Healthy Growth For Ecommerce As Retail Continues Shift To Web

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Growth rates to taper off as online retail matures

According to the US Department of Commerce, US retail ecommerce sales reached $165.4 billion last year, for 14.8% growth over 2009.

This represented a strong comeback for online retail after the recession, and healthy growth will continue this year.

eMarketer expects online shopping dollars, excluding travel, digital downloads and event tickets, to exceed $188 billion in 2011. Double-digit sales growth will taper off through 2015 as ecommerce continues to mature.

â€œTwo major trends that will fuel online buying growth are mobile commerce and daily deal sites like Groupon,â€• said Jeffrey Grau, eMarketer principal analyst and author of a forthcoming report on US retail ecommerce. â€œBoth opportunities are expected to have strong sales growth over the next five years.â€•

eMarketerâ€™s US retail ecommerce forecast model measures the market from both the retailer and consumer sides. The online sales forecast is based on an analysis of the latest historical retail ecommerce estimates from the Department of Commerce, as well as macroeconomic trends and research from firms that track ecommerce sales.

As ecommerce sales rise, so will the number of Americans contributing to that total. eMarketer estimates 87.5% of US internet users ages 14 and older, or 178.5 million people, will browse or research products online this year.

Of that group, 83% will make a purchase online, for a total of 148.1 million online buyers in 2011. By 2015, 170.3 million people, or 76.3% of the online population, will make a purchase on the web.

â€œMost of the growth in ecommerce is coming from incumbent online buyers shifting more of their spending from stores to the internet rather than from the spending power of new online buyers,â€• said Grau.

eMarketerâ€™s online shopper and buyer forecasts are based on a meta-analysis of estimates from leading research organizations and overall ecommerce trends.

17 March 2011