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## Retailers, 'Don't Get Caught with Your Sites Down' This Holiday Season

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For many UK consumers the typical Christmas shopping scenario no longer involves braving the cold and walking down to the high street to fight over this year's all-the-rage gift. Instead, more and more shoppers are resorting to tablets, mobile phones and computers to do all of their Christmas shopping online.

So they do a search online to find the best price to order, but there's a problem. Due to the high demand for the hot-ticket item on their list, the first site is out of stock. The second site keeps crashing, so they decide to purchase from a third site.

With online shopping sales around Christmas expected to rise roughly 14% this year<sup>1</sup>, retailers cannot afford to lose out because of a website malfunction or a transaction failure. Average downtime for the UK top 50 ecommerce websites in 2013 was higher in Q4 than any other time during the year. The major Christmas shopping season is not a time for any retailer to get caught with its site down. From hiring more IT staff to using load testing services and building website redundancy, retailers need to realise they can no longer afford to take chances with site performance — at any point, let alone the busiest shopping period of the year.

### Manage holiday shopping traffic with Internet performance

As retailers plan ahead for high traffic holiday shopping, they will take the time to decorate stores, create the best layout so that flashy products will catch shoppers' eyes and, most importantly, ensure there will be enough staff to handle increased capacity. So what can retailers do for their sites?

First, retailers need to take a critical look into the back-end of their online storefront and traffic — during the busy holiday season, the performance online can be crucial to whether a customer will make their holiday purchases there. So retailers need to always find ways to improve their web reputation and performance. Is it easy to find product information? How long and complicated is the checkout process? How do they compare the competition?

Retailers can also look to cloud-based managed DNS to help manage traffic booms. Here performance assurance lets you plan ahead, identify any risks and make smart decisions for upcoming periods based on data. With these tools in place, it is possible for retailers to plan ahead for the holiday season and be prepared for any foreseeable traffic booms.

### Ensuring a successful holiday season...online

The winter shopping season provides a huge opportunity for retailers to woo new customers and hit record sales — but the massive amounts of traffic that accompanies the holidays provides a great challenge to the Internet performance of retailers' websites. Retailers can't afford to fall at the first hurdle by offering a poor online experience. Instead, they should take advantage of the season to impress shoppers with a strong ecommerce offering: a reliable and trusted site and online services that can withstand high traffic.

For optimal performance retailers need to get prepare now for the forthcoming holiday peak, ensuring the ability to provide a great customer experience, even during busy times. Christmas in July isn't a myth. If an IT specialist can guarantee less downtime and lower latency for the holiday season, Christmas may just come early.

1. <http://www.mintel.com/press-centre/retail-press-centre/mintel-christmas-2014-predictions-online-sales-to-surge>