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E-commerce trade keeps growing

Small business online sales and purchases up 41%

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Canadian businesses with fewer than 50 employees bought and sold \$2.75 billion over the Internet during a 12-month period ending in May, representing a 41 per cent increase over the previous year, according to a new survey.

SES Canada Research of Toronto found that e-commerce purchases among small businesses amounted to \$1.45 billion, up 26 per cent compared to the previous period, while e-commerce sales were slightly higher at \$1.30 billion, up 53 per cent.

The survey found that e-commerce growth in the small-business community, while strong, has slowed significantly compared to the previous year, when e-commerce purchases grew by 180 per cent and sales jumped by 143 per cent.

SES Canada's survey was based on 1,000 randomly selected small businesses contacted by telephone between May 15 and May 30. The results are accurate within 3.1 percentage points, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20.

Among the survey's other findings:

- ✧ Forty per cent of small businesses use digital subscriber line, or DSL, services for their high-speed Internet access, compared to 32 per cent who use dial-up and 16 per cent who use cable-modem.
- ✧ High-speed users are more likely to engage in e-commerce, with 56 per cent using the Internet to make a transaction compared to 40 per cent who use a dial-up connection.

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