
Section 22

Wholesale and Retail Trade

This section presents statistics relating to the distributive trades, specifically wholesale trade and retail trade. Data shown for the trades are classified by kind of business and cover sales, establishments, employees, payrolls, and other items. The principal sources of these data are from the Census Bureau and include the 2002 *Economic Census*, annual surveys, and the *County Business Patterns* program. These data are supplemented by several tables from trade associations, such as the National Automobile Dealers Association (Table 1027). Several notable research groups are also represented, such as Claritas (Table 1022), National Research Bureau (Tables 1035 and 1036), Jupiter Research, Inc. (Table 1024), and Forrester Research, Inc. (Table 1023).

Data on wholesale and retail trade also appear in several other sections. For instance, labor force employment and earnings data appear in Section 12, Labor Force, Employment, and Earnings; gross domestic product of the industry (Table 651) appear in Section 13, Income, Expenditures, and Wealth; financial data (several tables) from the quarterly *Statistics of Income Bulletin*, published by the Internal Revenue Service, appear in Section 15, Business Enterprise.

Censuses—Censuses of wholesale trade and retail trade have been taken at various intervals since 1929. Beginning with the 1967 census, legislation provides for a census of each area to be conducted every 5 years (for years ending in "2" and "7"). For more information on these censuses, see the *History of the 1997 Economic Census* found at <<http://www.census.gov/prod/ec97/po100-hec.pdf>>. The industries covered in the censuses and surveys of business are those classified in 13 sectors defined in the *North American Industry Classification System*, called NAICS (see below). *Retail trade* refers to places of business primarily engaged in retailing merchandise to the general public; and *wholesale trade*, to

establishments primarily engaged in selling goods to other businesses and normally operating from a warehouse or office that have little or no display of merchandise. All Census Bureau tables in this section are utilizing the 2002 NAICS codes, which replaced the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. NAICS makes substantial structural improvements and identifies over 350 new industries. At the same time, it causes breaks in time series far more profound than any prior revision of the previously used SIC system. For information on this system and how it affects the comparability of wholesale and retail statistics historically, see text, Section 15, Business Enterprise, and especially the Census Bureau Web site at <<http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>>. In general, the 2002 Economic Census has two series of publications for these two sectors: 1) subject series with reports such as product lines and establishment and firm sizes, and 2) geographic reports with individual reports for each state. For information on these series, see the Census Bureau Web site at <<http://www.census.gov/econ/census02/>>.

Current surveys—Current sample surveys conducted by the Census Bureau cover various aspects of wholesale and retail trade. Its *Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services* release <<http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>> contains monthly estimates of sales, inventories, and inventory/sales ratios for the United States, by kind of business. Annual figures on sales, year-end inventories, and inventory/sales ratios, purchases, accounts receivable, and gross margins by kind of business, appear in the *Annual Revision of Monthly Retail and Food Services: Sales and Inventories*. Statistics from the Bureau's monthly wholesale trade survey include national estimates of sales, inventories, and inventory/sales ratios for merchant wholesalers excluding manufacturers' sales branches and offices. Data are presented by major summary groups "durable and nondurable,"

and 4-digit NAICS industry groups. Merchant wholesalers excluding manufacturers' sales branches and offices are those wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell (e.g., jobbers, exporters, importers, industrial distributors). These data, based on reports submitted by a sample of firms, appear in the *Monthly Wholesale Trade Report* <<http://www.census.gov/mwts/www/mwts/html>>. Annual figures on sales, inventory/sales ratios, year-end inventories, purchases, and gross margins appear in the *Annual Revision of Monthly Wholesale Distributors: Sales and Inventories*. Data on manufacturers' sales branches and offices were collected for the first time in the 2003 *Annual Trade Survey* and appear in the *Annual Report for Wholesale Trade*. Data are presented by major summary groups "durable and nondurable" and 4-digit NAICS industry groups for sales, end-of-year inventories, and operating expenses. The reports just mentioned may appear in print in some cases, but principally are available as documents on the Census Bureau Web site at <<http://www.census.gov/econ/www/retmenu.html>>.

E-commerce—Electronic commerce (or e-commerce) are sales of goods and services over the Internet and extranet,

electronic data interchange (EDI), or other online systems. Payment may or may not be made online. This edition has several tables on e-commerce sales, such as Tables 1021 and 1023 to 1025 in this section, 978 in Section 21, Manufactures, and 1257 in Section 27, Accommodation, Food Services, and Other Services. Also, there are several private sources for similar data such as Forrester Research Inc., Cambridge MA; and Jupiter Research, Inc., New York, NY. These sources show estimated and projected online retail sales by key categories from business to consumers or to other businesses. Their methods of collecting the data vary widely between the sources and consequently these estimates of this activity vary also. Users of these estimates may want to contact the sources for descriptions of their methodology. Methodology for Census Bureau estimates can be found at <www.census.gov/eos/www/ebusiness614.htm>.

Statistical reliability—For a discussion of statistical collection and estimation, sampling procedures, and measures of statistical reliability applicable to Census Bureau data, see Appendix III.

Table 1037. Wholesale Trade—Establishments, Employees, and Payroll: 2003

[432.5 represents 432,500. Covers establishments with payroll. Employees are for the week including March 12. Excludes most government employees, railroad employees, and self-employed persons. Kind-of-business classification based on North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), 2002; see text, Section 15. For statement on methodology, see Appendix III]

Kind of business	2002 NAICS code	Establishments (1,000)	Employees (1,000)	Payroll (bil. dol.)
Wholesale trade	42	432.5	5,864	272.2
Merchant wholesalers, durable goods	423	254.0	3,313	162.0
Motor vehicle/motor vehicle parts & supplies wholesale	4231	26.0	364	14.1
Furniture & home furnishings wholesale	4232	13.8	162	6.6
Lumber & other construction materials wholesale	4233	18.0	236	10.0
Professional & commercial equipment & supplies wholesale	4234	36.4	703	42.6
Metal & mineral (except petroleum) wholesale	4235	10.7	147	6.7
Electrical goods wholesale	4236	31.4	469	29.1
Hardware, & plumbing & heating equipment & supplies wholesale	4237	19.0	212	9.3
Machinery, equipment & supplies wholesale	4238	62.2	688	30.8
Miscellaneous durable goods wholesale	4239	36.6	330	12.8
Merchant wholesalers, nondurable goods	424	138.9	2,288	99.3
Paper & paper products wholesale	4241	12.9	215	8.8
Drugs & druggists' sundries wholesale	4242	7.7	252	16.6
Apparel, piece goods, & notions wholesale	4243	17.3	197	9.1
Grocery & related products wholesale	4244	35.2	757	29.3
Farm product raw materials wholesale	4245	7.3	65	2.2
Chemical & allied products wholesale	4246	13.1	146	7.6
Petroleum & petroleum products wholesale	4247	7.7	105	4.7
Beer/wine/distilled alcoholic beverages wholesale	4248	4.3	169	7.7
Miscellaneous nondurable goods wholesale	4249	33.4	383	13.4
Wholesale electronic markets and agents and brokers	425	39.7	264	10.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "County Business Patterns"; <<http://www.census.gov/epcd/cbp/view/cbpview.html>>.

Table 1038. Merchant Wholesale Trade Sales—Total and E-Commerce: 2004

[3,296,520 represents \$3,296,520,000,000. Covers only businesses with paid employees. Excludes manufacturers' sales branches and offices. Based on the Annual Trade Survey, see Appendix III]

Kind of business	2002 NAICS code ¹	Value of sales (mil. dol.)		E-commerce as percent of total sales	Percent distribution of E-commerce sales
		Total	E-commerce		
Merchant wholesale trade, total	42	3,296,520	451,574	13.7	100.0
Durable goods	423	1,654,621	198,597	12.0	44.0
Motor vehicles, parts and supplies	4231	277,765	74,832	26.9	16.6
Furniture and home furnishings	4232	58,298	7,340	12.6	1.6
Lumber and other construction materials	4233	128,624	5,517	4.3	1.2
Professional & commercial equipment & supplies	4234	296,276	43,669	14.7	9.7
Computer, peripheral equipment, and software	42343	157,547	23,246	14.8	5.1
Metals and minerals, excluding petroleum	4235	121,160	(S)	(S)	(S)
Electrical goods	4236	253,761	23,699	9.3	5.2
Hardware, and plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	4237	77,524	9,993	12.9	2.2
Machinery, equipment and supplies	4238	260,190	13,418	5.2	3.0
Miscellaneous durable goods	4239	181,023	18,767	10.4	4.2
Nondurable goods	424	1,641,899	252,977	15.4	56.0
Paper and paper products	4241	81,584	6,474	7.9	1.4
Drugs and druggists' sundries	4242	296,556	155,170	52.3	34.4
Apparel, piece goods, and notions	4243	108,432	23,092	21.3	5.1
Groceries and related products	4244	409,743	38,582	9.4	8.5
Farm product raw materials	4245	122,997	4,138	3.4	0.9
Chemical and allied products	4246	76,369	(D)	(D)	(D)
Petroleum and petroleum products	4247	274,942	10,496	3.8	2.3
Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	4248	85,607	(D)	(D)	(D)
Miscellaneous nondurable goods	4249	185,669	9,011	4.9	2.0

D Data withheld to avoid disclosing data of individual companies. S Figure does not meet publication standards. ¹ North American Industry Classification System, 2002; see text, Section 15.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "E-Stats, 2004 E-commerce Multi-sector Report"; published 25 May 2006; <<http://www.census.gov/eos/www/ebusiness614.htm>>.

