

## HIGH STREET SUFFERS AS SHOPPERS CHOOSE ONLINE

### **Retail FootFall Index - UK National November 2007:**

Month-on-month (November 2007 vs October 2007):	+6.4%
Year-on-year (November 2007 vs November 2006):	- 2.9%

### **Hitwise Index – November 2007:**

Month-on-month (increase in visits to online Shopping & Classifieds sites,  
Oct 07 vs Nov 07): +22.4%

The Christmas rush has finally started on the high street but with a whimper, not a bang, according to figures released today by Experian® company, FootFall. The November Retail FootFall Index (RFI) recorded the highest month-on-month rise in shopper numbers this year but the boost is later than expected and overall numbers are still trailing behind 2006 by nearly 3%.

Meanwhile online, Experian® company, Hitwise, reports a massive rise in online visits to all Shopping & Classifieds sites during November of 22.4%.

Martin Davies from Experian comments: “Our research suggests that the relatively poor show on the high street is due to shifting channel choice rather than declines in spending. The boom in online activity shows that UK consumers are still determined to celebrate this Christmas. Despite fragile financial markets, uncertainty about house prices and the likelihood of rising utility bills, consumer spending this Christmas is likely to exceed that of last year.

“Some retail sectors are outperforming others already. While high streets and shopping centres suffered in November, the out of town Retail Park Index kept an edge over 2006, as many chose destination centres where everything is contained under one roof, rather than face busy town centre crowds and the problems and expense of parking. The increasing popularity of buying gifting alongside groceries is also likely to continue this Christmas.

“With four weeks until Christmas, promotional activity and discounting is both in evidence and increasing. The slow start in shopper activity means anticipation is building fast and now all eyes are on this weekend to find out whether the eagerly-awaited big ‘swoop’ will arrive.”

Across the regions, most show a November year-on-year fall in shopper numbers, with the exceptions of the North East (+1.3%), and the West Midlands (+0.7%). Those regions showing the biggest falls compared to 2006 were Eastern England (-5.2%), Scotland (-6.0%) and the South West and Wales (-5.0%). These are among the most remote areas where people are more likely to shop online.

Jason Gordon, senior manager at Ernst & Young, comments: “We expect that our seasonal pricing survey will reveal deeper discounts in most sectors than last year, when markdown levels of 70% were common, as retailers are forced to work incredibly hard to woo cash-strapped shoppers. It all adds up to a tense and troubled Christmas for much of the sector – we reiterate our forecast of very low like-for-like growth across the sector with big variations in performance between the winners and losers.”

Robin Goad, Research Director at Hitwise, comments: “Many high street retailers have fared better online so far this year. Our analysis showed that in October visits to high street retailers’ web sites exceeded those to their purely online counterparts’ sites. This is a shift that doesn’t normally happen until December.”

**- ENDS -**



## Notes to Editors

Please note, all information presented in this press release and references to the Retail FootFall Index (RFI) is owned by FootFall, an Experian company. By issuing this release, FootFall is allowing the use of this statistical information in either printed, spoken or written format. However, the source of this information must be attributed to FootFall Limited, an Experian company, and the use of statistics to the Retail FootFall Index.

The Retail FootFall Index is endorsed by the BCSC, the membership organisation that represents the retail property industry, and, as such, is regarded as representative of UK shopping habits. FootFall, an Experian company, is a world leader in the provision of retail business information to the retail and retail property markets. The RFI now measures over 150 million shopper visits per month in over 200 retail centres throughout the UK, covering more than 12,000 retail outlets. Over 80% of the UK's population is contained within the catchment area of the basket of centres from which the RFI is produced.

FootFall is part Experian's Business Strategies division, one of the UK's leading economic forecasters. The business provides an understanding of consumers, markets and economies in the UK and around the world, past, present and future. Its focus is consumer profiling and market segmentation, retail property analysis, economic forecasting and public policy research, supporting businesses, policy makers and investors in making tactical and strategic decisions. As part of the Experian group, it has access to a wealth of research data and innovative software solutions.

The division's economic research team is devoted to analysing national, regional and local economies for a range of public and private sector clients. Its statisticians, econometricians, sociologists, geographers, market researchers and economists carry out extensive research into the underlying drivers of social, economic and market change.



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