

Fashion Online - UK - August 2009

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What is this report about?

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What have we found out?

- Despite the economic downturn, the online fashion market continues to boom. Mintel forecasts it will reach £4.1 billion in 2009, up by 26% on 2008.
- Fashion retailers' websites are now the favourite destination for online shopping, whereas in October 2008 and January 2009, books were the most popular category.
- However, there are signs that growth may be slowing from 2008's boom levels of 38%, as the economic downturn hits consumer spending and internet penetration levels off. The future for the market is therefore one of further growth, but of considerably greater numbers of retailers fighting it out for a share of online spending.
- Consumer research for this report shows that 31% of internet users (around 12.3 million people) have either browsed for clothing online but not bought (19% or 7.5 million people), or have never even browsed online (12% – 4.7 million people). This suggests that there remains potential for considerable further growth if retailers can convince these consumers to buy.
- Men are less likely than women to browse or to buy clothing online. This is one obstacle to future growth and retailers need to look at simplifying websites for men, to avoid the 'hassle factor'. Perhaps retailers should edit down their menswear ranges and make them more selective compared to womenswear, with a fewer key options in each clothing area.
- Increasing interest from broadband users in online shopping in general, and in clothing and footwear sites in particular, will boost the market. Other positive factors include an economic recovery and rising numbers of a key fashion consumer group, the 25-34s, whose numbers are forecast to rise by 12.1% in the next five years.

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