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Pew Internet & American Life Project

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# The rise of in-store mobile commerce

*During the holiday season, 25% of cell owners used their phone inside stores to gather price comparisons; 24% used them to look up online reviews. And 19% of those who searched for a better price on an in-store product eventually bought the product online*

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<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/In-store-mobile-commerce.aspx>

## How Americans used their phones to assist with purchasing decisions this holiday season

More than half of adult cell phone owners used their cell phones while they were in a store during the 2011 holiday season to seek help with purchasing decisions. During a 30 day period before and after Christmas:

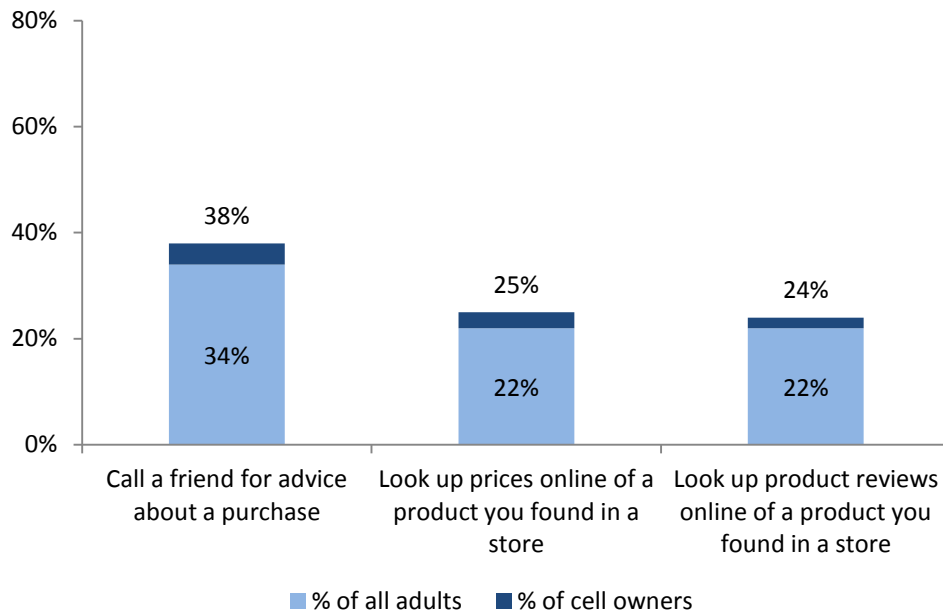
- 38% of cell owners used their phone to *call a friend* while they were in a store for advice about a purchase they were considering making
- 24% of cell owners used their phone to *look up reviews of a product online* while they were in a store
- 25% of adult cell owners used their phones to *look up the price of a product online while they were in a store*, to see if they could get a better price somewhere else

Taken together, just over half (52%) of all adult cell owners used their phone for at least one of these three reasons over the holiday shopping season and one third (33%) used their phone specifically for online information while inside a physical store—either product reviews or pricing information.

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### How Americans used their phones for help with in-store purchasing decisions this holiday season

% within each group who used their phone in the preceding 30 days while in a store to...



**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, January 5-8 2012 Omnibus survey. N=1,000 adults ages 18 and older, including 400 interviews conducted on respondent's cell phone. Margin of error is +/-3.9 percentage points.

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## Detailed findings—online product reviews and calling friends for purchasing advice

There are a number of demographic patterns in these survey findings. Specifically:

- Cell owners ages 18-49 are significantly more likely to use their phones for online product reviews than are cell owners ages 50 and older. Cell owners ages 65 and older are especially unlikely to do this—just 4% did so this holiday season.
- Urban and suburban cell owners are roughly twice as likely as rural cell owners to have recently used their phone to look up online reviews of a product they found in a physical store.
- Non-white cell owners are more likely than white cell owners to look up online product reviews, and those who have attended college are more likely to do so than those who have not.

### Who uses their phone for real-time product reviews and advice?

*% of cell owners who used their phones in the preceding 30 days while in a store to...*

	<u>Call a friend for advice about a purchase</u>	<u>Look up product reviews online</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>All cell owners (n=896)</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Men (n=437)	37	27	49
Women (n=459)	40	22	46
<b>Age</b>			
18-29 (n=128)	49*	41*	63*
30-49 (n=221)	45*	34*	59*
50-64 (n=245)	32	13	36
65+ (n=251)	22	4	24
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White (n=686)	37	21	45
Non-white (n=185)	42	33*	53
<b>Household Income</b>			
Less than \$50,000 (n=379)	41	23	48
\$50,000+ (n=373)	40	27	50
<b>Education level</b>			
High school grad or less (n=322)	35	17	40
Some college (n=199)	47*	32*	56*
College+ (n=362)	36	29*	50*
<b>Geographic Location</b>			
Urban (n=237)	40	29*	52*
Suburban (n=434)	38	24*	47*
Rural (n=163)	32	12	36

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, January 5-8 2012 Omnibus survey. N=1,000 adults ages 18 and older, including 400 interviews conducted on respondent's cell phone. Margin of error is +/-3.9 percentage points. \*Indicates statistically significant difference between rows.

## Detailed findings—cell phones as a tool for online price matching

Online price matching and looking up online reviews frequently go hand in hand. Overall, of the 33% of cell owners who used their phone recently in a store to look up either product reviews or prices online, roughly half (representing 17% of all cell owners) used their phones to engage in *both* of these activities.

As a result, the same groups that use their phones to look up online product reviews—such as cell owners under 50 years old, non-whites, those with at least some college experience and those living in urban or suburban areas—are generally the same ones that use their phones to look up online pricing information.

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### Who uses their phone for real-time price matching?

*% of cell owners within each group who used their phone in the preceding 30 days to look up the price of a product online while they were in a store*

<b>All cell owners (n=896)</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Men (n=437)	31*
Women (n=459)	20
<b>Age</b>	
18-29 (n=128)	38*
30-49 (n=221)	35*
50-64 (n=245)	16
65+ (n=251)	3
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
White (n=686)	19
Non-white (n=185)	38*
<b>Household Income</b>	
Less than \$50,000 (n=379)	25
\$50,000+ (n=373)	28
<b>Education level</b>	
High school grad or less (n=322)	19
Some college (n=199)	30*
College+ (n=362)	30*
<b>Geographic location</b>	
Urban (n=237)	33*
Suburban (n=434)	26*
Rural (n=163)	9

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, January 5-8 2012 Omnibus survey. N=1,000 adults ages 18 and older, including 400 interviews conducted on respondent's cell phone. Margin of error is +/-3.9 percentage points. \*Indicates statistically significant difference between rows.

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**One in five “mobile price matchers” ultimately made their most recent purchase from an online store, rather than a physical location**

When asked what happened on the most recent occasion where they used their phone to look up the price online of a product they found in a store, these mobile price matchers point to a range of outcomes:

- 37% decided to not purchase the product at all
- 35% purchased the product at that store
- 19% purchased the product online
- 8% purchased the product at another store

Since one quarter of cell owners looked up the price of a product using their phone in the 30 days preceding our survey, that works out to 5% of *all cell owners* who purchased a product online this holiday season after looking up its price online from a physical store. An additional 9% of all cell owners searched for the price of a product they found in a physical store but ultimately purchased it at that store.

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**The Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project** is an initiative of the Pew Research Center, a nonprofit “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping America and the world. The Pew Internet Project explores the impact of the internet on children, families, communities, the work place, schools, health care and civic/political life. The Project is nonpartisan and takes no position on policy issues. Support for the Project is provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts. More information is available at [www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

## About this survey

### Methodology

The PSRAI January 2012 Omnibus Week 1 obtained telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults living in the continental United States. Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (600) and cell phone (400, including 184 without a landline phone). The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI). Interviews were done in English by Princeton Data Source from January 5-8, 2012. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is  $\pm 3.9$  percentage points.

### Survey Questions

PIAL10a As I read the following list of items, please tell me if you happen to have one or not. Do you have a cell phone...or a Blackberry or other device that is also a cell phone?

	<u>CURRENT</u>	
%	88	Yes
	11	No
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

PIAL12 In the last 30 days, have you used your cell phone to do the following? [INSERT IN ORDER]?

Based on cell phone owners [N=896]

	<u>YES, HAVE DONE THIS</u>	<u>NO, HAVE NOT DONE THIS</u>	<u>HAVE DONE THIS BUT NOT IN LAST 30 DAYS (VOL)</u>	<u>CELL PHONE IS NOT ABLE TO DO THIS (VOL)</u>	<u>DON'T KNOW</u>	<u>REFUSED</u>
a. Call a friend while you were in a store for advice about a purchase you were considering making	38	61	*	0	*	0
b. Look up REVIEWS of a product while you were in a store, to help you decide if you should purchase it	24	75	0	*	*	0
c. Look up the price of a product online while you were in a store, to see if you could get a better price somewhere else	25	74	*	1	0	0

PIAL13 Thinking of the most recent time you used your cell phone to look up prices for a product while you were in a store, did you end up purchasing the product? [IF YES, ASK: Did you purchase the product in that store, another store, or did you purchase it online?]

Based on those who have looked up prices using phone [N=171]

	<u>CURRENT</u>	
%	35	Yes, purchased at store
	8	Yes, purchased at another store
	19	Yes, purchased online
	37	No, did not purchase
	3	Don't know
	0	Refused