



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

- Rob:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English with me, Rob.
- Finn:** And me, Finn.
- Rob:** Hello Finn. Well, Happy New Year to you. Here we are in 2014, the festive season is over – so Finn, did all that Christmas shopping **break the bank**?
- Finn:** You mean, did I spend too much money? Well, yes I did, but I put most of it **on plastic** – my credit card – so I'll pay for it next month.
- Rob:** Well, clearly you didn't have enough money to buy me a present! Anyway, today we are talking about shopping and a relatively new style of shopping called **showrooming**.
- Finn:** Yes, showrooming – this is where customers visit shops to see and test products before going online to buy them.
- Rob:** We'll be discussing that soon and looking at vocabulary to do with shopping. But before we do, Finn, you're a man who likes to shop - but do you know which country has the most people who shop online? Is it:
- a) The United Kingdom
 - b) The USA
 - c) Korea
- Finn:** Well, I know the internet is very big in Korea but I think the USA has more online shoppers.
- Rob:** OK, well, I'll let you know the answer at the end of programme. So today we're talking about how technology is changing the way we shop and how it could spell disaster – or be very bad for – **the high street**.
- Finn:** The high street – this is a term we use in Britain to mean the collection of everyday shops that we normally see in our town centres. Things like shoe shops, newsagents, supermarkets.
- Rob:** We know that the high street is competing with the internet. I buy things like CDs, electrical goods and food online, from the comfort of my home.
- Finn:** Ah but have you ever 'showroomed' before, Rob? That means going to a shop, having a look at something and then going home to buy it online.

Rob: Yes, I bought a camera at a **knock-down price** online, although it was from the same **retailer** as the shop that I saw it in. I know I'm not alone in doing this though. Research by a company called *Foolproof*, found 24% of people 'showroomed' while Christmas shopping last year.

Finn: And a market research company called TNS found one third of consumers around the world said they used this tactic – or this type of shopping.

Rob: Now, although people do it to try and save money, there are other reasons for this too, as we can hear from the Head of Technology at TNS UK, Amy Cashman. See if you can hear what the three reasons are:

Head of Technology, TNS UK, Amy Cashman:

There's basically three main points that this kind of behaviour can overcome. People are short on time, short on money and they want reassurance about the products they are buying. So they use the internet in store and online on their mobile which we found is particularly prevalent, to do things like try and get to the bottom of where they can find a cheaper price elsewhere but also get information, product reviews and also do things like look at store layouts and see where products are so they can go and find them faster.

Finn: So she says there are three main reasons for people to showroom: They are short on time, short on money, and they want **reassurance**.

Rob: Yes, reassurance – so they want to know what the product really looks like and they want to be confident they are buying the right thing.

Finn: I think that's true, I like to inspect what I am buying. If you go to a shop and look at the real thing, you get a much better idea of what it's like than from a photo on the internet or in a catalogue – but I also want a **bargain** – in other words, the best price.

Rob: That's why Amy Cashman said customers sometimes use the internet in store – so in the shop – to 'get to the bottom of' where they can get it cheaper. We could say they use the internet to **shop around**.

Finn: That's a good phrase, meaning to look around for the best deal. Using a smartphone is an increasingly popular way to do this.

Rob: Smartphones are also useful for getting **product reviews** – these are the kind of opinions or comments about the product.

Finn: Yes, and you can also use smartphones to scan the barcodes on the product and compare prices that way.

Rob: So it seems **browsing** – that's looking at things to buy – but not actually purchasing something in store – is set to increase. Does this mean the death of the high street, Finn?

Finn: I think it will have to adapt or make changes. It could try to compete on price more or offer more **incentives** when you are in the shop.

Rob: Incentives – these are things to encourage you to buy the product there and then. Perhaps a discount voucher or a free gift?

Finn: And we mustn't forget that buying in a shop means you can get expert advice from the sales assistant and you can get good **aftercare**.

Rob: Well, I didn't need expert advice buying my Christmas presents this year.

Finn: Oh, why was that?

Rob: Well, I bought gift vouchers for everyone! Now Finn, it's time to see if you belong to the nation with the biggest online shoppers. Earlier I asked you if you knew which country has the most people who shop online - is it:

- a) The United Kingdom
- b) The USA
- c) Korea

Finn: I said b) The USA.

Rob: A good guess but you were wrong. The answer is the UK. I don't know if it means we're the laziest people or just the best bargain hunters! Well, that's it for this programme. Please join us again for 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English.

Both: Bye.

Vocabulary and definitions

break the bank	cost too much
on plastic	on a credit card
showrooming	an activity where customers visit shops to see and test products before going online to buy them
the high street	a typical street in the centre of a town or village, where everyday shops and businesses are located
a knock-down price	an extremely cheap price
retailer	person or shop selling things to the public
reassurance	(here) getting comfort and confidence from seeing something yourself
a bargain	a price that is lower than usual
shop around	go to several shops before deciding what to buy
product reviews	opinions and comments about what a product is like
browsing	looking at things in one or more shops without intending to buy anything
incentives	things that make people want to do something, because they know they will get a benefit
aftercare	support or advice offered to a customer after buying something

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/2014/01/140102_6min_showrooming

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