

## Brazilians Buy 15% More Christmas Gifts

Contributed by Arthur Braga  
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A survey conducted by the Brazilian Association of Shopping Center Store Owners (Alshop) indicates that Christmas sales were up 15%, compared with 2003. And, according to reports from shopping centers throughout the country, this is the biggest growth since 1996.

On the average, consumers spent more this year than last. According to the Alshop, the average purchase cost between US\$ 18 (50 reais) and US\$ 29 (R\$ 80).

The items that were sold most included electro-electronic products, DVD's, cell phones, and digital cameras.

In the opinion of the president of the Alshop, Nabil Sahyoun, this result was a consequence of the payment of the annual salary bonus (the "thirteenth month salary") and the country's higher level of employment.

In his view, of the 70 thousand temporary jobs created to meet the sector's demand, 25% may become permanent positions.

Translation: David Silberstein  
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