



How to Future-Proof your IBM Commerce Store,  
while Boosting Conversions

# Introduction

According to Gartner<sup>1</sup>, IBM continues to be a leader in the digital commerce space based on its product functionality, B2B and B2C support, and ecosystem of applications. Additional IBM strengths are global scalability, machine-learning with Watson, and a strong ecosystem of partners. Gartner cautions customers and systems integrators, however, of the necessity of a sufficient knowledge of IBM's REST-based microservice architecture, along with IBM Commerce on Cloud's® decoupled frontend and backend architecture. These advancements are extremely important and create the opportunity for implementing a modern online storefront that is responsive, mobile-first, and provides superior performance.

## Why does a responsive, mobile-first storefront matter to retailers?

Purchases on mobile devices now make up 27% of all retail revenue in the US. In addition, average order value on mobile devices has grown 15% consistently year after year and is now double that of desktop<sup>2</sup>. Focusing on the mobile market has never been more important for retailers' online sales strategy.

For retailers on IBM Commerce, this can be concerning since many UI storefronts were built on top of the out-of-the-box Aurora store, which is server intensive, hard to update, and slow to load. Luckily, the new IBM architecture provides retailers with the opportunity to update their UI storefront without having to change their backend code.

In this whitepaper, we will explore the key elements to protecting your IBM Commerce investment including:

- A deep dive into mobile commerce trends
- A brief recap of the changes to IBM WebSphere Commerce® and the introduction of IBM Commerce on Cloud
- Key actions you can take today to capture more sales, while protecting your investment.

<sup>1</sup>Gartner 2017 Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce

<sup>2</sup><https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/consumer->

# MARKET TRENDS IN MOBILE ECOMMERCE

In early 2017, mobile eCommerce visits overtook desktop visits for the first time, with 77.5 million people<sup>3</sup> using their mobile device to make a purchase in the last six months. Considering 57% of online shoppers will not recommend a business with a poor mobile experience<sup>4</sup>, how optimized a retailer's site is for mobile will either directly help or hinder their overall revenue.



Image credit: <https://www.hwcreative.com/blog/infographic-e-commerce-vs-m->

<sup>3</sup><https://www.outerboxdesign.com/web-design-articles/mobile-e-commerce-statistics>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.impactbnd.com/blog/mobile-marketing-statistics>

95% of mobile internet users look up local information on their phones for the purpose of calling or visiting a business.



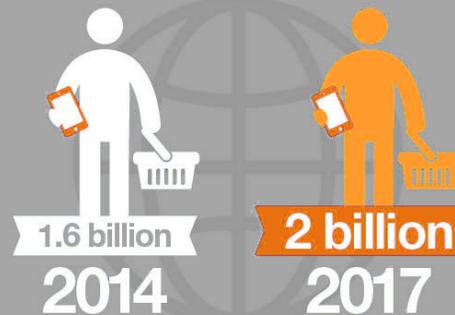
People who shop online using their mobile devices tend to spend twice as much via digital channels than those not buying on mobile devices.



### US Retail M-Commerce Sales By Device (in billions)

	Tablets	Smartphone	Other mobile devices
2014	\$38.02	\$18.49	\$1.27
2015	\$51.96	\$22.92	\$1.53
2016	\$68.98	\$27.47	\$1.67
2017	\$81.87	\$30.91	\$1.72
2018	\$96.31	\$34.63	\$1.75

Mobile devices account for 19% of all US retail e-commerce sales. This figure is estimated to reach 27% by the end of 2018.



### Online Shopping Percentages Based On Device

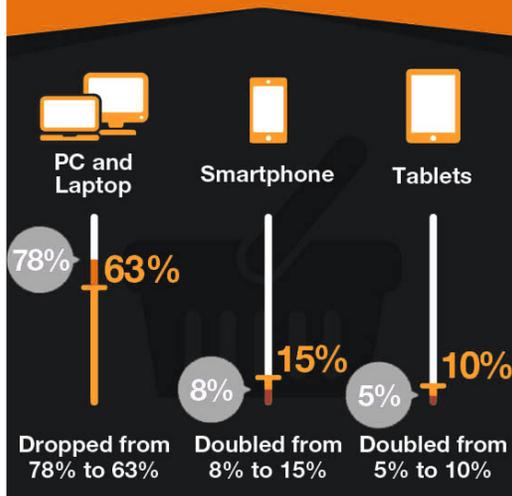


Image credit: <https://www.invespro.com/blog/mobile-commerce/>

# What has **IBM** changed

## and why does it matter?

IBM WebSphere Commerce has always been a robust platform for retailers. To continue to improve the platform, IBM introduced a REST-based service, which allows more flexibility for customizations. These updates have also provided retailers with the ability to use IBM WebSphere Commerce as an order processing engine for different types of transactions and a wide range of applications. This approach has helped IBM customers save money and reduce the number of platforms for their commerce needs. Customers can now create multiple storefronts or apps for different customer experiences, while using one single order processing engine.

**While IBM continues to enhance their on-premise commerce solution (IBM WebSphere Commerce), they have also restructured the product for the cloud. With the launch of IBM Commerce on Cloud in 2014, IBM sought to:**

- Ease the migration pains for customers when releasing new versions
- Improve scalability of the product by taking advantage of cloud elasticity
- Improve performance with optimized infrastructure
- Improve availability by offering always-available IBM SaaS support of infrastructure, operating systems, application servers, database, and software

In order to achieve these objectives, IBM needed the ability to control and continually refresh its core engine without disrupting live client sites, so they divided its monolithic application into 4 separate servers: storefront, core, search, and customization.

However, with the new decoupled architecture, there is not an easy migration path from IBM WebSphere Commerce V8 on-premise to IBM Commerce on Cloud<sup>®</sup>. In order to migrate to IBM Commerce on Cloud, existing IBM customers will be required to re-build their storefront, which is expensive both monetarily, and in terms of time required. In addition, there are still many challenges with the performance and responsiveness of IBM's out-of-the-box Aurora<sup>®</sup> storefront on cloud.



# KEY POINTS

## to take action on

Regardless of your path forward for optimizing your IBM Commerce UI storefront, you must ensure your solution has responsive capabilities, improved performance, and an optimized user experience. With the correct blend of form and function, your storefront can maximize potential conversions leading to increased sales and revenues, and a justified ROI.

Luckily, system integrators like Zobrist Consulting Group, a premier IBM Business Partner, have productized a mobile-first, responsive solution that decreases both cost and time to market. Whether you choose to go it alone or with Zobrist's Mobiecom solution, below are some key action points every retailer should know in order to future-proof their IBM investment and boost their conversion rate.

## SITE SPEED

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When looking for a new storefront, blisteringly fast speed is a priority. Online shoppers' attention spans are decreasing. As of this year 57% of mobile shoppers abandon a site if it doesn't load in three seconds or less<sup>5</sup>. Even slowing down some of the biggest brands in the world has a measurable effect on usage — Google recently found slowing down their search results by just 400 milliseconds decreased searches by 0.44%<sup>6</sup>. Further stats from the Aberdeen Group show that a one second delay in page load time equals 11% fewer page views, a 16% decrease in customer satisfaction, and 7% loss in conversions<sup>7</sup>. To put page load times into perspective, Amazon would lose roughly \$1.5 billion in sales a year with a page load slowdown of just 0.1 second.

Mobiecom addresses site speed with its single-page application storefront, which utilizes React.js, a cutting edge, lightweight Javascript tool kit used by Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Netflix. The use of React.js not only allows Mobiecom to render pages more efficiently, but also allows for decreased development time. The move towards a single-page application provides a native app-like experience to mobile users while providing code modularization – essentially meaning the site can be progressively loaded avoiding slow load times at the same time as providing a better user experience.

**Compared to the IBM out-of-the box Aurora store, Mobiecom can provide an order of magnitude improvement in speed, page to page navigation and loading time.**

<sup>5</sup><http://responr.io/new-research-mobile-ecommerce-trends/>

<sup>6</sup><https://colorlib.com/wp/how-to-speed-up-wordpress-site/>

<sup>7</sup><http://www.aberdeen.com/research/5136/ra-performance-web-application/content>.

## MOBILE-FIRST DESIGN

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Since the number of mobile shoppers now out-numbers desktop eCommerce shoppers, it's worth considering changing your web development strategy to focus on mobile-first.

On the IBM platform, this will require significant re-working because the Aurora® out-of-the box storefront was designed with desktop in mind, although it has progressively become more responsive.

Unlike the Aurora store, Mobiecom was designed from scratch as a mobile-first solution, from design to development. With Mobiecom retailers can rest assured that their mobile, tablet and desktop users are all experiencing optimal performance.

## THINK AHEAD

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To really future-proof retailers' IBM Commerce investment, their storefront decisions need to reflect the future of eCommerce, which will allow them to be ready for innovations in technology. By utilizing an IBM Business Partner, like Zobrist Consulting Group, retailers can take full advantage of the advancements in the IBM platform, optimize their sites for mobile, and explore additional money making advancements such as accepting additional payment methods, order online and pick up in store, and much more.

## CONCLUSIONS

IBM retailers should be excited about these upcoming changes, especially the opportunity to create sleek and lightning-fast sites by combining IBM's renowned reliability with innovative new UI technology. A responsive, mobile-first solution such as Mobiecom can be effortlessly integrated with IBM Commerce meaning retailers can now combine the power of IBM with the stunning design and performance of a storefront built to capture and convert shoppers.

**Mobiecom is more than a quick fix, it is a long-term investment. Think of Mobiecom as an enhanced IBM Commerce package offering everything the IBM Aurora Starter Store does along with 3rd party integrations for catalog load, payment, and web analytics.**

Mobiecom not only offers superior performance, but also saves costs:

- An optimized user experience saves on design and UX
- Built-in enhancements save on additional development
- Less demand and load on the backend translates into direct savings
- A team of dedicated developers saves on additional headcount
- The ability to go to market in a matter of weeks with a new storefront means an immediate ROI

Whichever vendor retailers choose, a mobile-first, responsive design is paramount in their considerations when it comes to the future of eCommerce. As technology continues to change and improve at a rapid pace, being on a lightweight and flexible platform will become more and more vital.

**For more information on how you can future-proof your IBM investment visit [Mobiecom.tech](https://mobiecom.tech) or email the Zobrist Consulting Group at [sales@zobristinc.com](mailto:sales@zobristinc.com).**



Zobrist is a Premier IBM Business Partner focused on Online Retailing since 2001. Zobrist has won many awards from IBM, including the IBM WebSphere Commerce Leadership Award for "Best B2C Deployment" in 2008 for the launch of [thenorthface.com](http://thenorthface.com), and the IBM "Foundational Leadership Award" in 2009 for the launch of [Lee.com](http://Lee.com) and [Wrangler.com](http://Wrangler.com).