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UK Online Spending Hits Record High of £10 Billion in July, Adobe Digital Economy Index Finds

UK Year-to-date online spending hits £64.9 billion, up 56% on 2019

LONDON, UK – 16th August, 2021 – Adobe today released its Adobe Digital Economy Index for the UK, which analyses billions of online transactions, making it the most comprehensive report of its kind. The report reveals that UK consumers spent a record £10 billion online in July - the highest monthly spend in 2021 so far, and the most spent in July ever. This brings the UK's year-to-date online spending to £64.9 billion, up 18% YoY and 56% compared with the same period in 2019.

The analysis also found that online inflation for July was up 2.8% year-on-year as surging demand clashed with continued pressure on supply chains. At a category level, Groceries (+3% YoY), Home & garden (+1.7%YoY), Books (+5.5% YoY), Apparel (+3.8% YoY) and Jewellery (+2.7% YoY) experienced the biggest increases.

UK online inflation figures for June showed a 4.8% increase compared with June 2020, outpacing offline inflation as measured by the Consumer Prices Index, which [increased by 2.5% YoY](#). While offline inflation has continued to increase since 2016, online prices only started to increase since the start of the pandemic.

Paul Robson, President of International at Adobe, said: “The pandemic further accelerated the move to digital. Consumers have become accustomed to ordering everyday goods online, and many of them won’t be turning back. This expansion of the digital economy has been unprecedented in its scale and will fundamentally reshape what consumers expect from brands they interact with.”

Businesses Experience Back-to-Work Boost

While the easing of social restrictions in the weeks immediately before and after 19th July has given many bricks-and-mortar stores a welcome boost, UK consumers continue to favour the relative safety of online shopping. Adobe’s companion survey of 1,000 UK consumers found that even after restrictions had lifted, 40% of shoppers planned to actively avoid in-store shopping, while 56% planned to avoid busy areas like high-streets altogether. When it comes to mask wearing in-store, while no longer mandated by the government, 68% will continue to wear one.

The easing of work from home guidance and gradual return to workplaces was also reflected in July’s online data; 51% of survey respondents said that their workplaces have now re-opened and 39% said they had returned to the office full-time for the first time since March last year. One-third of UK consumers said they purchased new clothes upon returning to the office and Digital Economy Index data revealed that formal work attire sales were up 200% over the six-week period up to the end of July, compared with the six-week period pre-lockdown (January and February 2020).



The return to the office also stands to have a positive impact on the office economy, with survey respondents spending an average of £62 per week on breakfast, lunch and with businesses that operate near to their offices, such as convenience shops and dry cleaners.

Online Becomes Channel of Choice for Extreme Weather Purchases

Online spending in response to July's heatwaves and flash flooding highlighted just how much UK consumers have come to rely on ecommerce for even the most urgent emergency purchases.

During the high temperatures in June and July, online sales of fans and air conditioning units were up 120% compared to May; while online sales of umbrellas, raincoats and wellies skyrocketed by 51% overnight in the last week of July as heavy rainfall caused flash flooding in many parts of the country.

The full Adobe Digital Economy Index report can be found [here](#).

Notes to editors

About the Adobe Digital Economy Index

The Adobe Digital Economy Index offers the most comprehensive set of insights of its kind, based on analysis via Adobe Analytics that covers tens of billions of transactions to UK retail sites.

Analysis is significantly more in-depth and precise compared to survey-based reports, because only Adobe has access to this volume of real-time, transactional consumer data. It is aggregated and anonymized, to provide insights on consumer spending, online prices and 12 product categories.

Companion research based on a survey of 1,000 UK consumers (18 years or older) fielded between 26 July and 1 August 2021.

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