



The Desertification of Main Street: Where Has Everybody Gone?

An Ipsos Global Advisor Study of Shopping Behaviors

Washington, DC, November 6, 2017 — The move toward online shopping coincides with a decline in the presence and use of physical retail establishments. This is according to a study exploring the changes in shopping habits and environments conducted by Ipsos Global Advisor in 24 countries around the world.

Consumers report seeing fewer traditional “Main Street” businesses while they are increasingly resorting to digital and convenience-focused alternatives. The types of establishments that are most markedly vanishing from local shopping areas are: bookstores (reportedly seen less often by 39% of the more than 19,000 consumers surveyed globally), newsstands (37%) and furniture stores (34%). In contrast, people are reporting seeing more or just as many drugstores and pharmacies (73%), stores or restaurants selling readily-prepared or takeout food (66%), and any type of chain or franchise store (66%).

- A quarter of global respondents (25%) say they have seen more stores and restaurants selling readily-prepared or takeout food in the last three years.
 - Nearly two in five Colombians (79%) say they have seen more or just as many stores or restaurants selling readily prepared or takeout food, narrowly passing China (78%) and Mexico (78%).
- Notably, the same number (25%) say they have also seen more empty or vacant stores.
 - In Japan and Great Britain, 65% say they have seen empty or vacant stores more or as often as they did three years ago, closely followed by Spain (62%).

Sparking these changes in local shopping areas, consumers report shopping online more often than they did three years ago.

- On the whole, consumers in China, Great Britain, and Poland are those most likely to report shopping online more or as often as they did three years ago. Peru, Hungary and Serbia tend to show the lowest proportions of consumers who say so.
- Only 45% of people report banking in person more or as often as they did three years ago. Nearly three quarters of people from the 24-country study report banking online more or as often as they did three years ago (71%).
- Just 35% say they buy print newspapers or magazines more or as often as they did three years ago while just as many say they buy them less often.
- Topping the list of in-person purchases, 77% report buying food in person more or as often as they did three years ago. This is followed by 71% for shopping at large retail stores and 67% for shopping at small retail stores.

As shopping habits change, so do self-reported social and personal activities conducted about town.

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Majorities of consumers surveyed throughout the world report eating at a restaurant (57%), going to a hair or beauty salon (54%), and going to a coffee house (53%) as often or more often than they did three years ago.

- China has the highest percentage of consumers who go as often or more often to eat at a restaurant (84%), Colombia of those who report the same about going to a coffee house (81%), and Mexico and Poland for going to a hair or beauty salon (68% both).

However, the global trend is down for many activities. For each one going to a bar or pub, going to a movie theater, and buying food from a street vendor, the percentage of global consumers saying they do it less often exceeds the percentage of those saying they do it more often by over 15 points. There are notable differences from country to country.

- The trend for going to coffee houses ranges from a 37-point net decrease in Russia to 20-point net increase in Colombia.
- Going to a movie theater shows changes from a net decrease of 48 points in South Africa to a net increase of 23 points in Mexico.

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About the Study

These are the findings of a Global Advisor survey on shopping behaviors. In total 19,000+ interviews were conducted between September 22 – October 6, 2017 among adults aged 18-64 in the United States and Canada, and adults aged 16-64 in all other countries.

The survey was conducted in 27 countries around the world via the Ipsos Online Panel system. The countries reporting herein are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Hungary, Italy, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States.

Between 500 and 1000+ individuals participated on a country by country basis via the Ipsos Online Panel. The sample was 1000+ in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the United States. In all other countries the sample was 500+. The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on Ipsos' use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses. Data are weighted to match the profile of the population.

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

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Ipsos researchers assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media and they measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,782.7 million in 2016.

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