



Freeney Williams

On-line retailers lose £450 m over Black Friday / Cyber Monday weekend due to websites which present barriers to disabled users

PRESS RELEASE

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London, UK – The second edition of the Click-Away Pound research survey is launched today. As online spending reaches record levels, new research aims to discover how much revenue UK businesses are losing as disabled customers click away from inaccessible websites.

Online shops should be open for everyone, but what if you can't use a mouse, or see the screen, or hear the sound? 1 in 5 people in the UK live with a limiting long-term illness, impairment or disability, and should be among those who benefit most from online access to the UK's major retailers. But many retailers still don't design and build their apps and websites to include everyone, turning away millions of customers and billions in sales.

The first [Click-Away Pound Report](#) showed 70% of users will 'click away' from sites with barriers, and 80% say cost is secondary to accessibility in choosing an online retailer. Failing to provide accessible consumer websites cost UK retailers £11.75 billion in 2016. This equates to £446 m over the Black Friday / Cyber Monday weekend. The new survey aims to see if that picture has changed as online spending rises to record levels.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures for 2017 show that online sales in the UK increased by 15.9% from the previous year. This trend continues, with spending online reaching a new high at 18.2% of all retailing in August 2018. UK consumers are now spending more online than ever before and, as a result, businesses are becoming ever more dependent on getting their online offering right.

The [Click-Away Pound survey](#) has been commissioned and designed by Brighton-based Rick Williams, Managing Director of specialist disability consultancy [Freeney Williams Ltd](#) in partnership with digital accessibility specialist Steve Brownlow.

Speaking about the Click-Away Pound survey, Rick Williams said:

“As a visually impaired person I do a lot of internet shopping, but will often need to try a number of sites before I find one I can actually use. The sites I can’t use have lost my business.”

“We expect the findings to show that this is an increasingly important issue for businesses. If the law doesn’t persuade them to do things differently and think about disabled shoppers, perhaps the bottom line will. While I hope that things have improved since 2016 many disabled people with access needs still report major challenges when shopping on-line.”

“We want as many disabled online shoppers as possible to go to the website www.clickawaypound.com and take part in this survey. We expect the results will play a key role in improving business’ approach to this issue.”

Susan Scott-Parker, Honorary Vice President and Founder of Business Disability Forum and now CEO at Business Disability International, said:

“This is one area many businesses seem to struggle with. This survey will demonstrate what we’ve known for many years, that businesses ignore disabled shoppers at the risk of their bottom line and damage to their PR. Why would anyone do that? And don’t forget – making it easier for disabled customers to spend their money, inevitably makes it easier for every customer. I’m hoping this research shows an improvement and look forward to the new survey’s findings with interest.”

In developing this research, Freeney Williams is supported by Barclays, Business Disability Forum, and Business Disability International.

Ends

Notes to editors:

The Click-Away Pound Report, published in 2016, was the first major research survey to establish and quantify the link between website accessibility and the consumer choices made by people with disabilities.

1. Rick Williams is Managing Director of Freeney Williams. For media enquiries, please email: rick@freeneywilliams.com or call 01273 327715
2. Freeney Williams Limited is one of Europe’s leading disability and diversity consultancies. They work extensively in all sectors to achieve long-lasting and self-sustaining change designed to meet the needs of employers and service providers in the real world. For more information, visit: <http://www.freeneywilliams.com/>
3. Business Disability Forum is a not-for-profit business membership organisation that represents some 300 organisations that employ 20% of the UK workforce. Formerly called the Employers’ Forum on Disability, the company has more than twenty years’ experience of working with public and

private sector employers and service providers. For more information about BDF, visit: <http://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/about-us>

4. Business Disability International works with global organisations in the private and public sector, and supports them to bring 'disability confidence' into their operations around the world. For more information about BDI, visit: <https://www.businessdisabilityinternational.org/>
5. For more details of the Click-Away Pound research survey, visit: <http://clickawaypound.com/>