

We Expect 7.4 Million New Digital Buyers in 2020 as Pandemic Alters Behaviors

Older consumers are becoming more comfortable shopping digitally

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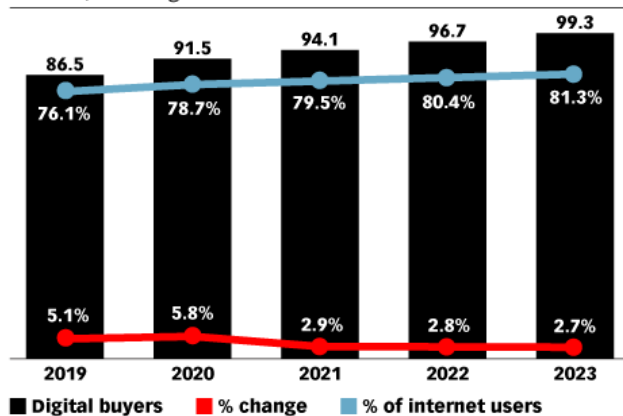
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In recent months, as stores temporarily closed and consumers refrained from going out to shop, one of the clearest emerging trends has been the accelerated shift to ecommerce, especially among older consumers.

We estimate that this year, more than 204 million people ages 14 and older will make an online purchase, two-thirds of which will be 45 and older. Our updated forecast, which factors in the pandemic's effects, anticipates a 5.8% increase in the number of digital buyers 45 and older, up from 3.2%. This equates to nearly 5 million new users.

US Digital Buyers Ages 45+, 2019-2023

millions, % change and % of internet users



Note: ages 45+; digital buyers are internet users who have made at least one purchase via any digital channel during the calendar year, including online, mobile and tablet purchases
Source: eMarketer, June 2020

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Because older adults are more likely to develop serious complications from the coronavirus, it's unsurprising that they are taking extra precautions and utilizing more online and contactless shopping options.

In surveys from [First Insight](#), one conducted February 28 and the other March 17, baby boomers had shifted their shopping to online channels most significantly in the three-week span. In the March poll, roughly 23% of boomers said they had been shopping more online due to the pandemic, considerably more than the 8% of respondents in February.

In a [Salesforce](#) survey, which asked US adults about their shopping habits during the first two weeks of May, 28% of baby boomers said they had used contactless delivery more than usual, followed by self-checkout options (23%) and click-and-collect (23%).

While we expect some shopping habits to return to normal post-pandemic, it's likely that consumers who have tried online shopping for the first time will stick with it, at least for occasional purchases. An April 2020 [GlobalWebIndex](#) study found that 31% of US internet users ages 16 to 64 said they will shop online more frequently after the pandemic ends, and 30% expect to visit stores less frequently.