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Initial numbers for Black Friday sales for internet retailers present a pretty rosy picture.

Though Black Friday is considered as the biggest day of the year for brick-and-mortar retail stores, online retailers are also seeing phenomenal year-over-year growth.

Retail e-commerce spending surged 26 percent on Black Friday compared with a year ago, internet research company comScore reported Sunday.

Web retailers took in a total of \$816 million on Black Friday, up from \$648 million last year, making it the heaviest online spending day to date in 2011.

Thanksgiving day, traditionally a lighter day for shopping, also saw online holiday spending spike 18 percent to \$479 million.

For the month of November up to Black Friday, \$12.7 billion had been spent online, marking a 15 percent increase over the same month last year.

ComScore Chairman Gian Fulgoni stated, "With brick-and-mortar retail also reporting strong gains on Black Friday, it's clear that the heavy promotional activity had a positive impact on both channels it is telling that the top multi-channel retailers also showed strong growth in visitors, demonstrating the importance of the online channel to the retail industry as a whole."

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The most visited websites:- Despite analysts' predictions that early opening of brick-and-mortar retailers would slash e-commerce, data shows 50 million Americans visited online retail sites on Black Friday, representing a 35 percent increase in traffic versus a year ago.

The most visited website on Black Friday was Amazon, with Walmart, Best Buy, Target and Apple rounding out the top five. Fulgoni said, "Amazon.com once again led the pack, with 50 percent more visitors than any other retailer, while also showing the highest growth rate versus last year.

"However, it is telling that the top multi-channel retailers also showed strong growth in visitors, demonstrating the importance of the online channel to the retail industry as a whole."

Focus now on Cyber Monday:- All eyes are now on whether web retailers can sustain the Black Friday momentum through Cyber Monday, when millions of bargain hunters are expected to log on from work.

Last year, online shopping peaked on Cyber Monday, with sales exceeding \$1 billion. Nearly 80 percent online retailers plan to offer Cyber Monday promotions ranging from one-day deals on certain items to longer-term incentives. For the month of November up to Black Friday, \$12.7 billion had been spent online, marking a 15 percent increase over the same month last year.

Vicki Cantrell, executive director of Shop.org, the digital arm of the National Retail Foundation, said, "With promotions like flash sales that only last an hour or deep discounts on selected lines, shoppers know they can win big on Cyber Monday."

•In addition to putting the finishing touches on their websites, retailers have invested heavily in mobile apps and related content as the appetite for Cyber Monday shopping through smartphones and tablets continues to rise. •

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