

Alexa, What's for Dinner?

More consumers are using digital for meal planning

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Tech is taking a seat at the table.

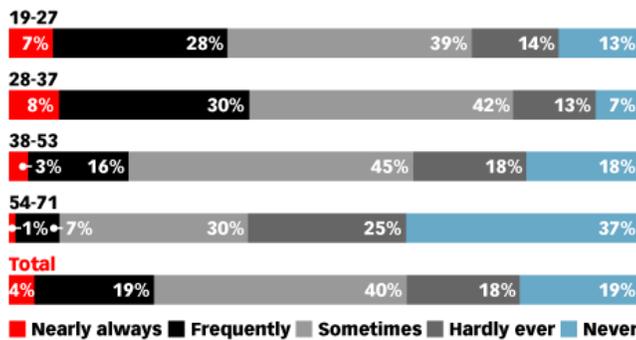
According to an October 2017 survey by [Food Marketing Institute \(FMI\)](#), nearly a quarter of US internet users turn to technology like voice assistants and mobile apps to help them figure out where and what to eat.

For the most part, 40% of respondents across all age groups said they at least sometimes use technology to help them make dinner decisions when they're eating out. And, unsurprisingly, younger consumers were more likely to do so frequently compared with their older cohorts. Indeed, 28% of 19- to 27-year-olds said they did so frequently, and another 30% of those ages 28 to 37 said they did as well.

In contrast, only 16% of respondents ages 38 to 53 said they frequently relied on tech for their dinner decisions, as did just 7% of those ages 54 to 71.

Frequency with Which US Internet Users Use Technology* to Help Make Dinner Decisions When Eating out, by Age, Oct 2017

% of respondents



Note: among those who have primary or shared responsibility for food shopping; decisions such as where and what to eat; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; *such as desktops/laptops, smartphones and tablets

Source: Food Marketing Institute (FMI), "The Power of Foodservice at Retail 2018: An In-Depth Look at Foodservice at Retail Through the Shoppers' Eyes" prepared by 210 Analytics with the support of Hussman and The Shelby Report, March 28, 2018

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So what do people look for in an app or site that will help them make their final decision? For most respondents (77%), a full menu is essential, as are clearly stated prices. Being able to pay online and online ordering with delivery were other key features mentioned.

A majority already research dinner options, look at menus, maps and make reservations on sites like Yelp or OpenTable (54%), with the highest usage coming from older millennials (72%), the study found. Ordering online delivery via Grubhub or UberEats is a less common activity, cited by 27% of respondents, with the largest participation coming from younger millennials (47%).

Separate findings from an October 2017 [Market Force Information](#) survey are in line with FMI's. The study also found that restaurant apps like Yelp and OpenTable are popular among US internet users. What's more, the number of respondents who have downloaded a restaurant app rose from 41% in 2016 to 45% in 2017. And the leading reason why many use such apps was the same as what FMI found—to view menus. Finding promos, locations, reading reviews and accessing a loyalty program were also popular motivations.

According to FMI, the average consumer eats dinner out of the home 2.1 times per week and turns to restaurants more often than prepared

foods in supermarkets. The top reason cited for choosing restaurants was that they just didn't think about a grocery deli. Retailers are increasingly trying to compete with restaurants **by offering prepared food**, and Costco, Albertsons, Kroger and Walmart have all introduced meal kits recently.