

## The Gen X Online Shopper

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Education + debt = savvy bargain hunters

Generation X—people born from 1965 to 1981—presents marketers with a complex mix of demographic characteristics.

One is financial. Many Gen Xers are being squeezed by college and credit card debt in addition to the high housing costs associated with subprime mortgages.

In a [Charles Schwab](#) study of 2,000 Gen Xers, 45% of respondents said they had too much debt to think about saving. [AARP](#) and the [American Savings Education Council](#) found credit card debt was most prevalent (67%) among Generation X Internet users, followed by car loans (52%), mortgages (49%), student loans (30%), medical debt (28%) and home equity loans (16%), according to their January 2008 survey.

### Type of Debt that US Generation X and Y Adult Internet Users Have, January 2008 (% of respondents in each group)

	Generation Y (19-27)	Generation X (28-39)
Credit card	57%	67%
Car loan	42%	52%
Mortgage	17%	49%
Student loan	32%	30%
Medical	25%	28%
Home equity loan	4%	16%
Other	20%	23%

Note: n=613 Gen Y-ages 19-27 (born 1980-1988); n=1,139 Gen X-ages 28-39 (born 1968-1979)

Source: AARP and American Savings Education Council (ASEC), "Preparing for Their Future: A Look at the Financial State of Gen X and Gen Y," conducted by Matthew Greenwald & Associates, March 2008

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On the plus side, 28.8% of people ages 25 to 34 hold a bachelor's degree or higher, according to the [US Census Bureau](#). Among people ages 35 to 44, 29.6% have attained this education level, as have 28.6% of people ages 45 to 65.

Xers' high education levels, coupled with their distrust of corporate America and their comfort with technology, make them scrutinizing consumers. Xers readily brag about bargains, noted a study by [Reach Advisors](#). They are not afraid to shop discount stores. Target, for example, built its "cheap chic" reputation largely around frugal-but-style-conscious Xers.

Generation X seeks value, regardless of brand affiliation. With so many research tools in their arsenal, they want the best solution for the money. They can and will seek out diverse and even esoteric products and services as well as little-known brands.