

Despite Weak Season, Online Spending Trends Outperform Brick-and-Mortar Across Several Key Retail Categories

Sport & Fitness Ranks as Top-Growing Online Category for the Season

RESTON, Va., Jan 02, 2009 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ --

comScore (Nasdaq: SCOR), a leader in measuring the digital world, today released online spending data by category for the online holiday shopping season, which showed that trends in online spending outperformed offline in several key product categories. The study compared comScore e-commerce data to overall (online and offline) consumer spending data published by MasterCard Advisors' SpendingPulse Unit for the period of Nov. 1 -- Dec. 24 vs. year ago. SpendingPulse is an information service provided by MasterCard Advisors, a subsidiary of MasterCard Worldwide. A macro-economic indicator, SpendingPulse reports on national retail and service sales and is based on aggregate sales activity in the MasterCard payments network, coupled with estimates for all other payment forms, including cash and check.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20080115/COMSCORELOGO>)

According to comScore, the top growing online product category for the season was Sport & Fitness, which grew 18 percent versus year ago. The category continues to benefit from consumers' focus on health and fitness and consumers feeling more comfortable purchasing higher-priced fitness equipment, such as treadmills and elliptical machines, online. The second fastest-growing category was Video Games, Consoles & Accessories, which grew 14 percent on continued demand for popular consoles, such as the Nintendo Wii, Microsoft Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3. Apparel & Accessories, the only other product category with positive online growth, generated higher sales as a result of retailers' aggressive discounting and promotions, and helped by unfavorable weather across much of the country.

Top Online Product Categories for 2008 Holiday Season

Online Non-Travel Spending

Excludes Auctions and Large Corporate Purchases

Dec. 1-24, 2008 vs. Nov. 26 -- Dec. 19, 2007

Total U.S. -- Home/Work/University Locations

Source: comScore, Inc.

Product Category	Y/Y Percent Change
Sport & Fitness	18%
Video Games, Consoles & Accessories	14%
Apparel & Accessories	4%
Books & Magazines	-1%
Consumer Electronics	-5%
Flowers, Greetings & Gifts	-7%
Toys	-7%
Computer Hardware	-8%
Home, Garden & Furniture	-14%
Event Tickets	-18%
Jewelry & Watches	-24%
Computer Software (Excl. PC Games)	-24%
Office Supplies	-30%
Music, Movies & Videos	-32%

A comparison to the MasterCard Advisors' data revealed that the online trends in several product categories outperformed overall consumer spending in those categories, including:

-- Sales of Apparel & Accessories up 4 percent online, compared to a 19-21

percent decline in overall sales of the category.

- Consumer Electronics declined 5 percent online and Home, Garden and Furniture declined 14 percent online. This compares to a 26-percent decline in overall sales of Electronics/ Appliances.
- Jewelry & Watches declined 24 percent online, compared to a 34-percent decline in overall sales of Luxury Goods (including Jewelry & Watches).

"For an online holiday shopping season that recorded a disappointing 3-percent decline in sales, a positive note is that e-commerce trends outperformed overall consumer spending in several product categories, which is to say that e-commerce continued to capture an increasing share of consumers' wallet," said comScore chairman Gian Fulgoni. "Clearly, 2008 was an extremely challenging time for many retailers, and the beginning of 2009 may not be much better. But when the consumer economy eventually does rebound, e-commerce is poised to benefit from its emergence as an important consumer sales channel."

Wealthiest Households Spent More Online this Holiday Season

comScore also analyzed non-travel e-commerce spending by household income segment for the holiday shopping season, revealing that growth in online spending only occurred (up 7 percent) within households making at least \$100,000 in annual income, while lower income segments logged significant declines in spending. Those households earning less than \$50,000 per year appear to be the most affected by the current economic environment, with their online spending declining by 13 percent versus year ago.

2008 Holiday Season vs. Corresponding Days in 2007
Online Non-Travel Spending
Excludes Auctions and Large Corporate Purchases
Dec. 1-24, 2008 vs. Nov. 26 -- Dec. 19, 2007
Total U.S. -- Home/Work/University Locations

Source: comScore, Inc.

Annual Household Income	Growth Rate
\$0-\$49,999	-13%
\$50,000-\$99,999	-8%
\$100,000+	7%

About comScore

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