

## 2007 UK Holiday Impact Study

Industry Study Series from Keynote Competitive Research

Study Abstract

# Keynote Competitive Research

## Research Objectives

The Keynote Holiday Impact Study is part of a competitive intelligence program for understanding and improving customer service and service levels of leading Web businesses. Keynote's mission is to improve eBusiness performance worldwide by providing metrics and insights for customer experience, application service levels and competitive strategies.

## Study Participants

For the study of Online Retail sites, Keynote collected over 3000 data points per site. For the purpose of measuring "Holiday Impact", the measurements were taken from December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007 through January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The Peak Period used for availability calculations is defined as:

- Daily 8:00AM to Midnight GMT.

The sites tested were:

- Amazon
- Argos
- ASDA
- BBC Shop
- Boots
- Comet
- Curry's
- HMV
- John Lewis
- Marks and Spencer
- Next
- Pixmania
- Play
- Tesco Direct
- Virgin
- Woolworths

## Methodology Overview

### Measuring Service Levels

To gather data on the operational excellence of sites in a study, Keynote uses its Transaction Perspective automated testing agents to mimic the actions of a consumer using the Internet Explorer browser to interact with the sites measured.

The agents are deployed through out Keynote's Global Network, and will perform these tasks at least hourly during the study period. The agents track more than 35 performance metrics and collect over 3000 data points to rank the sites in the study on each of seven key performance factors.

### Measurement Locations

- High Speed Locations (Once per hour)
  - ▶ London BT
  - ▶ London Level3
  - ▶ London PSI
  - ▶ London Verizon
- DSL Location (Once per hour)
  - ▶ London BT

## Transaction Compared

The transactions used in the study are based on similar activities that can be performed across sites within the study group. Path differentiation within the individual sites is examined and custom scripted to achieve accurate results. For the Holiday Study, the overall transaction included the following:

1) Home Page



2) Search / Category



3) Product Details



4) Cart / Checkout



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## Specific areas of Success

Using extensive measurement data and analysis, Keynote benchmarked leading online retail sites in two major categories:

**Reliability** – Measures a site's ability to service its customers without errors or outages. Reliability is based on detailed measurements focused on two Key Factors:

- Availability
- Outages.

Rank	Reliability
1	BBC Shop
2	Play
3	Pixmania

**Responsiveness** – Measures a site's ability to provide highly responsive and consistent page downloads. To obtain the overall Responsiveness Ranking, Keynote evaluates and compares the sites according to their performance on five Key Factors:

- High Speed Response
- Dial-up Response
- Response Time Consistency
- Geographic Uniformity
- Load Handling

Rank	Responsiveness
1	Argos
2	John Lewis
3	Next

## Industry Insights

- There was a large variation in download times between sites
  - ▶ Example: One site's Home Page downloaded in over 6s while the fastest (Boots) took only 0.99s
  - ▶ Example: The slowest Search Results took over 4.6s while the fastest (Boots) took only 0.28s
  - ▶ Example: Average page download varied between 0.77s and 3.5s
- DSL performance was very poor for several sites
  - ▶ Example: Two sites had Home Pages that downloaded in over 10s over DSL and 7 downloaded in over 5s

- Many of the sites showed significant Load Handling issues (a measure of how well the site serves users without slowing down)
  - ▶ Given the high volume of users visiting the sites during this time it is not surprising
  - ▶ Likely caused by inadequate planning or a larger volume of users than expected
- The top sites were available (error free) over 99.5% of the time
  - ▶ BBC Shop had an incredible 99.9% peak period success rate (Play was 99.5%)
- Many sites struggled with downtime
  - ▶ Industry averaged 11 peak hours of significant impact (>30% failures)
  - ▶ Several sites reported up to 60 hours of peak period downtime

## Results Availability

This abstract highlights findings from the Keynote Holiday Impact Study Research Report. The full report contains hundreds of data points including specific detail about why the sites ranked where they did. Armed with this intelligence, site managers and developers can tune specific aspects of their application to provide better performance to customers than their competition.

## Custom Comparisons

Not included in the study? Need to see where you rate against the top site? Keynote's researchers can create an expansion study to collect the same metrics on your site, and profile your results against the sites in this study. Conducting a study is a straightforward process:

## About Keynote Systems

Keynote Systems, Inc., the Mobile and Internet Performance Authority is the worldwide leader in eBusiness performance management services. Over 2100 corporations and 19,000 individual subscribers rely on Keynote's growing range of measurement, monitoring and customer experience management services to improve eBusiness performance by reducing costs, improving customer satisfaction and increasing profitability. Keynote's products provide enterprises with the tools to align IT and Business goals. To learn more about Keynote's Competitive Research studies, please visit: [http://www.keynote.com/keynote\\_competitive\\_research/](http://www.keynote.com/keynote_competitive_research/)