

How Do Smart Speakers Stack Up Against Visual-Based Retail Technology?

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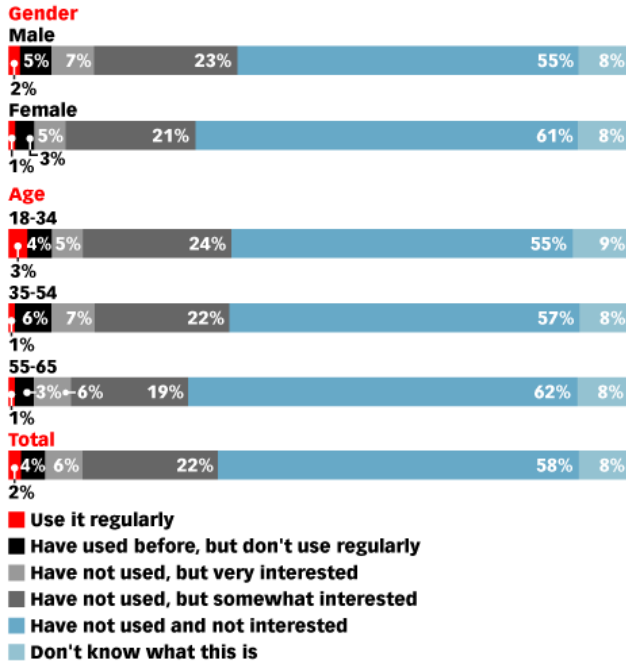
Blake Droesch

Despite all the hype around smart speakers, most consumers are more interested in shopping with retail technology that offers a visual aid, as opposed to completing purchases entirely with voice.

According to an August 2019 survey conducted by eMarketer and [Bizrate Insights](#), 58% of US internet users have neither used nor are interested in using smart speakers to make purchases. While 4% of respondents said they have made a purchase using a smart speaker at least once, just 2% did so regularly.

How Interested Are US Internet Users in Making Purchases Using Smart Speakers?

% of respondents, by demographic, Aug 2019



Note: ages 18-65; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
 Source: "The eMarketer Ecommerce Survey" conducted in August 2019 by Bizrate Insights, Aug 6, 2019

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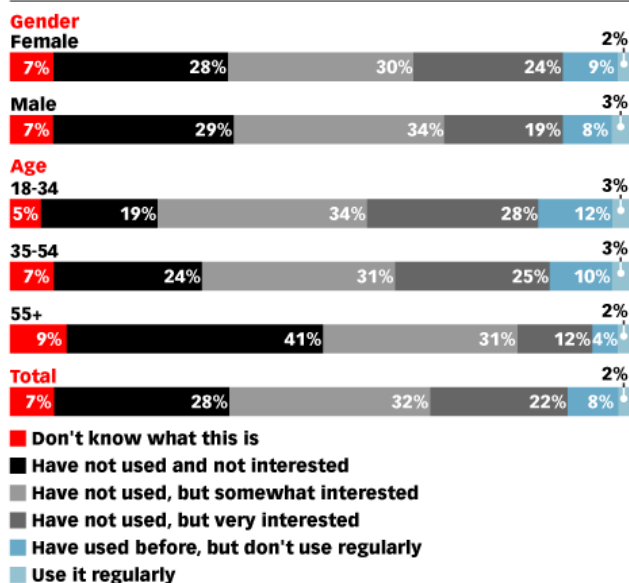
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On the other hand, emerging retail technologies offering a visual component have similar adoption rates but have garnered more interest among consumers who have not yet tried them.

Just 28% of respondents in the Bizrate survey were at least somewhat interested in making purchases via smart speakers, compared with 54% who were interested in using visual search. While just 2% said they used visual search regularly, an additional 8% had some experience with the technology, vs. the 4% who had tried making a purchase on a smart speaker.

How Interested Are US Internet Users in Using Visual Search* Retail Shopping Technology?

% of respondents, by demographic, April 2019



Note: ages 18+; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; *taking a picture of a product then uploading the image onto an app or website to find it and shop for it

Source: "The eMarketer Ecommerce Survey" conducted in April 2019 by Bizrate Insights, April 9, 2019

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Even though it's still early stages, augmented reality and virtual reality—used by just 6% of respondents—garnered more interest than smart speakers, Bizrate found. Some 39% of respondents who have not used AR/VR said they were at least somewhat interested in using the technology.

However, just because consumers aren't interested in making purchases with smart speakers doesn't mean they won't use them to shop.

Bizrate found that US smart speaker users were conducting shopping-related activities on their devices, including browsing for products (15%), asking for product recommendations (15%), and even going as far to add products to a shopping cart before finishing checkout on another device (12%).

Which Select Activities Have US Smart Speaker Owners Done on Their Smart Speakers?

% of respondents, by demographic, April 2019

	Gender		Age			Total
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	
Asked for product recommendations	17%	16%	20%	15%	14%	17%
Added products to shopping cart, then finished checkout on another device	13%	11%	18%	13%	4%	12%
Browsed products	15%	10%	14%	16%	5%	12%
Ordered movies, TV shows, music, etc.	12%	11%	15%	12%	6%	12%
Re-ordered products that you've bought before	13%	7%	11%	13%	4%	10%
Added products to shopping cart, then bought on smart speaker	9%	8%	11%	9%	3%	8%
Ordered groceries or household items	7%	3%	5%	7%	4%	5%
Ordered electronic devices	5%	3%	5%	6%	0%	4%
None of the above	62%	68%	63%	59%	75%	65%

Note: ages 18-65; among respondents who own a smart speaker
Source: "The eMarketer Ecommerce Survey" conducted in April 2019 by Bizrate Insights, April 9, 2019

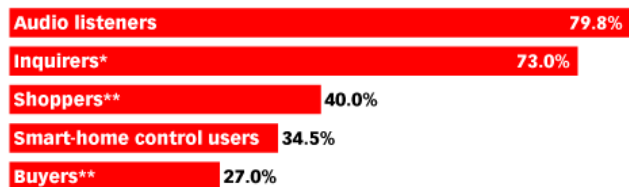
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In total, we forecast that four in 10 US smart speaker users will engage in shopping-related activity using a smart speaker in 2019, but won't necessarily use it to complete a purchase. However, more than a quarter (27%) will buy something using a smart speaker at least once this year.

US Smart Speaker Users, by Activity, 2019

% of smart speaker users



Note: individuals of any age who use a smart speaker for each activity at least once per month; *ask a smart speaker questions via voice command; excludes inquiries about weather, news and traffic; **ages 14+; at least once in the calendar year
Source: eMarketer, May 1, 2019

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We forecast that the number of US smart speaker users will top 77 million this year. With such a large percentage already engaging in shopping-related activities, smart speaker purchases have the potential to become a fast-growing trend. The question is: What will it take for consumers to stop clicking the buy button and start speaking it?

