

# Fashion Online - UK - April 2010

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## What is this report about?

Will the online fashion market continue to rocket in 2010 as it has done in 2009? Mintel thinks we may just be looking at a turning point. With H&M, Gap and Zara finally announcing they are to launch UK transactional sites, it looks like the online high street is moving close to completion. Among major fashion retailers, only Primark still has its shutters down on selling online.

## What have we found out?

- The slowdown in online fashion sales is forecast to make itself felt in 2010, as growth slows to 8%, taking the market to £4.27 billion. This is the slowest rate of increase since Mintel started monitoring the online fashion market.
- The online fashion market has been driven above all by the rise in internet penetration, but in the past year, this has begun to stall at around 71% of adults. At the same time, the proportion of those actually shopping online has also seen its increase come close to a halt at just over 70%. Economic factors are also not in the market's favour.
- Men are not being drawn into buying online in the same way as women. Only one in five male internet users have bought from a fashion website against one in three women. This is particularly true of men aged under 25, with only 14% buying clothing online.
- But there are some major positives. Significant improvement is going on in terms of service proposition, with more retailers introducing free and next-day deliveries as well as time slots. Improved photography, easier navigation and more advice and trend information are making shopping online more interesting, informative and fun.
- There is a very positive reception for online fashion retailing. More than half (14m adults) think online shopping is easy and convenient and 11m say it has cut down the time they spend in stores. Eight million shop online to avoid the crowds in shops.
- However, lack of trust is still a big problem. Some 12m prefer to see and feel an item of clothing before they buy it and 10m only buy from a small number of websites they trust. There is a huge disappointment factor, with almost 10m having bought an item of clothing that has not met expectations. This is higher among women, who are most likely to find that differences in sizing between brands mean they don't know if clothes will fit.

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