

## Internet damaging 20,000 U.K. stores

3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2013



The Internet has changed the nature of the way we shop. More and more of us are shopping online instead of in "bricks and mortar" stores. In

the United Kingdom, this is having dire consequences for the traditional high-street store. A respected business leader has released a report containing grim statistics on the future of U.K. retailing. CEO Bill Grimsey warns that 47 per cent of Britain's chain stores are "horribly stressed financially". This amounts to some 20,000 shops. He predicts a quarter of these will be out of business within the next three years. Mr Grimsey has also said that the continual demise of traditional shopping streets has led to what he termed as "ugly" town centres.

Mr Grimsey provided a range of reasons for the degeneration of Britain's downtown areas. Over 40,000 of Britain's shops are empty; roughly eleven per cent of all retail space. Grimsey said many stores have not sufficiently risen to meet the challenge posed by the Internet. He said that rather than looking to the future, and at innovative ideas to lure customers back, many stores are still stuck in the past. In particular, he said companies were too "nostalgic". Another reason is that multinational companies are draining local areas of money. He said: "It is not difficult to keep local money within the local economy, but it doesn't work if...we are listening too much to big firms."

Sources: *Telegraph* / *This Is Money* / *Independent*

### Writing

Compare and contrast shopping online and shopping in "bricks and mortar" stores.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*nature / shopping online / dire consequences / statistics / stressed / town centres / degeneration / empty shops / challenge / innovative ideas / nostalgic / local economy /*

### True / False

- The article says Internet shopping is changing nature. T / F
- A CEO warned that almost half of UK stores have financial problems. T / F
- Around 5,000 British shops may be out of business in three years. T / F
- A business leader says shopping streets make town centres ugly. T / F
- More than 40,000 shops in the U.K. are vacant. T / F
- A CEO said shops failed to cope with competition from the Internet. T / F
- The CEO said stores were too focused on the future. T / F
- The CEO said it was impossible to keep money in local economies. T / F

### Synonym Match

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. nature     | a. tempt         |
| 2. dire       | b. issued        |
| 3. released   | c. downfall      |
| 4. predicts   | d. vacant        |
| 5. demise     | e. character     |
| 6. range      | f. sentimental   |
| 7. empty      | g. variety       |
| 8. roughly    | h. terrible      |
| 9. lure       | i. approximately |
| 10. nostalgic | j. forecasts     |

### Discussion – Student A

- What do you think of Internet shopping?
- How is Internet shopping better than going to a mall?
- What do you think of traditional stores?
- How can regular shops compete with the Internet?
- What would happen if thousands of stores in your country went bust?
- How has your local shopping area changed in the past few years?
- Will all shopping be online in the future?
- What's your favourite shop (and why)?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. The Internet has changed the nature   | a. statistics on the future |
| 2. dire                                  | b. the local economy        |
| 3. a report containing grim              | c. shopping streets         |
| 4. stores are horribly                   | d. of reasons               |
| 5. the continual demise of traditional   | e. space                    |
| 6. a range                               | f. of the way we shop       |
| 7. roughly eleven per cent of all retail | g. stressed financially     |
| 8. meet the challenge posed              | h. customers back           |
| 9. lure                                  | i. consequences             |
| 10. keep local money within              | j. by the Internet          |

## Discussion – Student B

- How is going to a mall better than Internet shopping?
- How risky is it to open a new shop?
- Why have stores been slow to recognize the threat from the Internet?
- How can stores lure customers back?
- Do you prefer locally-owned stores or international brands?
- Is window shopping a total waste of time?
- Are people tempted to buy more online or in real stores?
- What questions would you like to ask Mr Grimsey?

## Spelling

- changed the truane of the way we shop
- "bricks and otamrr" stores
- dire gsoeesncunce
- a report containing grim ststcatsii
- horribly stressed iaailnfyInc
- the continual smeide of traditional shopping
- egodreetnani of Britain's downtown areas
- goryulh eleven per cent
- stores have not iiyfsnectufl risen to meet the challenge
- podse by the Internet
- nvitvneoai ideas
- companies were too "ctioagnsl"

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. b	4. j	5. c
6. g	7. d	8. i	9. a	10. f

## Role Play

### Role A – Internet shopping

You think Internet shopping is the best way to shop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): malls, markets or shopping streets.

### Role B – Malls

You think malls are the best way to shop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Internet shopping, markets or shopping streets.

### Role C – Markets

You think markets are the best way to shop. Tell the others 3 reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): malls, Internet shopping or shopping streets.

### Role D – Shopping streets

You think shopping streets are the best way to shop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): malls, markets or Internet shopping.

## Speaking

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| • music stores  | • sports shops           |
| • bakeries      | • toy stores             |
| • clothes shops | • electronic goods shops |
| • bookshops     | • furniture shops        |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.