It's as if after a few hours of the Christmas 'obligation' – AKA the obligatory family holiday – people were already desperate to book their next break and get away from it all!"

For many retailers they will be starting their sales on Christmas Eve, and IMRG member Shudoo.co.uk is no exception. MD Robert Russell said: "We believe sales will start early on the high street and therefore don't want to be late. We also feel that many of our customers are waiting for sale bargains this year more so than last year and therefore online shopping on Christmas Day will be even greater."

Perfect Handbags will also be launching their End of Season sale at midnight on Christmas Eve. Julie Ireland, Director of Perfect Handbags, said: "We did the same last year and had fantastic results – the sales during the period 2 weeks after Christmas were higher than the sales for the 2 weeks immediately before Christmas. We always give our existing customers advance warning and they get access to the sale items 12 hours before new customers, so there is always a rush in those first few hours. We're hoping that this year's sale will be as successful as last year."

Meanwhile online gifts retailer Prezzybox.com will be launching their Christmas sale on 23rd December which will run into a January Sale. Managing Director Zak Edwards said: "Last Christmas we saw a massive uplift in orders on Christmas Day/Boxing Day which was something we'd not previously experienced. Our December sales are already up 51% on last year."

However, whilst you are spending you can still be giving, Mark Clark Marketing Director at TheGivingMachine a not-for-profit fundraising shopping portal where online shoppers with a conscience can give 'free' money to charity explained, "Having witnessed astonishing growth in both Givers and donations pre-Xmas, we are looking forward to a new surge in support when shoppers go online on Christmas Day. Shoppers can become Givers, while taking advantage of the Christmas online sales without spending a penny extra. Simply by clicking through www.thegivingmachine.co.uk they will potentially raise millions of pounds for the charities and schools of their choice."

Notes to Editors

About IMRG

IMRG (Interactive Media In Retail Group) is the industry body for global e-Retail. Formed in 1990, IMRG is setting and maintaining pragmatic and robust e-Retail Standards to enable fast-track industry growth, and facilitates its community of members with practical help, information, tools, guidance and networking. Consumers can be confident when dealing with IMRG Members because all have committed to operate using methods that are Honest, Decent, Legal, Truthful and Fair, and have undertaken to not bring the industry into disrepute. The strength of IMRG is the collective and co-operative power of its members.

For more information please visit <http://www.imrg.org/> or email market@imrg.org

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