

# The Uncomfortable State of Voice Commerce

Article

Voice commerce holds promise. But, not everyone is comfortable—or even interested—in using their Amazon Echo or Google Home device to make a purchase (yet). Here's what marketers need to know.

**Product Info? Check. Order Using Voice? No, Thanks.**

Many people use voice to conduct simple tasks, like getting directions, making phone calls or checking to see if they need an umbrella when they go out. An August 2018 survey from

Social Lens Research found that while 25% of US voice command users use voice to find a new product, a smaller percentage—10%—use the technology to make a purchase.

Purchases via smart speakers don't happen very often, according to August 2018 data from Chatmeter, which surveyed 1,000 US voice tech users. In fact, 41% of males said they've never bought anything through a smart speaker and 51% of females agreed. For the most part, purchases are happening sporadically. Only a few men (8%) and women (5%) said they made a purchase everyday.

### How Often Do US Voice Tech Users\* Make a Purchase via Smart Speaker?

% of respondents, by gender, Aug 2018

	Male	Female
Every day	8%	5%
2-3 times a week	7%	6%
Once a week	5%	5%
2-3 times a month	12%	10%
Once a month	8%	6%
Once every 2-3 months	6%	6%
Once every 6 months	4%	3%
Once a year	2%	2%
Less than once a year	6%	7%
Never	41%	51%

Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; \*use voice assistant on phone or own a smart speaker

Source: Chatmeter, "Voice Engine Optimization: The Key to Driving Local Sales and Online Traffic" conducted by Sapio Research, Oct 24, 2018

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A more recent study from **Bizrate Insights** came to a similar conclusion. Only 2% of US internet users said they regularly use their smart speaker to buy something. In contrast, 58% said they neither used nor were interested in making a purchase using a smart speaker.

### OK Google, Am I Doing This Right?

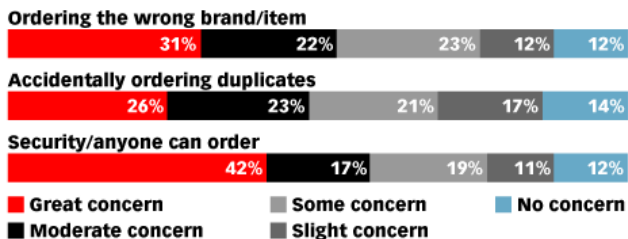
Consumers don't yet seem comfortable with the mechanics of purchasing through voice, or trust that it will be secure.

Nearly half (48%) of respondents surveyed by RetailMeNot said they won't shop via a smart speaker because they worry about the privacy of their personal information. Almost as many respondents (46%) are concerned about the security of their personal information.

Similarly, the Chatmeter study mentioned earlier also found that 42% of voice tech users were greatly concerned about security. What's more, respondents expressed concerns about ordering the wrong item and accidentally ordering twice.

### What Concerns US Voice Tech Users\* About Making Purchases via Smart Speaker?

% of respondents, Aug 2018



Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; \*use voice assistant on phone or own a smart speaker  
 Source: Chatmeter, "Voice Engine Optimization: The Key to Driving Local Sales and Online Traffic" conducted by Sapio Research, Oct 24, 2018

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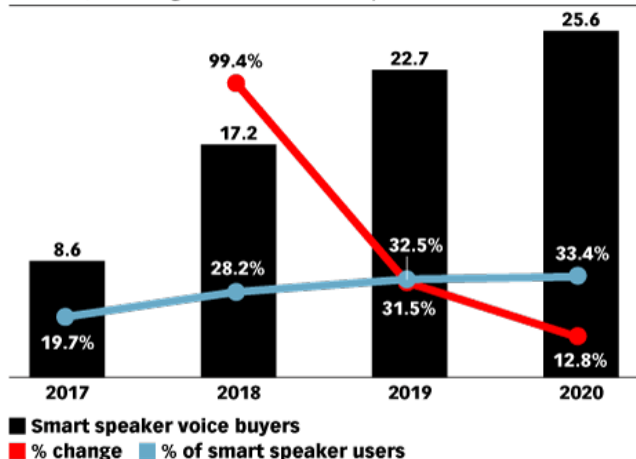
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## But, Voice Commerce May Be a Game Changer—One Day

As consumers get more comfortable with voice tech, we expect the concerns will fade. By the end of 2019, we forecast there will be 22.7 million US smart speaker voice buyers, making up 32.5% of US smart speaker users.

### US Smart Speaker Voice Buyers and Penetration, 2017-2020

millions, % change and % of smart speaker users



Note: individuals ages 14+ who have used a smart speaker to make at least one purchase with voice command during the calendar year  
 Source: eMarketer, April 2018

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"For the time being, voice commerce is probably best-suited to replenish goods, where the shopper already knows what they want and can utter a simple command to reorder that product," said Andrew Lipsman, principal analyst at eMarketer. "Reordering is where voice commerce will gather momentum in 2019."