

Market for online shopping grows

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Findings of the GfK Web*Scope survey on consumer behaviour of online shoppers

Nuremberg, 6 September 2004 - In the first half of 2004, German consumers spent more than EUR 5.3 billion online. According to an extrapolation by GfK Panel Services Consumer Research, which is based on continuous research into consumer behaviour involving 10,000 online shoppers, sales exceeding EUR 11 billion are forecast for the year as a whole.

Internet sales have continued to increase. The number of Internet users rose by around six million last year to 38.1 million and the frequency of online purchases by Internet users is also up. Compared with the first six months of 2003, retail via the Internet to sell textiles, electronic products and durables was up by over 60 per cent. As consumers are still taking a cautious overall approach to shopping, the increased use of the Internet as a sales channel is impacting on outlets and mail order business, which have both seen a considerable decline in sales.

Shopping on the web is cheaper

The Internet offers consumers the opportunity of easily locating the product they are looking for at the most favourable price. This is where independent retail outlets and department stores are disadvantaged. Their cost structure prevents them from responding to the price war with virtual providers and the extensive range of products these are able to offer.

Internet auctions are also becoming increasingly popular. Every fourth euro German Internet users pay on the net is spent during online auctions. Here, in addition to new and second hand goods, consumer goods that are "as new" are also increasingly being traded. This private second hand market is additionally drawing business away from retailers, with consumers benefiting who otherwise would have purchased brand new goods.

The GfK Web*Scope survey

This data, which was collected as part of the GfK Web*Scope survey, is based on continuous written surveys carried out online and offline and involving a representative sample of 10,000 Internet users. GfK Panel Services Consumer Research uses GfK Web*Scope to establish data on online consumption patterns by private individuals on an ongoing basis.

The GfK Group

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