

Back to school 2017

Our tenth annual back-to-school survey reveals the latest trends likely to impact spending in the 2017 season. Find out when and where consumers are expected to shop, how much they plan to spend and on what products, the ways in which digital influences shopping behavior, and more.

A major shopping season

\$501
average total
spending per child

on par
with last year

Touches nearly **1/4**
of US households
and accounts for
50% of annual
school-related spend

Part of **2nd**
largest shopping
season with an
estimated
\$27B in sales

Top spending categories

98% plan to buy
school supplies
Average spend **\$104**

97% plan to buy
clothes and accessories
Average spend **\$284**

23% plan to buy
computers and hardware
Average spend **\$307**

18% plan to buy
electronic gadgets
Average spend **\$254**

Payment methods

57% plan to use a
debit card—the **top**
payment method

Only **3%** plan to take advantage
of new **digital payment**
methods

Shifting destinations

Biggest gainers and losers

	% who plan to shop	
	2017	2016
Mass merchants	81% up from	57%
Off-price stores	28% up from	10%
Department stores	28% down from	54%
Specialty clothing	8% down from	25%

Purchases online vs. in store

Online
21%
\$103

\$501
Average
total sales

Undecided
22%
\$111

In store
57%
\$288

Most often purchased **online:**
computers and hardware by **33%**

Most often purchased **in store:**
school supplies by **66%**

Regional differences in shopping

South region
accounts
for **44%**
of back-
to-school
shopping

Southern shoppers
hit stores **earlier** and
spend more—\$554

Sales tax holidays matter

58% say they would **increase spending** given access to a sales tax holiday

If a retailer forgets to apply the tax reduction...

40% would contact in-store management
44% would abandon online check out

Digital influence

More than **1/2**
research online before buying

#1 use of social media
in shopping: to find
out about **promotions**

27% use **social media**
to inform purchase decisions

77% would use
digital in-store technologies
for value and convenience

Purchase timing

60% begin shopping
before the end of **July**

92% expect to finish shopping
by the end of **August**

\$19B (71%) of
spending happens during
July and August

Peak timing skews **earlier**
in the South and **later in the**
Northeast