

Black Friday now lasts the whole season, expert says

November 15 2012, by Judith Barra Austin

(Phys.org)—Black Friday has been the traditional kickoff of the holiday shopping season, but consumers can expect Black Friday sales starting now and extending through the end of the year, says Richard Feinberg, Purdue University professor of consumer science and retailing.

Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, gets its name from the fact that it used to be the day that retailers' profits moved into the black for the year.

"Now retailers are out to get consumers early and often," Feinberg says. "So Black Friday-like sales have already begun and will be a regular feature all through the [holiday season](#)."

Feinberg expects [retail sales](#) to be up 3 percent to 5 percent over a year ago. Last year was a solid year for retailers with a sales increase of 5.9 percent over the previous year, he says.

[Internet sales](#) are expected to increase more than 15 percent over last year, Feinberg says. That will push Internet [sales](#) to more than \$68 billion.

"It's still a small percentage of holiday spending, estimated to be \$570 billion," he says. "But the percentage has been creeping up over the past couple of years."

Traditionally, Internet holiday shopping has been most active on "Cyber

Monday," the Monday after Thanksgiving. That's because shoppers would be back at work with access to computers. But with computers in most homes now, [Internet shopping](#) starts earlier, Feinberg says.

"The [Cyber Monday](#) bump has just about been washed out," he says. "Internet holiday spending begins prior to Thanksgiving and extends all the way to the week of Christmas as consumers have become more confident that they will get merchandise on time."

More retailers are opening Thanksgiving evening, saying that consumers are asking for that option, Feinberg says.

"My research suggests that consumers are neither clamoring for nor complaining about Black Friday on Thursday. Some consumers simply like the idea of having something to do after the holiday meal," he says.

Thanksgiving weekend shopping accounts for just 10 percent to 14 percent of all holiday spending, Feinberg says, while more than 50 percent of holiday retail spending occurs during the last week and a half before Christmas.

"Contrary to popular belief, Black Friday has never been the best shopping day of the holiday season," he says. "That title usually belongs to the Saturday before Christmas. Black Friday is one of the top five busiest shopping days of the year, though."

Black Friday is really a pep rally for the holiday season. Getting consumers in the mood and optimistic turns out to be one of the most important factors influencing spending.

"It is important to get consumers excited about holiday spending, but my research shows that consumers get excited about the [holiday shopping](#) season even if they do not shop at 4 a.m. on Friday morning," Feinberg

says.

That said, he expects 75 million [consumers](#) to shop on Thanksgiving and Black Friday.

Provided by Purdue University

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