

Worldwide ecommerce will approach \$5 trillion this year

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eMarketer Editors

Despite a challenging year for retail in 2020, we estimate that worldwide retail ecommerce sales posted a 27.6% growth rate for the year, with sales reaching well over \$4 trillion. This represents a substantial uptick from our mid-pandemic assessment that global ecommerce would decelerate to 16.5% growth and demonstrates the remarkable extent to which consumers transitioned to ecommerce last year.

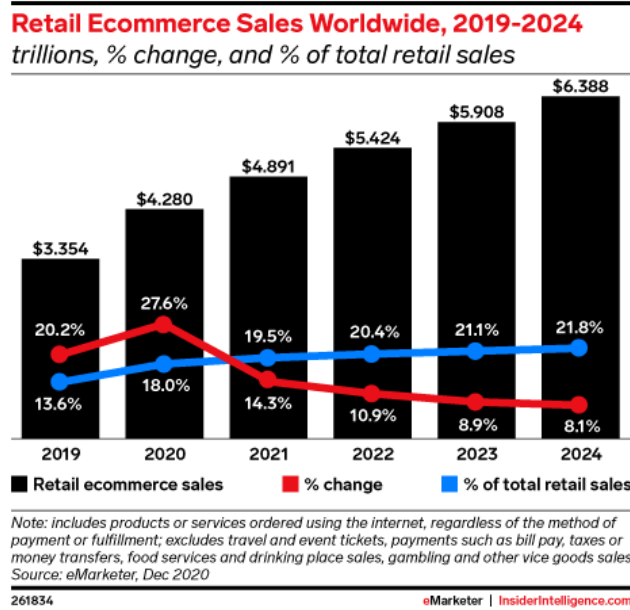
Even as total worldwide retail sales declined by 3.0% and recessionary conditions set in around the world, ecommerce managed to perform above pre-pandemic expectations in 2020.

“We anticipate that consumers will maintain many of their newfound digital behaviors in 2021,” said Ethan Cramer-Flood, eMarketer forecasting writer at Insider Intelligence and author of our new report, [“Global Ecommerce Update 2021.”](#)

“However, with so much growth shifted forward into 2020—and with a full year of relatively normalized brick-and-mortar commerce—2021’s growth rate will decelerate to some degree, despite the enduring enthusiasm for ecommerce,” he said.

We forecast that worldwide growth this year will be 14.3%, which is a relatively low number compared with 2019’s 20.2% and last year’s

27.6%, but it still represents \$611 billion in additional ecommerce sales.



As recently as 2018, worldwide ecommerce sales had not yet topped \$3 trillion. We estimate that the \$4 trillion line was easily breached in 2020, \$5 trillion will be achieved by 2022, and \$6 trillion will be reached by 2024. In 2020, 18.0% of all retail sales took place via ecommerce. In 2024, that figure will reach 21.8%.

eMarketer PRO subscribers can see more of our latest forecasts for worldwide retail ecommerce, mcommerce, and digital buyers—as well as selected regional trends for ecommerce and an update on overall retail sales.

Report by Ethan Cramer-Flood Jan 13, 2021

Global Ecommerce Update 2021

