



2014 HOLIDAY SHOPPER RESEARCH: Shopping Never Sleeps

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THE **RUNDOWN**

This holiday shopping season will be our most connected ever, with devices at our fingertips helping us hunt for deals in stolen moments—whether on a laptop at work or on a smartphone right before bed. In fact, *one third* of all shopping searches on Google happen between 10:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m.¹ That's because shopping doesn't stop once the mall closes. Today we're researching purchases online at all hours of the day. To understand how digital trends will affect this year's shopping season, we conducted our annual Holiday Shopper Intentions research with Ipsos, surveying consumers on their shopping behavior.

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Black Friday is becoming a month-long event

People are starting their research early, and retailers are stretching Black Friday promotions across November, changing the focus from just one day to a month-long event. More than half of consumers surveyed said they'll start their research before Thanksgiving, with 26% of shoppers starting before Halloween.²

Shoppers are also spending more time consulting more sources before making a decision. In 2010, shoppers used an average of five sources of information before purchasing, but that has more than doubled, with shoppers consulting [at least 12 sources last year](#).³ This means that October through November has become a crucial period for retailers to reach shoppers online, being present with offers, information, how-tos and content.



Online shopping is the new window shopping

Shoppers are going online for inspiration at all points of their day—not just to research specific products but to see what their friends and favorite influencers are wearing. Sites such as YouTube and Pinterest have become the new window displays, and a new generation of fashion influencers such as [Bethany Mota](#) are influencing shopping decisions.

Shopping-related content on YouTube, from unboxing videos to product reviews, is becoming an important part of the holiday research process and is trending up year over year. Haul videos—or the YouTube equivalent of telling your best friend about your latest shopping purchases—spike during key shopping events and hit their peak during Black Friday weekend. Videos with "haul" in the title have been watched more than 1.1B times on YouTube, and views are up 1.7x this year compared to last year.⁴



And shoppers aren't just using YouTube for research ahead of time; they're also looking up videos while making decisions in stores. One in four shoppers say they've used YouTube to search for a video related to a product they're considering while in a store.⁵

Your phone: The ultimate shopping assistant

One of the biggest enablers for shopping throughout the day is our mobile devices. Our research found that 75% of smartphone shoppers plan to use their phones in-store this holiday season.⁶ Shoppers used to come to the store with little knowledge, and the sales associate would educate them on products. Now shoppers are coming into stores teeming with information, and are turning to their phone as a personal shopping assistant. [One in three shoppers](#) use their smartphone to find info instead of asking store employees.⁷

We've found that when retailers understand mobile behavior in stores, they can meet shoppers online with helpful information. In fact, 46% of shoppers who use their phone in a store still end up making a purchase, an 11-point increase from 2011.⁸ Consumers are coming into stores more purposeful and informed than before, and savvy retailers are turning this into an opportunity.



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Sources

- 1 Google Shopping Search Data, July—September 2014..
 - 2 Google / Ipsos MediaCT 2014 Holiday Shopping Intentions Study, September 2014, *Base: Those who plan to purchase a gift during the upcoming Holiday Season, N = 2000.*
 - 3 [Google and Inmar, 2013.](#)
 - 4 Google Data, January 2013—September 2014, Indexed Views on YouTube.
 - 5 Google Consumer Survey, September 2014.
 - 6 Google / Ipsos MediaCT 2014 Holiday Shopping Intentions Study, September 2014, *Base: Those who plan to purchase a gift during the upcoming Holiday Season and plan to use their smartphone for holiday shopping, N = 588..*
 - 7 [Google Mobile In-Stores Study, May 2013.](#)
 - 8 Google / Nielsen Mobile Path to Purchase custom study, November 2013.
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