

Market Report

A Snapshot of your Marketing Sector

E-Commerce

This pack has been designed to provide information on setting up a business in the **E-Commerce** industry in Scotland, as well as helping to inform the market research section of your business plan. You can find more information on how to write a business plan from the Business Gateway website (www.bgateway.com/businessplan), including an interactive template and tips to get you started.

This market report was updated by Business Gateway in **November 2025**.

What do I need to know about the E-Commerce market?

The following summary statistics have been taken from market research reports and reliable resources that the Information Service uses to compile industry information. They should give you an indication of how your industry is faring at present and whether there is demand for your type of business:

- ◆ In 2024, online retailing bounced back from the post-pandemic dip to the total value of **£127.1bn**, a growth of **3.1%**. Online retail sales are forecast to grow by **22%** between **2024 and 2030** with annual growth rates of around **1.9% and 3.6%**. (Mintel, *Online Retailing*, August 2025).
- ◆ The estimated value of online retail orders collected in **2025** is valued at **£28bn**, an increase of **8.6%** compared with **2024**. The range of collection points are set to expand as retailers and delivery operators continue to invest in out of home networks. (Mintel, *Online Retailing: Delivery, Collection and Returns UK*, October 2025)
- ◆ People in the **25-34 year-old** age group were the most active online buyer group in **2024** with **89%** of internet users in this age group making purchases online, accounting for around **£95.4bn in revenue**. Consumers aged between **35 and 44 years old** have higher disposable income but less time which encourages them to lean towards digital channels for everyday and discretionary items. This demographic accounted for **£91.9bn revenue in 2024**. (IBISWorld, *E-Commerce in the UK*, July 2025).
- ◆ Clothing, Footwear and Accessories accounted for **25.4%** of sales (**£16.5bn**) in the E-Commerce and Online Auctions industry in 2025. Followed by Consumer Electronics at **20.4%** (**£13.2bn**) (IBISWorld, *E-Commerce and Online Auctions UK*, August 2025).
- ◆ Social commerce (**s-commerce**) and Mobile commerce (**m-commerce**) will continue to shape the retail e-commerce landscape in the UK. Mobile shopping is expected to continue expanding as smartphones become the primary devices for online shopping. Retail e-commerce is forecast to maintain a strong growth trajectory due to the rising consumer preference for convenience. (Euromonitor, *Retail E-Commerce in the UK* – April 2025).
- ◆ The national organisation for this industry is [SRC](#) (Scottish Retail Consortium). Other industry bodies are [IMRG](#) and the [British Independent Retailers Association](#)

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Where can I find more information on my market?

The Information Service has access to a number of databases which can offer more detail on this industry. Some of these reports are listed below - if you would like to be sent extracts from any of these reports, please contact us on **0300 013 4753** or email info@bgateway.com.

- ◆ **Mintel - Online Retailing - August 2025.** Around 63% of online shoppers have expressed interest in some kind of AI or tech assisted tools. Younger Gen Z and Younger Millennials, the most frequent online shoppers, show the greatest interest in AI tools. This demographic are the most likely to look for hacks to speed up the process.
- ◆ **IBISWorld – E-Commerce and Online Auctions UK – August 2025.** During times when disposable incomes are low, consumers may be put off by travel expenses associated with in store shopping. Consumers can turn online to find cheaper goods with auction sites benefitting from this. The broad types of products sold online, ranging from high-value to low-end varieties, shield the market from low consumer confidence.
- ◆ **Euromonitor – Retail E-Commerce in the UK – April 2025.** With technological advancements, retail e-commerce in the UK is expected to maintain strong growth, driven by consumer preference for convenience. Local consumers are seeking convenience, personalised experiences and flexibility in their shopping habits. In response, retailers are integrating AI and machine learning to provide a more tailored recommendations, personalised shopping and faster delivery options.
- ◆ **Statista – Online Shopping Behaviour in the UK-March 2025.** British consumer are avid online shoppers, and the well-developed e-commerce market in the UK has made customers increasingly demanding.

There are also online resources you may find helpful:

- ◆ Mobile commerce, or m-commerce, is sometimes seen as a subset of the e-commerce industry. Yet, shopping via smartphone has quickly become consumers' preferred way to shop online. By 2027, m-commerce is expected to [represent 62%](#) of all e-commerce transactions. [How The E-Commerce Industry Is Changing And What Companies Are Doing To Succeed](#) Forbes June 2025

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How can I find out about my competitors?

Business Gateway's online guide to [Competitor Analysis](#) explains how to find your competitors, how to research what they're doing and how to act on what you learn about them.

Immediate competition will be from other businesses in your local area. There are several online directories which can be used to find company information and generate lists easily and at no expense. Many Local Authorities also publish local business directories on the web. Below are some key web resources:

- ◆ General business directories such as [Yell](#), [Thomson Local](#) or [Google Maps](#)
- ◆ Trade specialists like [EuroPages](#) (European directory), [The Wholesaler](#) or [Free Index](#)
- ◆ Business to business (B2B) specialists such as [Kompass](#)

Likewise, your local Chamber of Commerce may publish a members' directory; find your local Chamber on the [Scottish Chambers](#) website.

Once you've identified who your competitors are, the next step is to gather information on the way they do business. Which services do they provide? How do they market themselves? How much do they charge?

To learn about your competitors:

- ◆ Look for articles or adverts in local newspapers, trade press and directories.
- ◆ Try to read their marketing material; if the company has an online presence, visit the company's website as a first port of call. Not only does it give you a better understanding of the company's activities, it can also offer a wealth of information such as a company history or staff biographies, as well as the company's partners or suppliers
- ◆ Search for information on limited UK companies via the [Companies House](#) website
- ◆ Gain an insight into your competitor's performance using credit checks and the accounts that limited companies are required to submit to Companies House each year.

We can provide credit checks free of charge; if you are interested in using this resource, or looking for us to help you find relevant publications, please contact us by emailing info@bgateaway.com or by calling **0300 013 4753**

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What about suppliers?

[Choosing and Managing Suppliers](#) can help you decide what you need from a supplier, how to identify one and how to choose one to deal with.

Trade associations or industry specific organisations may also be able to recommend suppliers or contacts. You can also use the aforementioned resources for finding competitors to find suppliers.

Once you have decided on a supplier, we can run a credit check on the company to help assess their financial stability. We provide credit checks free of charge; if you are interested in using the resource please info@bgateway.com or by calling **0300 013 4753**.

Who are my customers?

Your business plan should include information about the customers you would expect. Business Gateway's guides on [Market and customer research](#) will help you to identify new trends, opportunities, customers and competitors.

It can be useful to group your customers by geographical location, age or lifestyle. The websites listed below are freely available and can provide most of this information. If you can't find what you're looking for from these websites, please contact us and one of the team will be happy to help:

- ◆ Access the latest population estimates from the [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#). NRS also offers demographic factsheets for each council area in Scotland, which can provide summary statistics for the area you will be based in.
- ◆ Information from the most recent census in 2011 is released via the official website. See in particular the [Census Area Profiles](#). Clicking on your area of interest will give the latest population figures, including estimates by age.
- ◆ [Understanding Scottish Places](#) has interactive profiles of towns and cities across Scotland. It can be useful for understanding the interrelationships and flows between towns, and also gives comparisons between two or more places.
- ◆ [Scottish Government Statistics](#) provide accurate and up-to-date statistics on Scotland, covering population, health, education and housing.
- ◆ [The Scottish Household Survey](#) provides information on the structure, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of Scottish households, both at a national and local level.
- ◆ [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) is the recognised national statistical body for the UK. ONS covers a wide range of demographic, economic and social issues at a UK level.



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How can you help me with other aspects of starting my business?

The Business Gateway website has guides, videos, online tutorials and tips on all aspects of starting up a business in Scotland. Follow the links below to explore each resource:

Accountancy

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland's (ICAS) ["Find a Chartered Accountant"](#) tool

Funding

[Practical information](#) on finance and funding for starting and growing your business

Insurance

[Business insurance guide](#)

Legal Help

Gov.uk "[Licence Finder](#)" tool

Law Society of Scotland's "[Find a Solicitor](#)" tool

Pricing

Business Companion [Pricing & payment guide](#).

Please note: the most effective way to research pricing is to conduct your own research – visit wholesalers or suppliers to obtain price lists, find quotes from similar companies and work out what other businesses in your area are charging

Promotion

[BG guides to Marketing](#)

Training

[Skills Development Scotland's My World of Work](#)

[Funding for training](#)

[Small Business Bonus Scheme \(Scotland\)](#)

Your local Business Gateway can offer events, workshops and 1:2:1 support on all aspects of starting and developing your business. Call the helpline on **0300 013 4753** to find out what is available in your area.

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You must not rely on the information in the report as an alternative to advice from an appropriately qualified professional. If you have any specific questions speak to your Business Gateway Advisor or consult an appropriately qualified professional.

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