

# More Millennials Buy Online, but In-Store Still Plays Role in Path to Purchase

## ARTICLE |

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Millennials have long been omnichannel shoppers, but their preference for digital channels is growing alongside the rise of D2C brands and mcommerce.

According to a March 2019 report from coupon search engine [CouponFollow](#), this cohort's digital buying tendencies are on the rise. When US millennials were asked about their shopping preferences, the largest share—39%—said they liked to browse and buy online. That was up from 30% in 2017, with smaller increases in the share of millennials who preferred to buy online after browsing multiple channels, and those who preferred to buy online after browsing in-store.

## How Do US Millennials Prefer to Shop?

% of respondents, 2017 & 2019



Note: ages 22-37

Source: CouponFollow, "Millennial Shopping Report 2019," March 19, 2019

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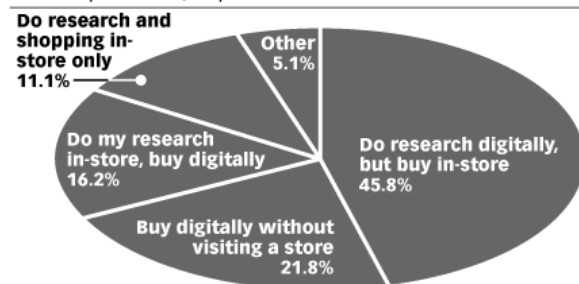
Millennial preferences for converting in brick-and-mortar stores have shifted, even though stores are still part of the preferred path to purchase for 61% of shoppers. Overall, 35% of respondents in 2019 said they preferred to make purchases in stores, down from 48% in 2017.

"Millennials have always been more digitally inclined when it comes to shopping, so it's surprising to see their buying behaviors shift so dramatically," said eMarketer principal analyst Andrew Lipsman. "But it can be explained, at least in part, by the emergence of D2C brands. As these brands become more popular, digital-only purchases are likely to increase. And as brands increasingly open brick-and-mortar locations—many of which function as shoppable billboards—they will drive more offline-to-online shopping engagements."

But this digital-only shopping behavior should be taken with a grain of salt, as other research suggests that millennials are still spending substantially offline. For purchases averaging more than \$100, US millennials are less likely to be strictly digital—45.8% of respondents said they preferred to do their research online, but to buy in-store, according to a September 2018 survey from [Roth Capital Partners](#). By comparison, 21.8% of respondents said they preferred to exclusively buy digitally.

## What Is the Preferred Method of US Millennials for Making a Significant\* Purchase?

% of respondents, Sep 2018



Note: ages 18-38; \*among those surveyed, 66% consider purchases of \$100+ to be significant

Source: Roth Capital Partners (ROTH), "2018-2019 Millennial Survey" conducted by MFour Mobile Research, Nov 12, 2018

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Marketers looking to reach millennial shoppers should know **where and why this generation browses, researches and transacts where they do**, and position themselves accordingly.

This year, we expect **US retail ecommerce sales to reach \$600.63 billion** – 10.9% of total retail sales. As retailers promote a frictionless shopping experience and **encourage mobile conversion**, total retail ecommerce sales are anticipated to grow to \$915.00 billion, or 16.2% total retail sales by 2023. **Mcommerce will boost ecommerce sales**, growing from 44.8% of total retail ecommerce sales this year, to 60.3% by the end of the forecast period.