Mcommerce Takes 15% of UK Retail Ecommerce Sales

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Ecommerce sales to account for more than 11% of Â£383.1 billion ($607.1 billion) UK retail market; mobile commerce sales alone expected to top Â£6.61 billion ($10.49 billion)

Shopping on mobile devices is helping drive retail ecommerce sales in the UK to new heights and a larger percentage of retail sales overall, according to new figures from eMarketer.

The UK has always registered relatively high online shopping and buying penetration rates. Based on eMarketerâ€™s first-ever forecast for UK retail sales across channels, digital sales in the country, including online and mobile, as a percentage of total retail sales, is among the highest in the world. eMarketer estimates that digital sales (excluding travel) will represent 11.5% of UK total retail sales this year, compared with 10.2% in 2012.

With retail ecommerce sales growing at double-digit rates for several years to come, as total retail sales remain all but flat, digital commerceâ€™s share of the total will continue to increase.

Nonmobile online retail sales will continue rising robustly in the coming years, even as a significant portion of digitalâ€™s growth will come from mobile devices, as shopping on smartphones and tablets reaches record levelsâ€”driving much of the incremental growth in the market.

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Tablet commerce will grow by triple digits in 2013 for the third year running, to reach Â£3.57 billion ($5.67 billion), while smartphone mcommerce sales growth will fall to 42.6%. Other mobile devices, such as ereaders, account for only a tiny fraction of mobile sales. The total mcommerce figure will reach Â£6.61 billion ($10.49 billion) this year and Â£17.24 billion ($27.36 billion) by 2017, with growth remaining robust throughout the forecast period.

Over the same period, UK retail mcommerce sales will increase its percentage of overall retail ecommerce sales from 15% this year to 26.5% by 2017, eMarketer estimates. Retail mcommerce sales include products and services ordered using a browser or app via any mobile device, regardless of where fulfillment occurs, but excludes travel sales and event tickets.

Factored into eMarketerâ€™s figures for UK retail ecommerce and mcommerce sales are the multiple ways in which mobile devices drive ecommerce sales. Growing use of smartphones and tablets as shopping and product research devices give consumers reasons to shift spending from stores to the internet, while additionally encouraging incremental purchases that stem from impulse buying. Smartphones and tablets also promote ecommerce by extending the shopping day and untethering consumers from the desktop or the store. eMarketer estimates 23.4 million people in the UK, or 58.3% of digital shoppers, will browse or research products on smartphones this year. Nearly 15 million will do the same on tablets.