

Britons finally find washing up as dull as dishwater

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Between 2001 and 2005, sales of automatic dishwasher detergents grew by a healthy 36% with the market for these products reaching Â£170 million in 2005. By contrast, sales of hand dishwashing products, namely washing-up liquid, grew by just 10% over the same five year period, with sales valued at Â£162 million last year.

Over the past 10 years automatic dishwasher detergents have made quite a splash. Back in 1996 sales of these detergents accounted for just 39% (Â£90 million) of the total dishwashing detergents market, with handwashing products accounting for the remaining 61% of sales (Â£142 million). But by 2005 the tide had turned for traditional washing-up liquid, with automatic dishwasher products expected to continue to gain force and are forecast to account for as much as 55% of the total market value by 2011.

"Hectic lifestyles and rising affluence mean that consumers are increasingly looking to buy products that reduce the time they spend doing household chores. In line with this dishwasher ownership has been growing for some time as ever more consumers look to avoid spending hours with their hands immersed in dirty dishwater. These trends along with considerable new product development activity have been the main driving forces behind the rise of automatic dishwasher detergents. Although generally things look positive for the market, the fact that water and energy use are now high on the political agenda may have some impact on future usage of dishwashers and detergents among environmentally concerned consumers," comments Amanda Lintott, senior market analyst at MINTEL.

Despite the rise in popularity of dishwashers, Britain still lags behind its European neighbours, France (49%) and Germany (53%), where around half of all households own one, compared to just 36% in the UK. It would seem that Britain remained tied to the kitchen sink for longer than its European counterparts. In Britain automatic dishwashing detergents have only just taken the lead in the dishwashing market, but in France they already account for some 56% of total dishwashing sales, while in Germany these detergents make up as much as 69% of the market.

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