



ARE BARCODE SCANNER APPS THE HIGH STREET'S SECRET WEAPON?

MAJOR RETAILERS ON THE WEB NOW HAVE "M-COMMERCE" SITES TO COPE WITH THE GROWING TREND OF SHOPPING ON THE INTERNET VIA TABLETS OR SMARTPHONES. TREVOR BINGHAM LOOKS AT WHAT'S NEXT FOR OUR TABLETS AND SMARTPHONES.



Mobile commerce (m-commerce), with proportionally designed sites, developed for our tablets and smartphones, is growing like a weed. By the end of 2015, the percentage of sales transactions carried out purely on our mobile devices is expected to reach 40 per cent. Japan and South Korea, no strangers to leading the way in electronic device usage, have already tipped over the 50 per cent mark on the 'eCommerce transactions' scales in favour of m-commerce.

Now that we carry these mobile devices around in pockets and handbags, be they tablet or smartphone, the high street retailers are out to take advantage of this, rather than engage in a battle that they couldn't win. The trick behind any good e-commerce or m-commerce site is to remove the barriers to the customer purchasing journey. In other words, make it as easy as possible for the customer to complete their purchase, in the least amount of time. To achieve this, the high street retailers have been looking at ways to streamline their own buying process. One key avenue of development, is having barcode scanner apps downloaded onto smartphones and tablets.

These apps, known as native apps because they are specific to each shopping chain, are set to be a 'major player' in the continued success of m-commerce during this year and

are said to be one of the mobile trends to watch in 2015.

Scandit, leaders in the barcode scanning app industry, have revealed that a total of 4.5 million of their barcodes were scanned during the last Black Friday in America. This impressive figure suggests that the predictions

"A BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED NATIVE APP CAN NOT ONLY BE A CONSUMER'S FIRST CHOICE FOR BROWSING, BUT ALSO RESULT IN A PURCHASE VIA A MOBILE OR A TABLET."

for native apps may prove to be correct. Retailers have caught on that native apps are an excellent way to acquire "an edge" over their rivals, meaning that scanning barcodes in stores may end up becoming the norm.

Mobile applications with in-app barcode scanning empower consumers in entirely new ways, enabling them to avoid long checkout lines through smartphone-based self-checkout. They also capture and save product information, compare prices in real-time, submit or view user reviews, build and share lists, find items while in-store, and more.

The increase in mobile barcode scanning during the shopping experience points to a broader trend: consumers, especially

consumers born after 1980, are using smartphones and tablets more than ever to make purchasing decisions, both online and offline.

Shoppers do generally use their mobile devices to research products before making a purchase these days, meaning that an

easy-to-use app builds customer relationships, with consumers returning to an app (or even the store) if the app provides an excellent user-experience. The appearance of an app or website obviously impacts on how consumers conceive a brand, as well as how safe it is to make purchases. Therefore a beautifully designed native app can not only be a consumer's first choice for browsing, but also result in a purchase via a mobile or a tablet.

The ability to scan barcodes with mobile devices to instantly compare prices are now used by many retailers, which can be used as a quick way to see how much competitors are selling products for. Businesses don't want to be creating the ultimate mobile shopping experience only to lose out on a sale due to the product being cheaper elsewhere. However, it is native apps that will ultimately keep customers engaged and drive sales, especially if there is a reward scheme in place.

Barcode-scanning apps are currently doing wonders for the numbers of people making purchases via their mobiles.

