

Consumers Still Like Shopping in Stores

Offline is favored for apparel, accessories and back-to-school items

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Even as the number of online buyers continues to rise—we forecast 79.6% of US internet users will make at least one purchase via digital means in 2018—consumers like to shop in-store for certain product categories and occasions.

According to a July 2018 [Monetate](#) survey of US consumers with one or more children under the age of 23, brick-and-mortar stores were favored for back-to-school shopping. Fully 56% of respondents planned to buy items in-store, compared with 20% who planned to do so online. Just 7% planned to use mobile retail apps. However, 67% will brows digitally before making a purchase.

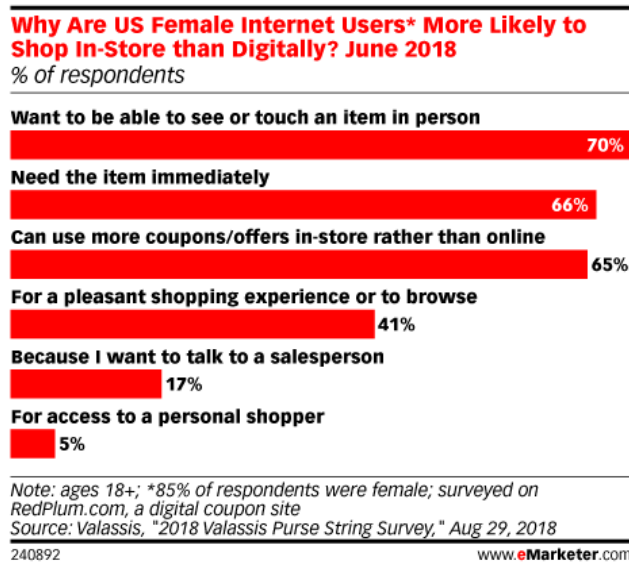
Over 80% of respondents favored the offline channel when shopping for school supplies, with clothing and accessories a close second. Physical stores were also preferred for dorm furnishings and electronics but to a lesser degree.

A July 2018 [National Retail Federation \(NRF\)](#) survey about back-to-school spending didn't find as an extreme preference for offline channels, but department stores were the leading location where US internet users planned to purchase those products, cited by 57% of

respondents. Digital channels (55%) and discount stores (52%) were nearly as popular.

A June 2018 survey by Valassis discovered that nearly all US internet users (96%) shopped in-store for apparel, shoes and accessories. While many are comfortable shopping for these items digitally, physical stores excel at demonstrating fit and fabric and materials.

The leading reason for choosing a physical store for any product category was the desire to see an item in person, cited by 70% of respondents. Needing the item immediately (66%) and being able to use more coupons/offers (65%) were also motivations.



Digitally native millennials overindexed in their preference to shop in-store for a pleasant experience (47% vs. 41% of overall respondents). And touching on potential back-to-school shopping behavior, dads were more likely to shop in-store because they wanted to talk to a salesperson (28% vs. 17%), and millennial parents were twice as likely than average to frequent physical retailers for access to a personal shopper (10% vs. 5%).

For now and the foreseeable future, offline and online shopping peacefully coexist, serving different needs. Valassis found that the vast

majority (77%) plan to shop in-store the same amount next year, though 15% plan to do more in-store shopping in 2019.