



European online retail sales up

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Online retail sales in Europe are set to jump 20 percent this year, far outstripping growth in store-based sales as countries like Poland, France and Spain catch the Internet shopping bug, according to new research.

The Centre for Retail Research (CRR), in a report commissioned by shopping comparison website Kelkoo, said on Monday online retail sales were likely to grow 19.6 percent to 172 billion euros (150 billion pounds) in 2010, following 22 percent growth last year.

That compares with CRR's forecast for total retail sales growth in Europe of just 1.4 percent as the region struggles to emerge from [recession](#).

"2010 is when we will really start to see online sales achieving a significant share of retail trade in most European countries," said Bruce Fair, managing director of Kelkoo UK.

Growth of 20 percent would outstrip the CRR's forecast for a 10 percent increase in online retail sales in the United States this year.

However, it would leave online sales in Europe, as a proportion of total retail spending, at 5.5 percent, below the U.S. on more than 7 percent.

The CRR forecast online sales growth would be fastest in Poland, up 36 percent, followed by France, up 31 percent, and Spain, up 25 percent, as they catch up with more mature markets like Britain, Germany and Nordic countries.

Britain, where online retail sales accounted for 9.5 percent of total sales in 2009, will see the slowest growth, up 12.4 percent. However, it will remain the largest market, worth an estimated 48 billion euros, the CRR said.

Last year, European online shoppers spent on average 871 euros each, with Britons topping the table with an average spend of 1,240 euros and Poland at the bottom of the countries surveyed on 362 euros.