

# Livestreaming ecommerce takes baby steps in the US

Article

**The news:** Livestreaming ecommerce is still searching for its entry point into the US market, but mobile marketplace **NTWRK** is making headway in the space. The platform is expanding rapidly: Last week, it **announced** the launch of **three new shoppable shows** and **hosted** the first **virtual Sneaker Con**. On the corporate side, its first CMO will join the company on July 1.

**How it works:**

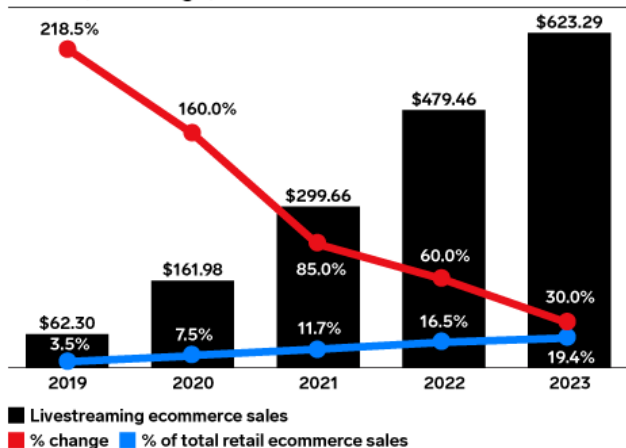
- NTWRK is a **mobile marketplace** that focuses on **exclusive and limited-edition drops**, often within the streetwear and sneaker communities, which are already accustomed to the format of "drops."
- It produces several **QVC-like shoppable shows** hosted by creators and influencers, where buyers can watch livestreams about products, enter giveaways, and make purchases through the app.
- So far, it has hosted four "shopping festivals" that have generated more than **10 million views each** and led to a total of **250,000 active buyers**, **according to** Retail Dive. Its most recent event was Sneaker Con, which ran from June 26–27 and was hosted by comedian Hasan Minhaj and Nick Diamond, founder of skate brand Diamond Supply Co.

**How we got here:** Taobao, an ecommerce site and app that is part of China-based Alibaba, pioneered livestreaming ecommerce with the 2018 launch of **Taobao Live**, where charismatic hosts sell a raft of products to large audiences watching online.

- We expect livestreaming ecommerce in China to bring in **\$299.66 billion** in sales this year, or **11.7%** of the country's total retail sales. In the US, that number is so slim that we don't forecast it.
- Social media seems to be the driver of livestreaming ecommerce: Of the nearly \$300 billion that livestreaming will generate in China this year, we estimate that **\$131.52 billion** will come from livestreams that happen on **social** platforms.

## Livestreaming Ecommerce Sales in China, 2019-2023

billions, % change, and % of total retail sales



Note: includes products or services ordered via online video streaming where the presenter demonstrates and discusses the offering and answers audience questions in real time; the livestream session can take place on an ecommerce website or on a social media platform; includes products or services ordered using the internet via any device, regardless of the method of payment or fulfillment; excludes virtual items gifted by viewers to livestream presenters, travel, and event tickets  
Source: eMarketer, May 2021

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**What's next:** Now the US is trying to catch up. Ecommerce marketplaces and social media sites have been rapidly introducing livestreaming ecommerce onto their platforms in an effort to replicate the success the format has seen in China.

- On the marketplace side, Amazon introduced **Amazon Live** in 2016, but the feature was available only to a limited number of sellers until a wider expansion to members of its influencer program in July 2020. Though still new, it's been a success for those in the program, **per** Digiday.
- On the social media side, **Facebook** and **TikTok** have introduced live shopping elements over the course of the past year, trying to get in on the social commerce trend.

**The key takeaway:** The rapid expansion of shopping livestreams on marketplaces like NTWRK and Amazon, plus the proliferation of live shopping features on social media sites, are both signs that livestreaming ecommerce is on its way to taking off in the US. But even though all the pieces are in place on the platform side, the shopping format will need to see strong adoption from both consumers and brands before it approaches China's level of success.

For more on this topic, read our "**Social Commerce Forecasts 2021**" and our "**Livestreaming Landscape 2021**" reports.