



Attitudes to shopping in 2020

What is the 'new normal' for retail and online shopping in 2020?

A Trends Guide



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Introduction



Whistl has conducted a research study, to understand the effect of Covid-19 on customer online buying habits and the potential trends going forward.

As the Covid-19 situation developed so did consumer behaviour, with rapid lock down of non-essential retail stores in March, people told to work from home and children to be home schooled if possible. Although this lockdown was eased in June, it was extended for others through a tiered approach, and in November a second national lockdown began. As the population adjusted to the ever changing regulations, the needs and wants of consumers shifted.

Millions of customers moved to online retail and businesses had to drastically meet demands. The shift from high street to online stores will be here to stay for a long time if not permanently.

Our research study was conducted online from 13th – 19th August 2020. Participants involved a representative sample of 1,000 UK adults, were sourced from a large online panel provider.

This guide highlights the findings from our research, equipping businesses with knowledge to understand trends and their customer base.



What is the 'new normal' for shopping?

Online shopping has become a necessity, with [millions of people shopping online for the first-time during lockdown](#).

Shopping behaviours shift from offline to online.

[Statista](#) results show the impact on e-Commerce and the percentages of purchases made online, instead of offline due to Covid-19 in four of the mature eCommerce markets



UK
(56%)



China
(92%)



Germany
(52%)



USA
(64%)

Source: Statista "COVID-19 Barometer 2020" Survey period March 23, 2020 – May 3, 2020

64% of our UK panel agreed that shopping online is now the new normal:

- Slightly more **women** in our panel agree to this (67%) then men (60%).
- 69% **35 – 44 year olds** also believed this to be true, but this decreased with age.
- 60% of those without kids agreed, increasing to 69% **with kids**.
- 70% of those **working from home** or had been made furlough agreed, versus 57% of those still going to their place of work.

"Digital shopping is here to stay"
www.mckinsey.com (Aug 2020)

What is the 'new normal' for shopping?

42% said they would permanently move the majority of their shopping online:

- 55% of **18 - 24 year olds** agreed with this age group versus 33% of those aged 65+
- Over half **with children** agreed with the statement versus 37% without children.
- More **women** said this was true for them (45%) then men (39%). This was supported by research conducted by Melody, who found that [women were more likely to shop online now](#).

Alvarez & Marshall and Retail Economics estimate that [17.2m British consumers have made permanent changes](#) to the way they shop.

It's not just the Brits changing their habits, the study of 6,000 Europeans also found that a [quarter of the population will permanently redirect their spending online](#).

The benefits of online shopping



62% said it was **safer**



62% believe it is **quicker**



62% state a **wider range** of products

I'm reluctant to go to physical shops until a vaccine has been found

I find it easier because there are no queues and no waiting time

Source: Whistl Research, 13th – 19th August 2020



Be aware of the demographics of your customer base and tailor your communications to those who wish to take advantage of the benefits of online shopping

Not the end of the road for the high street.

39% were still keen to get shopping on the high street, even with the uncertainties of the pandemic and ever-changing regulations.

- The younger ages groups were more likely to agree with this; 51% **aged 18-24**, and 50% aged 25-34 versus only 26% of those aged 65+.
- 46% of those **going to their place of work** were also more likely to want to go shopping on the high street v 27% of those who were retired.

[Money.co.uk](https://www.money.co.uk) say the spaces left by shop closures could be seen as opportunities for businesses to seize and focus on the following trends:

1. Shop local – the pandemic saw an increase in the demand for local produce which would benefit numerous retailers.
2. Click and collect – the growth of online shopping isn't limited to home deliveries. Businesses could offer cheap and convenient collections to encourage the footfall into stores.
3. Sustainable shopping – the concerns over sustainability has been increasing over the years and although not pandemic related, retailers should understand what 'sustainable' means to consumers in order to adapt their offering.

I want to support my local shops businesses and jobs.
I want my locality to be thriving and vibrant and prosperous.
I like looking and getting out side and meeting people.

Source: Whistl Research, 13th – 19th August 2020



Encourage customers into stores with targeted messaging, recognising the reasons for them taking to the high street whilst remaining sensitive to any concerns.

Online shopping in 2020

The frequency of online shopping in 2020 v 2019

28%
Increased
their purchase
frequency

58%
Maintained
their purchase
frequency

14%
Decreased
their purchase
frequency

2020 saw an increase in weekly and fortnightly purchases being made

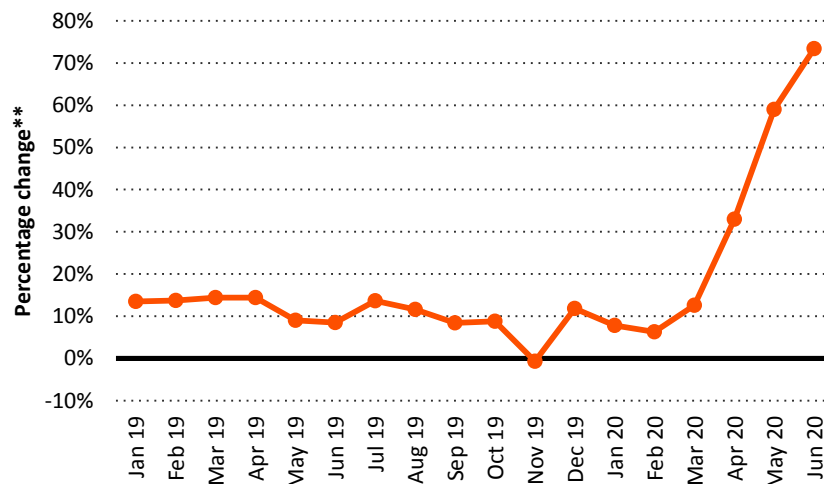
2-3
times a week
increased from
11% to 13%

Once
a week
increased from
18% to 22%

Every
two weeks
increased from
17% to 20%

[Statista](#) published the percentage change in monthly sales to show the drastic change COVID-19 had on the eCommerce market in the UK.

Percentage change in monthly internet retail sales value in the United Kingdom (UK) from January 2013 to June 2020*



Note: United Kingdom; January 2013 to March 2020

Further information regarding this statistic can be found on [page 49](#).

Source(s): Office for National Statistics (UK); [ID 286360](#)

Online shopping in 2020

Overall, frequency of online purchase increased in 2020 vs 2019, across all ages (apart from those under 24), gender and income groups.

The biggest change in frequency was seen amongst:

- 👴 The older age groups: **35-44 year olds** (34%) and 65+ (32%)
- 👨‍💼 and those with a higher income: **£30k-50k** (33%) and £50k+ (30%)



Online shopping in 2020

There was no surprise that online shopping increased during lockdown, however 63% said they would maintain their purchase frequency even after the easing of lockdown

Frequency of online purchases during lockdown increased across both genders and all age groups but the largest increase was among those **aged 65+**, who saw a 49% increase compares to a 29% increase amongst those ages 18-24.



The lockdown drove many of us to make greater use of the internet, particularly to shop. Our figures show that the over 65s have made a significant shift to shop online which is an important lesson for retailers when looking to increase sales among this demographic.



Melanie Darvall, Director Marketing & Communications, Whistl



Analyse what and how often your customers are buying. Reevaluate your service and offer savings through subscriptions or memberships to secure repeat purchases and increase customer loyalty.

Get in touch.

Whistl is the UK's leading delivery management company, focused on providing solutions to support you and your business.

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