

7 out of 10 Gen Z shoppers use AI to buy online

Digital natives are redefining the rules of e-commerce.



May 27, 2025

- 67% of Gen Z made online purchases in the past year, more than any other generation.
- 40% buy online because it makes them happy, rather than because they need it.

- 38% have abandoned a planned purchase due to distrusting a site's data protection.

Young people these days: They increasingly shop online, clutching their phones even as they browse physical stores. And they buy what makes them happy.

According to a study of e-commerce in Spain, Generation Z (those born between 1997 and 2012, so those currently in their teens and 20s) have turned online shopping into an omnichannel and deeply technological experience, leading digital sales growth through multiple platforms: apps, social networks and AI assistants.

The study, led by IESE's [Inigo Gallo](#) in collaboration with the French online retailer Veepee, considers the future of e-commerce — analyzing trends, shopping habits and consumer expectations across multiple generations in Spain.

Happiness drives consumption in young buyers

Older generations tend to buy out of necessity (87% of consumers between 61 and 75 years old), but Gen Z chases a dopamine hit: 40% say that happiness is the main driver behind their digital consumption decisions.

Unsurprisingly, they are also the generation with the most shopping apps on their devices (an average of 16 compared with 10 among consumers in their 60s and 70s). Almost all (95%) are interested in receiving notifications in this way.

AI is an ally and social networks are a showroom

Among young consumers, 77% have used some form of AI, be it ChatGPT, Gemini or Copilot, to shop online. Principal uses are to find deals and discounts, get personalized recommendations, understand technical specifications and compare products.

Additionally, 83% consider chatbots useful, and 1 in 6 have tried augmented reality — for example, to see how glasses might fit or how furniture would look in their home.

A whopping 91% of Gen Z use their mobiles even while shopping in physical stores, compared with 84% of millennials (those born between 1981 and 1996), 70% of those in the 46-60 age range and 52% of 61- to 75-year-olds who do so.

More sustainable and more cautious

Gen Z also stood out for their commitment to circular consumption: 70% have bought or sold secondhand products online in the past year, compared with 31% of those over 60 who have done so.

At the same time, young buyers have also been most affected by online fraud (39% have been victims), which reinforces their demand for privacy policies: 38% have abandoned purchases due to distrust, compared with 22% of older generations.

What these figures underscore is that, for young people, e-commerce is no longer just a digital store: it is a complete experience that should be seamless, fast, personalized and aligned with their values.

They expect flash discounts (90% show interest in them), they value speedy returns (almost half prioritize fast refunds) and they are the ones who most use lockers to receive packages (79%).

Companies that want to connect with this generation must be present in their channels and speak their language: direct, visual and authentic.

About the research

The report, by Inigo Gallo and Veepee, in collaboration with Kantar, is based on an analysis of the online shopping habits of 800 consumers aged 16 to 75 in Spain.

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