



Britons 'biggest online spenders'

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Britons are the biggest online spenders in Europe, making nearly a third of all internet purchases across the continent during 2009, according to a new report. Consumers in the UK collectively spent an estimated £38 billion online last year, accounting for 30% of total European internet sales, according to price comparison site Kelkoo.

Despite the recession, online sales grew by 12% in the UK during 2009, with purchases made over the internet making up 9.5% of all retail sales in this country. The report, which was carried out by the Centre for Retail Research, predicts the UK online market will continue to expand during 2010, growing by 12.4% to £42.7 billion.

But this growth will be dwarfed by the 19.6% jump the group is expecting across Europe as a whole during the coming year, pushing the total value of sales up to £152.8 billion. The UK is currently the single biggest online market, followed by Germany and France, with these three countries collectively accounting for 70% of internet sales in Europe.

At the other end of the scale, Poland has the smallest market with sales of only £2.2 billion, with Finland and Norway having only slightly bigger markets at £2.3 billion and £2.9 billion respectively. Across Europe as a whole, internet sales accounted for 4.7% of all retail sales, and this figure is expected to increase to 5.5% in 2010.

UK consumers also had the highest average individual online spend during 2009 at £1,102, followed by Denmark at £1,079 and Norway at £979.

People in the UK also bought the highest number of items over the internet, at an average of £37 each.

The report also found evidence that UK shoppers are feeling increasingly confident about shopping online, with the proportion who said they were prepared to spend £1,000 or in a single transaction over the internet rising from 12% to 25%. At the same time, there was a fall in those who would cap their online spending at £250 from 48% to 32% during the year.