

Sales tracker says 'Cyber Monday' sales up 33 pct

MAE ANDERSON - AP Retail Writer - Associated Press

Online sales rose 33 percent on the Monday after the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, a report by a sales tracking agency said Tuesday.

The average order rose 2.6 percent to \$193.24 on the day known as "Cyber Monday," when retailers amp up online promotions, according to IBM Benchmark. It didn't give comparative total dollar sales numbers, however.

The agency said about 80 percent of retailers offered online deals.

The Cyber Monday numbers point to Americans' growing comfort with using their personal computers, tablets and smartphones to shop.

Over the past few years, big chains like Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's largest retailer, have been offering more and better incentives like hourly deals and free shipping, to capitalize on that trend. It's important for retailers to make a good showing during the holiday shopping season, a time when they can make up to 40 percent of their annual revenue.

"Retailers that adopted a smarter approach to commerce, one that allowed them to swiftly adjust to the shifting shopping habits of their customers, whether in-store, online or via their mobile device, were able to fully benefit from this day and the entire holiday weekend, said John Squire, chief strategy officer, IBM Smarter Commerce.

About 6.6 percent of online shoppers used a mobile device to shop, up from 2.3 percent in 2010. Apple Inc.'s iPhone and iPad were the top mobile devices for retail traffic, with Android devices coming in third.

Web traffic rose 28 percent on Monday, according to another firm, online content-delivery firm Akamai. The peak was at 9 p.m. Eastern when shoppers on both the East and West coasts were online.

The numbers echo a strong shopper showing in brick-and-mortar stores over the holiday weekend. A record 226 million shoppers visited stores and websites during the four-day holiday weekend starting on Thanksgiving Day, up from 212 million last year, according to the NRF. And sales on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, rose 7 percent to \$11.4 billion, the largest amount ever spent, according to ShopperTrak, which gathers stores' data.

A clearer picture of how holiday sales are shaping up will come on Thursday, when major retailers report November sales.

The term Cyber Monday was coined in 2005 by The National Retail Federation, a

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retail trade group, to encourage Americans to shop online on the Monday after Thanksgiving.

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