

# Commerce

GlobalWebIndex's flagship report on the latest trends in online commerce

FLAGSHIP REPORT 2019

[globalwebindex.com](http://globalwebindex.com)



# Contents

Key Insights	04
The State of Ecommerce	05
Purchasing Habits by Category	11
The Purchase Journey	14
Ongoing Trends in Commerce	21
Notes on Methodology	26



# Introduction

The GlobalWebIndex Commerce Flagship provides the most important insights on the world of online commerce, consumer behaviors, and engagement levels.

Among others, this report covers the following topics in detail:

- ✓ The markets driving online commerce trends
- ✓ The role that different devices play in online purchasing
- ✓ The changing dynamics of how people are paying for products
- ✓ Purchase behaviors by category
- ✓ Important touchpoints along the path to purchase
- ✓ The potential and current impact of voice commerce, image recognition and New Retail

## METHODOLOGY

All figures in this report are drawn from GlobalWebIndex's online research among internet users aged 16-64. We only interview respondents aged 16-64 and our figures are representative of the online populations of each market, not its total population.

Each year, GlobalWebIndex interviews over 575,000 internet users aged 16-64 via an online questionnaire. A proportion of respondents complete a shorter version of this survey via mobile, hence the sample sizes presented in the charts throughout this report may differ as some will include all respondents and others will include only respondents who completed GlobalWebIndex's Core survey via PC/laptop/tablet. Where clearly stated, this report also draws on data from a bespoke survey from October 2019 among 1,125 (U.S.) and 1,023 (UK) luxury fashion buyers aged 16-64.

Throughout this report we refer to indexes. Indexes are used to compare any given group against the average (1.00), which unless otherwise stated refers to the average internet user or the average knowledge worker. For example, an index of "1.20" means that a given group is 20% above the global average, and an index of "0.80" means that an audience is 20% below the global average.

For more detailed information on GlobalWebIndex and the data used in this report, please consult our [Notes on Methodology](#) at the end of this report.

# Key Insights

## 01

**Today's consumers aren't committed to one device when it comes to browsing for products and visiting retail store websites. Researching and buying online are both actions that continue to take place across multiple devices.**

So, while purchasing online is undeniably a mobile-first activity, PCs and laptops still play a very important part in the overall purchase journey. The fact that they are often the device of choice for sensitive transactions is one reason why they are still relevant to today's online retail landscape, and why any attempt to effectively target consumers must take a multi-device approach.

## 02

**Social networks are becoming increasingly more significant for online product research. They are now the second most popular method by which customers look for brand-related information, behind search engines.**

Compared to 30% of internet users in 2015, 42% are now mainly using social networks in their quest for knowledge about the price and quality of products. For consumers aged 16-24, and those in Latin America and MEA, social networks have already taken their place as the primary research channel. Their ongoing rise in popularity indicates that this trend is likely to grow even further.

## 03

**The purchase journey is an omnichannel experience.**

While social networks often play a central role in the initial steps on the path to purchase, only 12% of internet users say that a "buy" button on a social network would drive them to check-out online. Most of the markets we track prioritize free delivery, financial incentives like coupons, and positive consumer reviews when making purchase decisions. It may be a while before a seamless purchase journey via social media is the norm; but this hasn't stopped brands or platforms from innovating their attempts to entice consumers into buying.

## 04

**High quality products continue to be the main reason buyers give for advocating brands online, followed by financial rewards such as discounts or gifts.**

This pattern remains unaffected across time and age groups. However, younger demographics are more likely to advocate brands that include and interact with them effectively. Among Gen Z and millennials, 22% would promote a brand that provides the feeling of taking part and being involved. On the other hand, older consumers favor practical benefits and are more likely to promote a brand demonstrating excellent customer service.

01

Commerce

# The State of Ecommerce

# Mobiles vs PCs

PCs have traditionally been the default device for online commerce, as they're often seen as the safer option for sensitive transactions, and were ubiquitous when online shopping first took off. Today, however, the online commerce landscape shows a very different picture.

On a global level, **for all stages of the purchase journey (from researching to buying, through to reviewing) the mobile is now the device of choice.** As online banking has become a mobile-first activity, the commerce landscape is being shaped by smaller screens.

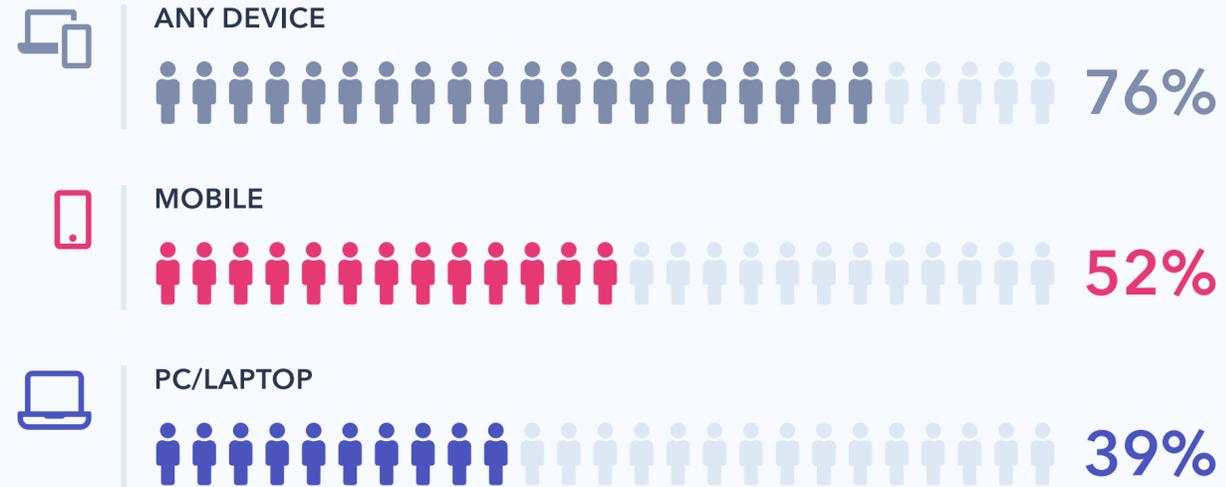
Generational differences do emerge. Internet users over the age of 45 still prefer devices with larger screens. This helps explain why PCs and laptops have maintained their hold on online commerce in Europe and North America, as internet populations here skew older. North America has a particular fondness for larger screens; more 16-24s here are purchasing products on their PC/laptop (46%) than 55-64s in APAC (39%) and the Middle East and Africa (38%).

**The PC is not disappearing from the online retail landscape any time soon** and internet users aren't exclusively committed to any one device. If they're buying on mobile, they are likely to be buying on PC as well, and vice versa. **Browsing for products and visiting retail store websites are still multi-device activities.** The large overlap demonstrates how a multi-device approach is crucial throughout the entire purchase journey. Consumers can check-out on either device, regardless of where their path began.

**Three-quarters of internet users aged 16-64 buy products online**

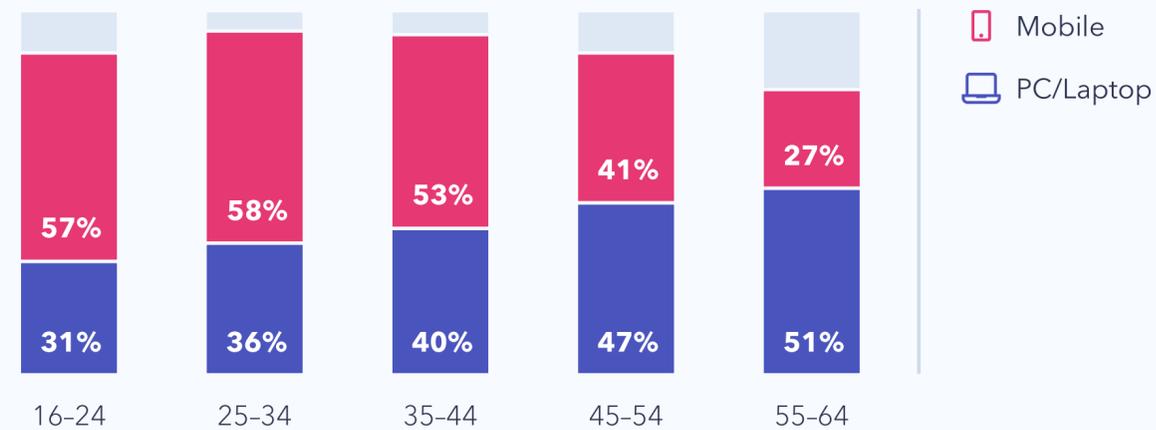
## THE STATE OF ECOMMERCE

% of internet users who have purchased a product online in the past month using the following



## AGE DIFFERENCES

% who have purchased a product online in the past month using the following devices

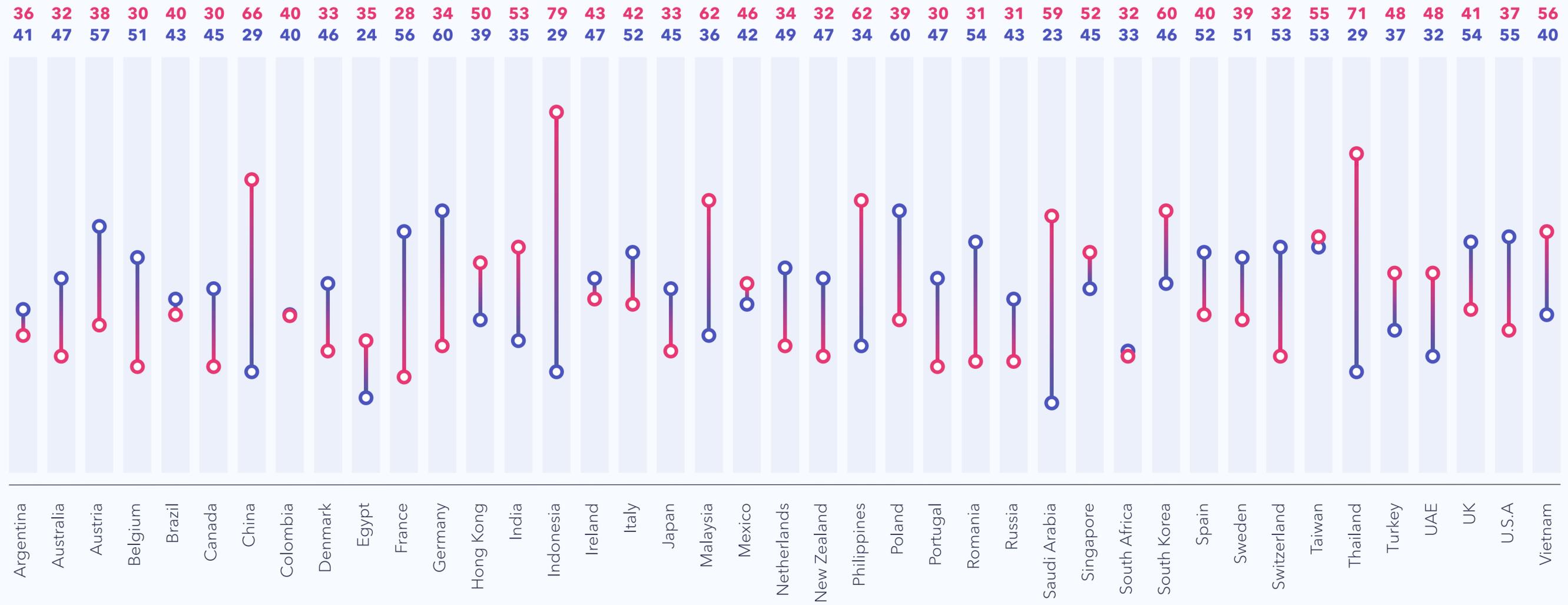


**Question:** In the past month, which of the following things have you done on the internet on your PC/Laptop/Mobile/Tablet?  
**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 230,936 internet users aged 16-64

# The State of Ecommerce Around the World

THE STATE OF ECOMMERCE AROUND THE WORLD | % of internet users who have purchased a product online in the past month using the following devices

● Mobile ● PC/laptop



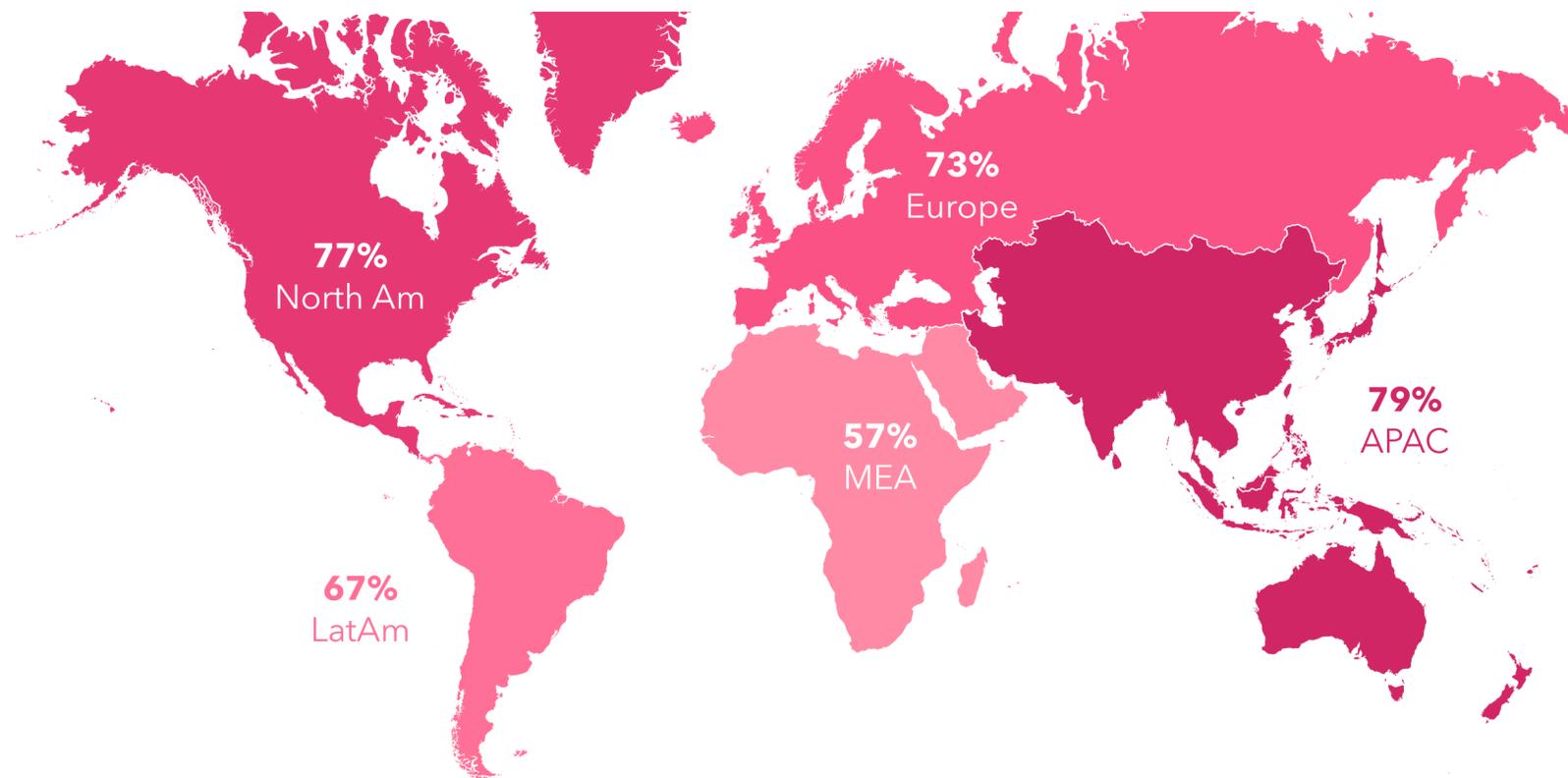
**Question:** In the past month, which of the following things have you done on the internet on your PC/Laptop/Mobile/Tablet?

**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 230,936 internet users aged 16-64

# Ecommerce by Region

## A REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

% of internet users in each region who have purchased a product online in the last month



**“The MEA region is going to be the next big growth market for e-commerce”**

– Nitin Kaushal, President and General Manager at EMEA at Capillary Technologies

When it comes to the popularity of online shopping, the main differences are regional, rather than generational. **In the Middle East and Africa we’re still seeing significantly lower rates of online shopping**, with the proportion of internet users who’ve made purchases online sitting at 57%. This percentage is creeping up year-on-year, but is still far behind the other four regions.

Despite the prevalence of mobile payment apps in these markets, many of their cash-first consumers would prefer to complete purchases offline. A lack of trust and knowledge surrounding online payments may be slowing the growth of ecommerce in these markets. The good news is that this means the potential for growth in these countries is massive, especially given their preference for the smartphone (77% of internet users in MEA say the mobile is their most important device).

What’s more, online consumers here are 2.3x as likely as the global average to cite that a cash-on-delivery option would motivate them to make a purchase online (44% say this). So, understanding these consumers and their motivations can be very rewarding for brands hoping to make an impact in the ecommerce space.

**The top ecommerce markets are concentrated in Asia and the West**, despite significant differences in these digital landscapes. As many as 83% of those in the UK and 81% of those in China purchase products online on a monthly basis, closely followed by countries such as India (74%) and the U.S. (78%). Yet, the shift to ecommerce can be seen across the world; and with countless local and regional players driving this trend, no single platform has yet been able to claim dominance.



**Question:** In the past month, which of the following things have you done on the internet on your PC/Laptop/Mobile/Tablet?

**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 230,936 internet users aged 16-64

• TREND IN ACTION •

## APAC Ahead of the Curve



Given APAC's late adoption of "traditional" payment methods such as debit or credit cards and rapid transition to mobile payments, **brands that have not yet adapted to this new climate are sure to fall behind.**

Shiseido's ecommerce and CRM director, [Scott Leaw](#) goes as far as to say that "selling online has become non-negotiable". Given that APAC is an incredibly large and varied market, brands that target consumers and their needs effectively will reap the most rewards. Smartphones have largely contributed to the rise of ecommerce here, with **6 in 10 internet users in APAC having purchased a product on their smartphone in the past month.**

As the line between online and offline payments becomes increasingly blurred, those hoping to stay ahead of the game will need to make use of all available channels. While ecommerce hasn't yet reached its peak, **Asian markets are largely contributing to the development of this worldwide trend.** [Paypal](#), acknowledging the nation's potential, has recently announced its plans to enter the Chinese market by the end of 2019; and others are sure to follow.

# Online Payment Providers

Globally, **PayPal has the highest number of internet users both using and advocating its service**. This varies by region; it is used by 62% of those in Latin America, but only 28% of internet users in Asia-Pacific. Similar patterns emerge for Visa and Mastercard, both considerably ahead of the next players in the online payment space.

However, looking at the market leaders in countries where mobile payments are used most often, we can see that the dominant players are often domestic companies, not global ones. **Local providers are detached from global competition by regulatory, cultural and commercial constraints**. This has driven **Ant Financial's strategy** of investing and leveraging in local partners, including India's top service PayTM, which they have a 40% stake in.

Denmark's MobilePay is indicative of this trend, as well. Seeing the space for mobile payments hadn't been filled, DanskeBank acted unilaterally to roll out its service to all holders of a Danish payment card and phone number, without the need to sign up. They quickly moved into a dominating position in a way payment providers in other Western markets haven't seen.

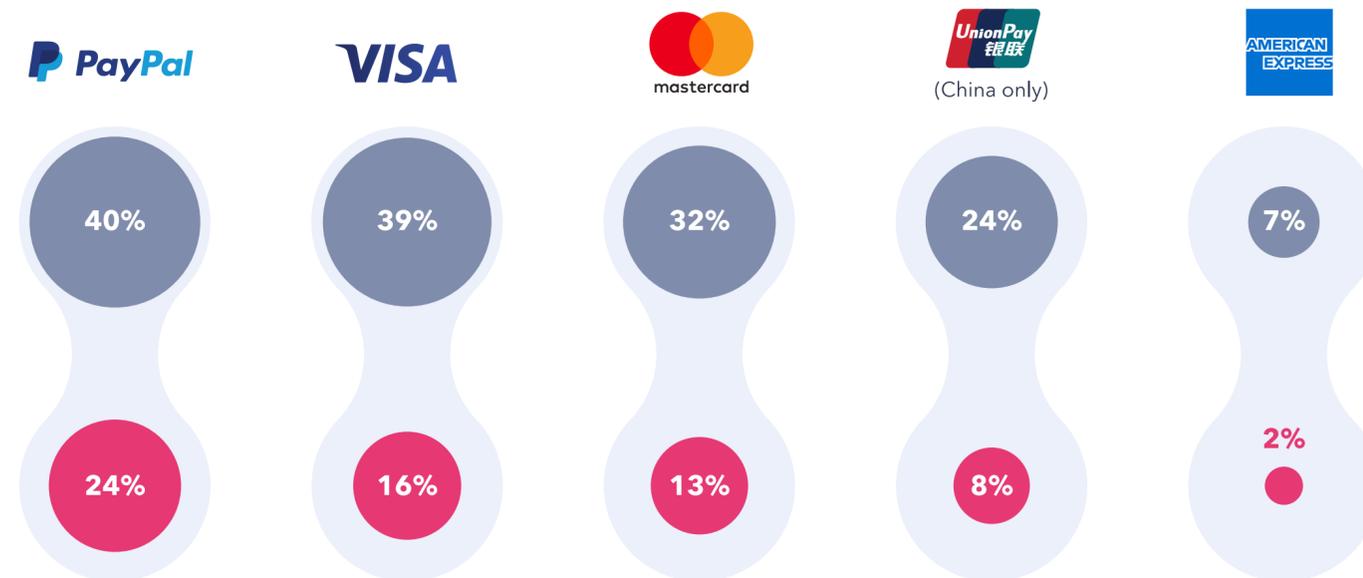
Unlike PayPal, for instance, it managed to be adopted for everything from parents' allowance transfers, to point-of-sale solutions in major retail chains. It's achieved the kind of personal and commercial ubiquity that industry watchers had mostly associated with developing markets.

So, while certain online payment providers may come out on top when looking from a global perspective, it is clear that each mobile payment market is fashioned differently and is defined by its own set of local players.

## ENGAGERS VS. ADVOCATES

% of internet users who use the following service/would advocate that service to others

● Engagers ● Advocates



**27% of online consumers have used a mobile payment service such as Apple Pay, rising to 33% in Asia-Pacific**

If you'd like more information on the topic, please see our [Mobile Payments report](#).



**Questions:** Which of these payment services/providers have you used? | Which of these brands would you advocate to others?

**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 230,936 internet users aged 16-64

02

Commerce

# Purchasing Habits by Category

# Buying by Category

## ONLINE BUYING VS. RESEARCHING (MINOR PURCHASES)

% of internet users who have purchased online or researched the following products online in the last month

● Purchased Online ● Researched Online



## ONLINE BUYING VS. RESEARCHING (MAJOR PURCHASES)

% of internet users who have purchased online/researched the following products online before purchasing

● Purchased Online ● Researched Online



When it comes to online purchasing, **not all product categories are equal**. For products lower in value, buying online tends to be a less daunting prospect. Cheaper items like packaged foods, beauty products, and household supplies are bought online more than they are researched. As they are more likely to be spontaneous purchases, **these categories are therefore a good fit for voice commerce**. The big players in grocery retail are competing to take advantage of this new channel. By extending Amazon Prime to Whole Foods, and selling Echo devices in their stores, Amazon has shown its ambition to integrate online and offline platforms. Amazon is also in talks to bring the cashierless technology that runs in its Go stores to other retailers like airport shops and movie theatres. The effort will help Amazon grow its retail presence so the company can rely less on online shopping and form alliances with companies that would ordinarily be considered competition.

On the other hand, **higher-priced products are researched as much as they are bought online**. For example, the same number of internet users have researched as have bought travel tickets online (12%). **Household furniture is a rare major purchase category that sees much more buying than researching online**. Only 10% of those who have bought furniture on the internet have looked it up online beforehand. Generally, however, consumers want reassurance that they are buying high-quality items, particularly when the stakes are higher. For brands selling items that require more of a commitment on the part of the consumer, **effective use of social media channels and positive consumer reviews are paramount**.

**Domestic vacations are more researched (13%) than purchased online (10%)**



**Questions:** Which of these products have you or your household purchased in the last month? | Which of these items did you purchase online? | Which of these items did you research online before purchasing?  
**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 230,936 internet users aged 16-64

# Paid-For Digital Content

Despite fears that online piracy and file-sharing would destroy the digital content landscape, the rate of **internet users who've bought some form of digital content has actually been growing - from 54% in 2016 to 65% in 2019**. There is strong regional variation, however - while 72% internet users in APAC have bought digital content in the past month, just 47% in Europe have.

Looking at the global picture, **we can see an ongoing trend of streaming services becoming increasingly more popular than downloads**. In 2016, movie/TV streaming services and movie/TV downloads were paid-for by the same percentage of internet users (15%). Fast forward to 2019, and while 17% have purchased a download in the last month, 26% have paid for a streaming service.

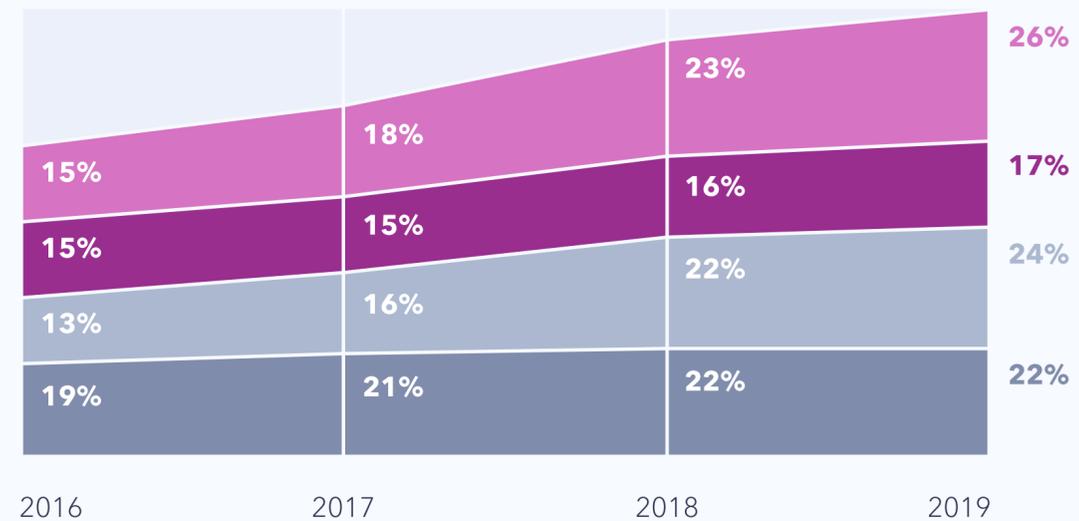
Similarly, music downloads (19%) were more popular than music streaming services (13%) in 2016; but **streaming services have now overtaken downloads**. This does vary by region, though. Music streaming services are preferred to downloads in Europe, Latin America and North America; while music downloads are currently a more popular choice in both Asia-Pacific and the Middle East and Africa. Expensive data plans and inadequate signal will have a big effect here, particularly in MEA.

Netflix and Spotify have led the transition to "access-over-ownership" subscription models, in a world where 41% and 24% of the internet population use their services, respectively. **If current patterns continue, these attitudes could affect a number of industries besides music and entertainment**; the car industry, for example, is set to face challenges when ride-sharing platforms offer an attractive alternative to ownership.

## SUBSCRIPTION VS. BUYING OVER TIME

% of internet users who have paid for the following services in the last month

- Movie or TV streaming service
- Music streaming service
- Movie or TV download
- Music download



**45% of internet users would rather sign up for membership of a product/service than pay extra to own it**



**Question:** In the last month, which of these have you paid for?  
**Source:** GlobalWebIndex 2016-2019 (Averages of all waves conducted between Q1 2016-Q2 2019)  
**Base:** 211,023 (2016), 303,502 (2017), 391,130 (2018) 230,936 (H1 2019) internet users aged 16-64

03

Commerce

# The Purchase Journey

# Discovery on the Path to Purchase

**BRAND DISCOVERY** | % of internet users who discover brands through the following sources



**1 in 4 internet users now discover brands through recommendations or comments on social media**

If you'd like more information on the topic, please see our [Brand Discovery report](#).

In 2019, **search engines remain the most influential source of brand discovery, closely followed by ads seen on TV**. However, differences appear when we look at factors such as age and income. Ads seen on TV are the leading source of brand discovery for less affluent consumers in the bottom 25% income bracket and those aged 55-64; whereas younger audiences and those in the top 25% income bracket lean more heavily on search engines.

While 51% of the online population have used an ad-blocker to stop ads being displayed in the past month, **online ads still feature high on the list, with 1 in 4 discovering brands this way**. Rather than abandoning this method due to the commonness of ad-blocking, brands should focus on ensuring that their messages are relevant and to the point.

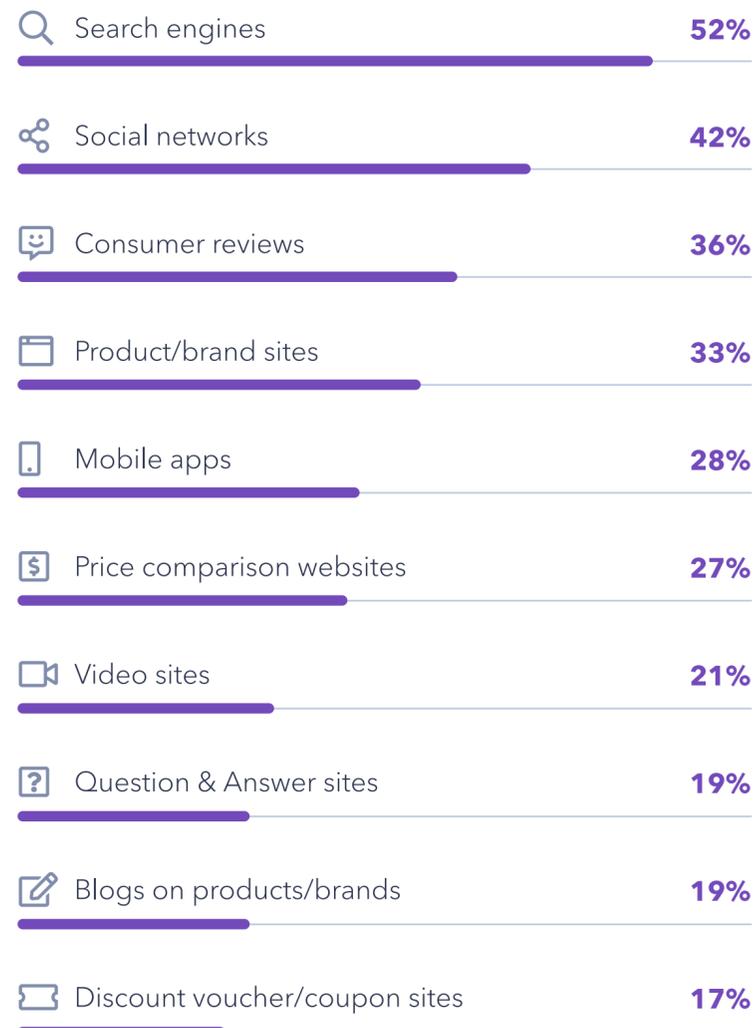
Vlogs and expert/influencer posts are now the topic of much discussion, but have so far proved to be effective mostly among younger audiences; **16-24-year-olds are 1.4x more likely than the global average to discover brands through vlogs (18% do)**. 2 in 10 also find out about brands through endorsements by celebrities or well-known individuals. Despite the lower figure, younger consumers are the ones setting the tone for future generations, it's safe to say that **the topic of influencers and their contribution to the world of advertising is unlikely to disappear anytime soon**.

**Question:** In which of the following ways are you most likely to find out about new brands, products, or services?  
**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 279,055 internet users aged 16-64

# Online Research via Social Channels

## ONLINE PRODUCT RESEARCH

% of internet users who use the following online sources to look for information



## 76% of internet users in Kenya mainly use social media when researching brands, products and services, compared to 21% in Japan

As we describe in our Social Media flagship [report](#), the way people use social media is changing. **Social behaviors are now less focused on sharing personal information and more purpose-driven**, which means that social media now plays an increasingly more important part in the overall purchase journey, most notably in the research stage.

In addition to almost 3 in 10 internet users discovering brands through ads seen on social media, over 4 in 10 are then using it to find more information before committing to buy. **Social media is therefore key for brands wanting to target consumers in the initial phases of the purchase journey**; and, with the buying process becoming increasingly more fragmented over time, a brand's priority should be engaging with buyers at every step of the way.

**Social networks are now the second-most widely used channel for online product research**, after search engines; and they are currently the main source of brand-related information about products and services for 42% of internet users. In 2015, this figure stood at 30%, demonstrating the growing relevance of social networks to consumers' brand research. **For 16-24s, social networks have already overtaken search engines as the most popular method of online research**; and millennials are not far behind.

The use of social media for research varies by region too. **These channels lead the way in Latin America and the Middle East and Africa**, and are used by 59% and 65% of internet users here, respectively. Whereas in Europe and North America, search engines still command most control in this phase of the path to purchase; **63% of internet users in Europe and 53% in North America prefer search engines**, with only 27% of those in North America turning to social media for further information. In these regions, while the impact of social media is likely to follow current trends, its role in consumer research habits is growing at a much slower rate than in other parts of the world.

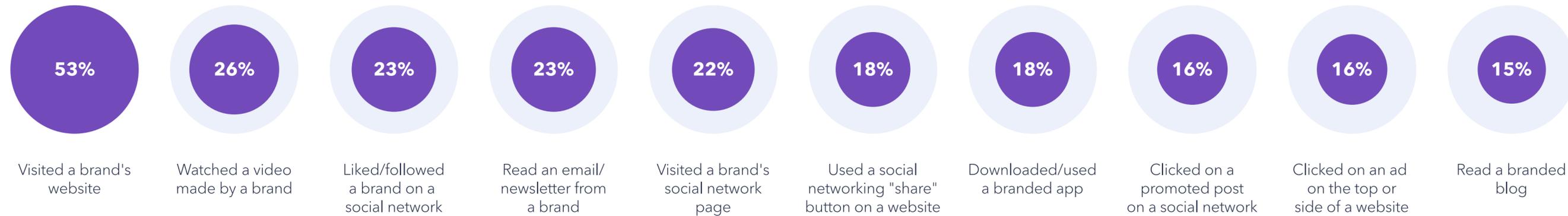


**Question:** Which of the following online sources do you mainly use when you are actively looking for more information about brands, products, or services?

**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 279,055 internet users aged 16-64

# Social Media Strategies in the Brand-Consumer Relationship

**ONLINE BRAND INTERACTIONS** | % of internet users who have done the following in the past month



Social platforms also provide important brand-consumer touchpoints: **38% of internet users follow brands they like on social media**, with 26% following brands they are thinking of buying something from. This reflects their motivations for using social media, as over 3 in 10 say that researching or finding products to buy is one of their main reasons for using these networks; again highlighting the purpose-driven nature of social media.

**Brand interactions are becoming more common.** This is partly because consumers want more from brands now than in the past. For example, 15% of internet users say they want their favorite brands to make them feel cool or trendy, which helps explain why similar percentages are sharing branded content with their friends on social media or uploading their own content to a brand's page.

Yet, **social commerce should be treated with caution.** Social media strategies should go beyond implementing "buy" buttons on posts, to focusing on the content itself. Instagram, in particular, has experimented with incorporating this final step of the purchase journey by adding a new **Shoppable** feature to its platform; but **brands will still need to step up their game if they want to close the gap between researching and purchasing on social media.**

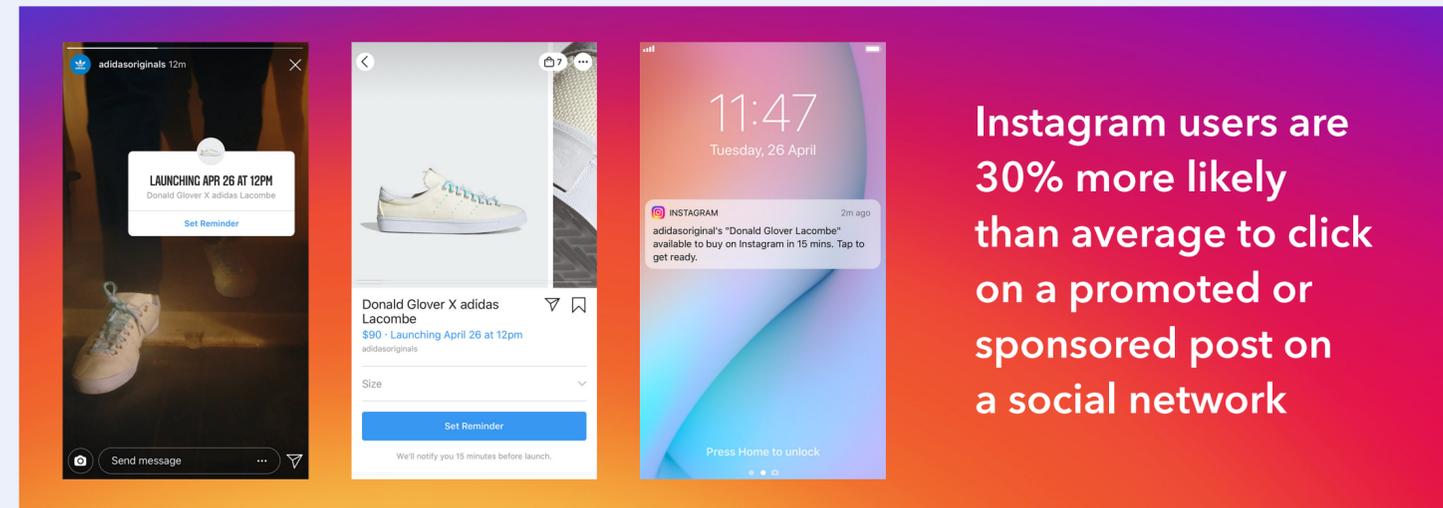
At present, only 12% of internet users say that a "buy" button on a social network would drive them to purchase online, increasing slightly to 15% in APAC and 14% among Instagram visitors and users. **The bridge between the start and end of the purchase journey on social media is not convincing enough to be taken by the majority of internet users;** and, at present, enthusiasm about buying ordinary goods and services via social networks is limited. However, this is something that robust branded content and inspiration can change.



**Question:** Which of the following actions have you done online in the past month?  
**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 230,936 internet users aged 16-64

• TREND IN ACTION •

# Instagram Testing In-App Reminders for Merch Drops



Instagram is testing a new feature that allows brands to set up reminder notifications about their latest product launches. These alerts will mean that **brand followers can purchase products on the platform as soon as they become available**. The company recently **announced** its partnership with around 20 brands in the U.S., including Adidas, Highsnobiety, Revolve and Chinatown Market.

Lately, **Instagram has focused much of its efforts on building an effective shopping platform** and creating a “personalized mall” for users. It has created several product features to complement the shopping experience, including **in-app checkouts**, as well as **shopping tags** for clothing posts. As apps like Instagram begin to reap the rewards of this strategy and buying via social media becomes more mainstream, it is likely that other brands and platforms will turn to these new revenue streams.

# Purchase Drivers and Reviews

So when consumers are on the path to purchase, what's needed to convert them into buyers? Above all, **free delivery is the most effective purchase driver**. Across all age breaks, and in every single country we track, internet users say that having free delivery would most motivate them to buy a product online. **Consumers would much rather have a product delivered for free than on the next day**, indicating that they rate saving money above convenience.

In general, **most markets share the same pattern in priorities for online buying**, where free delivery is followed by financial incentives like coupons, and then positive consumer reviews. Easy returns are catching up with customer reviews, even surpassing them in MEA. The lack of credit card infrastructure in MEA means that providing a cash on delivery option here ranks as the second most important feature (44%).

Globally, 48% of internet users post a review of a product, company or service each month. **These reviews then impact the decisions of the 36% who use them to research products**. Given the influence reviews have on consumers' purchase decisions, brands need to ensure they maintain a positive reputation by keeping track of feedback and resolve any issues that arise.

Although financial incentives top the list across all regions, **brand interaction is more effective in some than others**. Internet users in MEA and APAC are more likely to buy if they receive access to exclusive content or services (17% say this), or a live-chat box that allows them to speak to the company (16% say this). These factors are less persuasive among consumers in Europe and North America. Yet, on the whole, these are often seen as 'nice-to-haves' rather than 'must-haves' in buyers' decision-making.

## ONLINE PURCHASE DRIVERS

% of internet users who say the following would most motivate them to buy a product online



**Question:** When shopping online, which of these features would most increase your likelihood of buying a product?

**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 230,936 internet users aged 16-64

# What Turns Buyers into Advocates?

High-quality products are most likely to turn buyers into advocates regardless of age; this is followed by financial rewards such as discounts or free gifts. However, **younger consumers are more likely to advocate a brand they have a close relationship with it**, especially one providing a more immersive experience; whereas older demographics emphasize practicality.

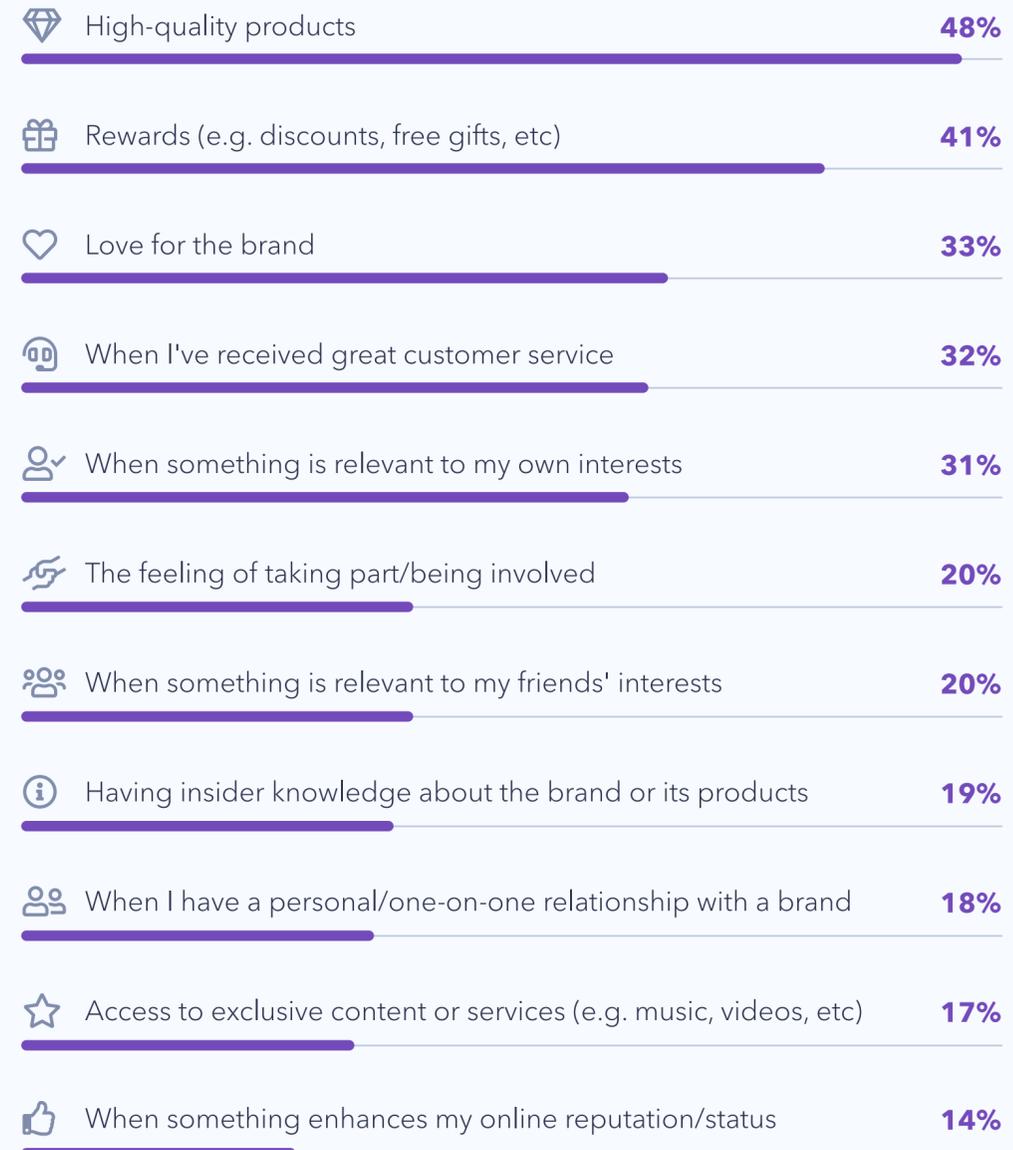
While only 23% of those aged 55-64 would advocate a brand simply out of love for it, 38% of those aged 16-24 would. **Among Gen Z and millennials, 22% would promote a brand that provides the feeling of taking part and being involved**; with 20% of this age group also wanting access to exclusive content or services. On the other hand, 36% of those aged 55-64 would promote a brand when they have received great customer service, compared to 29% of those aged 16-24. **The impact of financial incentives on the likelihood of advocacy also increases with age.**

This is reflected in consumers' expectations from brands too. Those aged 16-24 are 30% more likely than average to say they want brands to make them feel cool or trendy (20% say this); while 55-64s are 20% more likely to want brands to make them feel like a valued customer (29% say this).

Therefore, **aside from ensuring quality and value for money, a brand must bear in mind its target audience when engaging with it.** While good customer service is likely to encourage advocacy among older consumers, identity and prestige are important to younger audiences. Customizing this relationship depending on the customer base in question is crucial.

## BRAND ADVOCACY

% who say the following would most motivate them to promote a brand online



If you'd like more information on the topic, please see our [Brand Advocacy report](#).



**Question:** What would most motivate you to promote your favorite brand online?

**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 230,936 internet users aged 16-64

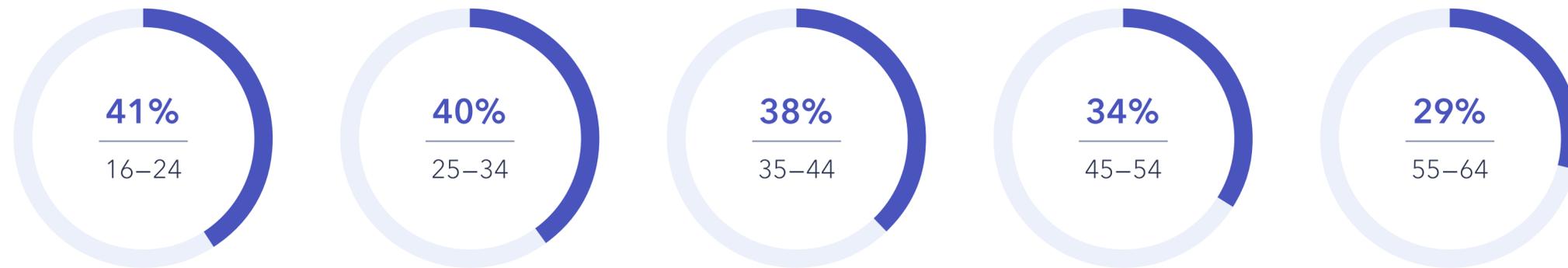
04

Commerce

# Ongoing Trends in Commerce

# QR Codes in Ecommerce

**QR CODE USAGE** | % of internet users who have used or scanned a QR code on their mobile in the last month



**4 in 10 internet users have scanned a QR code on their mobile in the last month, rising to two-thirds in Taiwan**

**Younger demographics tend to be the earliest adopters of emerging technology.** More than 4 in 10 of those aged 16-24 have scanned or used a QR code in the last month; and 32% of those aged 25-34 have used a mobile payment service. But differences in adoption among age groups aren't huge.

Regional variations matter more in this respect. **The QR code is part of the online fabric in South East Asia** (the majority of internet users in Hong Kong and Taiwan use them); and as many as 43% of internet users in APAC use or scan these codes on a monthly basis. QR codes have left their mark on India too, and are now commonly used by smartphone owners to **pay** for meals and goods in restaurants and shops. The current leader in the Indian digital payments market, Paytm, first set QR codes in motion by introducing them as a payment method.

Overall, QR codes have had a surprising comeback worldwide, with more internet users scanning them now than did when they first peaked in 2014. This is true in the West as well. These codes have featured on several platforms, such as Facebook Messenger, Snapchat and Spotify, with slight modifications and under different names.

**Their rising popularity along with mobile payment methods will leave a mark on the retail landscape** in coming years and affect the way brands interact with consumers. A number of brands are already adapting their strategies in order to stay competitive, with others set to follow.



**Question:** Which of the following have you done on your mobile phone in the past month? (Used a QR code)

**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 279,055 internet users aged 16-64

# The New Retail Experience

Jack Ma, former CEO of Alibaba, coined the term “New Retail” to describe a commerce future where online, offline, data, and logistics were integrated together to create a seamless shopping experience. We’re in this future now.

Today’s consumers are researching and buying products online more than in the past, but are often spreading the buying experience across a variety of different channels. A bespoke survey we conducted in October this year highlights how multi-layered the shopping experience has become. When purchasing high-end or luxury fashion products, a quarter of consumers in the UK and U.S. said they felt confident completing the purchase online without going into the actual store; at the same time, more than 3 in 10 said that they like to get inspiration online but prefer to complete the purchase in-store. It’s clear that offline and online channels are more intertwined than ever and a retail strategy isolating one from the other is no longer viable.

The smartphone is a major facilitator linking up and harmonizing these two worlds. Research conducted on smartphones can entice consumers to visit the physical store, but **these devices have become part of the in-store experience more broadly**. Of fashion buyers in the UK and U.S., 46% have looked for cheaper prices on their phone while shopping for clothes in-store and 42% have sent pictures of products to family and friends. **Rather than taking consumers away from stores, smartphones are enhancing the consumer experience within them.**

## THE MULTIPLE LAYERS OF LUXURY SHOPPING

% of luxury fashion buyers in the U.S. and UK who say that when purchasing high-end or luxury fashion products, they...

**31%** Like to get inspiration online, but complete the purchase in store



**25%** Feel confident completing the purchase online without going to the store



**16%** Like to purchase in store and get the item delivered to my door



**11%** Like to purchase online and collect in store

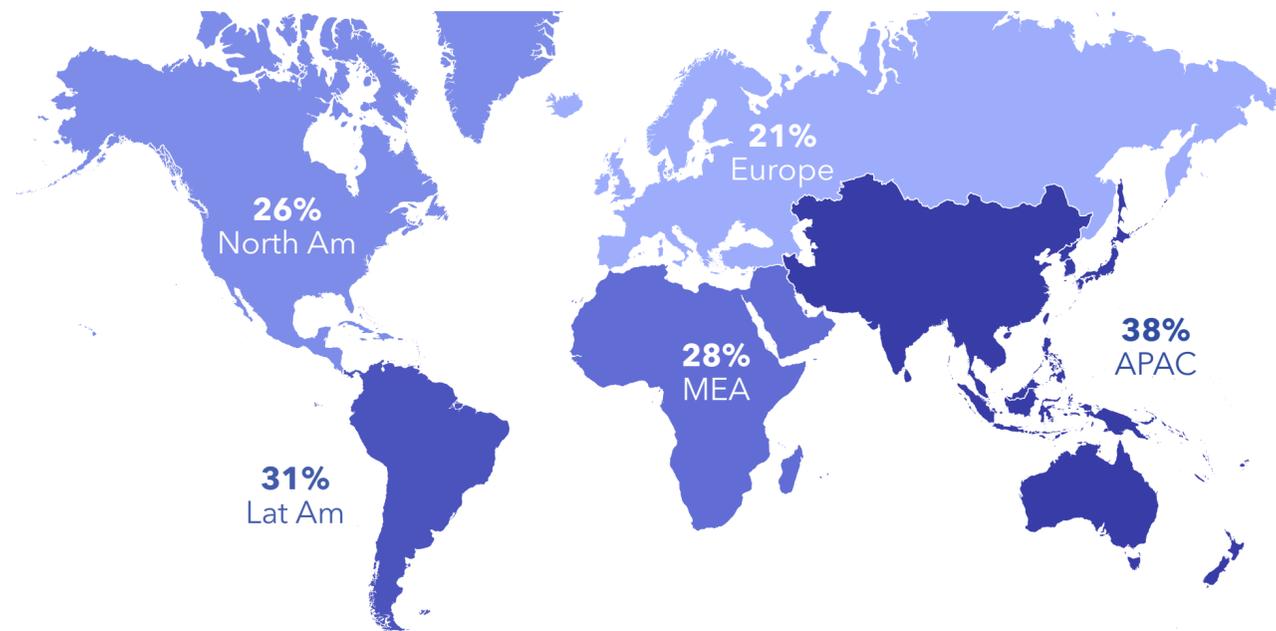


**Question:** Please complete the sentence: When purchasing high-end or luxury fashion products (e.g. a designer handbag, fine jewelry)...  
**Source:** GlobalWebIndex October 2019  
**Base:** 1,125 (U.S.) and 1,023 (UK) Luxury Fashion Buyers aged 16-64

# Voice Commerce

## VOICE SEARCH USAGE

% of internet users who have used voice search on their mobile in the last month



**Voice shopping is projected to reach \$40 billion by 2022, up from \$2 billion today**

Credit: OC&C

Globally, **voice tech has reached 43% adoption rate**, 33% of which is done on mobile. Voice search usage has been growing steadily over the past two years, showing an 11-percentage-point increase since Q2 2017. Although still niche, smart assistants have made themselves attractive to 7% of internet users globally; 54% of smart home product owners have also incorporated them into their family's shopping experience. As the trend matures, brands are keen to understand whether they need to integrate with voice before it's too late, and it's becoming clear that **this is a theme which has the potential to reshape the entire commerce landscape.**

Voice search adoption is not uniform across regions though. With its higher mobile penetration as well as young and affluent internet users, there's a wider openness to new tech in the APAC region generally. Nearly 4 in 10 online consumers here have used voice search or command tools on their mobile in the last month, compared to just a fifth in Europe.

**Improvement in existing voice recognition technology is key for enabling growth in voice-based shopping**, as well as mass adoption from brands. The volume of voice-based spending will most definitely grow over the next few years, fueled by rapid consumer adoption of smart speakers, the expansion of **smart home** appliances, and the growing integration of voice assistants in **cars**. With 29% of car drivers in the U.S. and UK wanting to make a purchase while driving based on something they've heard on the radio, voice tech could be a big facilitator of on-the-move commerce too.

Privacy concerns could stand in the way of some of these developments, however. **Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of their digital footprint**, and many may take issue with companies gaining access to sensitive personal information, such as a user's location in real-time; not to mention that many smart assistants have "active listening" enabled by default.

With over half of internet users deleting cookies, 49% using private browsing windows, and 48% using ad-blockers, companies have to deal sensitively with privacy-conscious users to develop and maintain trust on smart devices that use voice technology. If we look beyond this obstacle, the future of voice commerce looks bright.



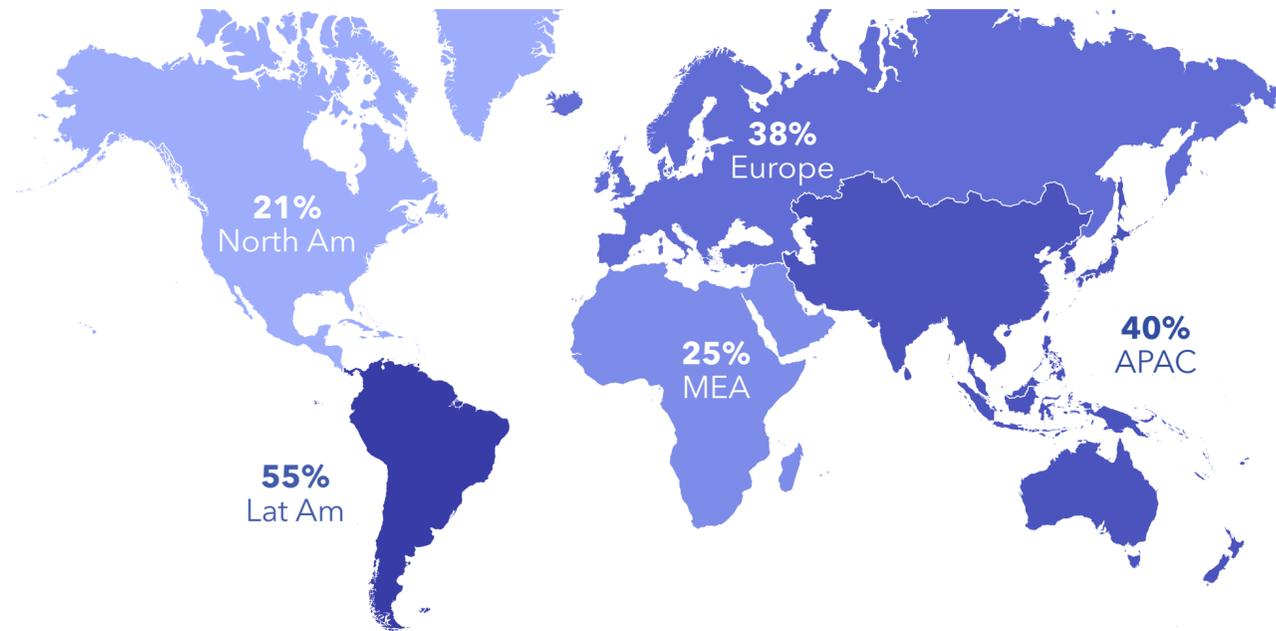
**Question:** In the past month, which of the following things have you done on the internet via your mobile? (Used voice search or voice command tools (e.g. Siri, Cortana))

**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 230,936 internet users aged 16-64

# Image Recognition

## IMAGE SEARCH USAGE

% of internet users who have used image search tools on their mobile in the last month



While voice gives us digital assistants to do the searching for us, visual presents a novel way of finding what we want at the prices we want, transforming ecommerce one image at a time

As adoption of voice search keeps growing, visual search is a little way behind but offers another compelling alternative to inputting text into a box. Google has been rapidly developing its visual search tool **Lens**, which now has a wide array of capabilities: translating text, scanning restaurant menus, searching objects in the real world and driving commerce. More recently, Google introduced “**style ideas**” where users can search items of clothing in stores or in real life and see similar items with the opportunity to buy many of them.

These features are now a big component in Google Shopping, which is now a hybrid commerce and discovery platform that puts Google Shopping more directly in competition with Instagram Checkout, which has also **rolled out** more fashion-friendly feature updates. **While Google has the advantage of search volume, Instagram currently caters to more of an open-ended exploration via scrolling.**

Microsoft has also done a great deal of work in the area of object recognition and machine learning since 2009, and has been making steady improvements to Bing's visual search. Pinterest's Lens is a bit more under-the-radar than Google and Microsoft, but allows users to isolate items in pins and search on them visually to find similar objects or use the smartphone camera to identify objects in real life and buy them in the Pinterest app. Most recently, Pinterest introduced **shoppable** Product Pins, connecting Lens image search results to ecommerce information such as the price and retailer link.



**Question:** Which of these have you done on your mobile in the last month? (Used an image search tool)

**Source:** GlobalWebIndex H1 2019 **Base:** 279,055 internet users aged 16-64

# Notes on Methodology

All figures in this report are drawn from **GlobalWebIndex’s online research among internet users aged 16-64**. Please note that we only interview respondents aged 16-64 and our figures are representative of the **online** populations of each market, not its total population.

## OUR RESEARCH

Each year, GlobalWebIndex interviews over 575,000 internet users aged 16-64 across 45 markets. Respondents complete an **online questionnaire** that asks them a wide range of questions about their lives, lifestyles and digital behaviors. **We source these respondents in partnership with a number of industry-leading panel providers**. Each respondent who takes a GWI survey is assigned a unique and persistent identifier regardless of the site/panel to which they belong and **no respondent can participate in our survey more than once a year** (with the exception of internet users in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, where respondents are allowed to complete the survey at 6-month intervals).

## OUR QUOTAS

To ensure that **our research is reflective of the online population in each market**, we set appropriate **quotas on age, gender, and education** - meaning that we interview representative numbers of men vs women, of 16-24s, 25-34s, 35-44s, 45-54s and 55-64s, and of people with secondary vs tertiary education.

To do this, we conduct research across a range of international and national sources, including the World Bank, the ITU, the International Labour Organization, the CIA Factbook, Eurostat, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics as well as a range of national statistics sources, government departments and other credible and robust third-party sources. This research is also used to calculate the ‘weight’ of each respondent; that is, approximately how many people (of the same gender, age, and educational attainment) are represented by their responses.

## MOBILE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

**From Q1 2017 on, GlobalWebIndex has offered our Core survey on mobile**. This allows us to survey internet users who prefer using a mobile or are mobile-only (who use a mobile to get online but do not use or own any other device). Mobile respondents complete a shorter version of our Core survey, answering 50 questions, all carefully adapted to be compatible with mobile screens.

**Please note that the sample sizes presented in the charts throughout this report may differ** as some will include both mobile and PC/laptop/tablet respondents and others will include **only** respondents who completed GWI’s Core survey via PC/laptop/tablet. For more details on our methodology for mobile surveys and the questions asked to mobile respondents, please download this [document](#).

## GLOBALWEBINDEX SAMPLE SIZE BY MARKET

This report draws insights from GlobalWebIndex’s Q1 2019 and Q2 2019 waves of research across 45 countries, with a global sample of 279,055 respondents.

Argentina	3,138	Morocco	1,985
Australia	8,094	Netherlands	2,635
Austria	2,580	New Zealand	2,578
Belgium	2,556	Nigeria	2,057
Brazil	4,721	Philippines	3,291
Canada	4,575	Poland	3,725
China	30,565	Portugal	2,580
Colombia	2,644	Romania	2,627
Denmark	2,521	Russia	4,430
Egypt	3,558	Saudi Arabia	2,950
France	10,187	Singapore	5,432
Germany	10,231	South Africa	3,056
Ghana	1,837	South Korea	2,565
Hong Kong	3,642	Spain	10,184
India	15,181	Sweden	2,616
Indonesia	3,794	Switzerland	2,580
Ireland	2,529	Taiwan	3,573
Italy	10,548	Thailand	3,172
Japan	3,681	Turkey	3,049
Kenya	1,982	UAE	3,531
Malaysia	3,069	UK	20,248
Mexico	5,252	USA	50,129

# Notes on Methodology

## INTERNET PENETRATION RATES ACROSS GLOBALWEBINDEX'S MARKETS

GlobalWebIndex's research focuses exclusively on the internet population and because internet penetration rates can vary significantly between countries (from a high of 90%+ in parts of Europe to lows of c.20% in parts of APAC), the nature of our samples is impacted accordingly.

Where a market has a high internet penetration rate, its online population will be relatively similar to its total population and hence we will see good representation across all age, gender and education breaks. This is typically the case across North America, Western Europe and parts of Asia-Pacific such as Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Where a market has a medium to low internet penetration, its online population can be very different to its total population; broadly speaking, the **lower the country's overall internet penetration rate, the more likely it is that its internet users will be young, urban, affluent and educated.** This is the case throughout much of LatAm, MEA and Asia-Pacific.

This table provides GlobalWebIndex forecasts on internet penetration (defined as the number of internet users per 100 people) in 2019. This forecasted data is based upon the latest internet penetration estimates from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for each market that GlobalWebIndex conducts online research in.

## GLOBALWEBINDEX VERSUS ITU FIGURES

As GlobalWebIndex's Core Research is conducted among 16-64 year-olds, we supplement the internet penetration forecasts for a country's total population (reproduced above) with internet penetration forecasts for 16-64s specifically. Forecasts for 16-64s will be higher than our forecasts for total population, since 16-64s are the most likely age groups to be using the internet.

## MOBILE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

From Q1 2017 on, GlobalWebIndex has offered our Core survey on mobile. This allows us to survey internet users who prefer using a mobile or are mobile-only (who use a mobile to get online but do not use or own any other device). Mobile respondents complete a shorter version of our Core survey, answering 50 questions, all carefully adapted to be compatible with mobile screens.

Please note that the sample sizes presented in the charts throughout this report may differ as some will include both mobile and PC/laptop/tablet respondents and others will include only respondents who completed GWI's Core survey via PC/laptop/tablet. For more details on our methodology for mobile surveys and the questions asked to mobile respondents, please download this [document](#).

## INTERNET PENETRATION RATES

GlobalWebIndex's Forecasts for 2019 based on 2017 ITU data.

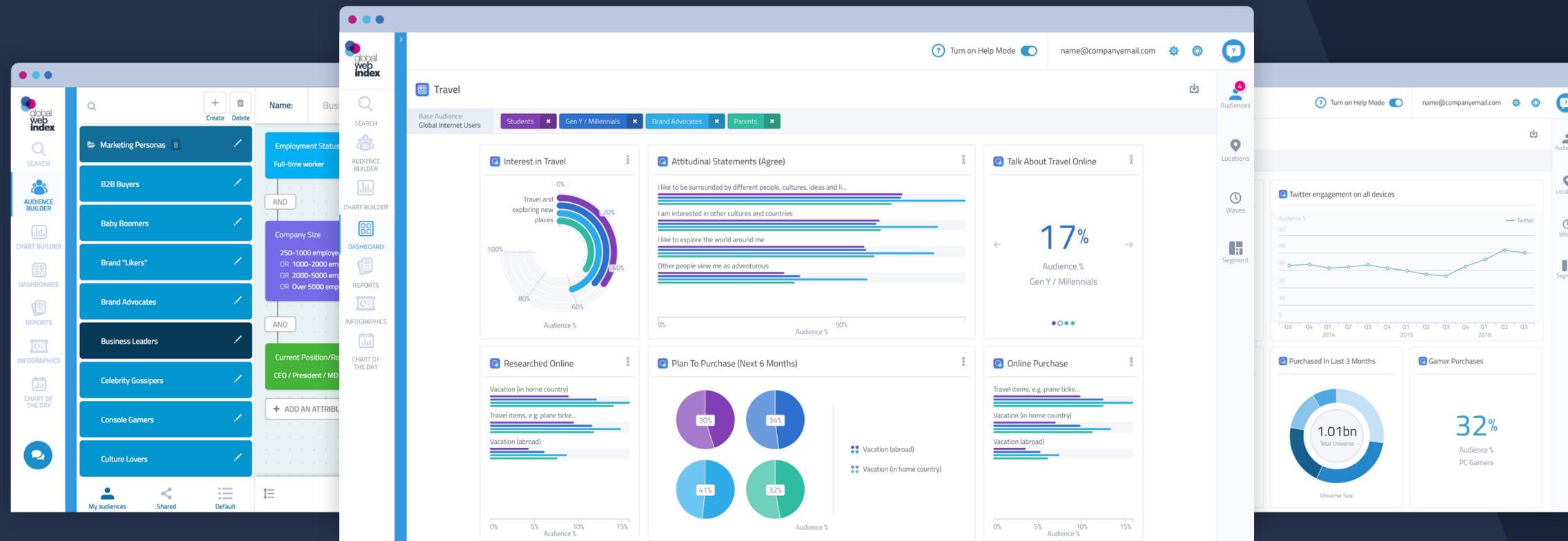
Argentina	78%	Netherlands	93%
Australia	88%	New Zealand	93%
Austria	88%	Nigeria	36%
Belgium	89%	Philippines	64%
Brazil	71%	Poland	79%
Canada	94%	Portugal	78%
China	59%	Romania	72%
Colombia	66%	Russia	80%
Denmark	97%	Saudi Arabia	83%
Egypt	54%	Singapore	85%
France	85%	South Africa	62%
Germany	88%	South Korea	95%
Ghana	48%	Spain	87%
Hong Kong	91%	Sweden	96%
India	42%	Switzerland	96%
Indonesia	39%	Taiwan	83%
Ireland	87%	Thailand	58%
Italy	62%	Turkey	71%
Japan	92%	UAE	95%
Kenya	43%	UK	96%
Malaysia	83%	USA	80%
Mexico	69%	Vietnam	55%
Morocco	69%		



Like what you've read?

There's plenty more where that came from. Browse our latest reports and infographics examining key consumer trends across markets.

[Access More Reports](#)



Get more from your data.

Run your own custom studies using our panel of 22 million consumers, and get instant access to insight tailored to your business needs.

[Request Custom Research](#)



**Jason Mander**  
Chief Research Officer

[jason@globalwebindex.com](mailto:jason@globalwebindex.com)



**Chase Buckle**  
Trends Manager

[chase@globalwebindex.com](mailto:chase@globalwebindex.com)



**Duncan Kavanagh**  
Senior Analyst & Writer

[duncan@globalwebindex.com](mailto:duncan@globalwebindex.com)

[www.globalwebindex.com](http://www.globalwebindex.com)

Copyright © Trendstream Limited 2019 - All rights, including copyright, in the content of GlobalWebIndex (GWI) webpages and publications (including, but not limited to, GWI reports and blog posts) are owned and controlled by Trendstream Limited. In accessing such content, you agree that you may only use the content for your own personal non-commercial use and that you will not use the content for any other purpose whatsoever without an appropriate licence from, or the prior written permission of, Trendstream Limited. | Trendstream Limited uses its reasonable endeavours to ensure the accuracy of all data in GWI webpages and publications at the time of publication. However, in accessing the content of GWI webpages and publications, you agree that you are responsible for your use of such data and Trendstream Limited shall have no liability to you for any loss, damage, cost or expense whether direct, indirect consequential or otherwise, incurred by, or arising by reason of, your use of the data and whether caused by reason of any error, omission or misrepresentation in the data or otherwise.