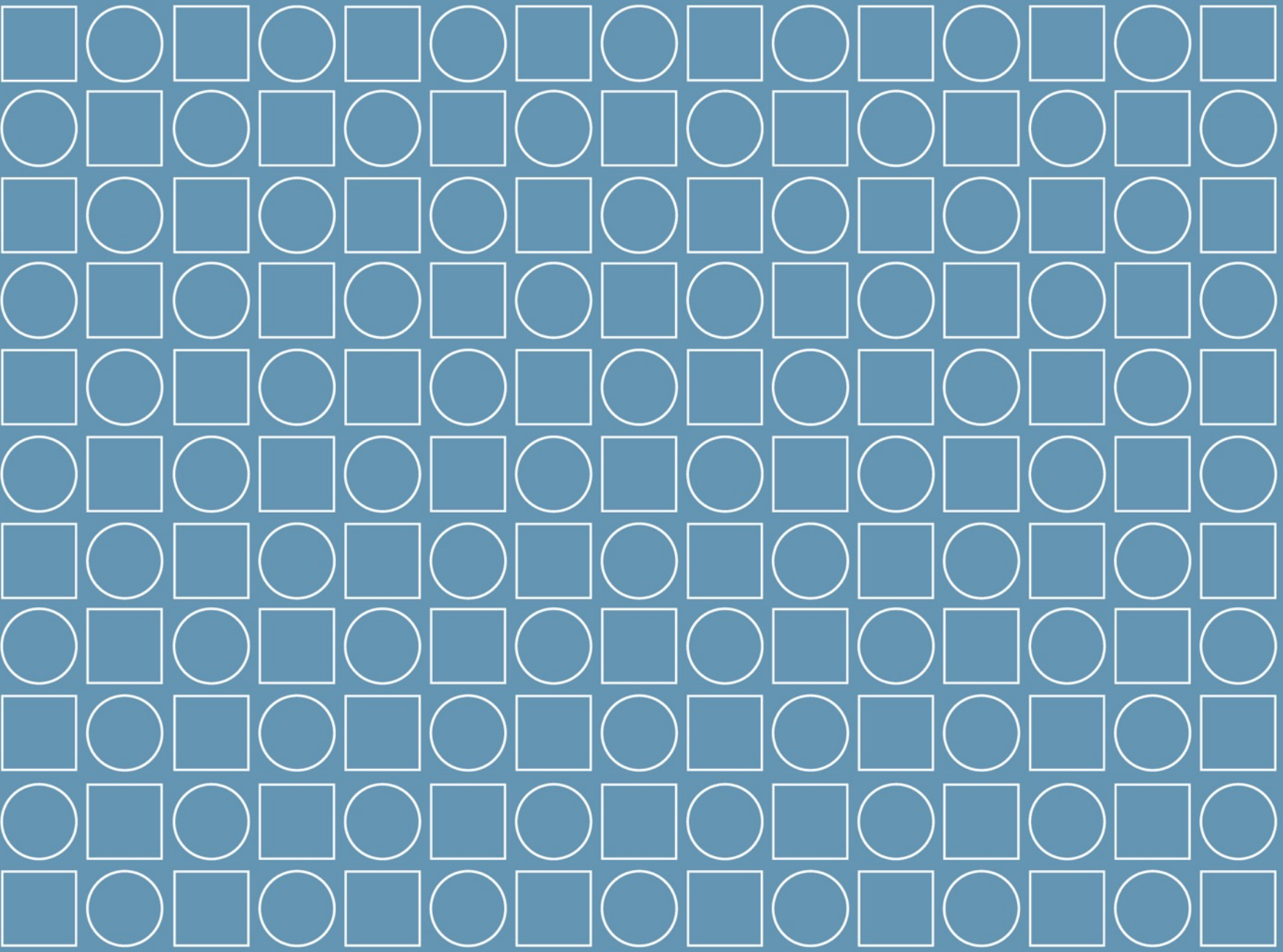


GCVA & PR  
Agency One

Press & Media  
Coverage

January



# Mail on Sunday – Top Tips – Expiry Dates



Title: Mail on Sunday

Date: 3rd January 2021

Page: 123

Circulation: 872,375



## The rip-off inactivity fees wiping out your gift card

By **Laura Shannon**

**A**NYONE who received a gift card for Christmas should be aware the clock is ticking to spend the funds – or they could be eroded by ‘inactivity fees’. It is a common peril with prepaid currency cards, but customers are now being caught out by fees on inactive gift cards.

These monthly charges eat into unspent balances when a card goes unused for a long time – until the balance reaches zero.

This problem is of increasing significance as people shop less in lockdown.

Before Christmas, The Mail on Sunday warned that gift cards should be spent quickly due to the threat of businesses going bust, at which point cards effectively become worthless.

Sir Philip Green’s Arcadia group collapsed into administration soon after, and shops such as Topshop and Dorothy Perkins only accepted gift cards for up to 50 per cent of an item’s purchase price.

But there is now a big surge in complaints about dormancy fees wiping out the value of cards.

Customers worry that the practice is both confusing and unfair. Gift cards sometimes come with a date

stamped on the front which many assume is an expiry date. But it can be a ‘valid until’ date, needed for when a card is used to shop online – like with a debit or credit card.

Elizabeth Sommerville, 69, from North Lanarkshire in Scotland, was given three One4All gift cards as a birthday present. Such cards are popular as they are accepted at many retailers.

After noticing a 2021 date stamped on the front, Elizabeth was spurred into using them. But her cards were declined for lack of funds.

Elizabeth says: ‘After a considerable amount of research, it was upsetting to discover the gift cards with a face value of £75 were now worth £35.20, even though the date on their fronts was 2021.’

This date, she discovered, was merely required to validate online purchases. The cards had shrunk in value due to a monthly ‘inactive balance’ charge per card of 90p. This had kicked in 18 months after the purchase of the cards.

Elizabeth admits she should have used the cards sooner, but a road accident had made it difficult for her to shop in person and she even struggled to use her computer for online purchases.

The Mail on Sunday contacted One4All about Elizabeth’s case. It agreed to refund the fees, with a £20 ‘goodwill’ gesture. It said: ‘Customer satisfaction is our top priority and if the application of an inactive balance charge has caused any of our customers financial stress during this difficult time, we encourage them to contact our customer service team for assistance.’

It stresses that details of the charge are stated on the back of the card, the packaging and in the card’s terms and conditions available on its website. It added: ‘Our gift cards do not have expiry dates. The ‘valid thru’ date on the front of the card refers to the lifespan of the physical card and enables the user to shop online.’

However, consumer experts beg to differ. They argue that inactivity fees are an expiry date applied by stealth.

The issue of expiry dates on gift cards was raised in the House of Lords a year ago, when it was confirmed there were no plans for further legislation. At the time, Lord Duncan of Springbank, Parliamentary Under Secretary for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, said busi-

nesses were strongly encouraged to use expiry dates longer than two years. For his part, Lord Foster of Bath admitted having lost money to inactivity fees. He only discovered the charge after finding out his One4All gift card balance had diminished from £40 to £25.60.

Some fees applied on gift cards are even more punitive. For example, Vanilla gift cards that are not used for six months incur a monthly inactivity fee of £2.

Martyn James, of online consumer complaints service Resolver, has heard from many people impacted by inactivity fees in recent weeks.

He says: ‘I have been horrified to discover a wave of complaints about inactivity fees from people who have only just discovered their gift card balances are being eroded.’

‘Not only are these fees fundamentally unfair, they’re clearly not widely known and not made clear. It really is a case of card issuers taking money for nothing – and it should be stopped.’

The Gift Card and Voucher Association has produced a guide for consumers giving or receiving gift cards at [gcva.co.uk](http://gcva.co.uk).

[laura.shannon@mailonsunday.co.uk](mailto:laura.shannon@mailonsunday.co.uk)

# Mail on Sunday (Scotland) – Top Tips – Expiry Dates



Title: Mail on Sunday (Scotland)

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

Page: 123

Circulation: 59,852



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[laura.shannon@mailonsunday.co.uk](mailto:laura.shannon@mailonsunday.co.uk)

# MSN -Top Tips – Expiry Dates



**Title:** MSN

**Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

**Link:** <https://www.msn.com/en-gb/money/other/my-gift-cards-with-a-face-value-of-75-are-now-worth-35-20-beware-the-rip-off-inactivity-fees-wiping-out-your-unspent-balances/ar-BB1cqk7A>

**DA:** 95



This is  
MONEY

## 'My gift cards with a face value of £75 are now worth £35.20': Beware the rip-off inactivity fees wiping out your unspent balances

Laura Shannon For The Mail On Sunday · 1 day ago



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# This is Money -Top Tips – Expiry Dates



**Title:** This is Money

**Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

**Link:** [https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/bills/article-9106479/Beware-rip-inactivity-fees-wiping-gift-card.html?ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490&ito=1490](https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/bills/article-9106479/Beware-rip-inactivity-fees-wiping-gift-card.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

**Circulation:** 371,430

**DA:** 81



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# Engage Customer – Digital Gift Card Release

## CUSTOMER

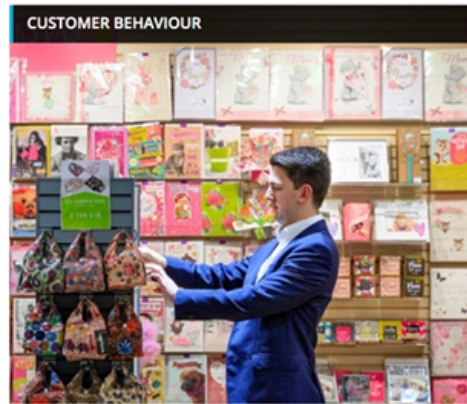
**Title:** Engage Customer

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Link:** <https://engagecustomer.com/gift-card-sales-surge-over-festive-season/>

**Circulation:** 200,000

**DA:** 41



A Christmas spent living under COVID-19 restrictions has sparked a significant shift in the public's gifting habits, according to data released by the Gift Card & Voucher Association (GCVA) working with GlobalData.

A survey of 2,000 members of the public has revealed that one in four Brits (25.2%) purchased gift cards for others in December, compared with 17.9% in November, with over a third of these (34.1%) directly highlighting lockdown restrictions as their reason for doing so. Furthermore, leading brands such as Tesco Bank have reported a surge in gift card sales – particularly digital gift cards, which can be sent, received and spent through smartphone apps – over the Christmas period.

Targeted, single-store gift cards were the gift of choice in December over multi-store alternatives, with 56.4% of gift card buyers purchasing single-store cards, compared with 32.4% for multi-store cards, indicating a thoughtful, considered approach to gifting from the public. Gaming gift cards also saw a notable uplift, with 11.3% of gift card buyers purchasing, compared with 7.9% in November, which is demonstrative of gaming's continued popularity as a hobby during lockdown.

# A1 Retail – Digital Gift Card Release



**Title:** A1 Retail

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Link:** <https://www.a1retailmagazine.com/latest-news/gift-card-sales-surge-over-uks-first-covid-christmas/>

**Circulation:** 6,030

**DA:** 37



## Gift Card Sales Surge over UK's First COVID Christmas

- Gift card sales see significant rise as consumers buy for loved ones in lockdown
- Research shows at least 1 in 4 gifts now more likely to be "pinged" than posted
- Shoppers urged to treat themselves with gift cards in lockdown; many of which can be spent online



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In 2020, [GCVA figures revealed](#) that digital gifting now represents 26% of all UK gift card spend, rising to 50% accounting for all gift cards spent online. Given Christmas In 2020, [GCVA figures revealed](#) that digital gifting now represents 26% of all UK gift card spend, rising to 50% accounting for all gift cards spent online. Given Christmas was the most popular gifting occasion in 2019, representing 41.7% of total gift card spend according to GCVA research, the suggested move to digital this past Christmas may be indicative of a more long-term shift in the public's gifting habits.

The trade body, which represents more than 80 of the UK's largest retailers, issuers and suppliers, is now urging the public to spend any gift cards they may have received this Christmas; both treating themselves to a lockdown lift while providing a boost to the high street.

Gift cards swelled in popularity throughout 2020 as the UK sought to lift the spirits of loved ones in isolation. GCVA research found that gift cards were in fact preferred to physical gifts in the first lockdown, making up 14% of total gifting spend, compared with physical gifts at 12%.

# Talking Retail – Digital Gift Card Release



**Title:** Talking Retail

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Link:** <https://www.talkingretail.com/news/industry-news/gift-card-sales-surge-over-first-covid-christmas-research-shows-28-01-2021/>

**Circulation:** 26,910



## Gift card sales surge over first Covid Christmas, research shows

By Liz Wells in Industry News 28th January 2021

Print

The pandemic resulted in gift card sales soaring at Christmas, new research reveals.



A survey of 2,000 Brits, carried out by the Gift Card & Voucher Association (GCVA) and GlobalData, has revealed that 25% of Brits purchased gift cards for others in December, compared with 18% in November, with 24% of these directly highlighting lockdown restrictions as their reason for doing so.

Single-store gift cards were the gift of choice in December over multi-store alternatives, with 56% of gift card buyers purchasing single-store cards, compared with 32% for multi-store cards. Gaming gift cards also saw a notable uplift, with 11% of gift card buyers purchasing, compared with 8% in November, demonstrating gaming's continued popularity as a hobby during lockdown.

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Gail Cohen, director-general of the GCVA, said: "Over the past year, the rise of digital gifting solutions in particular is driving a major change in how we send and receive gifts, meaning they can be shared and enjoyed almost instantly, offering a safe way of gifting that still offers that truly personal touch. That said, physical gift cards having performed strongly too indicates the importance of retailers continuing to offer that tangible solution that consumers can still "unwrap" on the big day.

"If you did receive a gift card for Christmas this year, whether physical or digital, don't just leave it in the bottom drawer and forget about it. It's not a savings product, it is there for you to treat yourself, and what better time could there be to give yourself a boost than now? Many gift cards can be spent online from the comfort of your home, so log on and start spending."



# Tech Round – GlobalData December Figures – Miconex Piece



**Title:** TechRound

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Link:** <https://techround.co.uk/interviews/predictions-for-gen-z-in-2021/>

**Circulation:** 104,700



- **TechRound has collected predictions for Generation Z (Gen Z) in 2021 from industry experts.**
- **Who are Gen Z? They are the first digitally native generation.**
- **Gen Z are going to continue to make their voices heard in 2021 according to experts.**

As people get older and technology develops, everyone picks up different lessons, consumption behaviour and new trends occur. Gen Z, in particular, are making their mark in today's economy. Taking over Millennials, Gen Z are our newest stars to watch.

Growing up immersed in technology, this generation in particular are tech-savvy and extremely connected and informed. This is mainly because of their internet usage, making them develop distinct attitudes, lifestyles and values. They are highly aware about everything around them!

What should you know about Gen Z, people born between 1996 and 2010? We have everything you need to know about how Gen Z are shaping different brands futures and way to help you get to know this particular generation, understanding their consumption behaviour. Here we speak to 5 different industry experts to help find out everything about Gen Z...

## **Colin Munro – Managing Director of Miconex**



Against a continuing backdrop of economic uncertainty, Generation Z will continue to make their presence felt through their purchasing preferences, with a particular impact on local economies. The Gift Card and Voucher Association's December commentary found that 38.4% of Generation Z gift card purchases were motivated by the desire to support local businesses.

This was backed up by our 2020 sales data for our 59 local **Town and City Gift Card** programmes around the UK, with 12.89% of all transactions from Generation Z during the key Christmas trading period. The fight for survival for small businesses in 2021 remains very real, a fact that Generation Z are entirely cognisant of. They are ready to do their bit to shop local, support local and ensure communities emerge intact from the pandemic.

# Retail Technology Innovation Hub – GlobalData December Figure – Miconex Piece



## RTIH

**Title:** Retail Technology Innovation Hub

**Date:** 29 January 2021

**Link:** <https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/press-releases/2021/1/29/consumers-turn-to-local-multi-venue-gift-card-schemes>



## RETAIL TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION HUB



Consumers turn to local, multi-venue gift card schemes

GIFT CARDS