

RETAIL

## Luxury ecommerce lacks speed, leaving shoppers behind: report

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*Chanel offers one of the most efficient luxury ecommerce Web sites. Image credit: Chanel*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

As ecommerce sales of luxury goods soar, an overwhelming number of consumers remain disappointed by their experiences with online shopping, particularly when it comes to speed and efficiency.

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Ninety percent of shoppers have left an ecommerce Web site because it did not load as quickly as expected, according to a new report published by Yottaa based on a survey conducted by Retail Systems Research. While high quality imaging is crucial to luxury brands and retailers, slow site speed greatly impacts consumers' user experience.

"Shoppers take action after getting frustrated from a slow loading ecommerce site," said Rich Stendardo, CEO of **Yottaa**. "One might assume that the majority of shoppers would simply go to Amazon to make their intended purchase.

"However, RSR's survey showed that most shoppers, 57 percent, went to a similar brand to make the purchase rather than Amazon, 40 percent," he said.

The research was based on evaluations of 80 ecommerce sites, including Louis Vuitton and Tiffany & Co., and responses from 1,300 consumers. Both mobile and desktop sites were reviewed.

### Speed matters

On average, it takes more than nine seconds for a retailer Web site to load on either a desktop or mobile device.

More than a third of respondents, 35 percent, reported having left between three and five Web sites in the last six months because of loading time.

Fifty-three percent believe that slow sites are a waste of their personal time. With many affluents being time-poor and free time being considered a non-renewable resource, improving site speed is another way luxury brands can cater to their audience.



*Ralph Lauren scored above average for site performance. Image credit: Ralph Lauren*

Of the 90 percent of respondents who left a site because of slow loading time, the majority completed their purchase elsewhere. Twenty-three percent never return to the initial site, discouraged by the slow speed.

Only 12 percent of consumers complained to retailers about their online experience, underscoring the importance of brands auditing their own digital properties.

Ralph Lauren was the highest scoring luxury brand, receiving 30 points on a 60-point scale. This translates to a grade of 50 percent, while the average retailer scored 47 percent.

With a score of 29 points, French fashion house Chanel also ranked above average at 48 percent.

Although jewelry was the best performing retail category, Tiffany & Co. scored 27 points. Also ranking below average was French fashion label Louis Vuitton with 26 points, or 43 percent.

#### Closer look

One of the major contributors to slow site speed is third-party applications, which are responsible for live chat, recommendations, product ratings and reviews.

"The leading cause for slow ecommerce sites is third party technologies that retailers add to their sites to make them more engaging," Mr. Stendardo said. "RSR has found that these third parties account for about 70 percent of site latency."

Nearly two-thirds of shoppers, 64 percent, consider user feedback during their shopping journeys, according to Bazaarvoice's Shopper Experience Index. The number of online reviews posted grew almost 10 percent from 2017 to 2018 ([see story](#)).

While luxury brands take the lion's share of all of the market's revenues, they are less dominant in ecommerce, accounting for only 68.9 percent of online sales.

According to a report from RetailX, brands have put more emphasis and investment into their bricks-and-mortar stores than their online presence, leaving more of the ecommerce market open to multi-brand players. The report estimates that 11 to 12 percent of 2017's 262 billion euros, or \$296 billion, in luxury sales happened online in 2017 ([see story](#)).

"Luxury brands are known for high quality, and a slow loading site is not the impression they want to present to shoppers," Yottaa's Mr. Stendardo said.

"These brands need to find a way to balance rich sites features and imagery with fast performance to enable shoppers to quickly engage with their brand online," he said. "This will result in greater shopper experiences and higher online revenue."