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In-store Mobile Commerce During the 2012 Holiday Shopping Season

58% of cell owners used their phones for recommendations, reviews, or price comparisons in a physical store this holiday shopping season. Young adults and smartphone owners lead the way.

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<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/in-store-mobile-commerce.aspx>

Main Findings

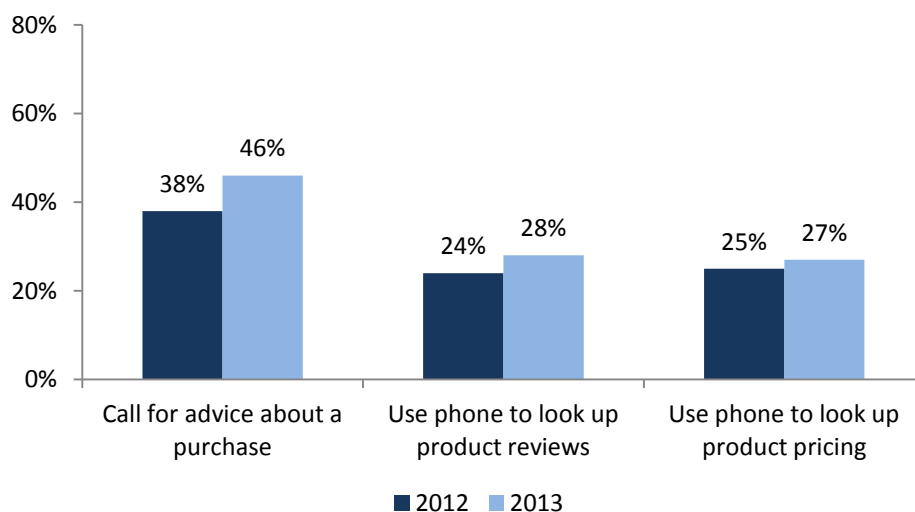
Nearly six in ten cell owners used their phone inside a physical store for assistance or guidance on a purchasing decision this holiday season. In the 30 days preceding our early January 2013 survey (the final weeks of the holiday gift-giving season):

- 46% of cell owners used their phone while inside a store to **call a friend or family member for advice** about a purchase they were considering.
- 28% of cell owners used their phone while inside a store to **look up reviews** of a product to help decide if they should purchase it or not.
- 27% of cell owners used their phone while inside a store to **look up the price** of a product, to see if they could get a better price elsewhere.

Taken together, 58% of cell owners used their phone for at least one of these reasons, with young adults and smartphone owners leading the way — 78% of cell owners ages 18-29 and 72% of smartphone owners did at least one of these with their phones this holiday season. The 46% of cell owners who called someone for advice about a purchase represents a significant increase from the 38% of cell owners who did so during last year’s holiday shopping season.

In-store mobile shopping experiences

% of adult cell owners who used their phone during the past 30 days inside a store to...



Source: Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, Omnibus Survey, January 3-6, 2013. N=1,003 adults ages 18 and older, including 502 interviews conducted on respondent’s cell phone. The survey was conducted in English. Margin of error is +/-3.8 percentage points for cell phone owners (n=908).

When asked what happened on the most recent occasion they looked up the price of a product inside a store using their cell phone, 46% of “mobile price matchers” say that they ultimately purchased the product in that store — an 11-point increase from the 35% of such price matchers who said this in 2012.

Some 12% wound up purchasing the product online, a figure that is not significantly different from the 19% who did so in our 2012 survey.

About this survey

These findings come from a survey of 1,003 adults ages 18+ between January 3-6, 2013. The interviews were conducted in English on cell phones and landline phones and the margin of error is plus or minus 3.8 percentage points for the 908 respondents who are cell phone owners and who received most of the questions that are reported here.

Detailed findings — calling others for purchasing advice

Women are more likely than men to have recently used their cell phone to call someone for advice or recommendations about a purchase they were considering making. Young adults, smartphone owners, and cell owners with at least some college experience are all relatively likely to have taken part in this behavior.

Phoning a friend about an in-store purchase

% of cell owners in each group who used their phone in the last 30 days while in a store to call a friend or family member about a purchase they were making

All cell owners (n=908)		46%
a	Men (n=442)	38
b	Women (n=466)	53 ^a
Age		
a	18-29 (n=166)	58 ^{cd}
b	30-49 (n=248)	48 ^d
c	50-64 (n=260)	44 ^d
d	65+ (n=208)	27
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=257)	45
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=179)	38
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=139)	45
d	\$75,000+ (n=235)	53 ^b
Education attainment		
a	High school grad or less (n=303)	39
b	Some College (n=275)	52 ^a
c	College + (n=323)	48 ^a
Cell phone type		
a	Smartphone (n=465)	53 ^b
b	Other cell phone (n=443)	36
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=271)	39
b	Suburban (n=459)	50 ^a
c	Rural (n=178)	46

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, Omnibus Survey, January 3-6, 2013. N=1,003 adults ages 18 and older, including 502 interviews conducted on respondent's cell phone. The survey was conducted in English. Margin of error is +/-3.8 percentage points for cell phone owners (n=908).

Note: Columns marked with a superscript letter (^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter. Statistical significance is determined inside the specific section covering each demographic trait.

Detailed findings — online product reviews

Young adults are especially likely to use their phone to check reviews of a product while inside a store—some 56% of cell owners ages 18-29 did so this holiday season. Smartphone owners, urban/suburban residents, and those with at least some college experience are also more likely than average to use their phones for in-store product reviews.

In-store mobile product reviews

% of cell owners in each group who used their phone in the last 30 days while in a store to look up reviews of a product to help decide if they should purchase it

All cell owners (n=908)		28%
a	Men (n=442)	28
b	Women (n=466)	27
Age		
a	18-29 (n=166)	56 ^{bcd}
b	30-49 (n=248)	31 ^{cd}
c	50-64 (n=260)	12
d	65+ (n=208)	6
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=257)	26
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=179)	22
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=139)	31
d	\$75,000+ (n=235)	33 ^b
Education attainment		
a	High school grad or less (n=303)	21
b	Some College (n=275)	33 ^a
c	College + (n=323)	31 ^a
Cell phone type		
a	Smartphone (n=465)	46 ^b
b	Other cell phone (n=443)	4
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=271)	32 ^c
b	Suburban (n=459)	27 ^c
c	Rural (n=178)	18

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, Omnibus Survey, January 3-6, 2013. N=1,003 adults ages 18 and older, including 502 interviews conducted on respondent's cell phone. The survey was conducted in English. Margin of error is +/-3.8 percentage points for cell phone owners (n=908).

Note: Columns marked with a superscript letter (^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter. Statistical significance is determined inside the specific section covering each demographic trait.

Detailed findings — online price matching

Using one’s phone to look up product prices while inside a store is especially commonplace among young adults (fully half of cell owners ages 18-29 have done this). Smartphone owners and the college-educated are among the most avid mobile price-matchers.

In-store online price matching

% of cell owners in each group who used their phone in the last 30 days in a store to look up the price of a product to see if they could get a better price elsewhere

All cell owners (n=908)		27%
a	Men (n=442)	26
b	Women (n=466)	28
Age		
a	18-29 (n=166)	50 ^{bcd}
b	30-49 (n=248)	32 ^{cd}
c	50-64 (n=260)	12
d	65+ (n=208)	7
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=257)	24
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=179)	22
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=139)	32
d	\$75,000+ (n=235)	32 ^b
Education attainment		
a	High school grad or less (n=303)	22
b	Some College (n=275)	30 ^a
c	College + (n=323)	32 ^a
Cell phone type		
a	Smartphone (n=465)	45 ^b
b	Other cell phone (n=443)	3
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=271)	30
b	Suburban (n=459)	27
c	Rural (n=178)	21

Source: Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, Omnibus Survey, January 3-6, 2013. N=1,003 adults ages 18 and older, including 502 interviews conducted on respondent’s cell phone. The survey was conducted in English. Margin of error is +/-3.8 percentage points for cell phone owners (n=908).

Note: Columns marked with a superscript letter (^a) or indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter. Statistical significance is determined inside the specific section covering each demographic trait.

As in our 2012 survey on this topic, we presented the 27% of cell owners who engaged in online price-matching this holiday season with a follow-up question in which we asked them what happened on the

most recent occasion where they looked up the price of an in-store product using their cell phone. And like we found in our 2012 survey, a majority of these interactions result in the consumer purchasing the item in the store — or simply not purchasing it at all:

- 30% decided to not purchase the product at all
- 46% purchased the product at that particular store
- 12% purchased the product online
- 6% purchased the product at a different store

The Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project is an initiative of the Pew Research Center, a nonprofit “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping America and the world. The Pew Internet Project explores the impact of the internet on children, families, communities, the work place, schools, health care and civic/political life. The Project is nonpartisan and takes no position on policy issues. Support for the Project is provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts. More information is available at www.pewinternet.org

About This Survey

The PSRAI January 2013 Omnibus Week 1 obtained telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,003 adults living in the continental United States. Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (501) and cell phone (502, including 241 without a landline phone). The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI). Interviews were done in English by Princeton Data Source from January 3 to 6, 2013. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 3.6 percentage points.

Survey questions

PIAL3. In the last 30 days, have you used your cell phone to...[INSERT ITEMS IN ORDER]

[Based on cell owners (n=908)]

a. Call a friend or family member while you were in a store for advice about a purchase you were considering making

Yes, have done this	46%
No, have not done this	53%
Yes, but not in last 30 days (VOL)	1%
Don't know	*
Refuse	*

b. Look up REVIEWS of a product while you were in a store, to help you decide if you should purchase it

Yes, have done this	28%
No, have not done this	70%
Cell phone cannot do this (VOL)	1%
Don't know	*
Refuse	*

c. Look up the PRICE of a product while you were in a store, to see if you could get a better price somewhere else

Yes, have done this	27%
No, have not done this	70%
Cell phone cannot do this (VOL)	3%
Don't know	*
Refuse	*

PIAL4. Thinking of the most recent time you used your cell phone to look up prices on a product while you were in a store, did you end up purchasing the product? [IF YES: Did you purchase the product in that store, another store, or did you purchase it online?]

[Based on those who have looked up product price in last 30 days using cell phone (n=200)]

Yes, purchased at store	46%
Yes, purchased at another store	6%
Yes, purchased online	12%
Not, did not purchase	30%
Don't know	4%
Refuse	1%