

# 'Twas the week before (and after) Christmas, when shoppers went nuts

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**W**ould it surprise you to hear that we see 34% more shopping searches on Christmas Day than on Black Friday?<sup>1</sup> That's just one of the eye-opening consumer trends we're watching closely now that the 2017 holiday season is in full swing.

With mobile, shoppers know they can easily find and get what they're looking for up until the last minute. So despite all of the improvements retailers have made to shipping speed and product availability, many people still wait to buy. That means that a lot of December's holiday shopping happens right before—and even after—Christmas, giving more reason for retailers to continue to drive store traffic from online and offline media throughout the Christmas shopping season.

## Early birds they are not

Retailers may be pushing their [holiday deals earlier and earlier](#), but some shoppers are still waiting longer and longer, weighing their options to make their final choices.

When shoppers consider a new purchase, they spend 13 days on average shopping for the item. But once they decide to buy, almost half expect it either the same day or the next day.<sup>2</sup> In fact, mobile searches related to “same-day shipping” have grown 120% since 2015.<sup>3</sup>

think with 

It's no wonder that we see online conversions from the week before December's shipping cutoff date on par with the week of Cyber Monday,<sup>4</sup> as holiday shoppers make an effort to get their presents sent to their doorstep.

## Once shipping cutoff hits, last-minute shoppers make a mad dash

The last week before Christmas is crazy busy of course, but it's also very local. Around Dec. 21, when the online shipping cutoff passes, Christmas shoppers increasingly turn to their hometown stores to get what they need.

Regardless of which day of the week Christmas falls, the in-store holiday rush starts on Friday one full week before Christmas. The Saturday after that is typically the second-busiest day of December. The busiest day of all in the last month of the year? That's Dec. 23, regardless of what day of the week it falls on.<sup>5</sup>

Searches for "where to buy" peak on Dec. 23 as last-minute shoppers grab their final gifts and stocking stuffers. Some popular examples: "where to buy Cards Against Humanity," "where to buy Yeti Cups," and even "where to buy coal."<sup>6</sup>

### 'Where to buy' searches in 2016



Source: Google Data, U.S., Nov-Dec. 2016.

Meanwhile, mobile searches for “open now” and “store hours” grow through December and peak on Christmas Day. That includes searches like, “what stores are open near me on Christmas,” “what grocery stores are open on Christmas,” and “what stores are open right now.”<sup>7</sup>

This year, retailers have an edge. With Christmas on a Monday, there are two full weekends (Dec. 15-17 and 22-24) in the 10 days before the holiday. This bodes well for store traffic with Christmas shoppers out in force on Fridays and Saturdays.

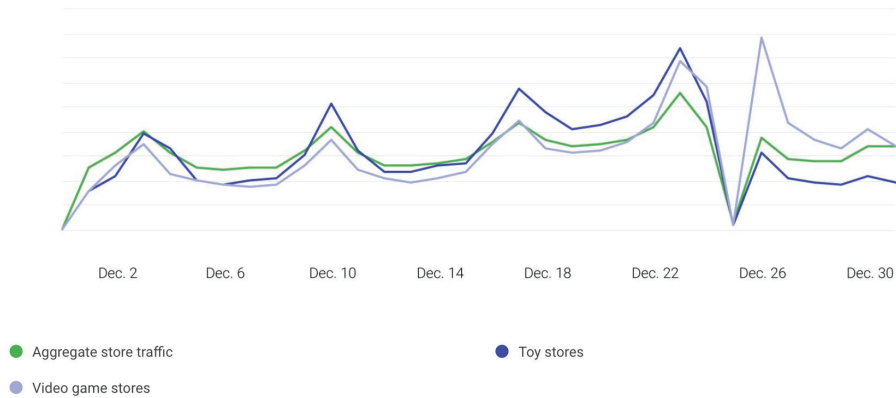
The takeaway? With people turning to stores at the last minute, be sure to highlight your local products for the best chance at drawing shoppers to your door.

## **Christmas may be over, but the shopping isn't**

The days between Christmas and New Year's Eve are just as busy as every other day in December (other than Christmas week itself). For general shopping queries (such as “shopping near me” or “store hours”), we see 34% more searches on Christmas Day than we do on Black Friday. Though searches for “where to buy” increase up until Dec. 23, the queries recover to pre-Christmas week levels and stay steady for the final week of the year.<sup>8</sup>

And this post-Christmas shopping busyness isn't just happening online. In fact, last year we saw about 20% of all December store traffic happen in the six days after Christmas.<sup>9</sup> And why is that? With searches for “clearance” spiking on Dec. 26, shoppers are likely looking to redeem gift cards, make returns and exchanges, find gifts for people they haven't seen yet, or decide to “gift” themselves a little extra.<sup>10</sup>

## Aggregate store traffic vs. toy stores and video game stores in 2016



Sources: Google Data, Aggregated, anonymized store traffic from a sample of U.S. users that have turned on location history, U.S., Nov.-Dec. 2015 and 2016.

Google Data, U.S., Dec. 2016

While Black Friday is still a major in-store shopping day for some categories such as electronics and furniture, many specialty stores see more foot traffic leading up to, and after, Christmas Day than on Black Friday. In 2016, toy stores and bookstores, for example, saw the most foot traffic of the holiday season on Dec. 23, while video game stores saw their busiest holiday shopping day on Dec. 26.<sup>11</sup>

Mobile has fundamentally changed the way holiday shoppers complete their lists. They expect to be able to find what they want, when they want it. And that means holiday shopping is happening right before—and even after—Christmas. That's a big opportunity for marketers who keep the lights on even after Santa slides through.

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## Sources

**1,6,7,8** Google Data, U.S., Nov.-Dec. 2016.

**2** Google/Ipsos, "Fall Shopping Study, High-Consideration Purchases" n=4,720, U.S., Sept. 2017

**3** Google Data, U.S., Jan.-June 2017 vs. Jan.-June 2015.

**4** Google Analytics, Based on data from Google Analytics accounts that have authorized Google to share website data in an aggregate way, shopping vertical only, Nov.-Dec. 2016.

**5,9,11** Google Data, Aggregated, anonymized store traffic from a sample of U.S. users that have turned on location history, U.S., Nov.-Dec. 2015 and 2016.

**10** Google Data, U.S., Dec. 2016