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PARENTS UNDER PRESSURE AS MORE YOUNGSTERS ASK SANTA FOR BRAND NAME GADGETS

- **Christmas cutbacks:** parents are cutting back on the amount they splash out on technology-based gifts for their children this Christmas^[1]
- **Wallet stretching:** almost half (47%) of parents will struggle to afford gadgets requested by their children^[2]
- **Waiting game:** children must be patient as one in ten (10%) parents will wait until the January sales to buy tech gifts in a bid to save money^[3]
- **Toddler tech:** more than a quarter (26%) of five to seven year olds have a tech gift at the top of their Christmas list^[4]
- **Brand babies:** 40% of under 16s and 15% of under 10s can identify tech brands such as Apple, Sony and Samsung^[5]
- **Techy tantrums:** a quarter (25%) of under 16s would be disappointed not to receive their favourite tech brand^[6].

As they try to cut the cost of Christmas, parents are spending less on high-tech gifts for their children this Christmas^[1], according to new research from independent price comparison and switching service, uSwitch.com. Last year parents were spending an average of £108 on technology for their children's Christmas presents. This year, the average expected spend has dropped to £99, £9 or 8% lower^[1].

And with families still feeling the financial pinch, just under half (47%) of parents will struggle to afford the electronic gadgets requested by their children this Christmas^[2]. One in ten (10%) are even planning on making their children wait until the January sales for their gifts, in order to make the most of the annual price slash^[3].

Across the UK, children as young as five are clamouring for the latest gadgets. Over a quarter (26%) of five to seven year olds and over half (51%) of children aged eight to ten have put a

tech gift at the top of their Christmas lists^[4]. However, youngsters hoping for a tablet, games console or mobile phone may be disappointed on December 25, as 83% of parents admit that the majority of presents they will be buying for their children will not be high-tech^[7].

The research also reveals how much more brand aware the younger generation is becoming when it comes to technology. Four in ten parents (40%) claim their under 16s could identify brands such as Apple, Sony, Samsung and Amazon^[5]. Even more surprisingly, 15% state that their child under ten was up to speed on tech brands^[5]. For those youngsters lucky enough to unwrap a new gadget on Christmas day, a quarter of under 16s (25%) would be disappointed if the gift was not manufactured by their preferred brand^[6], which, in the case of mobile phones, is Apple, with 15% stating their child's preference is an iPhone^[8].

However, despite this love of the brand, almost one fifth (18%) of parents still say they will ignore their children's brand loyalty - opting for a cheaper, more affordable gadget for their Christmas present^[9]. But others will do whatever it takes to make sure they satisfy their kids' demands. More than one in ten (13%) will borrow on credit cards so that their children aren't disappointed, while 11% will dip into their savings^[10].

Of the parents who have decided to splash out on electronic goods this year, a mobile phone is the first choice of gift, with 30% planning on buying a new handset for their child this Christmas^[11]. However, it is not the only popular high-tech gift, as 28% will opt for an iPod, 27% for a digital camera or television and just over a quarter of parents (26%) will purchase an iPad or tablet for their child^[12].

Ernest Doku, technology expert at uSwitch.com, says: "Never mind the traditional satsuma in the stocking, children today are going to be disappointed unless there's an Apple under the tree. Gone are the days of Barbie and Action Man. Now kids not only want the most expensive gadgets, they also want the coolest brands.

"However, as they continue to feel the squeeze on their finances, mums and dads are having to draw a line under their Christmas expenditure, especially when it comes to pricey gadgets. Children as young as five are nagging them for iPhones or other gadgets which are a huge financial commitment for many parents, particularly for those with more than one child. It's no wonder some feel like they have to turn to credit cards, dip into their savings or even make their children hold out until the January sales in order to ensure a happy home at Christmas."

For more information visit www.uswitch.com or call 0800 093 0607

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Notes to Editors:

Research carried out by uSwitch.com with the uSwitch.com Consumer Opinion Panel in November 2011 among 1,523 UK adults.

1. The average amount parents said they were going to spend on gadgets for their children was £99. Research carried out online with the uSwitch.com Consumer Opinion Panel in November 2010 amongst a sample of 1,100 UK adults with one child found that the average amount parents said they were going to spend was £108.04.
2. 47% answered 'yes' when asked if they were going to struggle to buy their kids the latest technology gadgets this Christmas
3. When asked if they would find a way to pay for technology gadgets this Christmas, 10% said they would wait until the January sales
4. When asked if a technology gift was at the top of their child's Christmas list, 26% of those with five to seven year olds said yes; 51% of those with eight to ten year olds said yes
5. When asked if their child was brand aware, 40% of parents with under 16's and 15% with under 10's said yes
6. When asked if their child would be disappointed if they received a technology present which was not manufactured by their favourite brand, 25% of parents with children under 16 answered yes
7. 83% answered no when asked if the majority of presents they buy for their child this year would be technology based
8. When asked to select their child's favourite mobile phone brand, 15% of those with under 16's selected Apple, the highest overall percentage
9. When asked if they would find a way to pay for technology gadgets this Christmas, 18% said they would by buying cheaper versions of their child's preferred brand
10. When asked if they would find a way to pay for technology gadgets this Christmas, 13% said they would by using their credit cards and 11% said they would by using their savings
11. When asked if they would be buying any technology gifts for their child this Christmas, 15% of those who answered yes were buying a mobile phone
12. When asked if they would be buying any technology gifts for their child this Christmas, % of those who answered yes 28% were buying an iPod, 27% a digital camera or television and 26% an iPad or tablet.

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