

Visual Search is Poised for Mainstream Adoption

In a recent poll, almost half of respondents were interested in the technology

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Key ecommerce players Amazon, China's Alibaba, and eBay, among others, now provide visual search tools that allow users to submit images as queries instead of text. This technology is also filtering into social media properties like Snapchat, which now lets users take a picture of an item and buy it on Amazon or Pinterest.

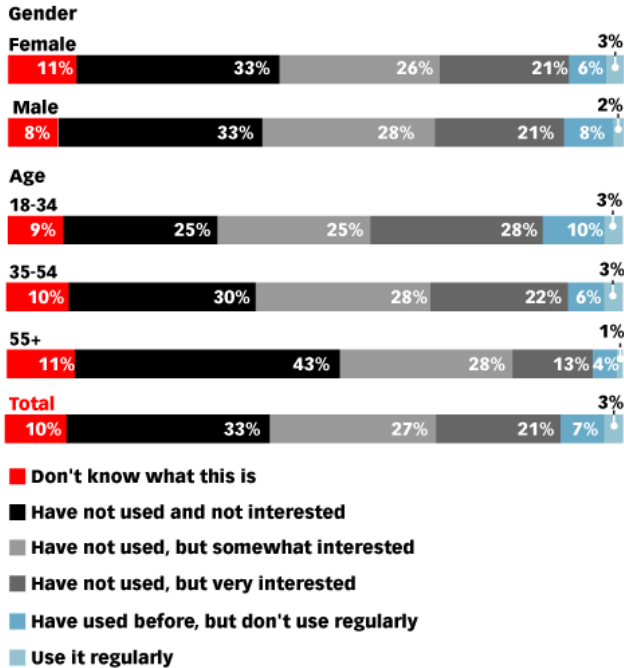
In theory, visual search can make the digital path to purchase for consumers even more seamless than it already is. See something you want to buy out in the wild? Just take a picture and let a visual search engine guide you to a product page.

But are consumers ready to embrace the technology?

New research released by Bizrate suggests that consumers are still in the early stages of familiarizing themselves with visual search. The company's survey of US internet users from December 2018 found that 48% of respondents had not yet used visual search, but were somewhat or very interested in it.

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

% of respondents, by demographic, Dec 2018



*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 December 2018 by Bizrate Insights, Dec 18, 2018

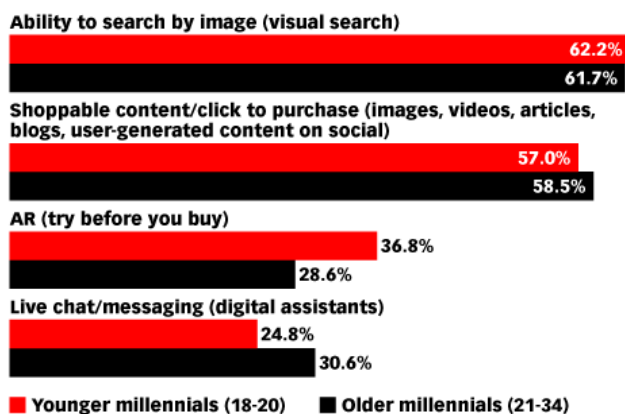
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Other data indicates that visual search will receive a warm reception among millennials. A separate survey of millennial internet users in the US and UK carried out by ViSenze found that more than 60% of millennials in the 18- to 20-year-old range and 21- to 34-year-old cohort were comfortable incorporating visual search into their digital shopping experiences. In the survey, visual search outperformed other emerging technologies, such as augmented reality and live chat/messaging services.

What New Technologies Would UK and US Younger vs. Older Millennial Internet Users Be Comfortable with as Part of Their Digital Shopping Experience?

% of respondents, by age, July 2018



Source: ViSenze, Aug 29, 2018

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To become even more consumer-ready, visual search has been fast-tracked for improvement. “Over the past two to three years, [accuracy] has improved rapidly,” said Ben Plomion, CMO at computer vision company GumGum. “We have more images than ever available to us, and because of that, we can train our algorithms to be more accurate all the time.”

Consumers can expect visual search to break even further into mainstream use as upgrades are continually made to artificial intelligence and algorithms underpinning the technology.

Interested in more on visual search? eMarketer PRO subscribers can read the full [Visual Search 2018 report here](#).

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