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85% of online consumers shop online for offline purchases, says a new study

Researching purchases online then buying offline is nearly universal among adult Internet shoppers, says the just-out American Interactive Consumer Survey, conducted by The Dieringer Research Group on behalf of ShopLocal, a shopping search site for consumers looking for products in neighborhood retail stores. The study reports that 85% of online shoppers have shopped online for a purchase they made offline.

"Nearly nine out of 10 adults—from the 110 million Internet shoppers 18 years and older who go online at least once a month—were found to have used the Internet for local shopping, not an online purchase," says Bob Armour, chief marketing officer for ShopLocal. "This confirms that the Internet is now widely used for local shopping information as well as making online purchases."

Online consumers told surveyors that they spend more time researching products online than they spend shopping in person. Two-thirds of multi-channel shoppers said the Internet is the most important shopping information resource.

Multi-channel shoppers also purchase more at local stores than they originally planned to after doing online research, according to the new study. During the three months prior to the survey, nine out of 10 local shopping trips made by multi-channel consumers for products researched online resulted in purchases worth \$125 more than the products researched online—up 25% from the prior year.

Consumers most frequently use multi-channel shopping for home furnishings, tools, men`s apparel, sports and fitness products and major appliances.

The annual American Interactive Consumer Survey by THE, was fielded in fourth quarter 2006. It interviewed 22,001 U.S. consumers by phone and online.