

What's driving growth in mcommerce?

Article

Building on momentum from a significant pandemic bounce, mcommerce sales continue to grow, albeit at the lowest rate in years. Growth will speed up again in 2023 and stay level above 13% through 2026, when US retail mcommerce sales will approach \$700 billion, more than 41% of total retail ecommerce.

The long-range curve for mcommerce sales closely aligns with ecommerce trends, such as rising click-and-collect sales, and growth in large ecommerce retailers such as Amazon and Walmart. But not all mcommerce trends follow the larger ecommerce story.

People are more comfortable downloading shopping apps, but they are using only a handful:

- **Shopping apps had a huge pandemic bump.** In 2019, shopping apps had 122.6 million users, but that jumped to 155.0 million in 2022, or 64.2% of US smartphone users ages 14 and older, according to eMarketer estimates. Moreover, the three fastest-growing major app categories over the past year were retail or retail adjacent: grocery, food delivery, and shopping/retail.
- **The number of apps people use overall is going down**, from an average of 21 during the peak of the pandemic in 2020 to 18.3 in 2026. Although people continue to use more types of apps than before, they're settling on a couple of apps they prefer in each category.

The rise in retail app users corresponds with an increase in time spent on them. In the US, time spent on Android shopping apps passed 100 billion hours in 2021, up from 48.70 billion in 2018, per a January 2022 Data.ai (formerly App Annie) report.

Not all shopping apps contribute to mcommerce sales. Many consumers view apps as a way to improve shopping in stores and online—not necessarily as a way to buy. In fact, last holiday season, more people still expected to complete their shopping journey on a mobile or desktop website.

Mcommerce remains divided between a few apps and a long tail of retail and brand mobile websites:

- **Amazon at No. 6 and Walmart at No. 21 were the only retailers in the top 25 apps** visited by US smartphone users in March 2022, **according to Comscore**. Amazon had a reach of 50% of smartphone users.
- **Amazon led in shopping app downloads in 2021**, with Shein and Shop as the next most-downloaded apps, according to Apptopia. (Shop, Shopify's consumer app, serves more to track packages than to browse deals for most people, so its high ranking as a shopping app is a bit misleading.) Walmart ranked fourth and was the only traditional retailer in the top 10.

[Read the full report.](#)