

## **Black Friday fever: police deal with desperate shoppers**

Some bargain hunts turn into trolley warfare, with police accusing Tesco executives of inadequate planning

Black Friday shopping fever has engulfed the UK, with fights breaking out between bargain-hunting shoppers, stores forced to close, and retailers' websites crashing as shoppers scrambled to grab discounted goods.

Police were called to at least 16 Tesco stores around the country after staff were overwhelmed by 500-strong crowds battling over discounted TVs, kitchen goods and clothing. The scenes led one senior police officer to call on shoppers to ask themselves: "What on Earth was I doing?"

A number of stores were closed after fights broke out between shoppers trying to get their hands on sale stock. A police spokesman said a woman was injured at a Tesco store in Stretford, Manchester, "after being hit by a falling television". [...]

The Black Friday extravaganza was imported from the US only two years ago but has captured the imagination of both retailers and shoppers. Visa Europe estimated that more than £500m would be piled on to its cards during the sale period. [...]

Jon Copestake, retail analyst at the Economist Intelligence Unit, said it appeared that the number of people looking for bargains had taken everybody by surprise despite all the preparations. "From a retail perspective the frenzy of interest has mixed implications," he said. [...]

The trend for midnight surfing was confirmed by data from Postcode Anywhere which said the number of online visits was up nearly 40% between midnight and 1am, compared with the previous day. The highest number of night-time orders came from Birmingham, Belfast and Glasgow.