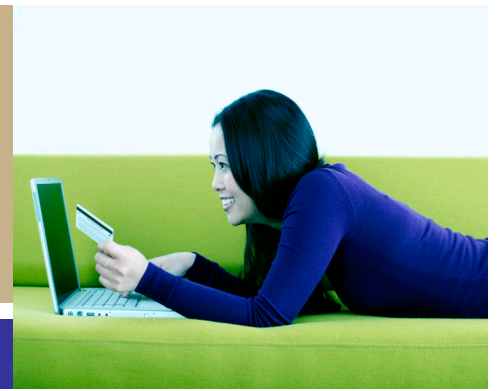


# INSIGHTS

## UNDERSTANDING THE ONLINE SHOPPER



Online shopping has grown drastically over the last decade. According to the *Cotton Incorporated Lifestyle Monitor™* survey, in 2010, 24% of consumers said they purchased clothing online, which is a significant increase from the 4% of consumers who said they purchased clothing online in 2000. Online retail sales continue to grow each year, and a five-year forecast released by Forrester Research projects e-commerce sales will represent 8% of all retail sales (amounting to \$248.7 billion of market share) in the U.S. by 2014.

Regardless of where they ultimately decide to buy, consumers' clothing purchases are influenced by what they see, compare, and experience online. Consumers are increasingly using the Internet as a research tool to make informed purchases. Sixty-six percent of consumers report

regularly browsing online for clothing and 63% report researching and comparing prices online before making a purchase. Online shopping is influencing consumers' decisions of what to buy and where, making for more educated shoppers.

### E-CLOTHES SHOPPING

Eighty-nine percent of consumers have shopped online (browsed or bought) for electronics, followed by clothing, shoes, home textiles, and cosmetics or beauty care items. Although electronics are the most popular items shopped for, consumers spend more time looking for clothing online than for other products. The average consumer shops online

### KEY INSIGHTS

- More than two-thirds of consumers report browsing online for clothing and report comparing clothing prices online before making a purchase.
- Fifty-seven percent of consumers say they shop for clothing online because it gives them a chance to shop at retailers not located near them.
- Most consumers look for product reviews when they shop online and 61% agree that product reviews influence their clothing purchase.
- Consumers associate cotton with the same qualities that are most important to them when buying clothing—comfortable, good quality, and durability. Communicating the fiber content provides consumers with instinctual clues to the quality, fit, and feel when they are not able to touch or try on clothing.

for clothing approximately once every three months—more frequently than all other products, except for cosmetics and beauty care items.

With the growing variety of online shopping sites, consumers have a large selection of retailers from which to buy clothing. Whereas mass merchants top the list as the destination for in-store purchases, chain stores, and specialty stores, are the top destinations for consumers when they shop online. Due to the larger selection of clothing available online, consumers may be looking for something unique that they cannot find at a brick-and-mortar store. Fifty-seven percent of consumers say they like to shop for clothing online because it gives them a chance to shop at retailers that are not located near them.

### CONSUMER CONSIDERATIONS

Consumers have a long list of considerations when shopping for clothing, regardless of how and where they purchase. Price is the number one factor driving consumers' buying habits, with 81% of those surveyed agreeing that it is the top factor they consider before they purchase. Other influencing factors include size (69%), color (63%), style (57%), and discount coupons and shipping promotions (50%). High-frequency online shoppers (those who shop for clothing online at least once per week) are more likely than lower

### WHAT ARE CONSUMERS SHOPPING FOR ONLINE?

% of consumers who shop online for the products



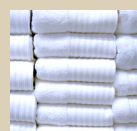
Electronics  
89%



Clothing  
86%



Shoes  
79%



Home textiles  
68%



Cosmetics or beauty care  
58%

*Cotton Incorporated  
Lifestyle Monitor™ survey*

# UNDERSTANDING THE ONLINE SHOPPER

## WHERE DO CONSUMERS START THEIR ONLINE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE?

Retailer/brand websites	64%
Online search engines	31%
Emails from retailers/brands	26%
Fashion trend websites	11%
eBay	4%
Facebook/Twitter/other social media	3%
Amazon	2%

*Cotton Incorporated Lifestyle Monitor™ survey*

frequency shoppers to consider discount coupons, shipping promotions, and brand name when deciding whether or not to make an online clothing purchase.

## PEER PERSUASION

Reading what others have to say about their experiences with a product is one of the most influential tools an online clothing shopper uses in determining whether or not to buy a product. Most consumers look for product reviews when they shop for clothing online, and 61% of consumers agree that product reviews influence their purchase. Eighty-nine percent read reviews on retailer or brand websites, followed by Facebook, Twitter and other social media (12%), and blogs (12%).

While most consumers find reviews helpful, only 25% of online shoppers always or sometimes write reviews about the clothing they purchase. High-frequency online shoppers are significantly more likely to post feedback about a purchase than lower frequency shoppers. Motivation to write a review may be greater among high-frequency shoppers because they are more likely than lower frequency online shoppers to say reviews are influential to their purchase (73% versus 58%). Access to online reviews can greatly inform and guide consumer purchase decisions. More than half (52%) of online shoppers who write reviews are just as likely to review a clothing item they were satisfied with as a clothing item they were dissatisfied with.

## INFORMATION MATTERS

Consumers' concerns when shopping online fall into two major categories: logistics and product. Within logistics, top concerns relate to shipping, product availability, policies, and security. On the product side, concerns relate to tactile properties such as quality, fit, and feel. The Internet provides an informative and convenient platform for purchasing clothing, however, retailers continue to face challenges in

communicating the tactile qualities of the clothing to the consumers who cannot touch and feel the product. This is an especially important challenge for persuading lower frequency shoppers, who are significantly more likely than high-frequency shoppers to have product-related concerns. While the price, color, and style of an item is visible online, it is difficult to judge factors such as quality, durability, and comfort without being able to touch, or try on the clothing.

Most consumers associate cotton with the same qualities they say are most important to them when buying clothing. More than 75% of shoppers agree that better quality garments are made from all-natural fibers, such as cotton. Cotton clothing is described by 82% of consumers as "comfortable," and 77% of consumers use the words "good quality" and "durable." Communicating the fiber of the product and most importantly, cotton, provides the consumer with instinctual clues to the product's appeal and ability to meet their needs. Meeting the needs of today's online clothing consumer means providing a medium to research, compare, and experience the product, regardless of where they ultimately make their purchase.

## ONLINE CONSUMER CONCERNS

% of consumers who are somewhat/very concerned, about the issue when shopping for clothing online



*Cotton Incorporated Lifestyle Monitor™ survey*

