

4 E-commerce in Spain: generational approach

E-commerce in Spain by age and education

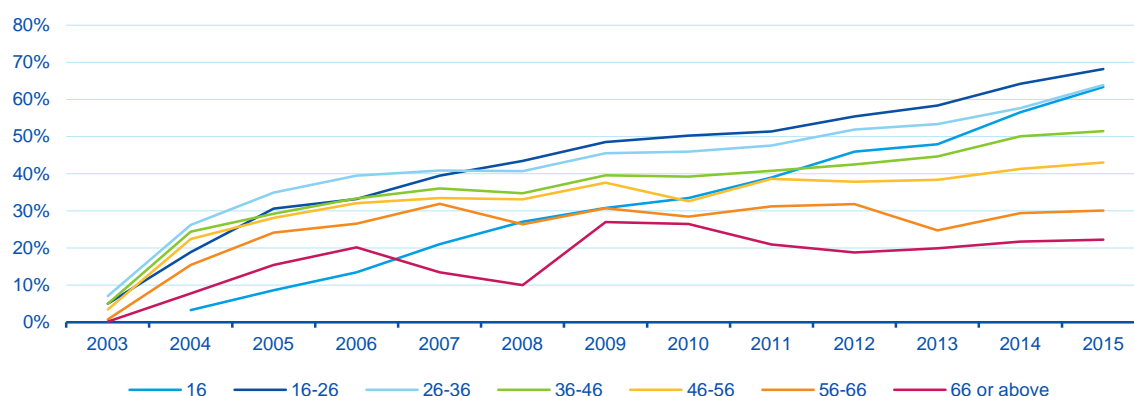
E-commerce is an outstanding indicator of the importance of ICT in the economy. Electronic commerce has spread in Spain between 2003 and 2015, and a phenomenon of divergence is observed by age, emphasizing the inverse relationship between this variable and e-commerce. These results are amplified with the level of education.

Consumer generations

Following the storyline of the November 2015 and January 2016 DEOs and using data from the ICT – Households (INE) between 2003 and 2015, several groups of consumers who use Internet (above 15 years old) have been created depending on age in 2003, at intervals of decades except for the last group, which includes people of 66 years old or above. Through this exercise, we can control for generations of Internet users and determine the evolution of them.

Figure 4.1 shows the behavior during the study period in response to the question of whether the respondent has ever used Internet.

Figure 4.1
Age distribution of e-commerce (%), 2003-2015



Source: BBVA Research based on ICT-Households (INE)

The results confirm the increase of e-commerce at all age ranges between 2003 and 2015, without appreciating clear signs from the economic cycle, as can happen with purchases in a more traditional format. All age ranges were based on a similar situation of scarcity of e-commerce activity in 2003, below 10 percent. However, the growth rate has varied among intervals, generating greater dispersion and the formation of three groups clearly differentiated. The most notable increases occurred among the population under 36, who have maintained the pace of growth in a sustainable way throughout the period considered, leaving the percentage of Internet users who have shopped online sometime in 2015 above 60 percent. The population between 36 and 46 years old form an intermediate group, with stronger growth in 2004 and 2005, and more attenuated in the following years, accumulating percentages close to 40-50 percent in 2015. Finally, those people over 55 years old have increased their percentage at a much slower pace and have undergone a process of stagnation since 2006. As a final result, the weights of Internet users who have shopped online for some time in these two older groups do not exceed 30 percent in 2015.

Education and e-commerce

As occurs with Internet usage, the education level is a relevant variable. Three levels are considered: Primary Education or lower, Secondary Education and University education. The results are shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2
Education and age distribution of e-commerce (%), 2003-2015



Source: BBVA Research based on ICT-Households (INE)

There is a positive relationship between the level of education and the percentage of people who said they had bought a product or a service online for some time, especially more intense the smaller the age of the consumer is. Thus, people with university degree have reached over 85 percent in the percentages under 36, while the weight is below 27 percent in the case of the primary education. The dispersion by level of education is much lower in the older population, varying from 30 percent in people over 66 years with university education, and only 5 percent for those with primary education.

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