



Record Christmas for online sales

Australia experienced its busiest ever online shopping period in December according to payment provider PayPal.

And the company says established Australian retailers have become the driving force behind the uptake of online commerce, rather than offshore retailers who attract a higher profile in the media thanks to the GST debate.

PayPal did not release any physical data, however it says the peak period commenced December 5.

Elena Wise, acting MD of PayPal Australia, said many of Australia's most established retailers have "come back fighting hard" against international competition over the last year.

"With the continued strength of the Australian dollar, international competition is set to intensify into 2012. (But) Australians prefer to shop domestically, providing an ongoing opportunity for retailers to capitalise on their competitive advantage by combining their offline footprints with their online presence," said Wise.

"Emerging retail models being offered by Aussie retailers, such as 'buy online, collect in-store', provide a customer-centric approach that engenders brand loyalty and is hard matched by overseas competition."

Two retailers already driving significant volumes of sales through their online channels are Dan Murphy's and Toys"R"Us, both of which experienced their largest ever online sales during the Christmas trading period, according to PayPal.

Toys"R"Us experienced healthy growth in online traffic and sales compared to 2010 with significant peaks seen in mid-November and mid-December. Perhaps surprisingly some of the most popular items purchased online were big ticket outdoor products such as trampolines, pools and swing-sets. Popular items purchased online also included a mix of trend toys such as Monster High dolls, LEGO and collectibles.

Beth Glancey, marketing manager online and eCommerce with Toys"R"Us said customers love the convenience of shopping online, with the added bonus of not needing to worry about getting a 16ft trampoline in the back of their car.

"Toys"R"Us shoppers use the online store to research their purchases with our Top 10 Toy List particularly popular with mums and dads wanting to know what the hottest toys were for

Christmas.”

Martin Smith, GM of Dan Murphy’s said the company saw a spike in alcohol sales online channel last Christmas, with additional offers adding to the convenience of buying online.

“Our customers demand information at their fingertips, whether they are planning to make their final purchase online or in a store and over the Christmas period we saw an uptake in customers using our ‘Find in Store’ option to search for products online before they buy in store, highlighting the value of our online channel to not only drive sales online, but also offline.”

Source: Inside Retail