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UK Online Spending Hits £10.4 Billion in October, Adobe Digital Economy Index Finds

UK Year-to-date spending hits £94 billion, as shoppers opt for ease over best deals this Christmas

LONDON, UK – 19th November 2021 – Adobe today released its latest Adobe Digital Economy Index for the UK, revealing that UK shoppers spent £10.4 billion online in October – an increase of 5% on last year’s Covid-driven gains and an indication that many consumers started their Christmas shopping earlier than ever this year. The figure is the highest ever online spend in October and 58% higher than in 2019.

This brings the UK’s year-to-date online spending to £94 billion, up 12% YoY and 55% when compared with the same period in 2019. With the majority of the Christmas shopping period still to come, the UK is forecast to eclipse last year’s figures and set a new record for ecommerce sales.

The Digital Economy Index uses Adobe Analytics to analyse billions of online transactions on UK retail sites and is the most comprehensive report of its kind. Adobe also conducted a survey of 2,000 UK consumers in the first week of November, which found:

Consumers prefer one stop shops

UK consumers are prioritising convenience over hunting down the best price for their items, despite 59% fearing their outlay on Christmas gifts and experiences are more expensive this year. The data shows:

- More than one in five consumers (22%) choose to do all their Christmas shopping on one website
- Men are more likely to pick one retailer to do all their Christmas shopping (25%) than women (19%)
- Younger people are the most likely to shop on one website, with 37% of 18–34 year olds doing so, compared with just 10% of those over 55

UK consumers are growing increasingly sceptical of Black Friday

Consumers no longer believe in the deals being offered by retailers and are becoming so fatigued by Black Friday that most of them ignore it altogether. The survey found:

- The majority of shoppers (53%) don’t plan to shop on Black Friday at all
- Some 61% of those said it was because they were sceptical about the size of the discounts on offer from retailers, while 39% said they felt this year’s discounts would be smaller than previous years
- 57% said they are becoming so unenamoured with Black Friday that they don’t even visit websites in advance to see what discounts are on offer
- Just 27% of shoppers believe they still get the best deals on Black Friday or Cyber Monday, with half (50%) saying they aren’t as good as they used to be



However, discounts an important factor for shoppers, with 66% saying that getting a good deal is the most important factor when shopping online, over product availability (64%) and free shipping (56%).

Shipping delays

Shoppers are so worried about supply chain issues and driver shortages that they're taking to the shops in person this Christmas to make sure they get their gifts on time. The research found:

- Almost half of UK consumers are worried about shipping delays this Christmas (45%)
- Almost a third (32%) of shoppers say they will shop in person this year to avoid any issues around shipping delays
- 44% said they were yet to start their Christmas shopping earlier this year to avoid issues around deliveries, despite more than half saying they wanted to secure items before they went out of stock (54%)
- Despite the shipping crisis, just a third of Brits (33%) are willing to pay for faster or expedited delivery this Christmas to guarantee their gifts arrive on time
- Many are opting for experiences rather than products to avoid supply issues. 41% are buying concert tickets for Christmas, with spa treatments (39%) and sporting tickets (22%) also among the top gift experiences.

Paul Robson, President of International at Adobe, said: "UK online spend continues to hit new heights as we come into the crucial Christmas trading period, even outperforming 2020 figures when consumers had little option but to shop online. We are seeing a growing scepticism around pre-Christmas discounts and shopping events like Black Friday, with many consumers putting convenience first this year and looking to get all their gifts from a single retailer. This presents retailers with a huge opportunity. Those that can target shoppers with bespoke deals to lure them in and provide a seamless digital shopping experience will be this year's big winners."

Notes to editors

About the Adobe Digital Economy Index

The Adobe Digital Economy Index offers the most comprehensive set of insights of its kind, based on analysis through Adobe Analytics that covers billions of visits to U.K. retail sites and over 10 million SKUs — more than any other technology company.

Analysis is significantly more in-depth and accurate compared to survey-based reports, because only Adobe has access to this volume of real-time, transactional consumer data. It is aggregated and anonymized, to provide insights on consumer spending, online prices and product categories.

Companion research based on a survey of 2,000 UK consumers (18 years or older) fielded between 2nd November and 8th November 2021.

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