

Statistical bulletin

E-commerce and ICT activity, UK: 2019

Use of information and communication technology (ICT) and the value of e-commerce activity by UK businesses.



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1 . Main points

- In 2019, e-commerce sales by businesses in the UK non-financial sector with 10 or more employees were £668.9 billion, rising from £639.7 billion in 2018.
- These e-commerce sales comprised electronic data interchange (EDI) sales of £334.0 billion and website sales of £334.9 billion in 2019; while web sales have more than trebled since the 2009 value of £110.6 billion, EDI sales have shown lower growth, rising just over a quarter from £264.5 billion in 2009.
- E-commerce sales were dominated by businesses with 1000 or more employees; their sales of £368.5 billion were more than half the total value of sales by all businesses with 10 or more employees (£668.9 billion).
- In 2019, 25.2% of businesses with 10 or more employees received website orders from UK customers, valued at £262.0 billion, 9.9% received website orders from customers in other EU countries valued at £26.5 billion, and 7.3% received orders from customers in the rest of the world valued at £46.4 billion.
- In 2019, 96.9% of businesses with 1000 or more employees had a website, compared with 81.4% of businesses with 10 to 49 employees; this pattern of much higher adoption by the largest businesses can be seen across many aspects of ICT measured by the E-commerce and ICT survey.
- Analysis in this release focuses on businesses with 10 or more employees as results for these are considered more robust; the lower survey response for 2019 disproportionately affected the quality of results for businesses with less than 10 employees; results for these businesses are available in [the dataset](#) but should be used with caution.

2 . E-commerce and ICT activity, UK: 2019 data

[E-commerce and ICT activity](#)

Dataset | Released 5 February 2021

Use of information and communication technology (ICT) and e-commerce activity by UK businesses. Annual data on e-commerce sales and how businesses are using the internet.

[E-commerce and ICT activity: confidence intervals](#)

Dataset | Released 5 February 2021

Confidence intervals at the 95% level for e-commerce and ICT activity, website and electronic data interchange sales.

3 . Measuring the data

These estimates are sourced primarily from the E-commerce Survey of UK businesses, which covers the manufacturing, production, construction and distribution sectors as well as parts of the service sector. Information from the [Annual Business Survey \(ABS\)](#) is also used in the preparation of estimates of e-commerce sales values.

The [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) definition of e-commerce is used in this statistical bulletin. An e-commerce transaction is defined as, "the sale or purchase of goods or services, conducted over computer networks by methods specifically designed for the purpose of receiving or placing of orders." It is important to note, under this definition, that "the goods or services are ordered by those methods, but the payment and the ultimate delivery of the goods or services do not have to be conducted online."

As in previous years, results for businesses with less than 10 employees are also available in the [dataset](#) associated with this release. However, the results for this group of businesses appear to have been disproportionately impacted by the lower 2019 survey response. Therefore, results based on businesses with 10 or more employees are considered to be more robust than those for all businesses, which include those with less than 10 employees.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In the 2019 E-commerce survey of UK businesses, 62% of sampled businesses were included in the final results. The rate for 2018 was 76%. The 2019 rate was lower than usual because the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has made it more difficult to contact respondents in order to process survey returns. This means that the estimates in this statistical bulletin are subject to more uncertainty than usual because there are fewer responders on which to base the survey results.

Estimated 95% confidence intervals for a selection of the survey results are available as part of this release. The 2019 values of website sales and electronic data interchange (EDI) sales have wider confidence intervals than those for 2018. This suggests that the 2019 results are subject to greater uncertainty than those for 2018 and therefore a degree of caution is advisable when interpreting the results.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has released a [public statement](#) on COVID-19 and the production of statistics. Specific queries must be directed to the [Media Relations Office](#).

Quality

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [E-commerce Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

4 . Related links

[Internet access - households and individuals statistical bulletin: 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 7 August 2020

Annual estimates of internet access in Great Britain, including how many people have internet access, what they use it for and online shopping.