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FRED HERITAGE ([HTTPS://BUSINESSADVICE.CO.UK/AUTHOR/FRED-HERITAGE/](https://businessadvice.co.uk/author/fred-heritage/)) · 26 JULY 2017

Free Wi-Fi would encourage over 80 per cent of shoppers to visit local retailers



Free internet access in-store is proving a big draw for retail customers

Some 82 per cent of British shoppers would be more likely to visit independent high street retailers if they had free Wi-Fi access, a new study has found.

Independent retailer customers with free Wi-Fi access are spending around 37,000 minutes browsing the internet on average per store every month, according to research carried out by small business phone and broadband provider XLN.

Meanwhile, the average online session time per device in independent UK retail stores with free Wi-Fi access has increased over the last six months by 32 per cent, suggesting Britain's shoppers are now willing to visit well connected independent retailers more frequently and for longer.

The findings come after analysis of the UK's largest free public Wi-Fi network, which has more than 20,000 internet hotspots across the country.

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The network, launched by XLN, has been designed to encourage people to spend longer in independent stores as opposed to large corporate chains.

The network's founder, Christian Nelleman, claimed that access to free Wi-Fi would hugely improve the prospects for many independent high street retailers. it's always been our ambition to do more than simply save small businesses money. We want to help them grow too, he added.

The co-founders of independent venture Just Beer, Phil Ayling and Duncan Neil, who've recently begun to offer access to free Wi-Fi to customers in their store, said that it'd resulted in a boost to business.

wi-fi is so important in this day and age, the pair added. We would be missing out by not having Wi-Fi, so having access to a free network is a godsend for a small business like us. It drives a lot of footfall in through the door.

the business couldn't warrant paying the cost of something like The Cloud, Ayling went on to explain.

Please tell us some of your views on the challenges facing high street retailers by take our two minute survey.

This article is part of a wider campaign called the High Streets Initiative, a new section of Business Advice championing independent and small retailers by identifying the issues that put Britain's high streets under pressure. Visit our High Streets Initiative section to find out more. (<https://businessadvice.co.uk/category/high-streets-initiative/>)

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ABOUT THE EXPERT



Fred Heritage (<https://businessadvice.co.uk/author/fred-heritage/>)
Fred Heritage was previously deputy editor at Business Advice. He has a BA in politics and international relations from the University of Kent and a BA in international conflict from Kings College London.

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Retailers fear squeeze from banks ahead of card payment surcharge ban

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The new rules banning the extra charges added to payments made by card will ultimately result in profit margins being squeezed, independent retail have claimed. more» (<https://businessadvice.co.uk/high-streets-initiative/retailers-fear-squeeze-from-banks-ahead-of-card-payment-surcharge-ban/>)

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Google's aim to connect small business with customers in vital online moments

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Google has become a champion of small business via a suite of innovative products making online transactions easier. Business Advice spoke to UK and Ireland small business director, Shane Nolan, to discover what firms can expect from the company in 2016. more»

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