

# Christmas Shopping 2010 and Planning for 2011 - UK - March 2011

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## What is this report about?

Consumers had an easy time of it in 2010, or perhaps it would be fairer to say that they should have cut back on spending, but instead they chose to cut back on saving. The year ended with a remarkably strong performance over Christmas. But where next?

## What have we found out?

- Clothing was the most widely bought Christmas present, bought by 59% of people closely followed by perfumery and books.
- People believe that they are becoming more cautious. Only 23% said they bought more than last year against 30% who thought they spent less. In fact retail sales grew by 2.2% equivalent to £750 million of extra spending.
- The weather certainly hit demand. On seasonally adjusted volume basis, sales fell by 1% in December on November and all of that would have been due to the weather. But almost all of the lost sales were 'routine spending' not present.
- Use of the internet is growing. A quarter of all 16-34 year olds with Internet access said that they bought most of their presents online and almost 20% of the over 55s said they had done as well.
- Consumers are quite convinced that they are going to save more in 2011. Saving came out top of the list of priorities, mentioned by 43% of our Internet survey, and there was, for the first time, a clear bias to younger people. The trouble is that they have said so before and not done it. But this year with the housing market weak and spending cuts beginning to bite we actually believe them.
- It's time to dispel some myths: Lots of people don't return unwanted gifts. Only 7% of people said they returned some unwanted gifts. The bad weather did not inhibit gift buying - only 4% said that they bought less because of the weather. Delivery problems have not put people off, Some 10% of people said they had problems with online purchases, only 2% said their experience would put them off buying online again.

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