

B2B E-Commerce - UK - 2022

Report Price: £1495 | \$1995 | €1800

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This report looks at the following areas:

- How the B2B ecommerce market has performed in the unprecedented disruptions of both Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The challenges facing the sector amid heightening inflation and material/component shortages due to the pandemic and Ukraine crisis.
- The segmentation of B2B ecommerce between EDI and website sales.
- The major variations in both current penetration and prospects of end-use markets.

The B2B ecommerce market is much larger than the B2C element of the market, and in 2021 accounted for almost 69% of the entire market. It has faced very different challenges to the consumer market, including both Brexit and, more recently, very different influences from COVID-19, which boosted the B2C sector but constrained the B2B market. In particular, the pandemic disrupted the important EDI component of the market, which does not exist in the B2C sector.

Both elements of the market are now facing new challenges brought about by spiralling inflation and supply chain issues as a result of global economic issues. However, the B2B ecommerce market covers a multitude of sectors, and the impacts of such global movements are impacting those sectors at very different levels.

The ecommerce sector in the UK is one of the most advanced in Europe and while the B2C sector continues to grow strongly through website sales, some elements of the B2B market are starting to show greater signs of maturity. EDI, in particular, is recording significantly slower growth than prior to the pandemic, though website sales are growing more widely across end-use markets.

Growth is forecast across all markets but well-established sectors, such as manufacturing, are now more dependent on wider economic developments.



“B2B ecommerce was in strong growth but this has been tempered by successive wider economic issues. Brexit disruption was swiftly followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and consequent major deviations in GDP. Inflation and material shortages are now surfacing with worldwide pressures on fuel prices compounded by the Ukraine conflict.”

– Terry Leggett, Senior Analyst, April 2021

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Other sectors remain significantly under-developed, such as the construction sector, which is a notoriously low user of digital formats, but also faces challenges around the suitability of the ecommerce format.

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