



Christmas Shopping Marathon Exhausting, time out shopping 11 hours, average spend £340

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London, 21 November 2000: Busy High Streets, the cost, and the time spent shopping for presents are leaving almost two-thirds of the population feeling less than festive, reveals consumer research published today by **Amazon.co.uk**.*

Crowded shops (56%), seasonally overloaded public transport (32%) -exacerbated by the rail crisis - and not being able to find the right presents (26%) - are the three biggest grumbles, with six in ten people saying getting ready for Christmas is hard work. Although it is accepted that this is part of the festive season buildup.

Amazon.co.uk, the UK's leading online retailer, commissioned the research to understand how it could better serve its customers this Christmas, ensuring that the online experience does not leave the public crying 'bah humbug'. And the company believes it is well placed with quick, simple, one-click shopping, electronic gift certificates and wish lists. Amazon.co.uk is also helping customers save time with fast on-site experience, a huge selection in one place and the ultimate treat of crowd-free shopping by using the Royal Mail to deliver.

Key research findings include:

- the average cost of buying presents this Christmas is £340 per adult - but almost one in ten people spend upwards of £750
- 31% of us return at least one present to the shop, representing a huge £398m spent on unwanted gifts - that's nearly 60 million pairs of Christmas socks.
- on average we'll spend about 11 hours Christmas shopping - and that's 22 episodes of *Only Fools & Horses*
- contrary to popular belief grandmas are not the worst present buyers - it's brothers and sisters
- shopping online you're more likely to be quicker and also get some presents for yourself!
- women are more likely to want a surprise - 56%
- women try harder listening all year for clues - to make sure their presents are just right
- most people start their Christmas shopping in late November - although 6% get shopping in June or earlier

Time spent filling stockings

The average shopper spends 10½ hours searching for the right presents for family and friends, but a dedicated, or indecisive, one in five people are out for 21 hours!

All I want for Christmas is

The habit of compiling lists for Santa Claus seems to be dying; nearly half of the population (45%) don't drop hints for present suggestions because they simply don't know what they want.

How we buy

When we buy presents, there are two distinct trends. For our partners, the majority of us (48%) listen for clues, ensuring our gifts are really appreciated. For family and friends we are somewhat less thoughtful - almost 6/10 buyers (58%) put exactly what is expected under the tree. A further 10% buy on the principle that the present can easily be returned.

The cost of Christmas - and unwanted presents

This Christmas, the average British adult will spend £340 on presents. A third (31%) of us will return some presents, with the average value of returned presents per person being £9. This represents a total of £398 million spent on unwanted presents 1.

For the person who has everything

Forget 'what to buy the person who has everything'. A third of people (32%) name their parents as the most difficult people to buy presents for. And if your parents are in their 50s or 60s, the figure jumps to 52%.

Taking it back

Boxing Day queues aren't always grandma's fault. In fact siblings are the worst present buyers, being twice as likely as any other relative to give something that ends up being returned.

Making their own minds up

And if you thought gift vouchers were a cop-out present, think again - four in ten young people (between 18-34) would actually prefer to receive as much as a quarter of the value of their presents as gift certificates.

Online shopping - Future of Christmas?

With 6 in 10 people feeling that Christmas is busy and hectic, online shopping can provide welcome relief. Avoiding packed shops is the biggest perceived benefit (70%), being able to shop when you want (70%), followed by not having to carry heavy bags (28%), gift wrapping and sending presents directly (23%) and present idea suggestions (21%).

"While the extent to which people are exhausted by the thought of Christmas shopping is surprising, it is not totally unexpected," said Steve Frazier, managing director of Amazon.co.uk, who commissioned the research. "Our aim is to make Amazon.co.uk the best and easiest place to do your Christmas shopping. This research shows that online retailers have a lot to offer consumers, particularly at Christmas time, and we hope that by helping to make things easier none of the spirit of Christmas is lost. This year our site is chockfull of the best gifts we can find and we are committed to keeping our despatch promises, just like last year."

1 Source: ONS 1998 - 44,187,000 UK adults aged 20+

* The study was carried out by ICM Research. 1000 people in households across the UK were interviewed during October 2000.

For further information please contact the **Amazon.co.uk** press office on 0208 636 9280

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