

Who's not shopping online?

IT'S ONLY NOW, EARLY SPRING, THAT IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CLEAR JUST HOW STRONG INTERNET SHOPPING WAS OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD.

**MICHAEL BRUNTON
PUBLISHER**

Online shopping is far from being a new phenomenon – Amazon and eBay are longstanding and familiar names. But with double and triple digit growth year on year, it won't be long, and no-one will be surprised, when one dollar in ten is spent online.

So what's driving such growth? The start point is probably the day-to-day hassle of traditional shopping, indifferent sales assistants and products out of stock – something you can unfortunately experience at any store up and down the country. Today's modern society seems to

prefer shopping online – with its choice of anything and everything and instant order capability – especially now that it's all so easy with DSL connection replacing dial up modems and the current speed of internet access.

It's an aspect of business not to be ignored by manufacturers, retailers or clubs. "We've had a web site for years" I can hear most of you saying. But what investment are you making in keeping the site updated and moving from an 'information' source to a 'selling' tool – the two are very different and poles apart. But that's not the end of the story. The more significant cost of offering online shopping is the required investment in internal administration and extensive logistic and fulfillment capabilities to meet the just-in-time delivery now demanded by this new breed of shopper.

POTENTIAL OF YOUTH

Online shopping clearly represents a retail revolution as consumers switch from traditional outlets to the convenience – and savings – promised by web shopping. Nowhere is this better illustrated than the number of youngsters who have adopted this form of shopping with such ease. And it's some of these same youngsters that are currently finding great attraction in outdoor sports – including clay target shooting.

In this issue, Pirate Lanford looks at what's on offer in the way



of youth programs and the opportunity for our 'top shots' to put something back into the sport. But, while young shooters are the life blood of our sport – and should be encouraged – we should not forget that a high proportion of those taking up the sport are over 30 years of age, older even, and often recruited via a friend, by family or a corporate event. They are at a stage in their lives when things are more settled – the kids are a bit older and the mortgage more manageable. In short, they have more of what marketers call 'disposable income'. While we all support and encourage youth programs, we should also support local club activities, charity and corporate events that are equally important in promoting our sport.

PLENTY MORE

With the coming of Spring, the competition season has got into full swing. Besides the early shoot reports in this issue we examine various ballistic issues, begin a new series of coaching articles and continue our well received Gun Test reports – including details of a new range of Italian Zoli shotguns just introduced to the USA. Tom Thompson's article on his recent visit to the NSCA Hall of Fame suggests that the next time you are in San Antonio it's very much worth a visit. Technoid has some interesting news for you, and rounding off another busy issue is an update on the contribution made to our sport by The Connecticut Travelers. Enjoy! ■