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QUARTERLY RETAIL E-COMMERCE SALES 1st QUARTER 2012

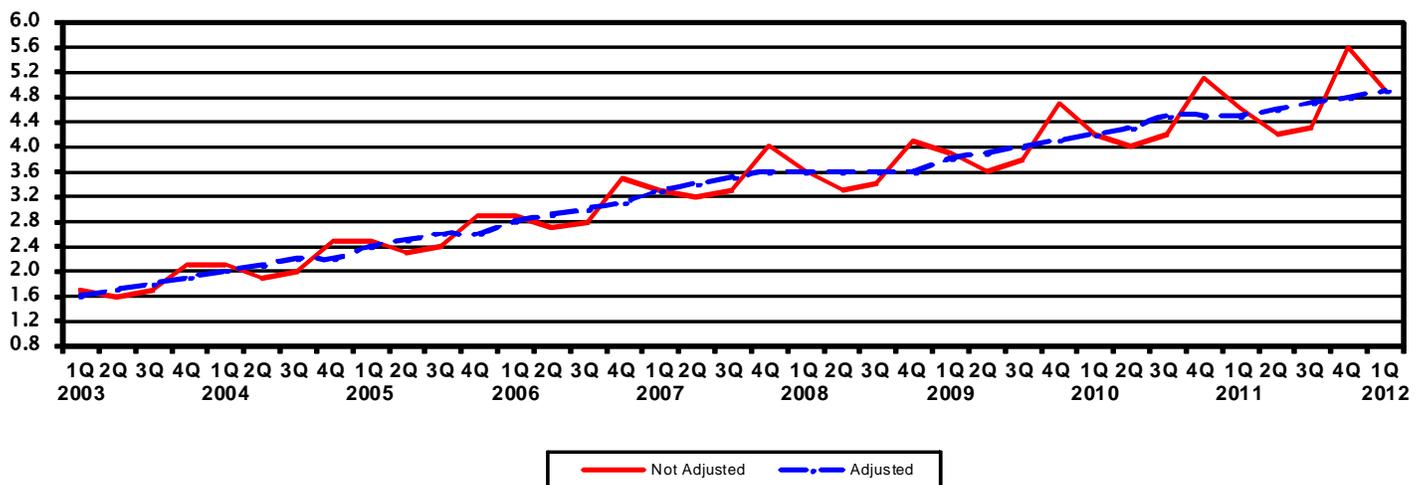
Notice of Revision: Quarterly retail e-commerce estimates were revised based on the results of the 2010 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Not adjusted and corresponding adjusted estimates were revised for fourth quarter 1999 through fourth quarter 2011.

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 2012, adjusted for seasonal variation, but not for price changes, was \$53.2 billion, an increase of 3.1 percent ($\pm 1.1\%$) from the fourth quarter of 2011. Total retail sales for the first quarter of 2012 were estimated at \$1,082.6 billion, an increase of 1.7 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$) from the fourth quarter of 2011. The first quarter 2012 e-commerce estimate increased 15.4 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) from the first quarter of 2011 while total retail sales increased 6.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) in the same period. E-commerce sales in the first quarter of 2012 accounted for 4.9 percent of total sales.

On a not adjusted basis, the estimate of U.S. retail e-commerce sales for the first quarter of 2012 totaled \$50.3 billion, a decrease of 18.6 percent ($\pm 1.1\%$) from the fourth quarter of 2011. The first quarter 2012 e-commerce estimate increased 15.4 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) from the first quarter of 2011 while total retail sales increased 8.0 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) in the same period. E-commerce sales in the first quarter of 2012 accounted for 4.9 percent of total sales.

Estimated Quarterly U.S. Retail E-commerce Sales as a Percent of Total Quarterly Retail Sales: 1st Quarter 2003 – 1st Quarter 2012

Percent of Total



The Quarterly Retail E-Commerce sales estimate for the second quarter of 2012 is scheduled for release on August 16, 2012 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 2012(p)	1,082,635	53,156	4.9	1.7	3.1	6.5	15.4
4th quarter 2011(r)	1,065,030	51,575	4.8	2.1	6.2	7.5	15.1
3rd quarter 2011	1,043,110	48,564	4.7	1.3	2.2	8.8	12.8
2nd quarter 2011	1,029,997	47,535	4.6	1.3	3.2	8.2	15.6
1st quarter 2011(r)	1,016,544	46,065	4.5	2.6	2.8	8.3	17.2
Not Adjusted							
1st quarter 2012(p)	1,029,978	50,267	4.9	-7.4	-18.6	8.0	15.4
4th quarter 2011(r)	1,112,422	61,765	5.6	6.9	37.6	7.2	15.8
3rd quarter 2011	1,040,438	44,876	4.3	-0.7	0.9	8.7	12.3
2nd quarter 2011	1,047,396	44,473	4.2	9.8	2.1	8.4	15.5
1st quarter 2011	953,891	43,577	4.6	-8.1	-18.3	8.3	17.3

(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 2012(p)	0.9	2.1	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.7
4th quarter 2011(r)	0.7	2.3	0.1	0.3	1.4	0.2	0.8
3rd quarter 2011	0.8	2.3	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.3	1.0
2nd quarter 2011	0.8	2.4	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.3	1.4
1st quarter 2011	0.8	2.2	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.4	1.2

(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 2012(p)	1,082,635	53,156	4.9	1.7	3.1	6.5	15.4
4th quarter 2011(r)	1,065,030	51,575	4.8	2.1	6.2	7.5	15.1
3rd quarter 2011	1,043,110	48,564	4.7	1.3	2.2	8.8	12.8
2nd quarter 2011	1,029,997	47,535	4.6	1.3	3.2	8.2	15.6
1st quarter 2011(r)	1,016,544	46,065	4.5	2.6	2.8	8.3	17.2
4th quarter 2010	990,726	44,819	4.5	3.3	4.1	7.2	17.4
3rd quarter 2010	958,694	43,043	4.5	0.7	4.7	4.6	16.1
2nd quarter 2010	952,070	41,112	4.3	1.4	4.6	6.4	16.9
1st quarter 2010	938,772	39,295	4.2	1.6	3.0	5.1	14.9
4th quarter 2009	924,422	38,163	4.1	0.9	2.9	1.1	14.4
3rd quarter 2009	916,317	37,075	4.0	2.4	5.4	-8.5	2.5
2nd quarter 2009	894,646	35,174	3.9	0.2	2.8	-11.8	-4.1
1st quarter 2009	893,218	34,206	3.8	-2.3	2.6	-11.4	-5.8
4th quarter 2008	914,671	33,345	3.6	-8.6	-7.8	-10.0	-8.1
3rd quarter 2008	1,001,058	36,164	3.6	-1.3	-1.4	-0.2	3.2
2nd quarter 2008	1,014,183	36,668	3.6	0.6	1.0	1.9	8.0
1st quarter 2008	1,008,585	36,321	3.6	-0.8	0.1	2.2	12.7
4th quarter 2007	1,016,382	36,275	3.6	1.3	3.5	4.2	18.5
3rd quarter 2007	1,003,356	35,046	3.5	0.8	3.2	3.1	20.0
2nd quarter 2007	994,919	33,943	3.4	0.8	5.3	2.9	22.0
1st quarter 2007	986,642	32,222	3.3	1.2	5.2	2.3	19.9
4th quarter 2006	975,402	30,615	3.1	0.2	4.8	4.0	23.7
3rd quarter 2006	973,393	29,205	3.0	0.7	5.0	4.2	21.5
2nd quarter 2006	966,992	27,818	2.9	0.3	3.5	5.5	23.3
1st quarter 2006	964,469	26,885	2.8	2.8	8.6	7.3	26.4
4th quarter 2005	938,329	24,746	2.6	0.5	2.9	5.3	23.5
3rd quarter 2005	933,986	24,039	2.6	1.9	6.5	7.5	27.0
2nd quarter 2005	916,869	22,564	2.5	2.1	6.0	7.2	26.2
1st quarter 2005	898,438	21,278	2.4	0.8	6.2	6.2	24.4
4th quarter 2004	891,125	20,040	2.2	2.6	5.9	7.3	26.2
3rd quarter 2004	868,612	18,929	2.2	1.5	5.9	4.9	25.5
2nd quarter 2004	855,491	17,878	2.1	1.1	4.5	6.3	27.4
1st quarter 2004	846,177	17,110	2.0	1.9	7.8	6.0	31.4
4th quarter 2003	830,759	15,876	1.9	0.4	5.2	5.0	27.8
3rd quarter 2003	827,778	15,085	1.8	2.8	7.5	5.0	29.6
2nd quarter 2003	805,050	14,032	1.7	0.8	7.8	3.4	29.0
1st quarter 2003	798,355	13,018	1.6	0.9	4.8	3.5	28.8

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 2012(p)	1,029,978	50,267	4.9	-7.4	-18.6	8.0	15.4
4th quarter 2011(r)	1,112,422	61,765	5.6	6.9	37.6	7.2	15.8
3rd quarter 2011	1,040,438	44,876	4.3	-0.7	0.9	8.7	12.3
2nd quarter 2011	1,047,396	44,473	4.2	9.8	2.1	8.4	15.5
1st quarter 2011	953,891	43,577	4.6	-8.1	-18.3	8.3	17.3
4th quarter 2010	1,037,984	53,356	5.1	8.5	33.5	6.9	17.6
3rd quarter 2010	956,838	39,962	4.2	-1.0	3.8	4.5	15.8
2nd quarter 2010	966,307	38,492	4.0	9.8	3.6	6.2	16.7
1st quarter 2010	880,401	37,155	4.2	-9.3	-18.1	5.8	14.7
4th quarter 2009	970,770	45,362	4.7	6.1	31.4	1.0	15.0
3rd quarter 2009	915,205	34,515	3.8	0.6	4.6	-8.7	2.3
2nd quarter 2009	909,480	32,982	3.6	9.3	1.8	-11.8	-4.4
1st quarter 2009	832,173	32,401	3.9	-13.4	-17.9	-12.6	-6.3
4th quarter 2008	960,717	39,458	4.1	-4.2	17.0	-9.5	-6.9
3rd quarter 2008	1,002,944	33,731	3.4	-2.7	-2.3	0.2	3.0
2nd quarter 2008	1,030,586	34,518	3.3	8.2	-0.2	1.6	7.5
1st quarter 2008	952,159	34,590	3.6	-10.3	-18.4	3.3	12.1
4th quarter 2007	1,061,748	42,404	4.0	6.1	29.5	4.4	19.3
3rd quarter 2007	1,001,108	32,744	3.3	-1.3	2.0	2.5	19.8
2nd quarter 2007	1,014,251	32,100	3.2	10.0	4.0	2.9	22.0
1st quarter 2007	922,149	30,860	3.3	-9.3	-13.2	3.0	19.2
4th quarter 2006	1,017,242	35,543	3.5	4.2	30.0	3.3	24.5
3rd quarter 2006	976,445	27,334	2.8	-0.9	3.9	4.0	21.2
2nd quarter 2006	985,254	26,315	2.7	10.1	1.7	5.8	23.4
1st quarter 2006	895,144	25,883	2.9	-9.1	-9.3	7.2	26.0
4th quarter 2005	985,026	28,547	2.9	4.9	26.5	5.2	24.0
3rd quarter 2005	938,943	22,558	2.4	0.9	5.8	7.7	26.8
2nd quarter 2005	930,877	21,317	2.3	11.4	3.8	7.0	26.5
1st quarter 2005	835,316	20,542	2.5	-10.8	-10.8	5.1	24.2
4th quarter 2004	936,559	23,018	2.5	7.4	29.3	7.2	26.0
3rd quarter 2004	872,109	17,796	2.0	0.2	5.6	5.1	25.4
2nd quarter 2004	870,348	16,852	1.9	9.5	1.8	6.3	27.5
1st quarter 2004	794,552	16,546	2.1	-9.1	-9.4	7.3	31.7
4th quarter 2003	873,985	18,264	2.1	5.3	28.7	5.0	27.1
3rd quarter 2003	829,930	14,188	1.7	1.4	7.4	4.9	30.0
2nd quarter 2003	818,756	13,215	1.6	10.6	5.2	3.7	29.4
1st quarter 2003	740,307	12,567	1.7	-11.1	-12.6	3.4	29.0

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 78 percent of the e-commerce sales estimate and about 72 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-13ARIMA-SEATS 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.

The X-13ARIMA-SEATS software improves upon the X-12 ARIMA seasonal adjustment software by providing enhanced diagnostics as well as incorporating an enhanced version of the Bank of Spain's SEATS (Signal Extraction in ARIMA Time Series) software, which uses an ARIMA model-based procedure instead of the X-11 filter-based approach to estimate seasonal factors. The X-13ARIMA-SEATS and X-12 ARIMA software produce identical results when using X-13ARIMA-SEATS with the X-11 filter-based adjustments. The X-13ARIMA-SEATS software will be available from the Census Bureau's Internet site in the coming months. Additional information on the X-13ARIMA-SEATS program may be found at <http://www.census.gov/srd/www/x12a/>.

Note that the retail estimates continue to be adjusted using the X-11 filter-based adjustment procedure.

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.