

Why Mobile Users Download (and Delete) Retail Apps

Why Mobile Users Download (and Delete) Retail Apps Retail app downloaders might not be who you think

ARTICLE |

Krista Garcia

Apps vs. mobile sites has been the subject of debate since the dawn of smartphones. For a period it seemed like apps fell out of favor, but there is proof [that trend is reversing in the retail industry](#).

A [Civic Science](#) poll released in September revealed 43% of US consumers had downloaded a retail app. Not surprisingly, these downloaders tended to be more frequent digital shoppers, and nearly three-fourths (71%) had used mcommerce compared with roughly one-quarter who had not downloaded a retail app. However, mobile sites (43%) were more commonly used among US digital shoppers to make digital purchases than apps (28%).

Less expected? Consumers who downloaded retail apps were more likely to be ages 35 to 54 and have incomes over \$100,000—in other words, moderately affluent Gen X'ers. This group was more likely to use an app in-store for price comparison than 18- to 34-years-olds, who tend to use apps while outside of brick-and-mortar shops.

While this implies that older mobile users may download retail apps more, millennials are the ones who use them more for transacting. Gen

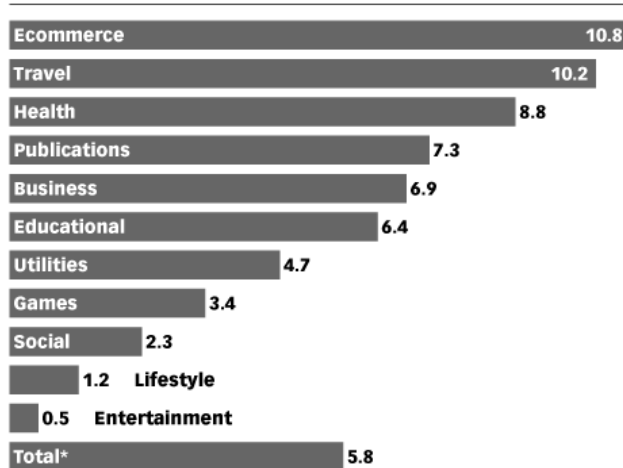
Z, meanwhile, **hasn't gotten fully on board with mcommerce.**

An April 2018 survey of online buyers in the US by **Synchrony**, a financial services company, found that 67% of respondents had downloaded a retail app, higher than Civic Science's broader survey base, up 8% over 2017. Most of the online shoppers surveyed used them for browsing products (60%) rather than making purchases (49%). These digital buyers regularly used four retail apps on average, and 83% of those polled said they were happy with the experience.

But what about the unhappy users? A recent study from mobile analytics provider **Adjust** found that app downloaders worldwide kept ecommerce apps on their phones the longest of all industries before deleting; 10.8 days compared with the 5.8-day average. Presumably because users were waiting for a purchase to arrive and could check on their order or delivery information before getting rid of the app.

Mobile App Performance Metrics Worldwide: Average Time from Last Usage Session to Uninstall, by App Category, Jan-July 2018

days



Note: represents activity on Adjust's platform, broader industry metrics may vary; includes Android and iOS; *includes categories not listed
Source: Adjust, "Unmasking Uninstalls: Three Data Points to Think About," Sep 6, 2018

241183

www.eMarketer.com

According to Synchrony, two major factors contributed to deleting a retail app: free up storage space (34%) and shopping less with a retailer (33%). Fewer deleted a retail app due to a poor experience (21%).

Retail doesn't inspire daily visits like news, entertainment or social apps, but marketers can still give retail app users reason to stick around. Re-engagement could include new product alerts, rewards programs or promotions. All the better, if based on **personal preferences**.

And per Adjust, if a user deletes a retail app, roughly one in five smartphone users worldwide polled said they would eventually reinstall.