

Black Friday: A closer look

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Traditionally, the annual Christmas shopping season has made December the busiest time of the year and the most important month for retailers. A greater proportion of annual sales among most store types takes place in December than in any other month.

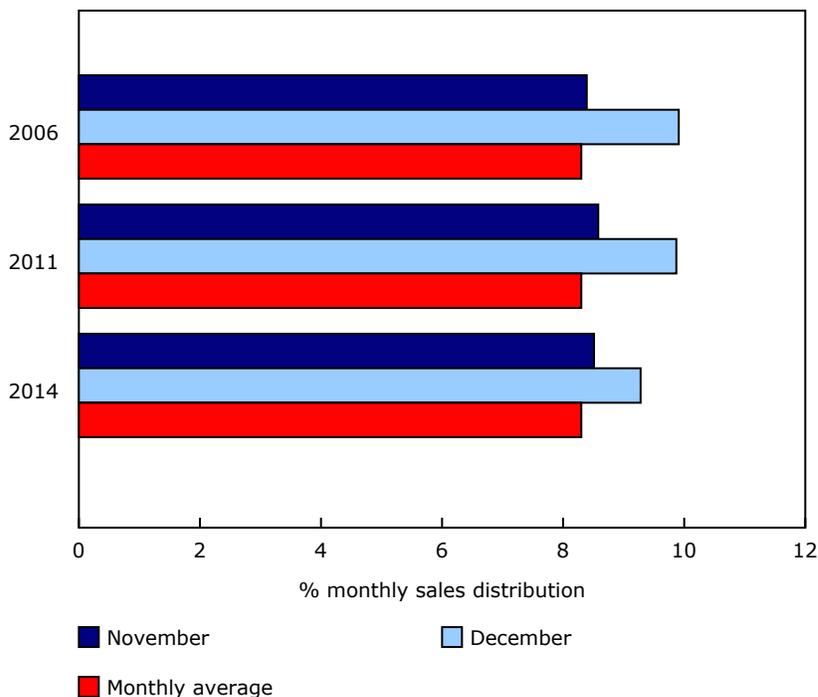
However, in recent years, the advent of more promotional events such as Black Friday, centred around the American Thanksgiving weekend, have pushed the beginning of the holiday shopping season into late November. Retail hours of operation have been extended to promote greater retail activity and spending.

Black Friday impact limited

From 2006 to 2014, the share of annual retail sales in November and December combined declined from 18.3% of total annual retail sales to 17.8%. During that period, November's share of total annual retail sales edged up from 8.4% to 8.5%, while December's share declined from 9.9% to 9.3%.

Sales in both November and December remained above the monthly average and December remained the busiest shopping month of the year.

Chart 1
December remains the busiest shopping month



Source(s): CANSIM table [080-0020](#).

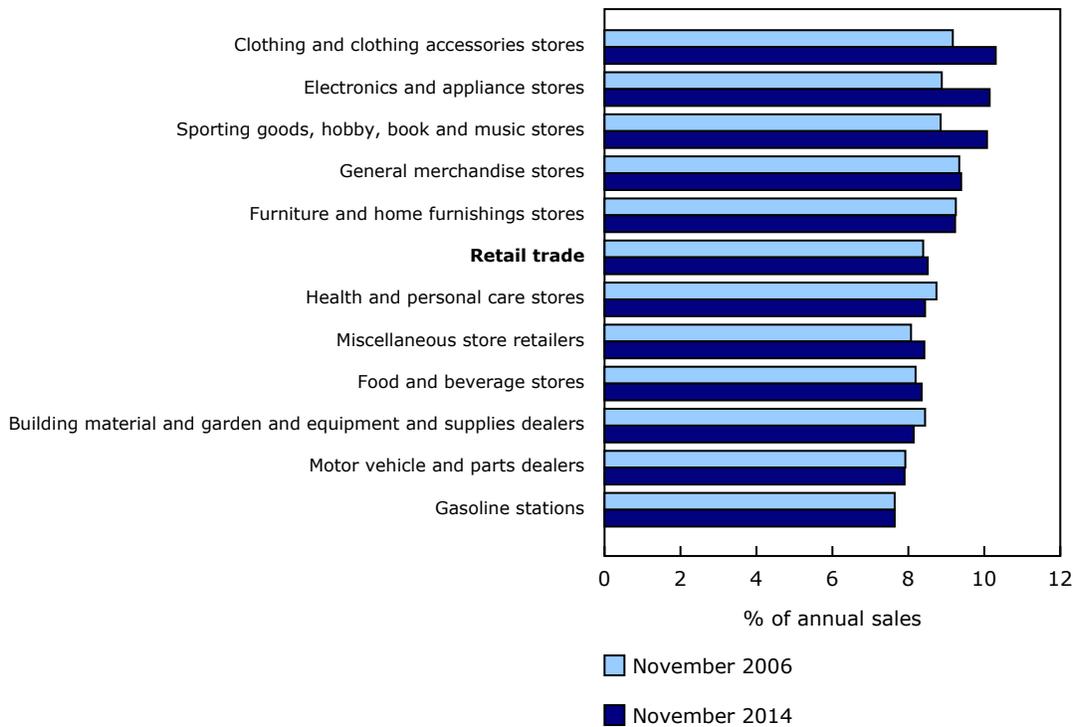
Black Friday by subsector

Looking at total retail sales from 2006, 2011 and 2014, Black Friday does not seem to have affected overall retail sales patterns. When considering specific retail subsectors, however, November's share of annual retail sales has grown significantly since 2006 in three types of retail stores: clothing and clothing accessories stores, electronics and appliance stores and appliance stores as well as sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores.

The timing of the arrival of colder weather and winter snowfalls affects sales in the clothing and clothing accessories stores subsector. For sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores, the combined effects of weather (16.1% of sales in this subsector are clothing and clothing accessories) and the timing of new product releases related to toys, games and hobby supplies (such as electronic games) have increased the portion of total annual retail sales for November.

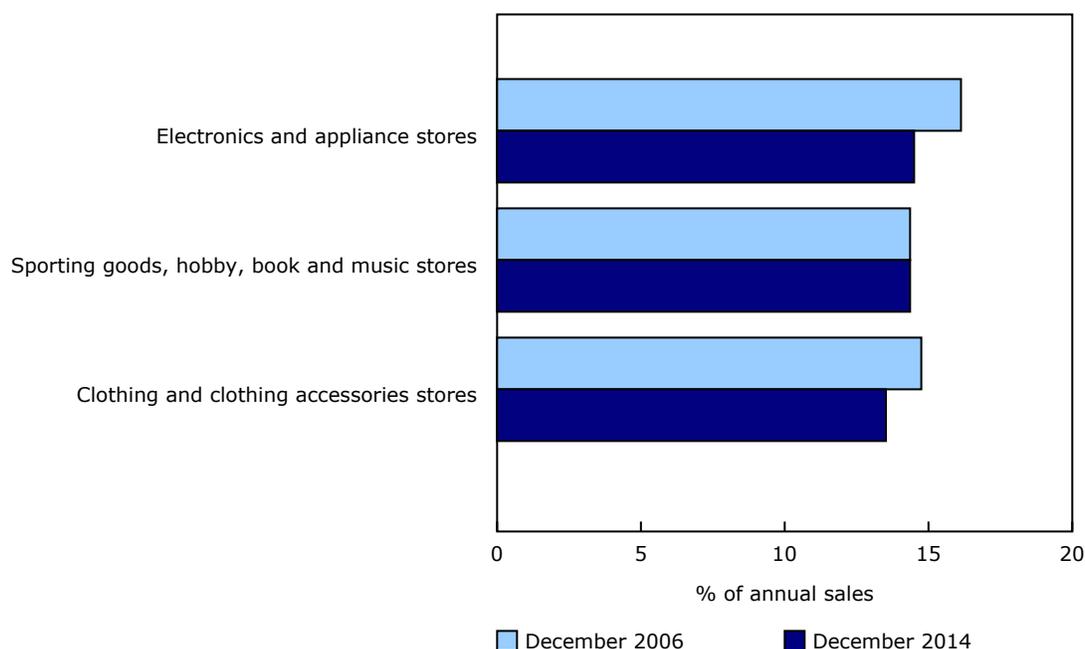
In the electronics and appliance stores subsector, Black Friday promotions appear to have shifted some sales from December to November. December's share of annual sales at electronics and appliance stores decreased from 16.1% in 2006 to 14.5% in 2014, while November's share increased from 8.9% to 10.1%.

Chart 2
Share of annual retail sales by subsector, November 2006 and November 2014



Source(s): CANSIM table 080-0020.

Chart 3
Share of annual retail sales for selected subsectors, December 2006 and December 2014



Source(s): CANSIM table [080-0020](#).

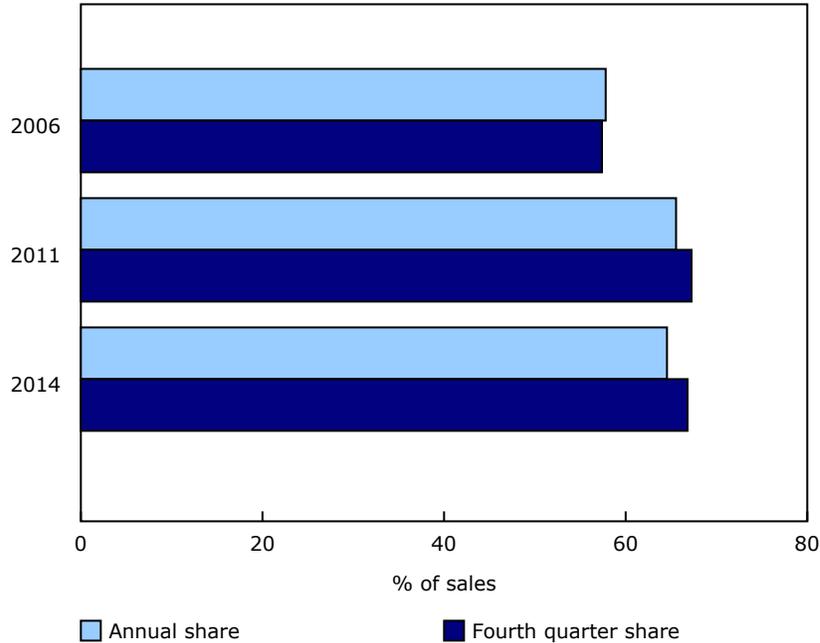
Black Friday at electronics and appliance stores

Almost two-thirds of the commodities sold at electronics and appliance store retailers can be attributed to computer hardware and software (30.3%), telephones and home office equipment (19.1%) and televisions and audio and visual equipment (15.1%), according to annual commodity estimates from the Retail Commodity Survey. This share has grown significantly, from 57.8% in 2006 to 65.5% in 2011 and 64.5% in 2014. These gains reflect, in part, changes in technology and product offerings, as they came mainly at the expense of pre-recorded CDs and DVDs and cameras.

On a quarterly basis, the highest annual share of sales is in the fourth quarter when Black Friday and Christmas occur. According to data from the Monthly Survey of Large Retailers, Black Friday has coincided with a higher share of annual sales in November for computer hardware and software as well as telephone and home office electronics. However, sales of cameras (still and digital) and related photographic equipment and supplies have edged down in November but have remained stable in December.

Chart 4

Share of computer hardware and software, telephones and home office equipment and televisions and audio and visual equipment at electronics and appliance stores



Source(s): CANSIM tables [080-0020](#) and [080-0022](#).

Note to readers

The release "Black Friday: A closer look" analyzes the effects of Black Friday on total retail spending using unadjusted data from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey and the Retail Commodity Survey. Additionally, it evaluates whether there has been a significant shift of sales from December to November since the introduction of Black Friday and in what store types.

Three years have been selected to compare retail sales patterns: 2006, which represents the time prior to Black Friday and before the economic downturn in late 2008; 2011, a post-downturn year when Black Friday events were an increasing part of the Canadian retail landscape; and 2014, the most recent year for which data are available.

Data presented in this release are available in CANSIM tables [080-0020](#) and [080-0022](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [2008](#), [2406](#), [2408](#) and [5027](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).