

◀ Online shopping ▶

Sub-standard sites slated

CONSUMERS ARE getting increasingly frustrated with UK online retailers, according to research.

Web-services companies, Transversal and Scivisum, found that online retailers took too long to answer emails, failed to provide the right answers to basic customer service questions or had poorly designed websites.

Transversal revealed that online retail websites could answer only five out of the 10 most common customer questions, such as queries about deliveries or returns.

Retailers who were the slowest to answer emails were grocery and fashion companies, where consumers had to wait on average 23 hours for a reply.

Such delays are making consumers increasingly angry, and the second survey from

Scivisum found UK consumers from the north of England and Scotland were most likely to be prone to "web rage" when shopping online.

Almost a quarter of people surveyed in these regions declared they would never return to a favourite site if its performance was bad, versus an average of six per cent elsewhere. According to the study of 1,000 people carried out in April this year, the main gripes were website crashes and the lack of telephone support.

One in three of those surveyed said poor web experiences would drive them back to shopping on the high street.

James Roper, chief executive of the Interactive Media in Retail Group, said that as online shopping grows, consumers are increasingly expecting a better service and companies must sharpen up procedures. ■

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