

# Christmas Goes Crackers for Online Retailers in 2004

Submitted by: Dexterity

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- Actinic's poll reports 60% sales growth over Christmas period -

A hi-res jpeg of Chris Barling is available at [www.actinic.co.uk/press/people.htm](http://www.actinic.co.uk/press/people.htm)

Weybridge, Surrey ~ 4 January 2005 ~ Growth in internet commerce has not slowed down and may even be accelerating, according to the fourth annual Christmas poll conducted by Actinic Software amongst a sample of small and medium retailers selling on the net.

The companies surveyed reported an average 60% increase in web sales during November and December 2004, compared with the same period in 2003. In 2003 the corresponding year-on-year increase in orders was 30%. Sites polled ranged from 2004 startups taking a handful of orders, to mature ecommerce sites processing several thousand. The average number of orders over the period was 1570.

Some online retailers were almost overwhelmed by the increase in orders. Chris Burslem of Online Paper ([www.on-linepaper.co.uk](http://www.on-linepaper.co.uk)) comments, "At one point during November we nearly switched the web catalogue off so we could catch up with the sheer volume of orders coming at us, not only from the UK, but from all over the world."

Sites also reported an average 80% increase in online turnover – indicating that the average order value has risen, as well as the average number of orders.

Some, such as Mega City Comics ([www.megacitycomics.co.uk](http://www.megacitycomics.co.uk)), note a corresponding decline in offline sales. Julian McIntosh of [www.safariquip.co.uk](http://www.safariquip.co.uk) remarks that, "Web sales are expected to overtake over-the-counter retail sales early in 2005. The rate of web growth is making us consider ecommerce a safer and less costly alternative to bricks and mortar growth into new branches."

The retailers surveyed were overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic about their internet ventures. Nigel Thornbory of Highly Strung International, [www.highlystrung.co.uk](http://www.highlystrung.co.uk), offers this advice for retailers considering taking the plunge into online trading: "If you have products worth selling and can deliver them quickly and efficiently, then your business will grow provided you follow two simple rules. Never advertise anything you haven't got in stock, and never make promises you can't keep."

Actinic CEO Chris Barling concludes, "We may be seeing the first signs that the internet is impacting not just High Street sales, but also the inclination of retailers to expand their real-world outlets. Each year adds to the feeling that the original dot-com boom hype wasn't so much wrong as too early".

For further comment, contact:

Chris Barling, CEO of Actinic. Tel 01932 871000, [Mailto:cbarling@actinic.co.uk](mailto:cbarling@actinic.co.uk)

Actinic PR: Jane Lee, Dexterity. Tel 01273 470199,

[Mailto:jane.lee@dexterity.co.uk](mailto:jane.lee@dexterity.co.uk)

About Actinic Software Ltd:

Founded in 1996, Actinic specialises in developing PC-based ecommerce software for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that want to sell online. Its products include Actinic Developer, Actinic Business, Actinic Catalog and Actinic Audio Store, and power more UK ecommerce sites than any other company. Research shows that over 50% of SMEs using packaged software to run their e-stores use Actinic. Search for 'acatalog' on Google to see the vast range of online stores that run using Actinic. Some of Actinic's better known UK users include the Royal Opera House, Lloyds of London, the Royal Navy and Help the Aged. Visit [www.actinic.co.uk](http://www.actinic.co.uk)