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INCLUDES
COVID-19
RESEARCH
THE LATEST

The new consumer mindset

How a global pandemic could change consumer attitudes for good

TREND REPORT 2020

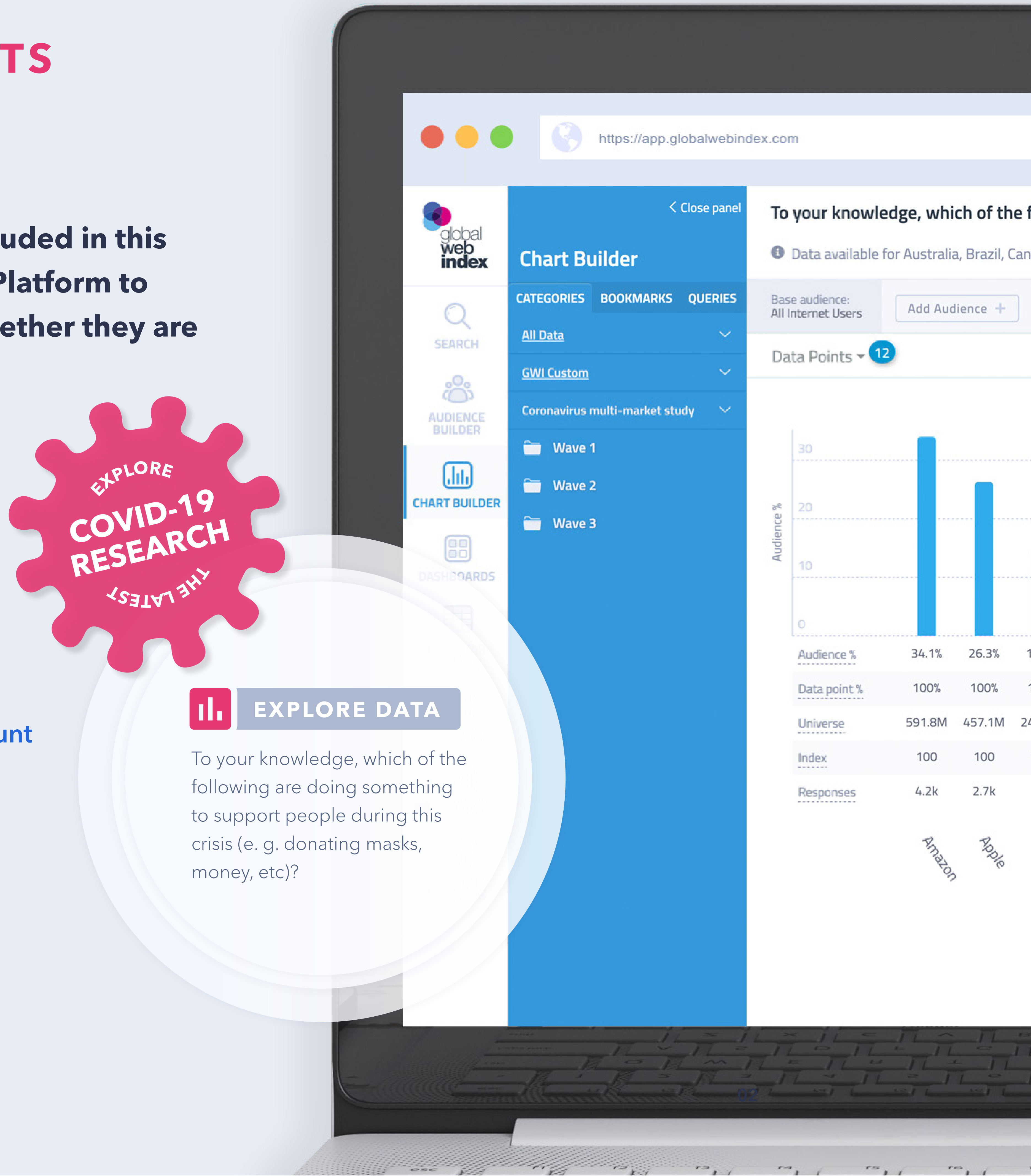
globalwebindex.com

What's inside?

RECREATE CHARTS FOR YOURSELF

Our COVID-19 research included in this report is accessible on our Platform to anybody – regardless of whether they are a client or not.

Clients can access it via their usual account, and will find it under the "Custom" section; because all respondents have previously completed our Core survey, you can cross-analyze the results of the two surveys. Non-users can sign up for a free account and will be able to analyze the results of the COVID-19 study.



Introduction

GlobalWebIndex Trend reports take a deep-dive into pressing topics for marketers and brands. In this report, we place the spotlight on **the post-COVID-19 consumer mindset,** looking at the most meaningful changes in attitudes that have appeared in our research.

In this report we have identified 5 aspects of the new consumer mindset:

- **Data for good**
- **Exclusivity excluded**
- **Life in the slow lane**
- **Tightened pursestrings**
- **Reduced horizons**

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. Note that in many markets in Latin America, the Middle-East and Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region, low internet penetration rates can mean online populations are more young, urban, affluent and educated than the total population.

Figures in this report are drawn from a mix of our ongoing quarterly global Core research among 688,000 internet users aged 16-64 worldwide, and our custom recontact study focusing on COVID-19 fielded in 17 countries between April 22 - 27.

The new normal

Since the coronavirus outbreak began, it's been widely understood that, when the dust settles, society is unlikely to resemble what it did before.

There have been scores of data releases trying to grapple with the momentous shifts in how people move, how they behave, and how they keep themselves occupied.

For this report, we're interested in something less tangible but still important: consumer mindset. With our ongoing research into how consumers think and behave going back to 2009, **we can identify the most significant changes in consumer sentiment in the first few months of the outbreak, and paint a picture of where the biggest shifts will be going forward.**

To achieve this, we've identified three markets in our global research for special analysis (China, South Korea and Italy) that were at the front-line of the pandemic. In these markets, findings from our most recent wave highlight five new areas of consumer sentiment that have been driven by COVID-19. The diversity of these markets, both in geography and demographics, indicate these are new ways of thinking that are likely to be driven by COVID-19 more than anything else. In all cases, **we have accounted for previous fluctuations in the data, as well as the typical data patterns under normal conditions, in order to identify where the most meaningful changes have come.**

Through this approach, we have identified five new aspects of the consumer mindset: data for good, exclusivity excluded, life in the slow lane, tightened pursestrings, and reduced horizons.

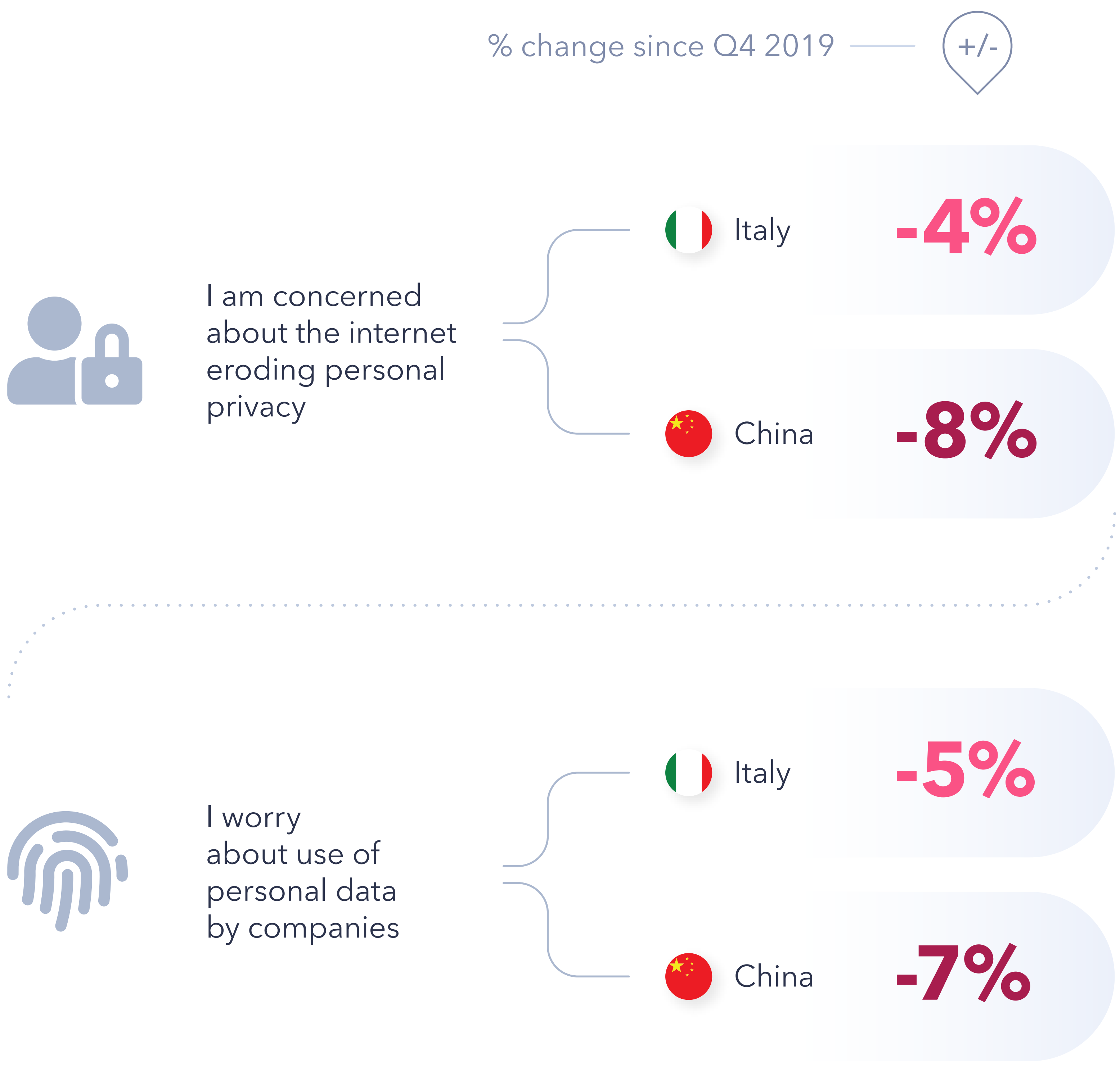
But even with this common framework, **harmonized global data is vital to understanding the full impact of COVID-19.** We believe the topics outlined here will influence much of the world in the coming months and years, but the extent to which they apply depends on the country, and may not be true everywhere. A country's cultural background, and government response to the crisis can cause attitudes to diverge.

For example, in our latest wave of research, identifying as brand-conscious dropped significantly in China (-11%), but rose in Italy (6%). While there are general lessons to learn, any strategy has to consider these individual market quirks too.

Data for good

PERSONAL DATA CONCERNS ARE DOWN

% change in the following data points



Since 2013, we have observed a consistent trend of consumers becoming, year-on-year, more concerned about the internet's erosion of their privacy. But as of Q1 2020, this has suddenly dropped, most notably in countries affected by coronavirus early on. Concerns about personal data may be being trumped by concerns about personal safety.

Personal data has been used to combat COVID-19 through contact tracing apps. There are many different examples of data collection in place, from Google and Apple's decentralized model, designed to offer absolute security to the end user, to South Korea's system, which draws on CCTV and credit card data, but there is clearly more at stake now in sharing data.

These attitudinal changes suggest consumers are viewing personal data as more of a public good, and are willing to sacrifice more of it than they were in the past. As each country has such different plans for contact tracing, responses will differ. South Korea has actually seen a slight increase in privacy concerns in the last quarter, while Italy and China have decreased.

Using personal data for the greater good had been more of a thought experiment before the pandemic. Facebook, for example, was **experimenting** with paying users for their data. The new sentiment could accelerate consumers' belief in large-scale data collection, when treated fairly and transparently, bringing wider gains.

Consumers have, however, been fickle with personal data before. In Q1 2018, we saw a big spike in these concerns, likely down to GDPR and Cambridge Analytica making them a front-page topic; by the next wave, attitudes had stabilized. It may well be that the generosity extended to data collection is temporary, particularly if the data used in contact tracing ends up stored on central servers in perpetuity.

OUR TAKE

Internet users appear willing to suspend their usual concerns with personal data to assist contact tracing software. It may also bring us closer to fair monetization of personal data in the long-run.

EXPLORE DATA

Question: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the statements below? Strongly/slightly agree
Source: GlobalWebIndex Q4 2019-Q1 2020
Base: 48,666 internet users in China aged 16-64 /10,223 internet users in Italy aged 16-64

Exclusivity excluded

COVID-19 has made the concepts of personal status and self-image much less relevant to consumers. This is to be expected ahead of an economic downturn, but it also reflects the root cause of it; a virus that is indiscriminate in who it targets, and which keeps people indoors, with less scope to show off.

Online purchases are therefore now less likely to be dictated by how many likes something attracts on social media, or the promise of exclusive content. Consumers are likewise less interested in having their personal image appealed to.

One hallmark of COVID-19 marketing has been a throwing open of doors for free services, perhaps best demonstrated by the Italian government's "**Digital Solidarity**" web portal, designed to help keep citizens educated and entertained during the lockdown. Initiatives like this have likely created an expectation that brands continue more altruistically for everyone's benefit.

OUR TAKE

Consumers will be less likely to want to stand out from the crowd, and will want more solidarity within the collective. Focusing on values, purpose, and a brand's contribution to the common good may be received better than strategies that try to put consumers apart from the pack. Emphasize practicality over exclusivity where possible over the coming months.

EXCLUSIVITY, STATUS, AND REPUTATION, ARE MUCH LESS RELEVANT

% changes in the following data points

			% change since Q4 2019 +/-
Online purchase drivers	Lots of "likes" on social media	China	-5%
		Italy	-21%
	Exclusive content/services	China	-12%
		South Korea	-15%
		Italy	-19%
Brand advocacy	When something enhances my online reputation/status	China	-9%
		South Korea	-21%
Brand action	Help improve image/reputation	Italy	-25%

EXPLORE DATA

EXPLORE DATA

EXPLORE DATA

Question: When shopping online, which of these features would most increase your likelihood of buying a product? | What would most motivate you to promote your favorite brand online? | Which of these things do you want brands to do? **Source:** GlobalWebIndex Q4 2019-Q1 2020 **Base:** 48,666 internet users in China aged 16-64/10,223 internet users in Italy aged 16-64/2,543 internet users in South Korea aged 16-64

Life in the slow lane

Whether it's from **power grids** or **sleep trackers**, data is showing that people are sleeping in longer during the pandemic. This is a profound change. And it's a massive shift in our sleep patterns which, since the Industrial Revolution put the workforce on timetables, have been forced to fit the 9-to-5 work day. Freed from the tyranny of the alarm clock, many people are finding themselves with more free time and a slower pace of life.

With movement curtailed, consumers are reporting less need to feel contactable at all times, or that they have to pack as much into their day as possible. One way consumers have filled up this extra time is to stream and stream some more, and although activities like gaming and TV streaming are up (which we will cover in upcoming content), consumers appear to be balancing this with offline activities.

Our bespoke COVID-19 data has shown steady drops in online media usage from the initial spike, with cooking the only activity to meaningfully grow during lockdown. Consumers may be moving to a stage where they catch up more on offline pursuits.

Which activities benefit depends on the country; in South Korea reading has taken off (though often, it should be said, through apps), and in China, consumers are getting more familiar with their kitchens and getting more interested in cooking.

OUR TAKE

Be aware of media fatigue caused by the creation of new free time. Consider how to engage and support consumers wanting to look away from their screens, as McDonald's and Kraft Heinz have through branded **jigsaw puzzles.**

FREE TIME AND SCREEN FATIGUE CREATES SPACE FOR OFFLINE ACTIVITIES

% changes in the following data points

		% change since Q4 2019 +/-
Interest in cooking	China	+12%
Interest in books/literature	South Korea	+6%
It's critical for me to be contactable at all times in terms of my private life	South Korea	-4%
	China	-5%
	Italy	-6%
I am constantly connected online	China	-8%
I try to fit as much into my day as possible	China	-11%

> The number of consumers spending more time cooking has increased 8% since our first wave of COVID-19 research – the number spending more time on apps has decreased by 15%

EXPLORE DATA

EXPLORE DATA

Question: Which of these things are you interested in? | To what extent do you agree/disagree with the statements below? Strongly/slightly agree **Source:** GlobalWebIndex Q4 2019-Q1 2020 **Base:** 48,666 internet users in China aged 16-64/10,223 internet users in Italy aged 16-64/2,543 internet users in South Korea aged 16-64

Tightened purse-strings

Consumers have identified from an early stage that COVID-19 would lead to global economic downturn, but optimism bias has meant that they've only recently begun to understand the impact it will have on their personal finances.

Decline in discretionary spending is all but inevitable. Alongside it is emerging what looks to be a post-affluent mindset, where consumers view themselves as less wealthy and less motivated to display wealth openly. Consumers in China – not exactly strangers to big spending in recent years – have seen pronounced dips in this area, and may herald some changing attitudes globally.

A drop in consumers saying they tend to buy brands they see advertised indicates a drop in spontaneous spending also, and suggests consumers will be taking more time over their purchases in future.

"Keep Calm and Carry On" became a global phenomenon after 2008, and the upcoming economic turbulence may breed a similar kind of focus on prudence and responsibility in spending.

OUR TAKE

Consumers may become more cautious and discreet when spending. Sellers of non-essential goods may have to find ways to make their products seem like essentials, rather than extras.

THE POST-AFFLUENT MINDSET

% changes in the following data points

Statement	Country	% change since Q4 2019
I tend to buy brands I see advertised	Italy	-8%
I tend to buy brands I see advertised	China	-10%
Money is the best measure of success	China	-10%
I would consider myself to be much more affluent than the average	China	-14%

The number of consumers expecting a big/dramatic impact on their personal finances from COVID-19 has increased by 43% since our first wave of research

EXPLORE DATA

Question: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the statements below? Strongly/slightly agree **Source:** GlobalWebIndex Q4 2019-Q1 2020 **Base:** 48,666 internet users in China aged 16-64 /10,223 internet users in Italy aged 16-64

Reduced horizons

International travel has ground to a halt. But consumers are now less likely to travel abroad in their minds, too. Understandably most concerned with their immediate environment, consumers appear to be becoming less cosmopolitan, and less interested in other countries and their cultures.

This is not to imply they're uninterested in global concerns – virtually everyone recognizes the global threat – but consumers appear more interested in their own country's performance during a time of crisis. Flags hanging from balconies have become almost cliché when depicting coronavirus, and consumers seem to be becoming more inward-facing, less likely to agree with virtually all of our "cosmopolitan" attitudinal statements.

Our bespoke COVID-19 research offers another sign of this. Our first wave of research was conducted when perceived panic-buying dominated the headlines, and opinions on other people in the population were somewhat low. But since then consumers have reported more approval with their country's population (rising more than any other institution), which perhaps reflects a stronger feeling of solidarity within the country.

OUR TAKE

Brands can tap into feelings of national pride and solidarity. For travel providers, pivoting to a strategy focused on domestic travel isn't just practical, but a meaningful way of connecting with consumers who have a stake in their country's performance. Security and national pedigree may become more impactful than vibrancy and cultural fluidity.

COSMOPOLITANISM IS NO LONGER A PRIORITY

% changes in the following data points

Statement	Country	% change since Q4 2019 (+/-)
I would like to live and work abroad	Italy	-4%
I am interested in other countries and cultures	China	-6%
I would like to live and work abroad	South Korea	-10%
I regularly try new food from other countries	China	-11%
I would like to live and work abroad	China	-13%

EXPLORE DATA

Question: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the statements below? Strongly/slightly agree **Source:** GlobalWebIndex Q4 2019-Q1 2020 **Base:** 48,666 internet users in China aged 16-64/10,223 internet users in Italy 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 688,000 internet users aged 16-64 across 46 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 GlobalWebIndex 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.

GLOBALWEBINDEX SAMPLE SIZE BY MARKET

This report draws insights from GlobalWebIndex's Q1 2020 wave of research across 46 countries, with a total sample of 175,545 respondents.

Argentina	1,559	Morocco	1,009
Australia	4,149	Netherlands	1,294
Austria	1,274	New Zealand	1,273
Belgium	1,297	Nigeria	1,041
Brazil	5,803	Philippines	3,104
Canada	4,816	Poland	1,810
China	24,332	Portugal	1,285
Colombia	1,300	Romania	1,306
Denmark	1,281	Russia	3,660
Egypt	1,812	Saudi Arabia	1,540
France	5,111	Singapore	2,759
Germany	5,115	South Africa	1,556
Ghana	1,006	South Korea	1,268
Hong Kong	1,765	Spain	5,066
India	13,016	Sweden	1,273
Indonesia	5,114	Switzerland	1,265
Ireland	1,261	Taiwan	2,341
Israel	1,284	Thailand	3,947
Italy	5,078	Turkey	2,085
Japan	3,283	UAE	1,812
Kenya	1,047	UK	10,295
Malaysia	1,567	USA	25,347
Mexico	4,314	Vietnam	2,625

Notes on methodology

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 GlobalWebIndex'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 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.

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 2020. 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.

INTERNET PENETRATION RATES

GlobalWebIndex's Forecasts for 2020 based on 2018 ITU data.

Argentina	80%	Morocco	67%
Australia	89%	Netherlands	95%
Austria	89%	New Zealand	94%
Belgium	90%	Nigeria	50%
Brazil	75%	Philippines	67%
Canada	94%	Poland	80%
China	62%	Portugal	79%
Colombia	68%	Romania	76%
Denmark	98%	Russia	85%
Egypt	54%	Saudi Arabia	90%
France	86%	Singapore	90%
Germany	92%	South Africa	64%
Ghana	50%	South Korea	97%
Hong Kong	92%	Spain	90%
India	45%	Sweden	96%
Indonesia	42%	Switzerland	96%
Ireland	87%	Taiwan	90%
Israel	88%	Thailand	59%
Italy	77%	Turkey	76%
Japan	93%	UAE	98%
Kenya	40%	UK	96%
Malaysia	84%	U.S.A.	90%
Mexico	71%	Vietnam	70%

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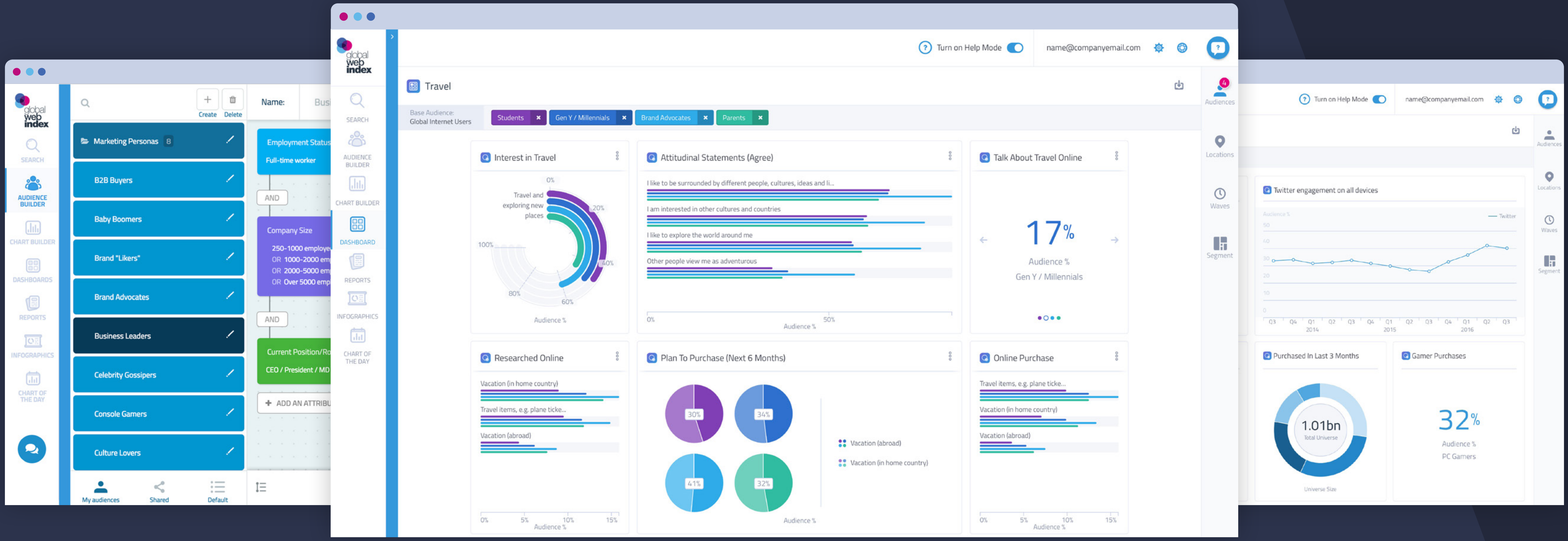

Get more from your data.

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