



Nielsen Online

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## News Release

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### **81 PERCENT OF ONLINE HOLIDAY SHOPPERS READ ONLINE CUSTOMER REVIEWS, ACCORDING TO NIELSEN ONLINE**

#### **Nearly 25 Percent of Online Shoppers Have Spent More than \$500 Online this Season**

**New York, NY – December 18, 2008** – Nielsen Online, a service of the Nielsen Company, today announced that 81 percent of online shoppers have read product or retailer reviews by other customers when doing their holiday shopping this year. Customer reviews are an important research tool for online consumers, with 71 percent agreeing that consumer reviews make them more comfortable that they are buying the right product. When evaluating this customer feedback, 63 percent of online shoppers indicated that it was important to have multiple reviews for each product; 14 percent looked for reviews from an established source; and just three percent sought out reviews by people they knew personally (see Table 1).

These results are from a Nielsen Online holiday survey intended to understand the mindset of the U.S. online shopper. The online survey was fielded from December 8 -15 among approximately 1,000 online shoppers in the U.S. who did holiday shopping online last year and/or planned to do so this year.

“Consumer reviews are a must-have for online retailers, especially during the holiday season when shoppers are buying for others in categories they’re less familiar with,” said Ken Cassar, vice president, industry insights, Nielsen Online. “Perhaps more than any other time of year, consumers are looking for outside feedback for guidance.”

**Table 1: Factors in Evaluating Customer Reviews**

Factor	% of Respondents
The product has multiple ratings or reviews	63
The rating or review comes from an established source	14
The rating or review comes from someone I know	3
Other	2

Source: Nielsen Online Holiday Survey, December 2008

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### ONLINE SPENDING

Nearly one-fourth, 24 percent, of online shoppers have spent more than \$500 so far this holiday season, with 22 percent spending between \$100-199 online (see Table 2). The 24/7 shopping convenience of the Web was the reason cited most frequently by respondents (78 percent) for shopping online.

**Table 2: Money Already Spent Online this Holiday Season**

Amount	% of Respondents
Less than \$100	18
\$100-199	22
\$200-299	17
\$30-399	13
\$400-499	5
More than \$500	24

Source: Nielsen Online Holiday Survey, December 2008

### MULTI-CHANNEL ADVANTAGE

More than half of respondents, 55 percent, indicated that they logged onto the Web site of a local brick and mortar retailer before visiting the physical store. The primary reason for going online first was comparing prices between retailers, followed by checking if an item was in stock and looking for sales in stores (see Table 3).

“With strong sales growth online in recent years, online sales have become the sole focus in assessing Web retailers’ holiday season success,” said Cassar. “This year, however, retailers should consider the online contribution to store sales, in addition to online sales, when evaluating how well the season went.”

**Table 3: Top 5 Reasons to Visit Retailer Web Site before Visiting Store**

Reason	% of Respondents
Wanted to compare prices between different retailers whose stores I might shop	33
Wanted to see if the product I was looking for was in stock	28
Wanted to find sales in the store	26
Wanted to come up with holiday gift ideas before I went shopping	22
I ordered online for in-store pickup	12

Source: Nielsen Online Holiday Survey, December 2008

### DRIVING TRAFFIC TO YOUR RETAIL WEB SITE

The most popular reason to shop at a particular online retailer was having made a purchase there in the past, with 62 percent of respondents. Search engines were the second most popular way to find an online retailer, followed by offline catalogs, with 38 and 31 percent of respondents, respectively (see Table 4). These results underscore the importance to consumers of solid, longstanding relationships with retailers they trust.

**Table 4: Top 5 Reasons to Shop at a Particular Web Site**

Reason	% of Respondents
I went to the retailer I have purchased from in the past	62
I found the retailer through search engines	38
I received a catalog in the mail from the retailer	31
I came across an email promotion from the retailer	25
I subscribe to e-newsletters from retailers	25

Source: Nielsen Online Holiday Survey, December 2008



***About Nielsen Online:***

Nielsen Online, a service of The Nielsen Company, delivers comprehensive, independent measurement and analysis of online audiences, advertising, video, consumer-generated media, word of mouth, commerce and consumer behavior, and includes products previously marketed under the Nielsen//NetRatings and Nielsen BuzzMetrics brands. With high quality, technology-driven products and services, Nielsen Online enables clients to make informed business decisions regarding their Internet, digital and marketing strategies. For more information, please visit [www.nielsen-online.com](http://www.nielsen-online.com). Also, visit our blog at [www.nielsen-online.com/blog](http://www.nielsen-online.com/blog).

***About The Nielsen Company:***

The Nielsen Company is a global information and media company with leading market positions in marketing and consumer information, television and other media measurement, online intelligence, mobile measurement, trade shows and business publications (Billboard, The Hollywood Reporter, Adweek). The privately held company is active in more than 100 countries, with headquarters in New York, USA. For more information, please visit, [www.nielsen.com](http://www.nielsen.com).

*Editor's Note: Please source all data to Nielsen Online.*