


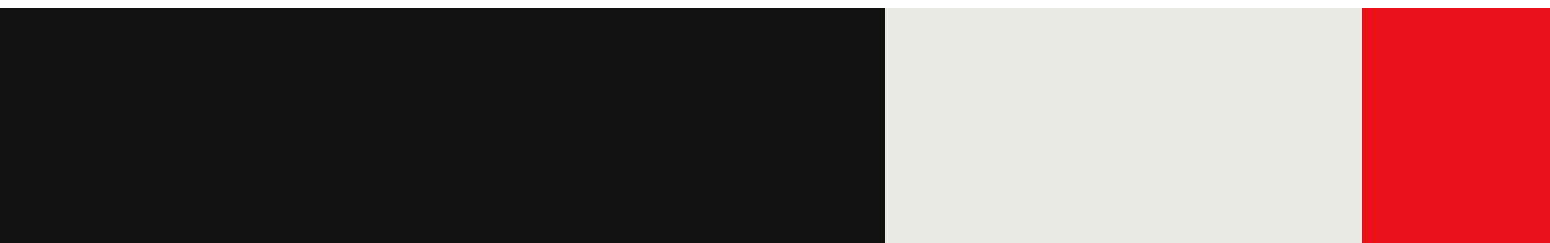
# How will the pandemic affect US ecommerce sales in 2021?

Article



**I**n 2020, the pandemic accelerated ecommerce sales growth significantly. Growth won't be as high in 2021, but total sales will far exceed our pre-pandemic estimates.

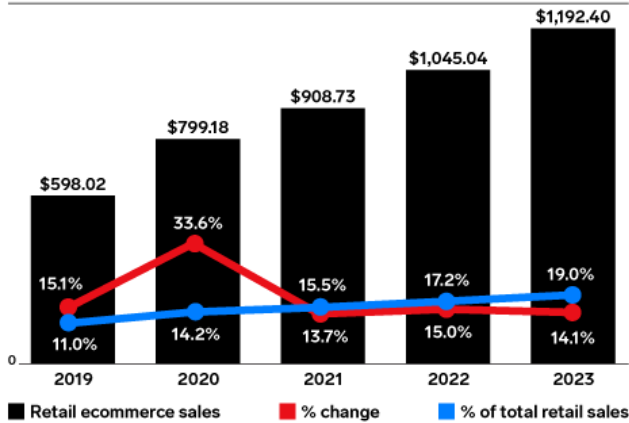
We estimate that US retail ecommerce sales grew 33.6% in 2020, reaching \$799.18 billion. As the pandemic subsides, in-store shopping will rebound, and a share of consumer spending will revert away from retail and toward services like travel and live entertainment. However, sales



growth this year will still build upon the massive upward revision from 2020, causing total ecommerce sales for 2021 to be more than \$147 billion greater than we expected prior to the pandemic. We forecast ecommerce sales will grow 13.7% this year, reaching \$908.73 billion.

### US Retail Ecommerce Sales, 2019-2023

billions, % change, and % of total retail sales



Note: includes products or services ordered using the internet, regardless of the method of payment or fulfillment; excludes travel and event tickets, payments such as bill pay, taxes or money transfers, food services and drinking place sales, gambling and other vice goods sales  
Source: eMarketer, Feb 2021

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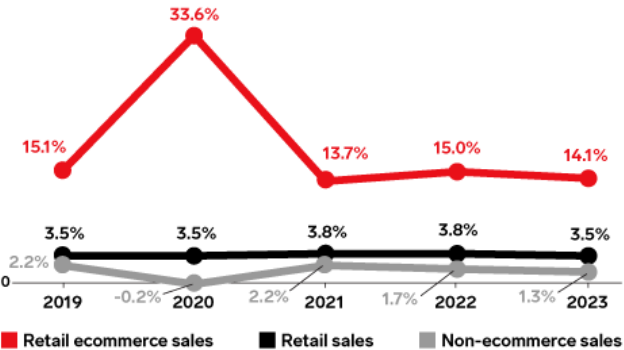
### What's changed:

- **We did a massive upward revision for 2020.** Before the pandemic, we expected US consumers would spend \$674.88 billion on ecommerce in 2020, up 13.2% from 2019. But the pandemic drove ecommerce sales significantly higher to \$799.18 billion.
- **In 2021, we'll see slightly higher ecommerce growth from a much higher base.** Our pre-pandemic forecast had US ecommerce sales growing by 12.8% to \$761.26 billion in 2021. We now expect ecommerce sales will grow slightly faster, by 13.7%, and also reach a much higher total sales figure (\$908.73 billion).
- **Ecommerce now commands a larger slice of a larger pie.** Prior to the pandemic, we expected ecommerce sales would make up 13.2% of total retail sales (\$5.779 trillion) in 2021. We now expect ecommerce sales will account for 15.5% of the \$5.856 trillion in total retail sales this year.
- **Ecommerce sales will surpass \$1 trillion next year.** We expect US consumers will spend \$1.045 trillion through digital retail channels in 2022. Prior to the pandemic, we did not forecast ecommerce to reach this milestone until 2024.

As ecommerce sales made significant gains, non-ecommerce retail contracted for the first time since the Great Recession, falling 0.2% in 2020. This translates to about \$12 billion less in retail sales compared with 2019.

In 2021, traditional retail will grow 2.2%, reaching \$4.948 trillion. This figure is higher than the 2019 total (\$4.854 trillion) but lower than our pre-pandemic estimates for 2021 (\$5.018 trillion).

**US Retail Sales Growth, by Segment, 2019-2023**  
% change



*Note: retail ecommerce sales includes products or services ordered using the internet, regardless of the method of payment or fulfillment; non-ecommerce sales excludes products or services ordered using the internet; all segments exclude travel and event tickets, payments such as bill pay, taxes or money transfers, food services and drinking place sales, gambling and other vice goods sales*  
Source: eMarketer, Feb 2021

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Prior to the pandemic, we predicted non-ecommerce sales would command 86.8% of total retail sales in 2021. We now expect non-ecommerce retail sales will hold slightly less market share at 84.5% of total retail sales.

In our recent report, we further break down our US ecommerce sales forecast by product category, delve into how the pandemic has affected sales growth, and look at how it has boosted ecommerce's share of total retail spending for 2020 and 2021.

Report by Blake Droesch Apr 27, 2021

## US Ecommerce by Category 2021

