

TEXTE

Record online sales give US holiday shopping season a boost

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- 5 U.S. shoppers spent more online during this year's holiday shopping season, a report by Mastercard showed on Wednesday, with e-commerce sales hitting a record high.
- The holiday shopping season is a crucial period for retailers and can account for up to 40% of annual sales. But this year, Thanksgiving, which traditionally starts the U.S. holiday shopping
- 10 period, was on Nov. 28, a week later than last year's Nov. 22, leaving retailers with six fewer days to drive sales between Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- E-commerce sales this year made up 14.6% of total retail and rose 18.8% from the 2018 period, according to Mastercard's data tracking retail sales from Nov. 1 through Christmas Eve.
- 15 Overall holiday retail sales, excluding autos, rose 3.4%.
- "E-commerce sales hit a record high this year with more people doing their holiday shopping online," said Steve Sadove, senior adviser for Mastercard.
- "Due to a later than usual Thanksgiving holiday, we saw retailers offering omnichannel sales earlier in the season, meeting consumers demand for the best deals across all channels and
- 20 devices, Sadove said.
- The last shortened shopping season was in 2013, when retail chains and delivery companies scrambled to get packages to shoppers in time for Christmas.
- Since then, retailers have invested heavily to provide same-day delivery, lockers for store pick-
- 25 up and improve their online presence as they battle against retail giant Amazon.com Inc for market share.
- Consumers also benefited from a low unemployment rate and rising wages, even as global uncertainty and trade tensions have hit business investment.
- The data showed sales at department stores fell 1.8% and online sales growth of 6.9%,
- 30 emphasizing the importance of click-and-collect and online ordering.
- The apparel category registered stronger-than-expected e-commerce growth, Mastercard's data showed, with online sales rising 17%
- The holiday season was challenging for retailers after Amazon expanded its free return policy
- 35 to include products that were not previously eligible, giving consumers until January to return even small purchases bought on the website.
- The National Retail Federation had forecast U.S. holiday retail sales over the two months to increase between 3.8% and 4.2%. That compares with an average annual increase of 3.7% over the past five years.
- 40 The SpendingPulse report tracks spending by combining sales activity in Mastercard's payments network with estimates of cash and other payment forms but excludes automobile sales.

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