



Tim Hodson,
Editorial Director

Brick & Mortar & Glass Shoppers

It's kind of hard to believe but the World Wide Web is almost 25 years old already. I'm sure when Tim Berners-Lee wrote his original proposal for a computer database and software project back in 1989, he had no idea what that proposal would evolve into and what it would actually look like in 2014 — or how people could and would use it!

The Internet has changed the way we do almost everything by putting so much information right at our fingertips.

It also has had an impact on the way consumers shop, but not to the degree that you probably think that it has. According to the financial consulting company Jones Lang Lasalle Capital Markets, even though it seems like e-commerce has grown exponentially in recent years, it is still only a very small percentage of all retail sales — it's actually only 6 percent.

Many "experts" have been predicting e-commerce would spell the demise of traditional brick-and-mortar retailers like garden centers, but, for the most part, it is only changing the way consumers shop.

"People still need to see and touch things; the instant gratification of an in-store purchase can't be discounted," said Kris Cooper, managing director at JLL Capital Markets. "Retailers who want to thrive will need to incorporate it all — hands-on goods, e-commerce and mobile commerce."

Nothing sells a plant better than experiencing it in person and most gardeners are bricks-and-mortar and *glass* shoppers. But they do use the Internet to educate themselves before heading to the garden center, so take Cooper's advice — make sure they are aware of you and your products both in person and online.

Meet the Class of '14

Don't forget, if you are headed to Cultivate'14 next month in Columbus, Ohio, you have a chance to meet many of the members of the Class of 2014 of *GPN's* 40 Under 40.

I will be hosting a special Mix 'n Mingle session that will take place on July 14, at 10:45 a.m. in Terrace Ballroom 5 in the Columbus Convention Center.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about many of this year's class members and find out what makes them tick.

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