

Grocery and food delivery apps were among the fastest-growing app categories in 2020

Article

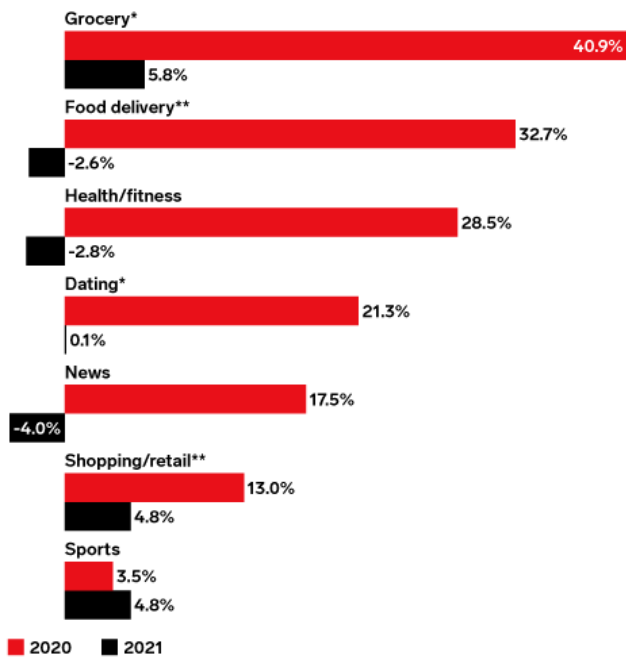
Many mobile app categories saw a boost last year as more consumers spent time with their devices during quarantines. According to our estimates for smartphone app user

growth, grocery apps, food delivery apps, and health/fitness apps were the three fastest-growing categories in 2020.

Grocery apps saw the biggest growth last year, with a 40.9% rise in smartphone users. That's because more consumers took to online grocery shopping and leaned more heavily on apps like Instacart and meal kit companies like HelloFresh and Blue Apron.

US Smartphone App User Growth, by Type, 2020 & 2021

% change



Note: smartphone users of any age who use an app on their smartphone at least once per month; *ages 18+; **ages 14+
Source: eMarketer, March 2021

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“While we do expect grocery app user growth to decelerate this year, to 5.8%, this is a reversal of our previous predictions for 2021,” said Cindy Liu, eMarketer director of forecasting at Insider Intelligence. “Additionally, grocery app users will account for 15.5% of smartphone users and 24.9% of digital grocery buyers.”

Along with increased grocery app downloads, food delivery apps also experienced rising uptake. As a result of many restaurants limiting capacity or closing entirely—particularly at the beginning of the pandemic—consumers turned to delivery apps for their takeout needs. To reach a wider audience, as well as make up for lost sales, many restaurants teamed up with services like DoorDash, Grubhub, and Uber Eats.

To round out the top five categories, health/fitness apps (28.5% growth), dating apps (21.3%), and news apps (17.5%) also soared in 2020 as more people relied on them to stay on track with their fitness goals, meet new people, and stay informed.

This year, we expect decreased engagement on these apps, though all categories will still have more users in 2021 than they did in 2019.