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QUARTERLY RETAIL E-COMMERCE SALES 1st QUARTER 2011

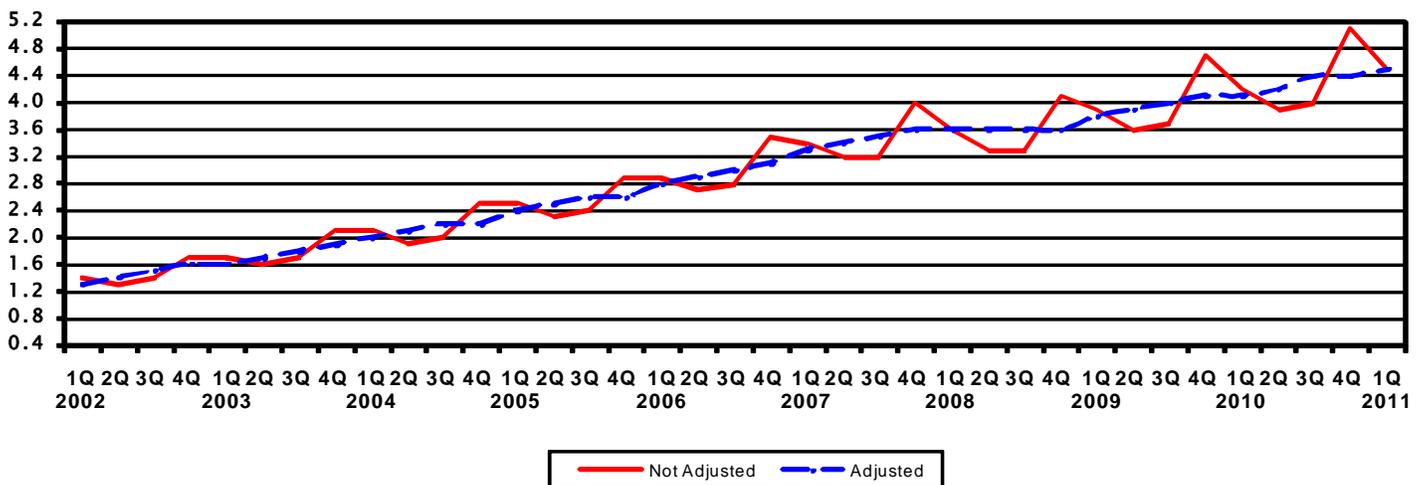
Notice of Revision: Quarterly retail e-commerce estimates were revised based on the results of the 2009 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Not adjusted and corresponding adjusted estimates were revised for fourth quarter 1999 through fourth quarter 2010.

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that the estimate of U.S. retail e-commerce sales for the first quarter of 2011, adjusted for seasonal variation, but not for price changes, was \$46.0 billion, an increase of 3.4 percent ($\pm 1.1\%$) from the fourth quarter of 2010. Total retail sales for the first quarter of 2011 were estimated at \$1,030.0 billion, an increase of 2.6 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$) from the fourth quarter of 2010. The first quarter 2011 e-commerce estimate increased 17.5 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) from the first quarter of 2010 while total retail sales increased 8.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) in the same period. E-commerce sales in the first quarter of 2011 accounted for 4.5 percent of total sales.

On a not adjusted basis, the estimate of U.S. retail e-commerce sales for the first quarter of 2011 totaled \$43.7 billion, a decrease of 17.9 percent ($\pm 1.1\%$) from the fourth quarter of 2010. The first quarter 2011 e-commerce estimate increased 17.6 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) from the first quarter of 2010 while total retail sales increased 8.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) in the same period. E-commerce sales in the first quarter of 2011 accounted for 4.5 percent of total sales.

Estimated Quarterly U.S. Retail E-commerce Sales as a Percent of Total Quarterly Retail Sales: 1st Quarter 2002 – 1st Quarter 2011

Percent of Total



The Quarterly Retail E-Commerce sales estimate for the second quarter of 2011 is scheduled for release on August 16, 2011 at 10:00 A.M. EDT.

For information, including estimates from 4th quarter 1999 forward, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <http://www.census.gov/retail>. For additional information about Census Bureau e-business measurement programs and plans visit <http://www.census.gov/estats>.

* The 90% confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

Table 1. Estimated Quarterly U.S. Retail Sales: Total and E-commerce¹
(Estimates are based on data from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey and administrative records.)

Quarter	Retail Sales (millions of dollars)		E-commerce as a Percent of Total	Percent Change From Prior Quarter		Percent Change From Same Quarter A Year Ago	
	Total	E-commerce		Total	E-commerce	Total	E-commerce
Adjusted							
1st quarter 2011(p)	1,030,038	46,023	4.5	2.6	3.4	8.6	17.5
4th quarter 2010(r)	1,003,648	44,517	4.4	3.2	5.0	8.1	16.3
3rd quarter 2010	972,440	42,381	4.4	0.9	4.7	5.8	14.8
2nd quarter 2010	963,389	40,472	4.2	1.6	3.4	7.4	15.2
1st quarter 2010(r)	948,172	39,159	4.1	2.1	2.3	5.9	14.7
Not Adjusted							
1st quarter 2011(p)	964,845	43,706	4.5	-8.3	-17.9	8.6	17.6
4th quarter 2010(r)	1,051,917	53,225	5.1	8.4	35.7	7.8	16.5
3rd quarter 2010	970,155	39,230	4.0	-0.9	4.0	5.7	14.9
2nd quarter 2010	978,726	37,718	3.9	10.1	1.5	7.4	14.6
1st quarter 2010	888,667	37,166	4.2	-8.9	-18.6	6.6	14.4

(p) Preliminary estimate. (r) Revised estimate.

¹ E-commerce sales are sales of goods and services where an order is placed by the buyer or price and terms of sale are negotiated over an Internet, extranet, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) network, electronic mail, or other online system. Payment may or may not be made online.

² Estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation, but not for price changes. Total sales estimates are also adjusted for trading-day differences and moving holidays.

Note: Table 2 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions, see http://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/how_surveys_are_collected.html.

Table 2. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability for Quarterly U.S. Retail Sales Estimates: Total and E-commerce

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey.)

Quarter	Coefficient of Variation (CV)		Standard Error (SE) for E-commerce as a Percent of Total	SE for Percent Change From Prior Quarter		SE for Percent Change From Same Quarter A Year Ago	
	Total	E-commerce		Total	E-commerce	Total	E-commerce
1st quarter 2011(p)	0.8	2.2	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.4	1.2
4th quarter 2010(r)	0.7	2.0	0.1	0.2	1.3	0.4	1.0
3rd quarter 2010	0.6	2.0	0.1	0.2	0.8	0.3	1.4
2nd quarter 2010	0.6	2.0	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.3	1.7
1st quarter 2010	0.6	2.1	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.2	1.9

(p) Preliminary estimate. (r) Revised estimate. (Z) Estimate is less than 0.05%.

Note: Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on data not adjusted for seasonal variation, trading-day differences, or moving holidays, and are used to make confidence statements about both adjusted and not adjusted estimates. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions, see http://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/how_surveys_are_collected.html.

Table 3. Estimated Quarterly U.S. Retail Sales (Adjusted¹): Total and E-commerce²
 (Estimates are based on data from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey and administrative records.)

Quarter	Retail Sales (millions of dollars)		E-commerce as a Percent of Total	Percent Change From Prior Quarter		Percent Change From Same Quarter A Year Ago	
	Total	E-commerce		Total	E-commerce	Total	E-commerce
1st quarter 2011(p)	1,030,038	46,023	4.5	2.6	3.4	8.6	17.5
4th quarter 2010(r)	1,003,648	44,517	4.4	3.2	5.0	8.1	16.3
3rd quarter 2010	972,440	42,381	4.4	0.9	4.7	5.8	14.8
2nd quarter 2010	963,389	40,472	4.2	1.6	3.4	7.4	15.2
1st quarter 2010(r)	948,172	39,159	4.1	2.1	2.3	5.9	14.7
4th quarter 2009	928,333	38,269	4.1	1.0	3.7	1.4	14.6
3rd quarter 2009	918,917	36,909	4.0	2.4	5.1	-8.4	2.0
2nd quarter 2009	896,957	35,133	3.9	0.2	2.9	-11.7	-4.2
1st quarter 2009	895,260	34,151	3.8	-2.2	2.3	-11.4	-5.8
4th quarter 2008	915,673	33,393	3.6	-8.7	-7.7	-9.9	-7.8
3rd quarter 2008	1,002,911	36,180	3.6	-1.3	-1.4	-0.2	3.4
2nd quarter 2008	1,016,290	36,691	3.6	0.6	1.2	1.9	7.8
1st quarter 2008	1,010,490	36,244	3.6	-0.6	0.1	2.2	12.0
4th quarter 2007	1,016,641	36,207	3.6	1.1	3.5	4.2	18.1
3rd quarter 2007	1,005,154	34,975	3.5	0.8	2.8	3.1	19.8
2nd quarter 2007	997,157	34,032	3.4	0.8	5.2	2.9	22.8
1st quarter 2007	989,144	32,350	3.3	1.4	5.5	2.4	20.8
4th quarter 2006	975,660	30,670	3.1	0.0	5.1	3.9	24.1
3rd quarter 2006	975,174	29,184	3.0	0.6	5.3	4.2	21.4
2nd quarter 2006	968,895	27,717	2.9	0.3	3.5	5.5	23.1
1st quarter 2006	966,148	26,770	2.8	2.9	8.3	7.3	26.1
4th quarter 2005	939,298	24,712	2.6	0.4	2.8	5.3	23.4
3rd quarter 2005	935,577	24,043	2.6	1.8	6.7	7.5	27.0
2nd quarter 2005	918,660	22,523	2.5	2.0	6.1	7.2	26.0
1st quarter 2005	900,378	21,227	2.4	0.9	6.0	6.2	24.2
4th quarter 2004	892,367	20,025	2.2	2.5	5.8	7.2	26.3
3rd quarter 2004	870,400	18,926	2.2	1.5	5.9	5.0	25.7
2nd quarter 2004	857,215	17,872	2.1	1.1	4.5	6.4	27.6
1st quarter 2004	847,868	17,097	2.0	1.9	7.8	6.0	31.5
4th quarter 2003	832,261	15,855	1.9	0.4	5.3	5.0	27.8
3rd quarter 2003	829,025	15,062	1.8	2.9	7.5	4.9	29.5
2nd quarter 2003	806,000	14,011	1.7	0.8	7.8	3.4	28.9
1st quarter 2003	799,504	13,003	1.6	0.8	4.8	3.4	28.8
4th quarter 2002	792,817	12,409	1.6	0.4	6.7	0.7	31.7
3rd quarter 2002	789,978	11,631	1.5	1.3	7.0	4.1	39.2
2nd quarter 2002	779,542	10,870	1.4	0.9	7.7	1.9	29.1
1st quarter 2002	772,932	10,097	1.3	-1.8	7.2	2.1	22.3

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

¹ Estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation, but not for price changes. Total sales estimates are also adjusted for trading-day differences and moving holidays.

² E-commerce sales are sales of goods and services where an order is placed by the buyer or price and terms of sale are negotiated over an Internet, extranet, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) network, electronic mail, or other online system. Payment may or may not be made online.

Note: For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions, see http://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/how_surveys_are_collected.html.

Table 4. Estimated Quarterly U.S. Retail Sales (Not Adjusted): Total and E-commerce¹
 (Estimates are based on data from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey and administrative records.)

Quarter	Retail Sales (millions of dollars)		E-commerce as a Percent of Total	Percent Change From Prior Quarter		Percent Change From Same Quarter A Year Ago	
	Total	E-commerce		Total	E-commerce	Total	E-commerce
1st quarter 2011(p)	964,845	43,706	4.5	-8.3	-17.9	8.6	17.6
4th quarter 2010(r)	1,051,917	53,225	5.1	8.4	35.7	7.8	16.5
3rd quarter 2010	970,155	39,230	4.0	-0.9	4.0	5.7	14.9
2nd quarter 2010	978,726	37,718	3.9	10.1	1.5	7.4	14.6
1st quarter 2010	888,667	37,166	4.2	-8.9	-18.6	6.6	14.4
4th quarter 2009	975,587	45,684	4.7	6.3	33.8	1.3	15.4
3rd quarter 2009	917,856	34,153	3.7	0.7	3.8	-8.6	1.8
2nd quarter 2009	911,223	32,902	3.6	9.3	1.3	-11.7	-4.8
1st quarter 2009	833,805	32,475	3.9	-13.4	-18.0	-12.6	-6.1
4th quarter 2008	962,634	39,595	4.1	-4.2	18.0	-9.5	-6.5
3rd quarter 2008	1,004,489	33,541	3.3	-2.7	-2.9	0.2	3.1
2nd quarter 2008	1,032,233	34,550	3.3	8.2	-0.1	1.6	7.2
1st quarter 2008	953,577	34,595	3.6	-10.3	-18.3	3.2	11.5
4th quarter 2007	1,063,151	42,349	4.0	6.0	30.1	4.4	18.9
3rd quarter 2007	1,002,562	32,547	3.2	-1.3	1.0	2.5	19.5
2nd quarter 2007	1,016,043	32,218	3.2	10.0	3.8	3.0	22.8
1st quarter 2007	924,042	31,031	3.4	-9.3	-12.9	3.1	20.2
4th quarter 2006	1,018,762	35,607	3.5	4.2	30.7	3.2	25.0
3rd quarter 2006	977,859	27,246	2.8	-0.9	3.8	4.0	20.9
2nd quarter 2006	986,883	26,245	2.7	10.1	1.7	5.8	23.3
1st quarter 2006	896,632	25,814	2.9	-9.1	-9.4	7.1	25.9
4th quarter 2005	986,722	28,482	2.9	4.9	26.4	5.2	23.9
3rd quarter 2005	940,550	22,529	2.4	0.9	5.8	7.6	26.6
2nd quarter 2005	932,525	21,284	2.3	11.4	3.8	6.9	26.3
1st quarter 2005	836,894	20,509	2.5	-10.8	-10.8	5.1	24.0
4th quarter 2004	938,330	22,996	2.5	7.4	29.2	7.2	26.1
3rd quarter 2004	873,846	17,796	2.0	0.2	5.6	5.1	25.6
2nd quarter 2004	872,157	16,850	1.9	9.6	1.9	6.4	27.7
1st quarter 2004	796,097	16,533	2.1	-9.1	-9.3	7.4	31.7
4th quarter 2003	875,581	18,236	2.1	5.3	28.7	5.0	27.0
3rd quarter 2003	831,311	14,169	1.7	1.4	7.3	4.9	29.9
2nd quarter 2003	820,004	13,199	1.6	10.6	5.1	3.7	29.3
1st quarter 2003	741,258	12,553	1.7	-11.1	-12.6	3.3	28.9
4th quarter 2002	833,877	14,360	1.7	5.2	31.6	0.7	31.6
3rd quarter 2002	792,657	10,908	1.4	0.3	6.9	4.8	39.2
2nd quarter 2002	790,486	10,206	1.3	10.2	4.8	1.5	29.2
1st quarter 2002	717,302	9,738	1.4	-13.4	-10.7	1.8	22.5

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

¹ E-commerce sales are sales of goods and services where an order is placed by the buyer or price and terms of sale are negotiated over an Internet, extranet, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) network, electronic mail, or other online system. Payment may or may not be made online.

Note: For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions, see http://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/how_surveys_are_collected.html.

Survey Description

Retail e-commerce sales are estimated from the same sample used for the Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) to estimate preliminary and final U.S. retail sales. Advance U.S. retail sales are estimated from a subsample of the MRTS sample that is not of adequate size to measure changes in retail e-commerce sales.

A stratified simple random sampling method is used to select approximately 12,500 retail firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over two million retail firms. The MRTS sample is probability based and represents all employer firms engaged in retail activities as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Coverage includes all retailers whether or not they are engaged in e-commerce. Online travel services, financial brokers and dealers, and ticket sales agencies are **not** classified as retail and are **not** included in either the total retail or retail e-commerce sales estimates. Nonemployers are represented in the estimates through benchmarking to prior annual survey estimates that include nonemployer sales based on administrative records. E-commerce sales are included in the total monthly sales estimates.

The MRTS sample is updated on an ongoing basis to account for new retail employer businesses (including those selling via the Internet), business deaths, and other changes to the retail business universe. Firms are asked each month to report e-commerce sales separately. For each month of the quarter, data for nonresponding sampling units are imputed from responding sampling units falling within the same kind of business and sales size category. Responding firms account for approximately 80 percent of the e-commerce sales estimate and about 75 percent of the estimate of U.S. retail sales for any quarter.

For each month of the quarter, estimates are obtained by summing weighted sales (either reported or imputed). The monthly estimates are benchmarked to prior annual survey estimates. Estimates for the quarter are obtained by summing the monthly benchmarked estimates. The estimate for the most recent quarter is a preliminary estimate. Therefore, the estimate is subject to revision. Data users who create their own estimates using data from this report should cite the Census Bureau as the source of the input data only.

Adjusted Estimates

This report publishes estimates that have been adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. We used quarterly e-commerce sales estimates for 4th quarter 1999 to the current quarter as input to the X-12 ARIMA program to derive the adjusted estimates. For sales, we derived quarterly adjusted estimates by summing adjusted monthly sales estimates for each respective quarter. Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Additional information on the X-12 ARIMA program may be found at <http://www.census.gov/srd/www/x12a/>.

Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the population conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire population is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation, as given in Table 2 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimated percent change is -11.4% and its estimated standard error is 1.2%, then the margin of error is $\pm 1.753 \times 1.2\%$ or 2.1%, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -13.5% to -9.3%. Confidence intervals are computed based on the particular sample selected and canvassed. If one repeats the process of drawing all possible samples and forming all corresponding confidence intervals, approximately 90 percent of these individual confidence intervals would contain the estimate computed from a complete enumeration of all units on the sampling frame. If the confidence interval contains 0%, then one does not have sufficient evidence to conclude at the 90 percent confidence level that the change is different from zero.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses with e-commerce sales, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although not directly measured, precautionary steps are taken to minimize the effects of nonsampling error.