



Young people window shop more than they buy online, survey shows Of those who do, Young Americans first in line at virtual till – IPSOS-REID

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 23, 2001 – It may be a case of looking, and researching, before they leap.

More than half (54%) of online young people surveyed around the globe report using the Internet to gather information about products and services, according to Ipsos-Reid's *The Face of the Web: Youth*, a comprehensive study of Internet usage among teens and young adults in 16 countries.

But far fewer, only 27 percent, are buying online – just yet.

Most enthusiastic about online browsing: urban Brazilians (84 percent), followed by youth in the Netherlands (64 percent), Sweden (64 percent), the U.S. (60 percent), Germany (59 percent), Italy (58 percent) and Canada (57 percent).

"Window and comparison shopping is commonplace in the well-developed Internet youth markets in North America and Europe," said Gus Schattenberg, Vice-President of Global Research at Ipsos-Reid, an international market research firm. "The next step is actually making an online purchase. The question is, how far off is that next step?"

When it comes to buying, young Americans (43 percent) and Swedes (41 percent) are first in line at the virtual till, followed by young Germans (33 percent), Canadians (25 percent) and Britons (22 percent).

"Youth in other countries are still less likely to have made it to the checkout counter. However, they are roaming the aisles," said Schattenberg.

Despite their otherwise intense involvement in other realms of the Internet, Asian youth so far have not made any comparable large-scale forays into e-commerce.

"Young Americans may no longer be a majority of the online youth population, but they still account for the majority – about 60 percent – of the shoppers in the global e-shopping mall," he noted.

What are youth snapping up once they decide to make a purchase? The most popular items are: music (19 percent); clothing (16 percent); and books (14 percent), but a wide range of consumer goods and services have made it into youth virtual shopping carts, from toys and flowers to tickets and travel.

Some clear niche interests are evident. Video game purchases are generally accounted for by male teens, while young men and females of all ages generally ignore these and instead are more likely to purchase books.



Young women and girls are roughly three times more likely to buy clothing online than young men or male teens. Meanwhile sporting goods and computing goods have captured the attention of young male internet purchasers.

Some 43 percent of youth surveyed reported using their own payments cards to buy. Another 28 percent used the card of someone else, generally a parent. While electronic cash has yet to be adopted on a broad scale (used by 1 percent), more traditional methods of payment account for over one-fifth of purchases (23 percent report using COD, cheques or money orders, bank drafts or transfers).

Will online shopping among youth grow?

"Gradually, would seem a safe bet," said Schattenberg. According to *The Face of the Web: Youth*, online shopping holds far less appeal than email, music downloading, chat room participation and video gaming.

Only about one-in-six youth regard purchasing anything online this year as very likely. Another one-in-four judge it as only somewhat likely.

"Young shoppers are still likely to find more immediate gratification at a brick-and-mortar retailer than waiting days or weeks for delivery of an order placed online," said Schattenberg. "It would appear that young consumers like the idea of window shopping online, but prefer the social experience of 'actual' shopping, and enjoy handling the merchandise they buy. There are also significant hurdles to be overcome in some markets. Not every kid has easy access to credit, which clearly has facilitated the development of e-commerce."

Methodology *The Face of the Web: Youth*

A two-phase survey conducted last year with over 10,000 youths between the ages of 12 and 24 in 16 countries. Half of the interviews were conducted with a representative sample of the youth populations in each country to track current Internet awareness, usage, and intentions to go online. The remainder of the interviews focussed on young Internet users in each country to investigate their Internet usage patterns and experience with Internet music, chat, and retail services.

National samples each consisted of 300 12–24-year-olds, except in the U.S., where 600 interviews were conducted. Results outside the U.S. are accurate within an error margin of no more than plus/minus 6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20; in the U.S., the results are accurate within an error margin of no more than plus/minus 4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

North America

Europe

Latin America

Asia

Middle East



About Ipsos-Reid

Ipsos-Reid has been tracking public opinion around the world for more than 20 years and has become a leading provider of global public opinion and market research to private, public and not for profit organizations in over 50 countries. With more than 1,300 staff in 11 cities, Ipsos-Reid offers clients a full line of custom, syndicated, omnibus and online research products and services. It is best known for its line of Express opinion polls, the *World Monitor* public affairs journal, and *The Face of the Web*, the most comprehensive study of global Internet usage and trends. It is a member of Paris-based Ipsos Group, ranked among the top ten research groups in the world.

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