

## Consumers head online to find more retail deals

Six years after the phrase Cyber Monday was coined, shoppers around the country flocked to their computers or smartphones to snap up deals on electronics, apparel, furniture, and more.

Online sales on Cyber Monday, which was started in 2005 by a retail trade group to encourage Americans to shop online the Monday after Thanksgiving, were up mid-afternoon by 15 percent from a year ago, according to data from IBM Benchmark.

Meanwhile, sales from mobile devices were up 7.4 percent.

Last year, Cyber Monday sales topped \$1 billion for the first time, making it the heaviest day of online spending ever. During this week's "Cyber Monday," the NRF says nearly 80 percent of retailers planned to offer special promotions. And a record 122.9 million of Americans are expected to shop on the day, up from 106.9 million who shopped on "Cyber Monday" last year, according to a survey conducted for Shop.org.

"If you go back five years ago, we didn't do much at all on Black Friday or Cyber Monday," Other World Computer President and Chief Executive Officer Larry O'Connor said. "But we have some really inexpensive Apple cables that are flying off the shelf, and SSD [hard drives] starting at \$49 that are moving out briskly. ... I don't expect to have many of them on the shelves at the end of the day."

O'Connor said OWC sales revenue on Black Friday soared 40 percent from a year ago, and Saturday and Sunday sales also were up more than 15 percent from 2010 levels.

"It looks like we're on track [Cyber Monday] for at least 25 [percent] to 30 percent over last year, and last year was huge for us, too," he said.

To handle the expected deluge of traffic, O'Connor said OWC went through early tests of servers and capacity – to ensure there was more than enough capacity and traffic routing to provide a seamless customer experience – as well as adding extra shifts in the warehouse Saturday and Sunday to ship products.

"We normally don't run a Sunday shift, but we had an extra shift, and Saturday we had

extended hours," O'Connor said. "A very important thing for us is our same-day shipping until 10:30 p.m. It's always been a priority, so we have a team and staff in place, even with the crazy volume like today. We'll ship out 5,000 orders today. It's fun stuff, to stay the least."

The strong start for Cyber Monday, created by a unit of The National Retail Federation, comes after more people than ever turned out during the kickoff to the holiday shopping season over the weekend. A record 226 million shoppers visited stores and web-sites during the four-day holiday weekend starting on Thanksgiving Day, up from 212 million last year, according to the NRF.

And sales on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, rose 7 percent to \$11.4 billion, the largest amount ever spent, according to ShopperTrak, which gathers stores' data.

By early afternoon Monday, Web traffic was up about 46 percent year-over-year at noon, according to Akamai, a firm that tracks Web traffic said.

Traffic has been up substantially since the Monday before Thanksgiving, as retailers promoted online deals earlier than ever, said Lelah Manz, chief strategist of commerce,

"There has been a huge volume of promotional activity being driven by daily deal sites, Facebook and other social networking sites," she said. "The season started much earlier, there has been a huge volume of promotional activity being driven by daily deal sites, Facebook and other social networking sites."

Jamie Minoso is among those who shopped online Monday. She stayed in on the busy shopping day after "Black Friday," but hit websites Monday to check out the deals on toys, electronics and pet products online.

"I do not enjoy the traffic and chaos involved in shopping at a mall," she said.

"So, if I can get what I am looking for sent to my door for free, I will always take that option."