

## **2003 Holiday Shopping Season: More Buyers Plan to Go Online**

Americans plan to spend an average of nearly \$775 on holiday gifts this year, with a growing chunk going to online retailers.

Thirty-one percent of Americans say they'll do holiday shopping over the Internet this year, continuing steady growth in gift purchasing online – up from 18 percent in 1999 and 24 percent last year.

Online buyers, moreover, tend to be more affluent, and plan to spend more on average (\$813) than those who won't be using the Internet (\$754). At the top end, among people who say they'll spend \$1,000 or more, 42 percent say they'll buy gifts online. Among those who plan to spend \$100 or less, just 13 percent will shop online.

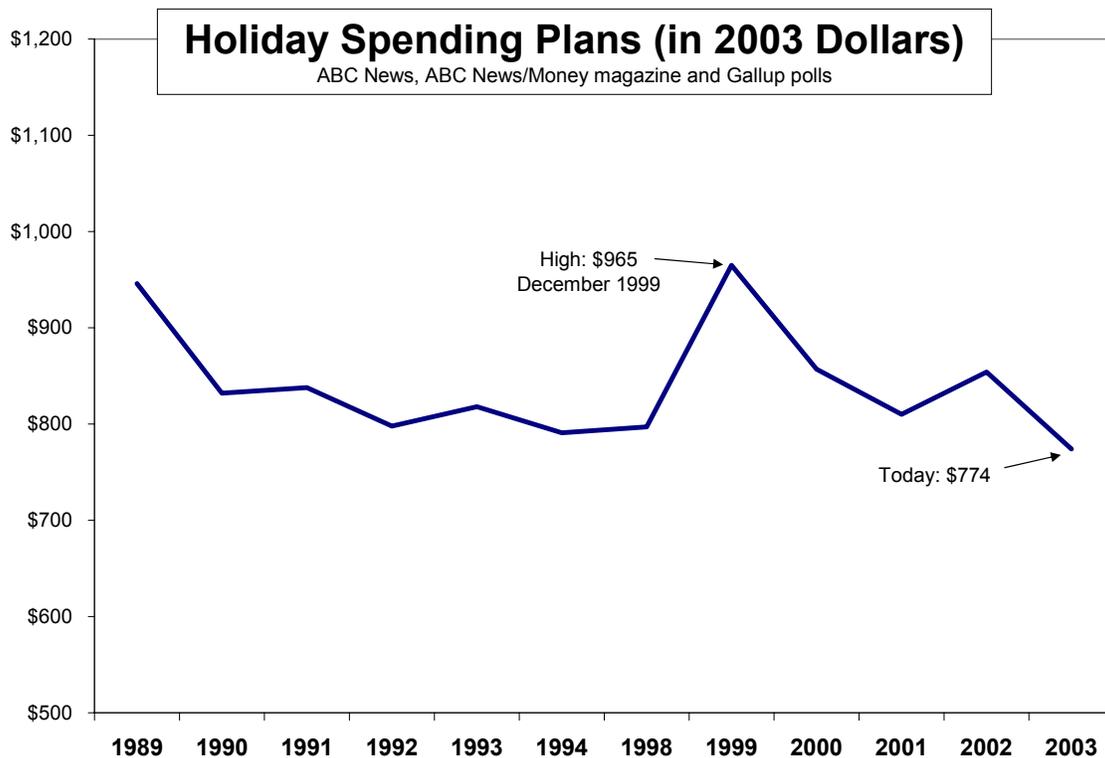


People planning to buy gifts for the holidays estimate they'll spend an average of \$774 this year, down from an inflation-adjusted \$854 last year. Spending plans can change, however, if prices and products are attractive, and if consumer confidence improves. In this week's ABC News/Money magazine poll, confidence was its best in 14 months.

A Gallup poll last week had gift spending estimates at \$773 (almost exactly the same as this poll's estimate), compared with an inflation-adjusted \$791 last year.

Pre-holiday spending estimates have a mixed track record. Spending plans peaked at \$965 in 1999, and the National Retail Federation later reported a large increase in sales that year – up 8.2 percent from 1998. It reported slower sales growth in 2000 (4.3 percent) and 2001 (5.6 percent), and slower still in 2002 (2.2 percent).

Average spending plans on holiday gifts		
	Adjusted Average	Change
	(2003 dollars)	
11/23/03	\$774	-\$80
11/24/02	\$854	+\$44
11/11/01	\$810	-\$47
12/3/00	\$857	-\$108
12/12/99	\$965	



**GROUPS** – Men, higher-income Americans and people with children in their household plan to have the deepest pockets this year. Men say they'll spend \$124 more than women do, and those earning \$50,000 or more plan to spend an average \$1,003 compared with \$567 in households earning less.

Spending plans increase along with household size, from \$564 in single-person households to \$722 in two-person households and \$860 in households with three or more

people. And, naturally, children are a factor: People with kids at home plan to spend \$905 on holiday gifts, compared with \$706 among those with no children at home.

There also are regional differences, with Northeasterners shaping up to be the biggest spenders (\$937), Westerners the lowest (\$603). That's different from last year, when Westerners led in planned spending.

	Average spending plans - 2003
Men	\$ 838
Women	\$ 714
West	\$ 603
South	\$ 776
Northeast	\$ 937
Midwest	\$ 784
Household Size:	
One	\$ 564
Two	\$ 722
Three+	\$ 860
Kids at home	\$ 905
No kids at home	\$ 706
Under \$50,000	\$ 567
\$50,000+	\$1,003

In terms of online buying, higher-income and better-educated Americans are more likely to say they'll buy gifts via the Internet; older adults, less so. Thirty-six percent of those age 18-54 plan to do so, compared with 18 percent of those 55 and up. Forty-five percent of those in \$50,000+ households say they'll buy over the Internet; it's 21 percent in households earning less. And 42 percent of those who've been to college will buy online, compared with just 19 percent who haven't. (Not coincidentally, the groups in which online buying peaks are also those with greater levels of Internet access.)

There's also a slight gender gap, with 36 percent of men planning to buy holiday gifts online, compared with 27 percent of women.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Nov. 19-23, 2003, among a random national sample of 1,026 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:  
[http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/PollVault/Poll\\_Vault.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/PollVault/Poll_Vault.html)

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Results follow:

1. Roughly how much money do you think you personally will spend on holiday gifts this Christmas season?

	Under \$100	\$100- \$249	\$250- \$499	\$500- \$999	\$1000 or more	No op./Don't celebrate/DK	Mean	Adjusted Mean*
11/23/03	8	15	16	24	24	14	\$774	\$774
11/24/02	8	14	17	26	27	8	\$830	\$854
11/11/01	6	16	16	25	22	14	\$775	\$810
12/3/00	2	18	16	25	23	15	\$798	\$857
12/12/99	4	19	16	25	28	9	\$869	\$965

Compare to\*\*:

12/6/98	8	14	22	25	24	7	\$702	\$797
12/5/94	9	19	23	20	22	7	\$634	\$791
12/6/93	8	17	20	27	19	9	\$639	\$818
12/18/92	10	18	20	24	19	9	\$605	\$798
12/15/91	7	19	22	24	20	8	\$617	\$838
12/2/90	7	19	23	25	17	9	\$588	\$832
10/15/89	4	15	25	23	18	15	\$634	\$946

\*Adjusted to 2003 dollars using Inflation Calculator at <http://www.bls.gov/>

\*\*1998 and previous by Gallup. In Gallup data answers above \$5,000 are recorded as \$5,000; in ABC data answers above \$9,999 are recorded as \$9,999. In both, answers of 0 are not included in the averages.

2. Will you use the Internet to buy Christmas or other holiday gifts this year, or not?

	Yes	No	No opin.
11/23/03	31	67	2
12/8/02	24	74	2
11/21/99	18	79	3

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