

Toy and Hobby Advertisers Are a Pandemic Bright Spot

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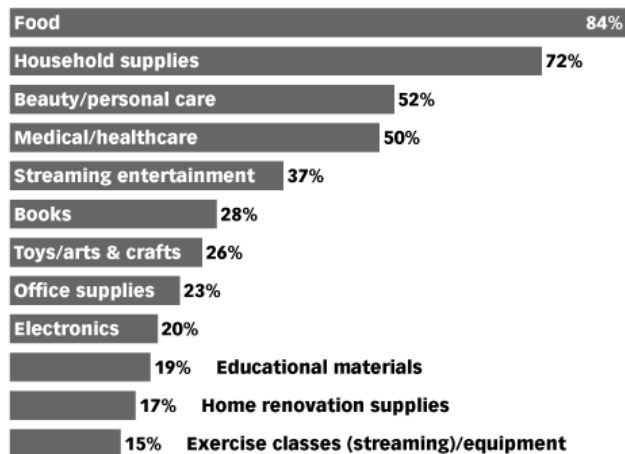
Nicole Perrin

It's an unusual time, to say the least. But Americans are reacting to the coronavirus pandemic and resulting stay-at-home orders partially by retreating to a number of familiar activities, including hanging out with other household members and spending time on hobbies. The need to stay occupied and entertained at home has led to a boom in sectors like video gaming—but also lower-tech crafts, toys and games.

Polling conducted on March 18 by the [American Association of Advertising Agencies \(4A's\)](#) asked US internet users about the products they intended to purchase in the next month due to the pandemic. While the most common responses were the immediate necessities like food (84%), household supplies (72%), and beauty and personal items (52%), entertainment was a clear secondary need. Twenty-eight percent of respondents planned to buy books, and 26% intended to purchase toys or arts and crafts supplies. On a more adult-oriented DIY front, 17% said they planned to buy home renovation supplies.

Products US Internet Users Intend to Purchase due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, March 2020

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+; in the next 30 days

Source: American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's) as cited in company blog, March 20, 2020

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According to a [GlobalWebIndex](#) survey conducted around the same time, 32% of US internet users ages 16 to 64 said they would be spending more time on hobbies and pastimes because of the pandemic. That was the same share who planned to spend more time on social media, and a slightly more common response than playing more video games.

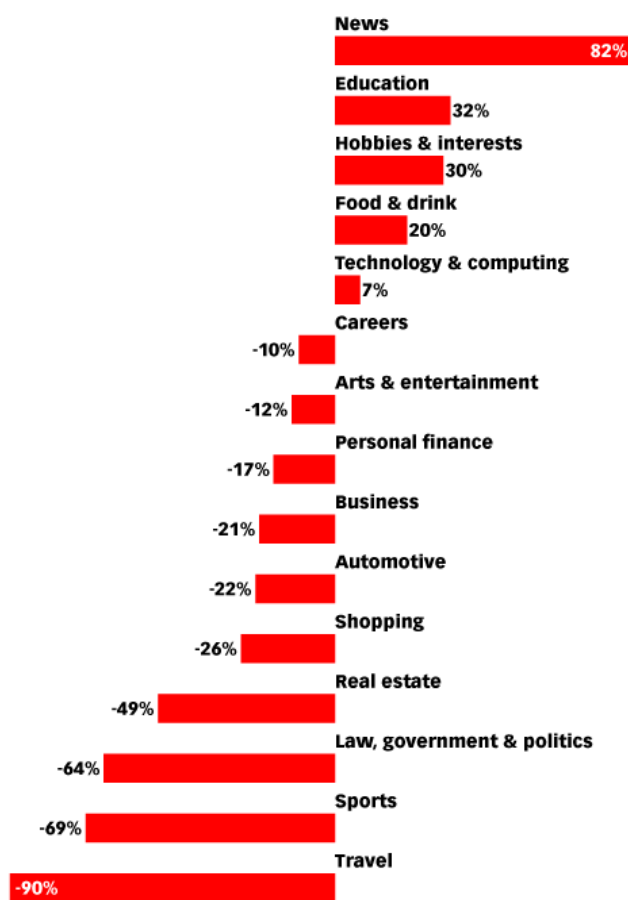
According to data from Amazon ad buying tech provider [Pacvue](#), a number of toy-, game-, crafting- and DIY-related search terms appeared in the top 200 on Amazon in April that normally don't show up until Q4, including:

- Puzzles (and variants)
- Board games
- Paint-by-number kits
- Lego toys
- Balloons
- Sidewalk chalk
- Diamond painting

That translated into advertising opportunities for sellers of products in those categories and dramatic increases in ad spending compared with the same period last year. Pacvue clients in the toys and games category saw average daily ad spending on Amazon skyrocket in late March.

And ad spending growth in this category hasn't happened only on Amazon. According to supply-side platform PubMatic, which tracks display advertising across its clients' sites, advertisers in the hobbies and interests category spent 31.0% more between **March 15 and 18** than they had two weeks earlier. And between March 25 and 31, hobby and interest-related ad spending was still up 30% vs. the first week of March.

Coronavirus Impact: Digital Ad Spending Growth, by Category, March 25-31, 2020
 % change vs. March 1-7, 2020



Source: PubMatic as cited in company blog, March 31, 2020
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Digital ad buying technology provider Kenshoo reported that ecommerce ad channel activity across Amazon and Walmart was also elevated for toy and game advertisers from late March through early April—though the company also noted that the “spike has started to recede halfway through April, but may start up again when you or your children finish all of those puzzles.”

Or perhaps until more upper-funnel advertising has a chance to raise consumer awareness of more fun, crafty projects they can do themselves or with their kids.