

# Pre-purchase online research comes out tops in the DMMA e-commerce study

Issued by [IAB South Africa](#)

29 Nov 2011

During the month of October 2011, the DMMA and Effective Measure performed a joint research project into South African e-commerce trends. The response was positive, with 1001 respondents who were sourced from a survey that ran across over 400 websites. The survey asked five key questions relating to the use of the Internet as a research resource for both online and in-store purchases. The results showed that online research is widely used before making any purchasing decisions, with three quarters of online South Africans opting to do their pre-purchase research via the internet rather than in-store, proving that it is vital for companies to have comprehensive product information available online.

On the flipside, about half of the respondents also said they would go into stores to do their research before making their purchase online. Men were slightly more likely to do this than women. From an age point of view, there is a trend of 25-40 year olds being more likely to conduct research online if they planned to buy in-store. Respondents aged 51 years and older were more inclined to conduct in-store research if they planned to purchase in-store than younger respondents. Interestingly enough, for each age group, income group and gender it was found that online research was more popular than actual in-store research when the purchase was to be made in-store.

Almost 60% of respondents said they had made an online purchase in the last 12 months. Males were marginally more likely to have purchased something online but the largest driver is monthly household income. Almost 80% of respondents earning over R50 000 a month have purchased online in the past 12 months. Only 15% of younger respondents (18-20 year olds) had made an online purchase. This is most likely due to credit card restrictions that are keeping this demographic out of the e-commerce market.

Almost 80% of respondents who have purchased online have spent up to R5 000 in the last 12 months. Males were twice as likely to have spent between R5 001 and R19 999 than females. Older respondents (45-54 year olds) were the mostly likely to have spent over R20 000 online in the last 12 months. Obviously household income plays a large part with higher earners tending to spend more online.

Please see the data table below for survey results. For more information contact the DMMA on [info@dmma.co.za](mailto:info@dmma.co.za).

**Table 1** below shows the data and questions asked.

Have you purchased anything online in the past 12 months (e.g. books, music, apps, ringtones, airtime, groceries, gifts etc.)?	Total	Male	Female
Yes	59.66%	62.22%	55.86%
No	40.34%	37.78%	44.14%
	Total	Male	Female
When you plan on buying an item in-store, do you research it online and then purchase it at a store?	Total	Male	Female
Yes	76.60%	80.49%	70.99%
No	23.40%	19.51%	29.01%
When you plan on purchasing an item online, do you ever research it offline first by going into a store to research the item and/or look at other options?	Total	Male	Female
Yes	54.86%	57.14%	51.91%
No	45.14%	42.86%	48.09%
When you purchase an item online do you research the item in other online areas (e.g. review sites, manufacturer sites, service sites e.g. Hello Peter)	Total	Male	Female
Yes	73.71%	77.47%	67.18%
No	26.29%	22.53%	32.82%
If you purchase items online, how much have you spent online in the past 12 months?	Total	Male	Female
Less than R1,000	35.11%	28.85%	43.51%
R1,001 to R5,000	43.47%	44.23%	43.13%
R5,001 to R19,999	16.72%	21.70%	9.16%
R20,000 plus	4.71%	5.22%	4.20%

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