

There's still lackluster enthusiasm for shopping and buying via voice

But brands are exploring ways to engage and market to consumers

ARTICLE | NOVEMBER 19, 2020

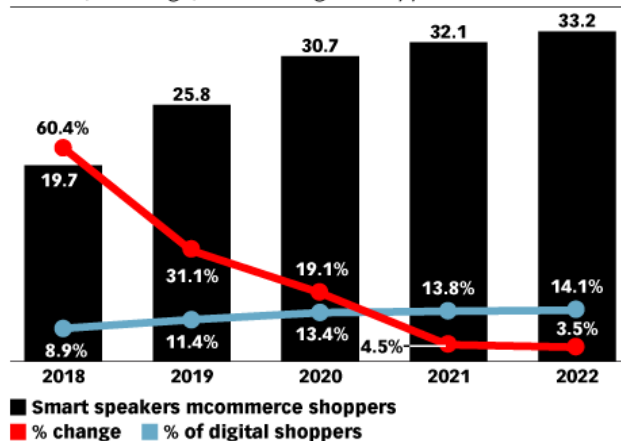
eMarketer Editors

Though several of the largest smart speaker developers—including Amazon, Google, and Apple—and other retailers hope to entice more shopping and buying via voice, consumers are not nearly as enthusiastic. As a result, we have downgraded our forecasts for smart speaker shoppers and buyers from previous years.

In 2020, we expect 30.7 million people in the US ages 14 and older will be smart speaker shoppers, accounting for 13.4% of digital shoppers. Those figures will experience slow increases through 2022.

US Smart Speaker Mcommerce Shoppers, 2018-2022

millions, % change, and % of digital shoppers



Note: individuals ages 14+ who have used a smart speaker to research products or add products to a shopping cart with voice command at least once during the calendar year, but have not necessarily made a purchase via smart speaker
Source: eMarketer, July 2020

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If the number of people who shop via smart speakers seems low, the number who actually make purchases is even lower. Some 22.7 million people will use smart speaker voice commands to purchase goods or services at least once this year. This translates to 26.0% of smart speaker users, 11.1% of digital buyers, and 8.2% of the population.

Additional research confirms that most people who dabble in voice shopping only do so on the margins. Our September 2020 "Ecommerce Survey," conducted by [Bizrate Insights](#), revealed that just 2% used voice shopping regularly, while 63% said they'd neither used it nor had any interest, up from 58% in our June 2020 survey. It also found that 9% had made purchases via their smart speaker (up 3 percentage points since June) and 22% said they'd asked for product recommendations using their device (up 4 percentage points). Just 14% added products to their shopping cart and checked out on another device (down 1 percentage point), and 12% had reordered products they'd purchased before (down 3 percentage points).

These statistics further reinforce that consumers are not regularly shopping or buying via smart speaker, especially when they have no screen and it's difficult to see what's being purchased. However, in one slightly brighter spot for voice commerce, 17% of smart speaker

owners ages 18 to 34 had made a smart speaker purchase, and 15% had used their device to reorder products they'd bought previously.

What Activities Have US Smart Speaker Owners Done on Their Smart Speakers?

% of respondents, by demographic, Aug 2020

	Gender		Age			Total
	Female	Male	18-34	35-54	55+	
Asked for product recommendations and information	23%	21%	19%	24%	21%	22%
Added products to shopping cart, then finished checkout on another device	15%	11%	15%	18%	7%	14%
Ordered digital content (e.g., movies, TV shows, music)	12%	16%	14%	14%	12%	13%
Reordered products that you've bought before	11%	14%	15%	12%	11%	12%
Purchased product on smart speaker	8%	10%	17%	7%	5%	9%
None	64%	64%	65%	62%	65%	64%

Note: among respondents who own a smart speaker

Source: "The eMarketer Ecommerce Survey" conducted in August 2020 by Bizrate Insights, Sep 24, 2020

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"While brands haven't yet cracked the code on how to drive more voice shopping and buying, the number of voice assistant users is rising, and most industry practitioners believe voice has significant untapped marketing potential," said Victoria Petrock, eMarketer principal analyst at Insider Intelligence and author of our new report, "[Voice Assistant and Smart Speaker Users 2020](#)."

"As voice technology continues to evolve—and as more people embrace it—brands are exploring new ways to reach users, enhance customer experiences, and drive new behaviors and habits," she said.

For example, brands may someday be able to use advanced voice tech to determine—and even anticipate—a customer's intent during a search query and then personalize results to reflect exactly what is wanted or needed at that moment. Voice may also help improve the way they interact with customers, providing more seamless, conversational customer journeys that shepherd them through purchase funnels, customer service encounters, and other types of payments and transactions.

eMarketer PRO subscribers can read more of our latest forecasts for US voice assistant users—including those who use voice assistants on smartphones and smart speakers—along with an analysis of the trends shaping the market.

Report by Victoria Petrock Nov 16, 2020

Voice Assistant and Smart Speaker Users 2020

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AND SMART
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