

NEW REPORT: Shoppers to spend almost US\$6 trillion online by 2026 - Edge by Ascential

- *Ecommerce will be the main driver of global retail growth by 2026*
- *UK shoppers to spend £77.6 billion online (2021-2026) as pandemic effect continues to boost ecommerce*
- *Edge by Ascential anticipates the value of UK ecommerce to grow to almost £220 billion by 2026*

London, UK – Tuesday 29th March, 2022: [Edge by Ascential](#), whose technology-driven products power brands to win in digital commerce, today released its annual [Future of the Digital Shelf Report](#). The report predicts that between 2021-2026, \$2.4 trillion (£1.82 trillion) of global retail sales will take place online, more than double the amount generated by all leading bricks-and-mortar stores. By 2026, the total value of global ecommerce will have reached nearly \$6 trillion (£4.6 trillion).

This emphasises the importance of the ‘digital shelf’ – the online equivalent of shopping in a physical store.

In the UK, Edge by Ascential predicts that shoppers will spend almost £78 billion (£77.6 billion) via ecommerce platforms between 2021-2026, accounting for 68.3% of total retail growth over this five-year period. By 2026, UK ecommerce will have grown to £219.6 billion, up from £142 billion in 2021 – an almost 55% (54.6%) growth rate over five years.

In 2022 alone, Edge by Ascential anticipates UK ecommerce will grow by £15.5 billion (almost 11%) to reach £157.5 billion, evidence that ecommerce remains an entrenched shopper habit even though COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.

By 2026, Edge by Ascential anticipates that in the UK, ecommerce sales will account for almost 41% of chain retail sales - up from 32% in 2021. By 2026, in the US, ecommerce share of total retail sales will be 30%, in Germany 33% and in China 78%.

Xian Wang, VP Edge Retail Insight, Edge by Ascential, said: “Ecommerce will be the largest driver of retail growth over the next few years. The pandemic normalised online shopping and created a considerable wave of first-time ecommerce shoppers. Companies responded by improving the speed, convenience and range of digital services available and it’s now a virtuous circle – we shop online because it’s a good experience, and because we’re shopping online, companies continue to invest in that experience. As ecommerce matures, it is fragmenting the path-to-purchase further and becoming a number of different channels, including direct-to-consumer, Amazon, and social platforms like TikTok and Facebook.

“The pandemic’s legacy for retail is lasting change. Shoppers now discover, engage with, and purchase products not through a physical shelf – but through a digital shelf, and that has major implications for brands, the role of the physical store, traditional retailers and even pure play digital retail platforms.”

Xian Wang continued: “2022 will bring continued challenges for brands and retailers as the cost of living increases and households feel the strain. In an increasingly competitive environment, retail chains need to think more like Amazon to succeed. The retailers that maintain a strong market position will be those that embrace the concept of ecommerce as part of an omnichannel future.”

Edge by Ascential’s ***Future Of the Digital Shelf Report*** highlights some of the biggest ecommerce trends and challenges impacting brands and retailers today. Some additional key findings include:

- **E Commerce is the #1 driver of retail growth (2021-2026)**
 - Edge by Ascential expects online retail to account for almost 40% of global retail sales by 2026.
 - From 2021 to 2026, ecommerce will make up 63% of all total GMV growth, outpacing every other retail channel.
- **Ecommerce is reshaping the purpose of the store**
 - The majority of shoppers now begin their product searches on digital channels and studies show that one in three store purchases begin online. Even when in-store, shoppers are increasingly engaging with digital experiences, through mobile apps, QR codes, social media and payment. The report suggests that store-based retail, while still important, must find fresh purpose in a digital-first world.
- **The digital shelf is the primary place where brands achieve future growth, but online is not just one channel**
 - During the pandemic, ecommerce activity increased by 37% worldwide in 2020 (almost 50% in the UK), causing advancement and evolution throughout the entire online shopping ecosystem.
- **Specific ecommerce factors help drive online traffic, sales and market share**
 - Keeping items in stock is the ultimate precursor to sales and conversion on the digital shelf and to maintain a top search ranking. Edge by Ascential has observed clients lose as much as a fifth - 22% - of their weekly sales for every day their product is out of stock.
 - Search is now the preferred way to shop and an entry point for product and brand discovery.
 - For products sold online, a product detail page and online packaging are as critical as the packaging and promotional material for products displayed on a physical shelf.

About the data in this press release

UK data in this press release was calculated in March 2022 using Edge by Ascential’s AI-powered data analytics tool Retail Market Monitor (RMM). Global data and insight come from Edge by Ascential’s Future of the Digital Shelf Report, November 2021-2022, available by subscription to the Edge by Ascential Retail Insight platform. The report was created with data from the RMM which can analyse the entire retail ecosystem by sector, geography and channel, and identify 3-5 year growth opportunities for retailers and brands. Retail sales referenced are calculated using Gross Merchandise Value (GMV), a standard used to measure the size of a third-party marketplace. It is calculated by multiplying the number of products sold by the price at which each product was sold over a given time period. Retail sales data includes online and offline operations, and only includes chain retailers, of which Edge Retail Insight covers almost 2,500 worldwide.

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About Edge by Ascential:

Edge by Ascential powers the digital commerce segment for brands. The world's leading brands focus their local and global go-to-market strategy by using Edge's predictive retail intelligence technology, advisory services, digital shelf monitoring insights and market share performance analytics. We're giving global brands the strategy, execution and performance edge they need to win in digital commerce. Edge by Ascential is a measurement partner within the [Amazon Ads Partner Network](#).

About Ascential

Ascential delivers specialist information, analytics and eCommerce optimisation platforms to the world's leading consumer brands and their ecosystems. Our world-class businesses improve performance and solve problems for our customers by delivering immediately actionable information combined with visionary longer-term thinking across Digital Commerce, Product Design and Marketing. We also serve customers across Retail and Financial Services.

With more than 2,800 employees across five continents, we combine local expertise with a global footprint for clients in over 120 countries. Ascential is listed on the London Stock Exchange.

For more information, visit www.ascentialedge.com

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