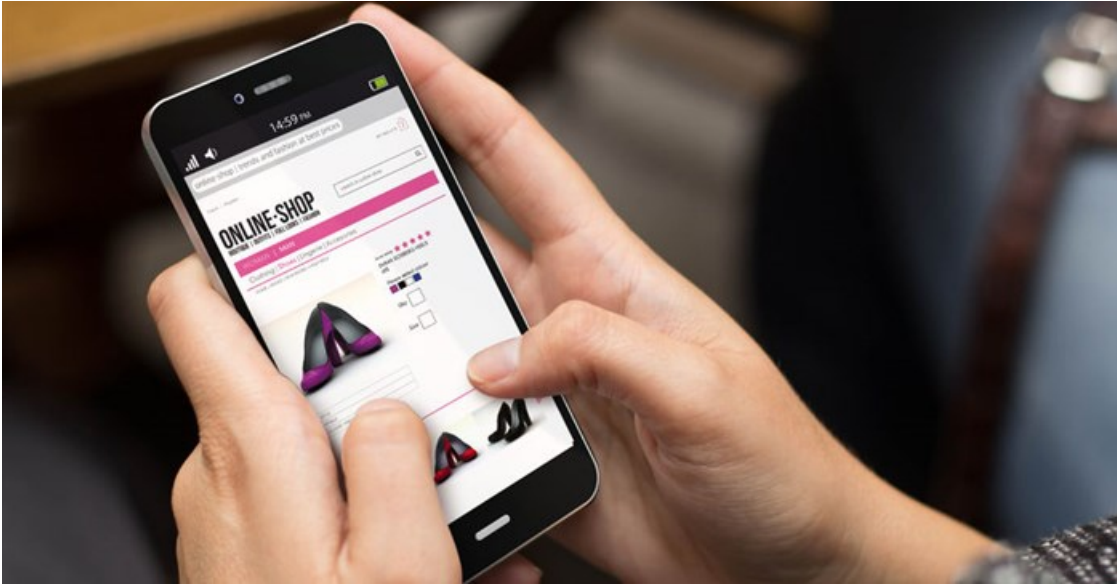


Global e-commerce trends taking off locally

E-commerce is set to increase in popularity and consumer uptake in South Africa this year due to a number of supporting trends, from greater variety offered by e-tailers, to the evolution of tech offerings, such as shopping apps and the profile and behaviour of shoppers.



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“While there is already much variety available online, more brick and mortar stores are joining in. This has been enabled by umbrella platforms, such as PriceCheck Marketplace, which offers a solution for retailers wishing to move into the e-tailer space,” says Kevin Tucker, founder of [PriceCheck](https://www.pricecheck.co.za). He identifies the top five global e-commerce trends set to take off locally in the coming year.

1. International online retail sale days

International online sale days, such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday, are popular and profitable e-commerce opportunities and present South African e-tailers with the chance to reach more consumers (who are actively looking to make purchases) than they normally would. This trend has great potential locally, particularly if retailers form partnerships or cross-channel agreements with each other. For example, an electronics retailer could join forces with a gaming retailer to form better deals, reach more potential customers and move more stock.

2. Faster delivery turnaround

The unreliable South African postal service has been a hurdle in the local context but delivery in South Africa through various providers and couriers has improved over the last few years. This improvement is likely to continue with delivery methods taking priority for businesses looking to stand out in the local e-commerce sector.

3. Variety

A major influencer of local e-commerce growth in 2017, the increase in variety of product offerings online, e-tailers and the presence of online marketplace platforms is likely to continue. While South African consumers have been able to make online purchases for everything from tickets for live shows to their Friday night takeaways, the variety of product and supplier options will continue to rise.

4. Customer behaviour evolution

As e-commerce offerings increase with the inclusion of brick and mortar stores and their products, which may not have traditionally been sold online, South African consumers will continue to become more aware of the safety and convenience of online shopping. They will become more inclined to turn to e-commerce platforms for everyday convenience purchases - moving beyond current trends that fall more towards fashion and electronics.

5. Mobile at centre stage

The use of mobile devices – and smartphones in particular – within the e-commerce space is a major consideration for organisations in terms of ensuring mobile-friendly online display settings, opportunities in developing mobile applications and introducing new payment options. While the majority of mobile online shopping transactions tend to take place on desktops, shopping apps, which are easy and convenient to use on mobile devices, are likely to increase in popularity in South Africa this year.

Likewise, with increasing interest of local banks to improve their online payment systems, new payment options may further simplify e-commerce websites and the way online shopping is done.

“As mobile penetration continues to increase rapidly, as it has in the past decade, Africa’s current contribution to global e-commerce sales is set to rise exponentially.

“It is important to note that South Africa, as one of the most significant e-commerce contributors on the continent, is likely to take the lead in next level e-commerce adoption with sales expected to increase by around 40% over the next 10 years, as consumers continue to shift their purchasing behaviour to increasingly favour the convenience of online platforms.

“Staying up-to-date with the latest e-commerce trends and innovations in 2017 will benefit both customers and retailers by providing an optimal user experience as well as giving brands a better understanding of their client base,” he concludes.

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