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## Nearly 97% of Americans Rely on Online Reviews When Making Major Purchases, ConsumerAffairs Finds

New survey shows economic uncertainty is making big purchases harder — and reviews more essential

**TULSA, Okla. — Jan. 22, 2026**— As Americans navigate a challenging economic environment, online reviews have become nearly unavoidable in the purchasing process. According to a new national survey from ConsumerAffairs, 97% of Americans read reviews or seek opinions before making a major purchase, highlighting how central online reviews are to consumer decision-making today.

The survey of 2,000 U.S. adults found that more than one-third of Americans did not make a major purchase in the past year, and only 14% say they feel fully comfortable making a big purchase under current economic conditions. As hesitation increases, consumers are turning to reviews to validate decisions and reduce risk.

Key findings from [ConsumerAffairs' State of Online Reviews 2026](#) report include:

- **Reviews are essential:** One in three Americans won't buy a product or service without reading reviews first.
- **Reviews can be dealbreakers:** About 80% of consumers say reviews have convinced them not to make a purchase.
- **Ratings matter:** Many shoppers become hesitant when ratings fall below 4 or 4.5 stars.
- **AI trust remains low:** While most consumers have seen AI-generated review summaries, fewer than 10% trust them more than reading reviews themselves.

“Major purchases feel more stressful right now, and consumers are looking for reassurance wherever they can find it,” said Jon Bortin, senior research editor at ConsumerAffairs. “Reviews help people understand real-world experiences — not just marketing claims — which is especially important when the financial stakes are high.”

The full State of Online Reviews report is available here:

<https://www.consumeraffairs.com/research/online-review-statistics.html>

### About ConsumerAffairs

Big purchases can be overwhelming, especially during major life changes. ConsumerAffairs helps consumers make confident decisions by providing trusted information, verified reviews from real

customers, and connections to reputable brands – giving people the clarity they need before they buy.

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