

For immediate release: Monday 21st November 2011

Keeping up Appearances Costing Brits at Christmas

- A desire to keep up appearances will prove costly for Brits this Christmas
- Festive spending expected to increase this year with presents being biggest financial headache
- But three in four people in the UK would be happy to receive a second-hand gift this Christmas
- However, less than half of people would consider giving one

Three in four (74%) people in the UK would be happy to receive a second hand gift this Christmas yet less than half (47%) of people would consider giving one, according to research from classified ads website, Vivastreet.co.uk.

Despite concerns over the rising cost of day-to-day living, the pressure to appear un-miserly at Christmas means people expect to spend close to £470 on average over the festive period this year – around £30 more than last year*. The pressure to buy new appears misplaced however as the vast majority of people in the UK would gratefully receive a second-hand gift which would provide givers the opportunity to spend the same amount but on better quality presents.

Vivastreet.co.uk surveyed over 2,000 consumers on their Christmas spending and what they believe important for the perfect festive season. Despite the cost of gifts being the biggest financial concern in the build up to Christmas only one in ten (9.4%) believe receiving presents is essential for the perfect Christmas. Spending time with family is considered the most important by far with four in five (86%) people believing it essential.

Cedric Brochier, Head of Business Development at Vivastreet.co.uk, said: *“Keeping up appearances is a very British trait and is never more present than at Christmas. While Brits like to recycle and be environmentally conscious these days, keeping up with the Joneses is as British as the make do and mend spirit.*

“Not wanting to appear like a miser at Christmas puts a lot of financial pressure on people at this time of year, but we should loosen up. The vast majority of people would be happy to receive a second-hand gift and only one in ten feel receiving presents is essential for the perfect celebration. We should be trying to break the belief that new is best – especially as, for the most part, second-hand gifts mean better quality presents at a lower price.”

Christmas Spending

While the national average spend on gifts, travel, food and drink this Christmas will be nearly £470 in total, it is people aged between 41 and 50 who will spend the most this year. This age group, who are typically at the centre of large extended families, will spend nearly £600 on average.

Age	Christmas Spend in Total	Christmas Spend Per Present
16-20	£185.99	£18.36
21-30	£327.51	£23.85
31-40	£458.22	£32.84
41-50	£597.47	£35.12
50+	£349.09	£28.61
Overall Average	£469.51	£35.26

Brochier, continued: “As long as gifts are thoughtful, and in good condition the majority of people don’t mind if they aren’t fresh off the shelf. Items like vintage clothes, jewellery, furniture, DVDs, games consoles, video games and art make ideal gifts and can be bought at a fraction of the cost of new items – up to 40% below the off-the-shelf price in some cases. Even the most sought after gifts can go for 20% less.”

Second Hand Savings Examples

Gift	Cost New	Cost Second-Hand	Saving
Specialized Rockhopper 2011 Mountain Bike	£599	£350	£249 (42%)
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	£44.99	£35	£9.99 (22%)
Xbox 360 250GB	£170	£150	£20 (12%)

(Second hand items available on Vivastreet.co.uk on 15th November 2011)

Unwanted Gifts

In-laws give the worst gifts according to the research, closely followed by friends and children. However, the majority of the UK’s unwanted gifts aren’t going to waste. 29% of people give unwanted gifts to charity while 12% sell them online and another 12% re-wrap them and give them away as presents.

Brochier, concluded: *“It’s not just buying second-hand that can ease the financial burden of Christmas. Making use of the unwanted gifts you will inevitably receive can also help make January a less painful month in the wallet or purse department.”*

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Vivastreet.co.uk is a free, classified ads site. It ranks among the largest classified ads site in the UK and is ninth largest in the world.

Vivastreet offers users a simple and sociable shopping and selling experience through its extensive choice of adverts ranging from buy and sell services, properties, cars, events, pets, friendships, love and much more, all in their local area. Vivastreet operates across Europe, Latin America, North America, North Africa and Australasia – in total 18 countries across the world. Through its rigorous manual moderation procedures, Vivastreet ensures its users a safe and secure experience.

* Christmas spending figures based on the weighted average of respondents to Vivastreet.co.uk’s Christmas Spending Survey