

# The Weekly Listen: Amazon's new AI shopping assistant, targeted ads at the gym, and miniaturizing TV

Audio

On today's podcast episode, we discuss how much Amazon's new shopping chatbot can move the needle, what Planet Fitness' out-of-home ad network looks like, becoming a digital mannequin to see what clothes look like on you, whether minutelong soap operas will catch on, who the smartest people in the world are, and more. Tune into the discussion with vice president of content Suzy Davidkhanian, analyst Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf, and vice president of Briefings Stephanie Taglianetti.

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Episode Transcript:

Marcus Johnson:

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Hello everyone, and thanks for hanging out with us for the Behind the Numbers weekly listen, an eMarketer podcast made possible by StackAdapt. This is the Friday show that is not starting with the last segment first. Okay, Stuart? This is why Stuart's not in charge of producing the content, because he tried to start with dinner party data. Sure, if it was up to Stuart, it would just be dinner party data probably. And he'd be right to do so. Who we kidding? That's why most people tune in. Today, what are we talking about?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

And the game. People-

Marcus Johnson:

No, you're the only one who shows up for the game and we told you before, no more games.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I think you're going to get a lot writer-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I'm glad this is a video one, so people can see how deflated Suzy looks that she's not going to be able to win anything today.

Marcus Johnson:

She just gets up and just walks off. Bye, Suzy.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I mean, I tried, but you asked me kindly to stay on. Whoops. I got so worked up, I touched my computer.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh my goodness.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

You've ruined Suzy's entire week, Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Before Suzy starts trashing the place, what do we have in store for you today? Amazon's AI Shopping Assistance, Planet Fitness' out of home ad network. Are we going to become our own mannequins? Are minute-long soap opera is here to stay? And we talk all about Mensa and the smartest people in the world. Join me for this episode. We have three people. Let's meet them. We start with our vice president of content, also heads up our retail and E-commerce team based in New York City. It's Suzy Davidkhanian.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Hi. Thanks for having me.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello, hello. We're also joined by our vice president covering everything briefings based in New Jersey. It's Stephanie Taglianetti.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Cheers, mate.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello, hello. And finally, we have one of our senior analysts on the digital advertising and media desk based in Virginia. It's Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

[inaudible 00:02:21]. Drum roll.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Did it pause for anybody else?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yeah.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yes, we didn't even hear Evelyn in that.

Marcus Johnson:

I said your name. I said Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Oh, we didn't hear it.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Hello, hi. It's good to be here.

Marcus Johnson:

What an uncomfortable pause. Okay, let's go on with the show. You know how it goes if you've listened before. If you haven't, you'll figure it out. We start with the story of the week. We're talking about Amazon's AI shopping assistant. Amazon is testing an AI powered shopping assistant on its mobile app called Rufus. I don't know why. It can answer Shoppers-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

It's a dog.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Why not?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

No, no. Apparently there's a Rufus dog in the Amazon story.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Oh.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, okay. But no one knows that. So what...

Suzy Davidkhanian:

If you Googled it to prep for the call today, you would also know it.



Marcus Johnson:

Okay. Yeah, I don't think most shoppers-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Just saying.

Marcus Johnson:

Are doing that, but fair play.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

No game, but I'm still going to win.

Marcus Johnson:

Well, you can ask Rufus questions if you're shopping on Amazon on its marketplace Pulse. Ben Glickman of the Wall Street Journal writes that Rufus is trained on the company's product catalog, customer reviews, community questions and information from across the web. How will it help folks? Our retail analyst, Rachel Wolf, explains that shoppers can ask whether a shirt is suitable for running or if it will fit someone above average height and the AI assistant will comb through reviews to surface the relevant information or the most relevant information. This is not to be confused as I confused it with for a second, with Amazon's Q, which is a chatbot, but that's for businesses. This is for regular consumer people. So Suzy, start with you. You cover retail the most for us. How much does Amazon's AI shopping assistant called Rufus, for some reason, move the needle out of 10 for the online retailer?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Four. I got the email, I don't know if you guys got the email from Amazon, if you're a Prime member, I don't know how they decided to get an email. But a week ago I got an email announcing how they're using AI and it was Rufus and I didn't really pay enough attention to it because the way they described it didn't feel at all interesting for me. And then when we got ready for this, I checked on YouTube and there is a demo of the technology and it is actually much cooler when you see it than in real life when you describe it in words and you go into the search button and the example they use is like, what's the difference between a coffee filter per cup versus a quick serve coffee? I don't know it, it was a coffee thing.

And then it gives you all the answers and then you could keep asking. So that's the generative part, right? You can keep asking it questions. It knows the subject, it knows what you're talking about, and it answers back intelligently. And so from that perspective, it's very cool and it could help move the needle in terms of getting a better customer experience. Right now, they're so cluttered on the website, it's just so hard to find what you're looking for. I just don't think they did a great job describing it. As someone who reads about retail, if I don't understand the value I'm getting from it, I don't really care.

Marcus Johnson:

Stuart, the timer. Oh my good... This is why I told you he shouldn't be in charge of producing the show. Thank you, Stuart, who runs the team. Barely runs the team. So Suzy-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

He was busy listening to my intelligent answer.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

We'll go with that, Suzy.

Marcus Johnson:

Dumbfounded by your response. So it can't compare products though. It only answers this question about a single product at a time. And I think it was Rachel's article was noting Walmart offers a generative AI powered search search function on its iOS app that let shoppers search via use cases. We talked about this, Suzy, in a previous episode. They can say engagement party and it'll help them search for different things. Do you see shoppers actually noticing, okay, there's this AI assistant, there's this one over here and deciding where to shop because of that? Is it that much of a game changer? AI?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

No, not in the way you're phrasing it or framing it. I think it's a game changer when it's the underlying technology that makes my life as the consumer easier. But do I need to see how you're applying it? No, not really. I just want you to make my life easier.

Marcus Johnson:



Just in terms of do you think people will gravitate towards Walmart because that has a better AI chatbot shopping experience?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

No, go ahead. Steph.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I don't think it's because of the AI, but if it had a better experience because of the AI, I think it's like phrasing it differently. But it's not the AI that's the lure, right? It's the actual experience that's improved. Yeah, yeah.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Yeah. I ranked several needles here as to what Rufus would do for Amazon. And I did say as far as Amazon's dominance in e-commerce, I expect this to move the needle zero points because I don't expect it to be a strong incentive for consumers to choose Amazon over other retailers. I do though expect it to benefit user experience. I put that at maybe about a five because it has the potential to help with some of those big pain points like decision paralysis. Suzy, you mentioned how cluttered Amazon is these days. It seems like you have to scroll miles down the product page just to look at the reviews. And I have seen that they have started putting AI generated summaries of the big pros and cons associated with each product based on the reviews. But it takes so long just to get there on the page.

Scrolling, scrolling or if you're on your phone tapping a million times. So this could help. I think though the reason it's only a five and not a game changer, at least one of the reasons is I personally still don't trust it. And I think trust in AI generated responses is still a work in progress among most consumers. Amazon isn't exactly known for getting it right every single time you order a product off of it, there are red flags you have to look for on the product page. So I personally, if I were to use Rufus would probably still want to just confirm on my own, do a little bit of extra research, go to the product page, look for myself. I mean it's cool. Definitely cool.

Marcus Johnson:

There was a stat supporting that. Rachel had a stat in her article. You could argue only, you could say, "Wow, it's quite impressive number." But 50% of people feeling positively about

using AI to engage with a business according to LivePerson survey. Seems pretty high to some folks, but that's down from 62% from a year ago. So it's going in the wrong direction.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Well, glass half full [inaudible 00:09:20].

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yeah. Well, I also think there's all this AI generated bad behavior that is probably getting people to be less trusting, right? And Taylor Swift just had a whole thing happen that probably will, if we did another survey today, would make it even lower and going into an election year, that also probably adds to it. But I will answer your question in a more direct way around will this be the reason people go to Amazon versus Walmart? No, product is king. If as a retailer you don't have the right product for your consumer, if you don't have what they're looking for, no matter how you're showing it to them, doesn't matter. They're going to go somewhere else.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Yeah, and price too.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I think the only other thing that we didn't hit on that was mentioned that Rufus is doing is making product recommendations. And I actually don't think that's a high utility use case for Rufus because my understanding is if you're on Amazon, you already have a particular product or purchase in mind. So if anything, I think something like that could probably inspire more impulse shopping just because if you're on Amazon for in and out shopping, I don't think you're going there for discovery of inspiration of gift ideas or purchase ideas, right? But if Rufus is targeting in the right way for recommended purchases, it could maybe inspire an impulse purchase that way.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. Yeah. I wonder at what point's going to start remembering all of the conversations that you've had with it. So when you do check back into Amazon, it says, "Oh, that thing that you were looking for that was out of stock, that's back." Or, "I found something that was quite similar. Remember a year ago when we were talking about that gift you were trying to get for your partner? I found a few other ones, which might be good."

Suzy Davidkhanian:

But I mean retailers are already doing that, right? If you went and put something in your shopping cart and you didn't actually make the purchase, you'll probably get an email from most retailers saying, "Hey, you left something." Now you're even getting it from some of the affiliate marketers who are like, "Oh, by the way, we noticed you left something." And also for out of stock, especially there are features on apps that you're like, "Please notify me when this product comes back in stock." So a lot of the things that we're talking about in terms of facilitating the path to purchase to actually converting is stuff we're seeing it's just now a little bit fancier. The ribbon around it is a little bit fancier.

Marcus Johnson:

Right. That's what I mean. All those things being combined into an AI chatbot, whether that makes any difference versus getting an email saying the product's in stock or not. This does seem to be a bit of a balance. If you offer AI shopping tools too soon, you risk putting out an unhelpful product and turning people off. If you offer them too late, then maybe customers will be excited to try out new AI shopping tools on other people's sites. So you have to try and figure out when's the right time to get into the game here. It does seem like some of these products are a little bit rushed because they're just trying to put something out so they can say they have an AI-infused product. But I think, Evelyn, it comes down to... I think you mentioned the term or the phrase, pain points, and Rachel had a great line in this piece saying, "Retailers need to make sure their gen-AI strategies are centered around solving customer pain points rather than merely adopting the latest buzzy technology." Which I think is exactly the point.

All right folks, that's what we've got time for for the story of the week. It's time now for the analysis of the week. Today, brand new segment, place your bets. How's it work? Well, I present three different initiatives, ideas to our panel and have them tell me how likely they think this thing is to happen or to be a success. They each get 10 investment points to spend throughout the whole segment. So if they spend them all on the first idea, they have nothing left for the second two. The more investment points they give the idea, the likelier they think it is to happen or to go well. So an example would be, what are the chances that Suzy becomes a successful tomato farmer? I would spend zero investment points myself because of-

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

I'd give her two.

Marcus Johnson:

Her shockingly small first crop and her tendency to leave her so-called Tomato ranch-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

It's still going.

Marcus Johnson:

Unsupervised and appallingly neglected for weeks at a time.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

It is still going. I'm going to show you pictures of the tomato plant with red tomatoes on it.

Marcus Johnson:

And investment points-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Tomato farmer is a far cry away from just a hobby tomato-

Marcus Johnson:

Plant on a window sill? Yeah. So yeah, no investment points for me from that, but that's an example of how you play. Let's start with idea one.

Speaker 5:

Hey Marcus. Sorry to interrupt. What's on the timer again?

Marcus Johnson:

Good God.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I think nine.

Marcus Johnson:

See what I mean?

Speaker 5:

Nine.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I think it's nine.

Speaker 5:

Thank you.

Marcus Johnson:

Nine minutes, yeah.

Speaker 5:

[inaudible 00:14:12].

Marcus Johnson:

Thanks Jim. Idea number one. We're talking about Planet Fitness's out of home ad network. As our Jeremy Goldman explains, "Planet Fitness has launched an out-of-home ad network called PF Media Network that offers brands close-up access to its large captive audience. It's over 2,500 global locations. The pitch here is that brands can use data to target gym memberships through various in-club screens, located in workout zones, locker rooms, and member lounges as well, which ensures prolonged ad exposure." Quoting the piece, "Brands can connect with members through various in-club screens ensuring prolonged ad exposure." Place your bets, folks, on Planet Fitness's out of home ad network being a success. Let's go with Suzy. How many points you want to put down here?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I put four.

Marcus Johnson:

Points out the gate, why?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Interesting.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yeah. It's funny, we were talking about... I don't know why I only put four or four is too many it sounds like for you guys, but I think there is something about the gym and a captivated audience who's there because they have no choice but to be there. I don't think it's a retail media network-

Marcus Johnson:

No choice.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Sort of thing.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

No choice.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

But I do think-

Marcus Johnson:

It's not prison.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

No choice. One of the things that I think is not reasonable is this idea around the screens, right? There are TV screens in front of all of the cardio. They're playing ABC, NBC, they're playing Sports ESPN. There's already ads there, right? So then it's the next level of screens that are retail media in-store-esque, which I still don't believe is where we're going to be. It's just so expensive. Every person there is different. But at the office we were talking about what if my gym membership came with a Netflix membership and I could watch the show on the screen while I was bicycling and it would be like a two for one. And then I would be a captive audience person because they would know my habits from a media perspective and they would know my habits from an exercising perspective and maybe they would know my goals depending on how sophisticated the gym membership app is.

And all of a sudden, I would really be all in on those ads. But as it stands today, I think it's a really good idea, just not quite fleshed out yet.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay. How about you Evelyn? How many points?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Yeah, I give it a six. Six investment points. That doesn't seem that much higher than four to me, but...

Marcus Johnson:

But you've only got four left for the rest of the segment.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Yeah, And I think that's perfectly fine. So I gave it six investment points because I think Suzy's right, it's got a promising value proposition and it's skewed toward Gen Z and millennial audiences is I think another positive. Everyone's trying to get at those audiences right now. And I think it'll get a lift from advertisers adopting in-store retail media. But then it gets dinged for not having closed loop attribution. And also, I don't know if prolonged exposure is enough to make a difference. What Suzy outlined is a great idea, but in my experience going to the gym, people are in their own worlds. They're listening to their own music, their podcasts. I listen to audiobooks when I'm at the gym and rarely do I ever look up at the screens in front of me. And when I do, most of the time it's because Jeopardy's on.

I mean, they're listening to something else. So whatever ads on the screen has to be really interpretable without sound, really simple so that people can absorb it while they're listening to other things. I think it's a fine line. So I think it could go places, but it's got a couple of things working against it.

Marcus Johnson:

I just realized my face looks very red.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

It does. Like a tomato.



Marcus Johnson:

I look like a baked potato.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Are you at the gym now, Marcus?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

You look like Suzy's tomato.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yeah, he was making fun of my tomato.

Marcus Johnson:

All right. So Evelyn, you seemed very [inaudible 00:18:08]. Some great points why this is not going to work, but gave it a six.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Okay, because I think retail media it's on a rocket ship and this isn't retail, but it is adjacent. And I think when I say that the retail media in-store, retail media like ship was the tide will lift all boats, whatever that is. You know the phrase I'm talking about.

Marcus Johnson:

Rising tide lifts all boats.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Yeah, that one.

Marcus Johnson:

I got you.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

That's the one I'm trying to go for and I think it's powerful.

Marcus Johnson:

All right. Stephanie.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I was right in the middle. I gave it a five out of 10.

Marcus Johnson:

A five.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Because I thought that targeting folks already spending, you know they're going to be there for 30 to 60 minutes in the location versus capturing a passerby on transit or something. So it's already a little more captivated of an audience. You don't know exactly who they are, but there are some assumptions about who they are since they're in a health and wellness focused space. So I think it's a matter of how well you can target the folks in this environment to see if it can be pulled off well. But yeah, I think the most interesting draw here is having that captive audience and I thought that was somewhat of a slam dunk, but I was reserved in just not understanding how the targeting could work on a more personal level in the gym. But I think that again, there are enough assumptions. These are people who are focused on their health, focused on their wellness. So if you're targeting appropriate ads that way, it's pretty successful I would think.

Marcus Johnson:

All right. Idea two, becoming a mannequin. Becoming the mannequin, if you will. Recent research from company payments suggests that 38% of folks are keen on virtual shopping technology and quote, "The ability to visualize how a potential purchase would appear on oneself close." Close quote. So place your bets on creating yourself as a digital mannequin and being able to see how all of a brand's clothes look on you becoming commonplace this year. Evelyn, how many points?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

I give it zero investment points.

Marcus Johnson:

Zero investment-

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Zero. First of all, it seems like a really heavy lift for a brand or retailer to enable this kind of experience, not just AR try-ons, but the creation of a digital mannequin to live inside the internet. Also, I have no reason to believe that in 2024 digital avatars will get life-like enough to really juice adoption there. I mean, you might be able to input your measurements, but there are so many factors that go into making something like this useful to a consumer. Like one's musculature affects how the clothes fit them, their skin tone affect how the clothes look. So it's like there's just so many variables there and if you're going to do virtual try-ons, I think AR is the way to go, at least in 2024.

Marcus Johnson:

Speaking of skin tone, why am I so red skin? Geez. All right, sorry. Stephanie.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

So I gave this one investment point, only because I do think it's a cute novelty that people would have fun trying and using. But I didn't think it would be a game changer on influencing shopping because in terms of swaying a decision for apparel, things like comfort, fit, these are all so important and an avatar, whatever virtual mannequin is not going to be able to get you to understand those factors. But perhaps for things like accessories, it could make a little more sense. But again, don't think it's going to be hugely influential on shopping, but rather people curious enough to try it because it's a cool flashy little fun thing.

Marcus Johnson:

Suzy, can I get you to part with more than one investment point for the self mannequin idea?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

You can, but I didn't give it that many more points because I don't think it's 2024 thing. I do think if you are a smart investor, not that I was because I only gave it two, but you're trying to get ahead of it, right?

Marcus Johnson:

It's okay.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Put the money in when the technology is not quite there yet so that when it does get there, you can make a lot of money. You're one of the early investors. What I loved about the article is how the writer was leading us into, it's really not that hard to believe that people can do many things at once. What I'm not clear about, which is a little bit similar to what Evelyn and Steph were saying, is is this for online shopping because the way you guys were talking about it was like you're at home and you're using this mannequin avatar. But I was thinking about it you're in a store and there are smart mirrors and this is the next iteration where you have an app and it knows everything about you and then all of a sudden you don't need to try on the 37 different things, you just try them all with your phone while in the store, you touch what you're looking at and then you move on with your life.

Marcus Johnson:

Interesting. Yeah, maybe both. But yeah, you could think about it either way I guess. Okay, so Suzy is going to be the primary investor on that one. Two points. Evelyn, primary investor on the out of home ad network for Planet Fitness with six. Let's see what points we've got left. Oh, similar number. So let's go to idea three. Minute long soap operas are here. "Popularized in China during the pandemic, ReelShort, One Word and other apps are hoping to bring minute by minute vertically shot melodrama episodes to the US," Writes Claire Moses of the New York Times. With the format being described as this generation's soap opera, Ms. Moses explains that viewers can watch dozens of minute-long episodes on ReelShort for free via multiple platforms, YouTube, TikTok. But at some point they must either pay or watch ads to unlock subsequent episodes. A quote from the piece, "Think soap opera, but for the short attention span of the internet age." So place your bets, folks, starting with Stephanie, on this type of content taking off.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I gave it two because I am wary of-

Marcus Johnson:

Two?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Investing in something that has already been attempted and failed. Talking about Quibi, which tried to do exactly this sort of short form video content. I mean again, Quibi launched during

the pandemic where people actually had a little more attention span to give, but still my general understanding is that people are in on bite-sized content for social but not necessarily for original content. So I am a little wary. I only gave it two investment points.

Marcus Johnson:

Just two. She had a possible four left folks, so she said, "I'm not buying-"

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yeah, I didn't even use all mine. Just because I got it, don't mean I got to spend it.

Marcus Johnson:

Exactly. We've got to invest somewhere, right? She's putting the rest in high yield savings. Suzy.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I also didn't think that this was the most clever, so I gave it a one investment point. And I think for me it's also because it's just counterintuitive to the binging trend, right? I don't know that it's about original content versus not original content. But if you're telling me a story in one minute bite-size increments, I'm dying to hear what the next thing is. If you think about soap operas, they were an hour and every time there was a cliffhanger and you're dying for that hour slot to come back the next day to see what happened to the nurse or to the doctor or whoever. I just don't understand how it would translate here with cliffhangers. I mean, it would be a cliffhanger every second of the day unless they release all of the minutes at the same time and then all of a sudden you're watching your 30-minute episode anyways.

Marcus Johnson:

All right. Evelyn, can I get you to throw three points at this?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

I did give it three investment-

Marcus Johnson:

Yes.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Yes.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

You did?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

I did. And a big reason is because I never want to underestimate the potential of content created for women. There's just some magic there and it takes off a lot more than I think a lot of people expect it to. So I think it'll grow. I'm not fully convinced it'll take off as we phrased it. And the biggest thing holding me back from investing more is the monetization strategy because hooking the audience with a few ungated episodes and then converting them through a separate app to continue watching, it's not a non-starter per se, but I think breakthrough success of short form content hinges on reaching people where they already are. And anytime there is a unique app involved, I become skeptical because I think plenty of people will download the app to finish watching one series. But I can't imagine a critical mass of people permanently swapping out their time on TikTok for something like ReelShort, which means real short will-

Marcus Johnson:

Good point.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Will remain dependent on TikTok. So it's iffy, but I mean, I think it has value. I mean, people still watch Hallmark movies and stuff. This kind of content can thrive. I think anywhere people consume content.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Wait, was that directed at B?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

No, it was not.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Oh. All I watch is Hallmark.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Oh, yeah?

Marcus Johnson:

Well played.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Literally all I watch.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Did see the Biltmore one?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Wait, which one is that one? I watched last night. Oh no, not last night. Saturday night had a whole new Hallmark movie.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Oh. We can talk about it later.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Very good.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. So yeah, it's been downloaded some 4 million times in January according to Sensor Tower, but it did rank somewhere in the top 15 most popular entertainment apps in both app stores on most days. And last year it had 7 million US downloads, 24 million worldwide. But yeah, whether that number stalls or keeps going, we shall see. So to summarize, Evelyn will be the primary investor on the, as I said, Planet Fitness out of home ads with six investment points. Suzy takes the self mannequin idea with just the two, only two needed to win that one. And then Evelyn, the primary investor on minute long Soaps as well with three points. So Evelyn spent nine, she was able to secure two of the ideas. Stephanie not swayed today.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I'm just being practical with my investment dollars or points.



Suzy Davidkhanian:

I feel like you just turned it into a game where she won two of the investment-

Marcus Johnson:

She did win. Congrats to Evelyn.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

And if I hadn't known this is what it was-

Marcus Johnson:

Suzy, so close.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I would have spent all my money.

Marcus Johnson:

Second place, which no one remembers second.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I would've spent all my money, had I realized this was turning into a game.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

You know what? You did your authentic spending and it wasn't as good as mine, so.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, didn't pay off. All right, well played, folks. We move now to the final segment of the day. It's dinner party data. This is the part of the show where we tell you about the most interesting thing we've learned this week. And we'll start with Evelyn.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Okay, so I have some data on-

Marcus Johnson:

Because she won.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Oh, thanks. I have some data on-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

So rude. It's not a game.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Let me get my data out, please.

Marcus Johnson:

Yes, Suzy.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

I have some data on Americans' book collections. So there is a correlation between how many people or whether people own 100 or more physical books and then their education level, which I thought was interesting. And then of course it also grows by age because I guess as you grow older, you just collect more books. That has been true for me. Also, the fewer books that Americans have, the more likely they are to organize them by book size. And then the more books that you own, you're more likely to organize them by genre or subject. Alarming to me, also the second most popular response for how Americans organize their books it was they don't, which it's just that chaos strikes fear in my very core. Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

Chaos.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I have these bookshelves-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Those floating ones, yeah.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yeah. And my brother's kids when they were younger came and they took them all down and did it by color. And I was like, "Guys-"

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

That's another thing.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

"That's cool, but it's also weird. How am I going to know where to find the books I need?"

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

The younger you are, the more likely you are to sort them by color, which I thought was interesting. Yeah.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Well, there you go. Sample size of two.

Marcus Johnson:

I always wanted have-

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

No, the sample size was larger according to-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Oh, no. I meant my nieces.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Oh.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

My nieces tag team did it by color.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Oh, got you.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

They were under 10 though, so.

Marcus Johnson:

I always wanted to have a library with one of those sliding ladders. I don't know why.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

My in-laws do.

Marcus Johnson:

They do?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

They do. It's really cool. Very cool.

Marcus Johnson:

But do they run and jump on it and glide-

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

They don't. It's not big enough to do that, but it's still... I mean, it's still cool. And the shelves are really high, so they do need the ladder to reach the books.

Marcus Johnson:

I'd try anyway. Very nice. Let's go Stephanie.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

So my chorus is singing this song called Might As Well, which is this really quirky song about how much time you spend in your life doing various things like eating or waiting in line. So I was curious how much time people spend doing stuff generally. And so I found some stats based off of life expectancies in the UK where Marcus is from. So everything I'm about to tell you is based off of how long you live when you're in the UK, which is roughly 79.5 years or around 950 months and a bit under 700,000 hours. So the average person spends five years waiting in lines or queues, about a third of their life-

Marcus Johnson:

In England, that checks out.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

About a third of their life sleeping, 318 months taken up of your life laying in bed. If a person started working at the age of 19 after their education and kept working until around the age of 65, doing a standard eight hour per day job, excluding weekends and holidays, that'd be about 128 of the 954 months of life spent working. On average, about 20 minutes a day is spent on the toilet. So over the course of 80 years, that sums up to about 13 months and one week.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Whoa.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Wow.

Marcus Johnson:

These are bleak. Jesus.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Oh, and here's another one I liked.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh good.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

People spend around-

Marcus Johnson:

There's more.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

One year of their life looking for lost possessions. But then I imagine that some folks who are married may double that time looking also for their partner's possessions when they swear they've looked everywhere.

Marcus Johnson:

All the stuff they've moved.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yes.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

That's awesome.

Marcus Johnson:

Very good. Very good. Suzy.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Next week is Valentine's day and it's a big gift-giving occasion. So I just wanted to give you some fun facts. Last year, 136 million Americans participated in Valentine's Day and that was about \$26 billion worth. NRF thinks it'll be about \$26 billion worth of sales again this year. And people spend about \$190 on Valentine's day, which is a lot if you think about it.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

190?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

That's a lot of money.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yeah, across-

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

That sounds like a lot.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

All of the gifts. Yeah, across all the gifts. Jewelry-

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

I was going to say, gifts and-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

No, go ahead.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

A nice meal out would-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

All of it counts. Cards, flowers-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

If dining counts, that makes sense.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yeah.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Okay, okay.

Marcus Johnson:

I'll you two roses.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

As a gift, as an expression. There were some stats on that as well, but I decided to steer clear those. Jewelry, highest volume category. But candy, most bought and people also buy themselves candy. And Marcus, co-workers, 27% of them buy gifts for their co-workers for Valentine's Day. Just saying. You can ship us stuff, especially on the weekly listens that are not games and they are-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yeah. Marcus, just buy candy on the 15th. It's way cheaper.

Marcus Johnson:



This is a podcast people. What kind of money do you think we have?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

27% of co-worker people spend money on buying a gift. It could be anything. Like a card, a candy for their co-workers, pets, friends, teachers and classmates. Which is cute if you think about when you were a kid and you had to. You loved making those little cards for everyone. And the most popular candy, are you ready for this? Is the conversation hearts.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Those are really nasty but they're fun.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

And the heart shaped boxes of chocolates. My favorite two last pieces are the most popular candy purchased in Alabama is...

Marcus Johnson:

In Alabama?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

The candy necklace.

Marcus Johnson:

That's very specific.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

And it's so random.

Marcus Johnson:

It's a classic-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Very. For a Valentine's day, it's random.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yeah. It is a top 10, but somehow it's a Valentine... I don't know. It is a very interesting thing to purchase for someone else, a candy necklace.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. It instantly broke-

Suzy Davidkhanian:

There's a whole thing around pop culture and the Sweetheart Candy Group made situationship. Did you guys hear about this? They made situationship heart-shaped candies for all of those-

Marcus Johnson:

What are we doing?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Unknown sort of activities-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Why are we promoting situationships?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

We are not. But TikTok has a great commercial, so I'm sending everybody to TikTok to listen to the Sweetheart situationship candy. It's very cute.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Suzy, so does candy necklace sit in between at the intersection of jewelry and candy purchases?

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Yes. That is a good one. I'll do some research for next year's-

Marcus Johnson:

Please don't.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Weekly listen-

Marcus Johnson:

Don't bother.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Valentine's Day edition.

Marcus Johnson:

We'll cut out. All right folks, I've got one for you real quick. It's not that quick actually, but I'll get through it as fast as I can. So Mensa and the smartest people in the world. So Jenny Kumar and Jonathan Morris just reported that a 12-year-old boy scored the maximum you can score in an IQ test. Rory Bidwell from England joined the ranks of Mensa after he aced the Cattell III B test with 162, the top score for kids. The maximum for adults is 161. Albert Einstein was believed to be a 160. The average adult is about a 100. Anything above 140 is considered to be genius. So I started thinking about Mensa, this group he got into. So Yuri's 162 qualifies him for Mensa. Sorry, Rory.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

I was like, "Yuri?"

Marcus Johnson:

Yuri probably does have... He probably does have an IQ of 162. But Rory qualifies for Mensa with 162. It's the largest and oldest high IQ Society in the world. It was founded by Roland Berrill, Dr. Lance Ware in 1946 in Oxford, headquartered in England in a really small town right in the middle of the country in Thorpe. Mensa means table in Latin. The organization was so named because Mensa is a round table society where ethnicity, national origin, age, politics, educational or social backgrounds are completely irrelevant. There are different types of IQ tests. To get into Mensa, you need a minimum score of 132 on the Stanford-Binet, 148 on the Cattell, and 130 on the Wechsler test. Put another way, you have to be in the top 2% of smart people to get in. The group's aim is to help foster human intelligence to research lectures and social events.

As of 2021, there are around 100,000 members in 100 countries across the globe. Put another way, 0.001% of people on the planet are in. And then finally, who are the smartest people in

the world? Chinese-American mathematician, Terence Tao and American Magazine columnist, Marilyn vos Savant are said to have the highest IQ scores in the world between 225 and 230. The average is a hundred. But many people believe that American William James Sidis was the smartest person ever. By the time he was one and a half years old, he could read the New York Times. When he was six, he could speak multiple languages, including English, French, German, Russian, Hebrew, and Turkish. He graduated from Harvard age 16. Said to have the highest IQ of between 250 to 300.

And finally at the end of last year, Isla McNabb from Kentucky became the youngest Mensa member at age two and a half. At seven months old, she could pick out certain items from picture books when asked. And at one, Isla started learning her colors, numbers, and the alphabet. Most kids, I think, can learn the alphabet by the time they're three or four. It's just remarkable. Yeah, so they're the smartest people in the world. I, on the other hand, look like I fell asleep on the beach. Geez, Marcus. I have to go.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

I'm surprised you didn't say my name in your list of top, smartest...

Marcus Johnson:

No mention of you. No one's surprised by that. That's what we've got time for for today's episode. Thank you so much to my guests. Thank you to Stephanie.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Thanks for having me, Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to Evelyn.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Thank you, Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to Suzy, kind of.

Suzy Davidkhanian:

Thanks for having me.

Marcus Johnson:

Thanks to Victoria who edits the show, James, Stuart, kind of as well because it was rough. Sophie and Lance, thank you to you guys. Thank you to everyone for listening in. We hope to see you on Monday for the Behind the Numbers Daily, an eMarketer podcast made possible by StackAdapt. Happy Weekends.