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**Press release**

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**Consumer fears regarding the security of their personal data stall the development of online commerce, according to PwC Total Retail Consumer Survey 2015**

**Bucharest, 19 March 2015** – Although traditional shops are still the consumer’s first choice, 20% of them prefer shopping online using personal computers, 10% shop via tablets, and 11% via mobile phones, according to PwC’s *Total Retail Survey 2015*, based on the answers of 19,000 shoppers from around the world.

„On the internet, the mobile phone device tends to become the main sales assistant, as shoppers claim a more personalised product experience. Thus, clients use mobile phones in order to research pricing, product characteristics and friends’ opinions regarding their experiences with those products. Social media is also a marketing tool, and its impact on online commerce is visible in Romania as well” argues Mircea Bozga, Partner, Assurance Services, PwC Romania.

Consumers still prefer traditional high-street shopping, citing the fact that, this way, it’s easier for them to see, touch and try on products (60%). Another advantage of traditional shopping is that they receive the items on the spot, instead of waiting for delivery after placing an order (53%).

Consumers use mobile phones, tablets or PCs mostly for researching products (according to 50% of respondents), but also for comparing them with competitors (49%), locating shops (31%) and using their discount vouchers (25%). Although more and more consumers turn to mobile technology to shop, more than half (66%) fear that the security of their credit card data is at risk of being stolen.

„What stalls the development of online commerce are consumer fears regarding the security of their personal data, especially since cyber attacks target mostly systems supporting card payments. By accessing these systems, hackers use the account information of the user (including the PIN number), clone cards and, consequently, withdraw cash” stated Armin Dinar, Senior Manager, IT Risk Assurance, PwC Romania.



„As mobile phones and tablets are more and more present in daily activities, businesses started to implement security measures in order to tackle cyber threats. Moreover, EU regulations regarding data protection to be adopted in 2015 include among the security measures that businesses must take: insurance against cyber security incidents, implementing a risk assessment process and adopting a risk management program which should enable organizations to better manage security threats targeting data” added Mircea Bozga.

The study also reveals that traditional payment methods prevail at the expense of mobile payments. Thus, the main payment method – credit cards – is preferred by 40% of shoppers, followed by debit cards (28%), cash payments (20%), invoice payments (6%), while mobile payments are preferred only by 3% of shoppers.

Almost half of consumers do not consent to shops detecting their location or collecting data related to payment and delivery through a mobile application. Instead, more than half of consumers are delighted when they receive deals and vouchers on their mobile phones, but are worried about the fact that their personal data used in transactions on these devices can be stolen.

Social media is becoming more and more present in human interactions in various fields, but especially in the relationship between the consumer and the retailer. According to the PwC study, 34% of consumers follow their favourite brands or retailers on social media, 28% have discovered brands through social media, 27% researched a brand taking into consideration the feedback of other consumers, and 23% voiced their experiences with certain brands or products online.

The study reveals that what attracts a significant percentage of shoppers (45%) to access the social media page of a certain brand are promotional deals and discounts. Other consumers are interested in deals for new products, for which 33% access social media. Other reasons cited are product research through social media before buying (24%), recommendations of friends or digital influencers (24%), and also deals sent via email/text (21%).

According to the PwC survey, Facebook ranks first in the preferences of 52% of consumers when asked which social media channel they use during the online shopping process. Other frequently used social media channels are Google Plus (31%), Youtube (25%) and Twitter (14%).

### **About the report:**

PwC carried out a global survey to understand and compare consumer shopping behaviours and the use of different retail channels across 19 territories: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Chile, Denmark, Hong Kong, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Middle East, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, UK and the US. PwC conducted 19,068 online interviews during August and September 2014.

For the full version of the report, please access [www.pwc.com/totalretail](http://www.pwc.com/totalretail)

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