

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00:01 27 MARCH 2013**

## **40% OF BRITS ADMIT TO 'NET REGRET' FROM ONLINE SHOPPING**

- **1/4 of Brits admit to drunken online shopping**
  - **4/10 regret online purchases**
- **Bizarre attire, gig tickets and sex toys amongst the boozy buys**

A quarter of Brits admit to drunken online shopping for items they later regret, according to a new report.<sup>1</sup>

In a study of online shopping habits by [broadbandchoices.co.uk](http://broadbandchoices.co.uk), 28% of those questioned said they had shopped under the influence, with four out of ten saying they regretted purchases bought on the internet. One in ten (11%) revealed that shopping whilst sloshed was the key factor that affected their buying decision.

The findings are underpinned by figures highlighting how online shopping has overtaken visits to the British high street, with more people (36%) choosing to browse via broadband rather than head to the shops (32%). Ofcom also recently revealed British consumers spend an average of £1,083 a year online – more per head than every other major market, including the US, China and Japan.<sup>2</sup>

In the broadbandchoices.co.uk study, shoppers regretted an average of four purchases each year and one in ten (11%) spent over £200 on something they wished they hadn't.

Nearly a quarter (22%) of shoppers said they return over 10% of their purchases. People felt most rueful about buying clothes (56%), followed by technology and gadgets (22%) and then shoes (19%). It's also women that are more cavalier with their shopping clicks – 45% of women regret online purchases, compared to 34% of men.

Some of the most unusual online purchases revealed by the study include a musical chairman Mao cigarette lighter, sex toys, a pair of fake teeth and a meat pizza purchased by a vegetarian.

Brits are also prone to making errors when shopping online – one in seven (14%) said that they had bought something online by mistake (wrong size, wrong colour, etc), with over a quarter (26%) of these shoppers admitting that they had bought the wrong item entirely.

Dominic Baliszewski, telecoms expert from broadbandchoices.co.uk commented: “Post-pub purchases are becoming much more common due to the rising ownership of tablets and smartphones – we’re online all the time and can indulge in some retail therapy whenever we like. However, it’s not always a good idea to buy goods at all hours of the day. We’ve heard from people who have bought train tickets to the wrong end of the country, a 1930s male bathing suit, and chilli vodka that was so hot it was undrinkable – all purchased whilst inebriated. As online shopping becomes ever more mobile we expect to see a continued rise of this ‘net regret’ from online shopping.”

The survey highlighted online shopping as a key reason behind a general trend for increased spending. Over 60% of shoppers said that they regularly ended up spending more than they planned when shopping online, an average of £528 a year more than they would if they did not have online shopping access.

Auction fever was also revealed as a key reason for over-spending, with over a third (36%) admitting to bidding more than they originally set out to.

Dexter Paine, 22, a designer from Enfield, was left with a £2,048 bill after he mistakenly bought 22 tickets to see Oasis at Wembley Stadium. He explains, “I was at University at the time, and tickets went on sale at 8am. I had been out on a rather late one the night before, and was still drunk when tickets went on sale. I went to order two standing tickets online, however the whole site grinded to a halt when I submitted the booking form because my broadband was playing up; in my drunken

impatience, I hammered the refresh button repeatedly before giving up and calling it a morning and going to sleep.”

“Flash forward 3 hours and I had 21 confirmation emails. After a 10 minute freak out, I calmed down enough to phone customer services, beginning the conversation with “Hi there, I’ve made a serious error”... I still have the bank statement somewhere at home reading: ‘5th September: - £2,048, 6th September: +£1,965, Refund.”

Dominic continued: “Consumers are in charge of their own sobriety whilst shopping, but if their broadband isn’t up to scratch that can cause a whole slew of additional problems for online shoppers that is beyond their control. A lot of households are stuck on outdated packages and over a third of Brits haven’t switched in 4 years or more. Whilst these consumers are doing their online shopping they should also look at buying a new broadband package – making sure they aren’t drunk at the time of course! It’s incredibly easy to shop around these days; just go on an Ofcom accredited website to compare deals in your area. If you haven’t switched in a while, you could save yourself over 50% from your broadband bill.”

Experts at [broadbandchoices.co.uk](http://broadbandchoices.co.uk) have compiled their top 5 tips for online shopping, helping Brits avoid ‘net-regret’ and get the best out of their online shopping experience:

1. **Choose your moment:** it may seem obvious, but doing your online shopping when you are awake and alert is always a better option than doing it when you are tired and more likely to make mistakes. Choose a time when you will be free from distractions before making online purchases.
2. **Pay by credit card:** where possible, pay with your credit card rather than your debit card, as this offers greater protection should you encounter problems with fraud or non-delivery.
3. **Ensure payment is secure:** when you come to make payment, the browser window frame should display a padlock or the address should start ‘https’ to indicate it is a secure payment site.

4. **Be wary of 'one-click' purchases:** 'one click' shopping may be convenient but it also makes it very easy to instantly buy something that you may not necessarily want or need. The act of entering your card details into a payment site acts as a reminder of the cost you are about to incur and can help you see sense before buying, so avoid 'one-click' transactions to avoid getting carried away.
5. **Check, check and check again:** make sure you review every detail of your purchase before hitting the button to confirm your transaction. Chances are you may have the wrong delivery address, wrong colour or wrong size of item – this is your chance to catch your mistake, so make sure you use it.

Ends

<sup>1</sup> OnePoll carried out the study on behalf of broadbandchoices.co.uk in March 2013. 2000 UK adults were questioned on their online shopping habits.

<sup>2</sup><http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/market-data/communications-market-reports/cmr12/downloads/>

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[broadbandchoices.co.uk](http://broadbandchoices.co.uk) is a free, impartial and award winning price comparison site with over 50 staff based in central London.

We are the UK's number 1, Ofcom accredited comparison company for fixed line communications services - broadband, home phone and digital TV.

Our broadband and home phone comparison services have the much sought after Ofcom accreditation, and our spokespeople are widely quoted in the national press and broadcast media.

Our website attracts over 1.8 million visitors per month, and every month we help thousands of customers find better deals on their broadband, phone and digital TV services.



Our white label programme provides the cutting-edge technology behind some of the biggest names in the comparison market including: Comparethemarket.com, Confused.com and GoCompare.com.