

It's Time for Holiday Shopping. Do You Have Your Budget?

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Paul Taylor, Executive Vice President
Cary Funk, Senior Project Director
Peyton Craighill, Project Director

MEDIA INQUIRIES CONTACT:
Pew Research Center
202 419 4332
<http://pewresearch.org>

PewResearchCenter
A Social Trends Report

It's Time for Holiday Shopping. Do You Have Your Budget?

It's that time of year again. Merchants are stocking the shelves and hoping for record sales. Forecasters are busy trying to figure out what to expect at the cash registers when the traditional start of the holiday shopping season arrives this weekend.

Once they do start flooding the stores, more than half of all adults (56%) say they'll be working within a holiday shopping budget, while about four-in-ten (41%) say they'll be winging it – shopping without a pre-set spending limit.

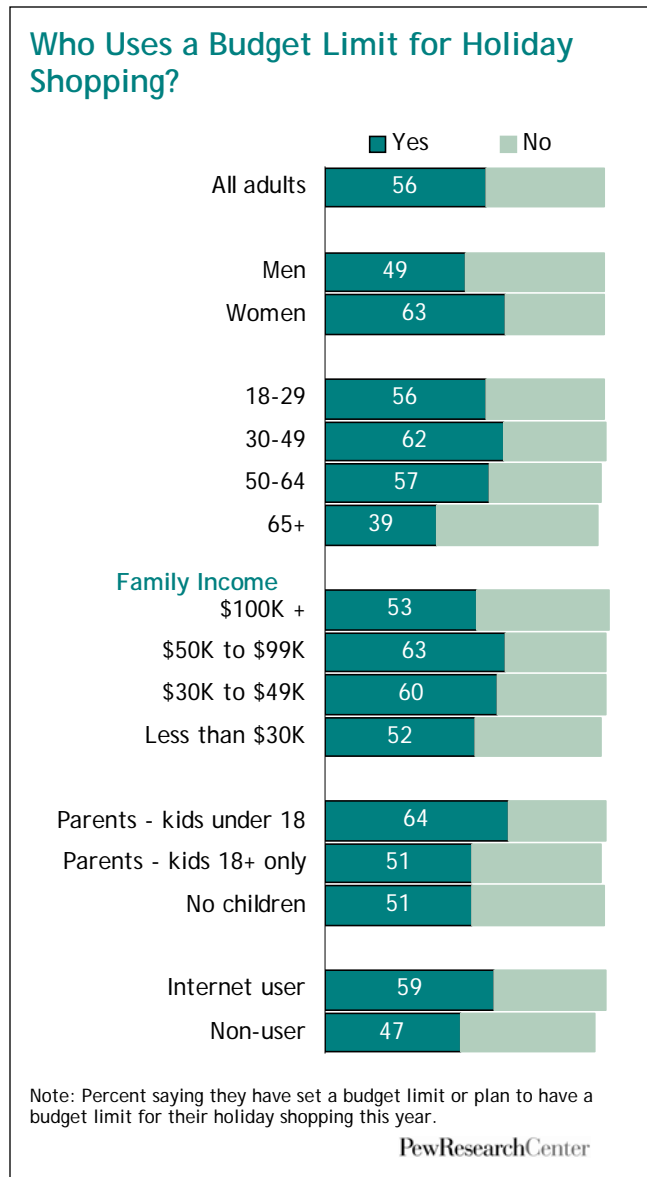
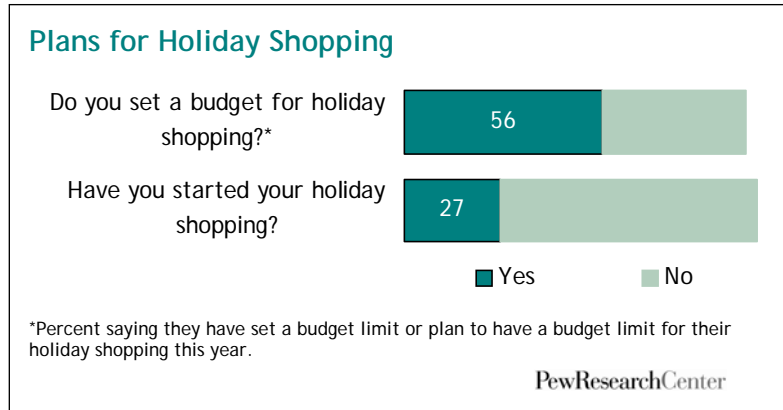
For most Americans the heart of the holiday shopping season still lies ahead. Fewer than 3 in 10 (27%) adults have started their holiday shopping. The findings are from a Pew Research Center telephone survey among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 adults taken from October 18 through November 9.

Holiday Budgeting and Ease of Affordability

A majority of Americans say they set a budget limit for their holiday shopping; 56% have already set or plan to set a limit while 41% say they don't use a budget limit for holiday shopping.

Women are more inclined than men to use a holiday budget. Fully 63% of women use a budget limit for holiday shopping, compared with 49% of men. Parents of minor age children (64%) are more likely than non-parents and those with adult age children to set a limit (51% each).

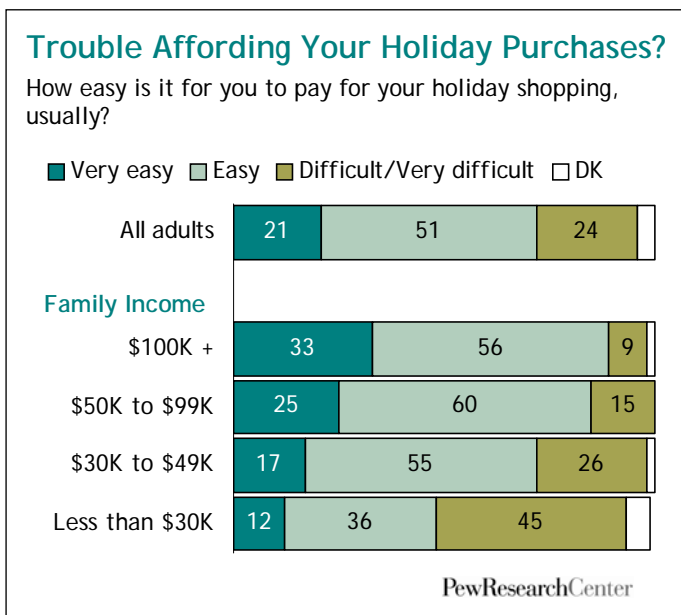
Younger and middle-aged adults are about equally likely to report using a budget limit for holiday



shopping; older adults (ages 65 and older) are less likely to do so.

Regardless of whether or not respondents use a budget, a majority report that it is usually easy or very easy to pay for their holiday shopping. About one in five (21%) adults say it is usually very easy to pay for their holiday shopping; 51% say it is easy and 24% say it is difficult or very difficult to do so.

Not surprisingly, the less affluent are more likely to report difficulty paying the holiday bills. Fully 45% of those with incomes under \$30,000 say it is difficult or very difficult to pay for holiday shopping; about half (48%) say it is easy or very easy to do so. By contrast, fewer than one-in-ten (9%) of those with incomes of at least \$100,000 report difficulty paying for holiday shopping; 89% say it is easy or very easy to do so.



Who Are the Early Birds?

Most Americans have yet to begin their holiday shopping. Fewer than three-in-ten of Pew's survey respondents interviewed in October (26%) and November (28%) have started their shopping. Groups more inclined to have started holiday shopping are: women—especially working women; parents of either minor or adult age children; the married; and those with family incomes at or above \$30,000. Even so, in none of these groups has more than four-in-ten yet started their holiday shopping at this point in the fall.

While Internet shopping may seem like a procrastinator's dream, internet users (30%) are a bit more likely than non-users (19%) to say they have started their holiday shopping. This pattern may be explained, in part, by the groups most likely to be on-line: namely younger and more affluent adults. Internet users under age 50 (28%) are more likely than their non-user counterparts (17%) to have started shopping. Those with less income to spare are both less likely to have started shopping and less likely to be internet users. Among those with family incomes of \$30,000 and above, internet users are a bit more likely to have started shopping--33% have done so compared with 27% among non-users, but this difference does not reach levels of statistical significance.

About the Pew Social Trends Reports

The Pew social trends reports explore the behaviors and attitudes of Americans in key realms of their lives – family, community, health, finance, work and leisure. Reports analyze changes over time in social behaviors and probe for differences and similarities between key sub-groups in the population.

The surveys are conducted by the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

Survey reports are the result of the collaborative effort of the social trends staff, which consists of:

- Paul Taylor, Executive Vice President
- Cary Funk, Senior Project Director
- Peyton Craighill, Project Director

About the Survey

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted with a nationally representative sample of adults, ages 18 years and older, living in continental U.S. telephone households.

- Interviews conducted Oct. 18 - Nov. 9, 2006
- 2,000 interviews
- Margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level. The margin of sampling error is higher for results based on subgroups of respondents.

Survey interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

Bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias in the findings of opinion polls.

PEW SOCIAL TRENDS
 FINAL TOPLINE
 OCTOBER 18 - NOVEMBER 9, 2006
 N=2000

QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 29 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Q.30 Have you started your holiday shopping this year, or not?

27 Yes, started
 73 No, haven't started
 * Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
 100

ASK IF STARTED (Q30=1):

Q.31a Have you set a budget limit for your holiday shopping this year or don't you use a budget limit for holiday shopping?

ASK IF NOT STARTED (Q30=2):

Q.31b Do you plan to have a budget limit for your holiday shopping this year or don't you use a budget limit for holiday shopping?

<u>Q31a/b</u>		<u>Q31a</u>	<u>Q31b</u>
56	Have/Plan to have a budget limit	57	56
41	Don't use/Don't plan to use a budget limit	43	41
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>*</u>	<u>3</u>
100		100	100
(N=2000)		(N=578)	(N=1415)

ASK ALL:

Q.32 How easy is it for you to pay for your holiday shopping, usually? (READ)

21 Very easy
 51 Easy
 18 Difficult
 6 Very difficult
 4 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
 100

QUESTIONS 33 THROUGH END HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

Who's Started Holiday Shopping?



Note: Employed includes those who are not retired and are working either full-time or part-time. Not employed includes those who are not retired and not employed.