

Does Black Friday still matter? You might be surprised

November 23 2017, by Ian Chaffee



Lining up at midnight for Black Friday deals on electronics may be a waning holiday tradition. Credit: Robert Stromberg

If you're among the throngs in the stores this Friday—or even late Thursday—you might not realize it, but in retail circles many experts are

asking one question: With shopping options galore, does Black Friday even matter anymore?

"Many of us like to marvel at, complain about or participate in the craziness of Black Friday shopping," said Anthony Dukes, associate professor of marketing at the USC Marshall School of Business.

"However, data shows that sales on the day after Thanksgiving have declined over the past two years and there are reasons to expect the trend to continue."

He noted that fewer shoppers are entering stores, thanks to the explosion in online retail. And some retailers—online as well as brick-and-mortar—have been going ahead with promotions and discounts in the days and weeks before Thanksgiving.

Timely help

But there's good news for retailers, too, thanks in part to the calendar.

"This year, Thanksgiving happens relatively early," said Lars Perner, assistant professor of clinical marketing at the USC Marshall School.

"This is [good news](#) for retailers in the sense that there will be more time for consumers to shop.

"Sales have also been 'stretched,' with many new sales happening before and during the Thanksgiving weekend and on Cyber Monday [Nov. 27]. Cyber Monday seems to have been revived as a means to extend the Thanksgiving sales."

But while shopping patterns alter and traditional stores face challenges, it's hardly the end of the line for those of us on the receiving end of all that gift-buying.

"This is probably not an indication that Americans are giving up on holiday [shopping](#)," Dukes said. "But the nature of when and where we purchase our gifts may be changing for good."

Provided by University of Southern California

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