

SA's online shoppers diversifying their search - Pricecheck

Online shopping in South Africa continues to grow, and with more traditional brick and mortar stores taking their brands online, there is more choice than ever before.



Getty

“Retailers, both online and traditional, continue to invest in improving delivery speed, with multiple next- and same-day delivery options now available,” says Paul Cook, co-founder and managing director at Silvertree Holdings, which operates popular consumer brands including UCook, Faithful to Nature and PriceCheck.

He notes that despite a challenging climate overall, many traditional retailers have improved their online offering, as the space shows clear signs of growth.



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Kirsten Dewar 8 Jan 2020



According to online price comparison platform PriceCheck, external factors such as recent load shedding and the ongoing water crisis afflicting various provinces have prompted an increase in searches for products such as solar panels and water tanks over the last few years.

“Consumers are increasingly moving beyond searching for tech, gadgets, games and music, and instead searching for more intricate purchases, such as generators, air conditioners and even artificial grass,” explains Cook.

In response, online retailers are diversifying their product and service offering to stay relevant and meet consumers’ changing needs. PriceCheck is extending its focus to answering buyers’ questions beyond just price, helping them with more common product-related questions to help inform their purchasing decisions. In addition to price comparisons, there are also user reviews and guidance on which online merchants are the most credible.



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Paul Cook 16 Jan 2020



With the increase in new products entering the e-commerce space, Cook says he's excited about what 2020 has in store. “Looking back at 2019, the top five categories searched were cellphones, laptops, LED TVs, consoles and video games. We suspect that this year we’ll see an increase in searches of items such as air conditioners, generators and wearable fitness trackers as buyers continue to become more environmentally and health-conscious.”

In an ongoing attempt to ward off the country’s economic woes, South Africans are now considering alternative sources of energy, or ways in which to reduce their water consumption and overall food waste. Given the past year’s trends, Cook concludes, “I'm excited to see new types of offerings coming to the market this year, including a growing number of subscription and curated boxes.”

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