Social Commerce Leads Consumer Adoption of New Retail Technology
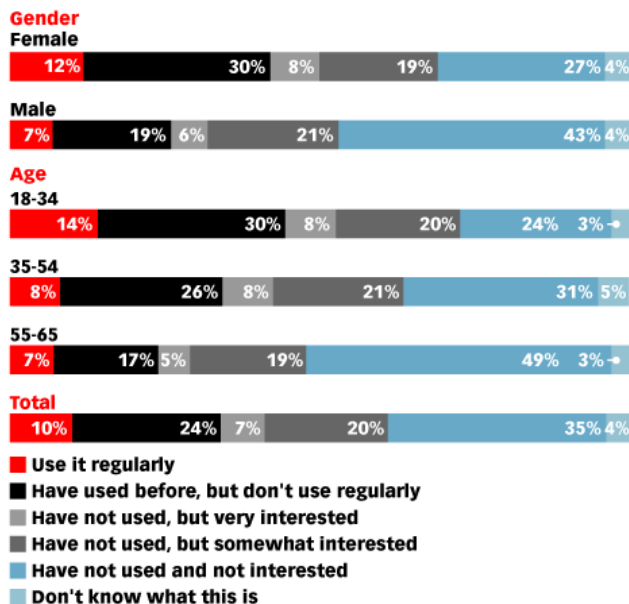
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In an effort to engage customers, online retailers are incorporating a variety of emerging technology tools into their ecommerce platforms. Social commerce has become one of the most talked-about practices, where consumers can make purchases directly through a brand's or retailer's social media page.

According to an August 2019 survey conducted by Bizrate Insights, social commerce ranked among the most-used emerging ecommerce behaviors by US consumers, far more so than visual search, augmented or virtual reality (AR/VR) and voice commerce via smart speakers. More than one-third of US consumers said they had purchased products through social media. And among the 66% who had not engaged in social commerce, 27% said they're at least somewhat interested in using it in the future. This was an increase from November 2018 polling, which found that 29% of respondents said they had made a social commerce transaction and 71% who hadn't.

How Interested Are US Internet Users in Purchasing Products Through Social Media?
% of respondents, by demographic, Aug 2019

Gender

Female

| 12% | 30% | 8% | 19% | 27% | 4% |

Male

| 7% | 19% | 6% | 21% | 43% | 4% |

Age

18-34

| 14% | 30% | 8% | 20% | 24% | 3% |

35-54

| 8% | 26% | 8% | 21% | 31% | 5% |

55-65

| 7% | 17% | 5% | 19% | 49% | 3% |

Total

| 10% | 24% | 7% | 20% | 35% | 4% |

- ■ Use it regularly
- ■ Have used before, but don't use regularly
- ■ Have not used, but very interested
- ■ Have not used, but somewhat interested
- ■ Have not used and not interested
- ■ Don't know what this is

Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: "The eMarketer Ecommerce Survey" conducted in August 2019 by Bizrate Insights, Aug 6, 2019

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This could indicate early success for new social commerce features introduced on Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat during the same time period. Last November, Snapchat launched a new social commerce feature called "Shop and Cop." Pinterest expanded its shopping capabilities in anticipation of its initial public offering in March. And that same month, Instagram launched its widely anticipated social commerce platform called Checkout by Instagram.
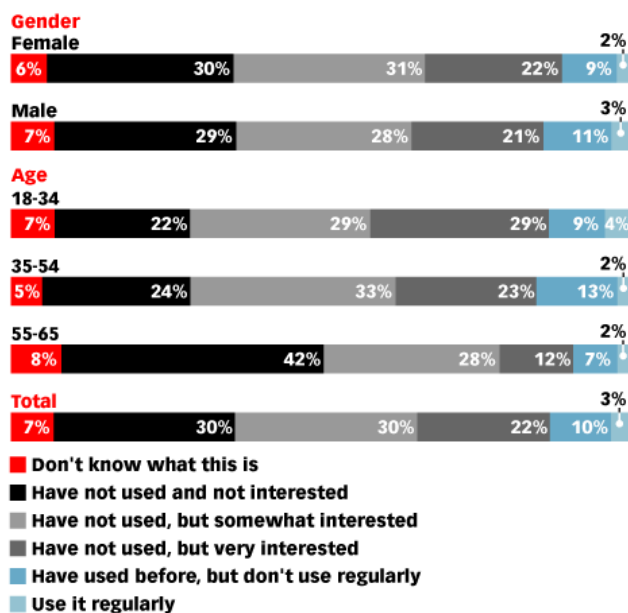
"Social commerce has definitely emerged as one of the recent growth stories of ecommerce, fueled by social platforms making it easier for brands to showcase their merchandise and for shoppers to follow, browse and buy products," said Andrew Lipsman, principal analyst at eMarketer. "Despite the added features, the real driver behind this trend is that social media is providing contextual relevance to shopping in a way it didn't previously."

While other new retail technologies have not been adopted as widely as social commerce, there is still significant interest among consumers. Bizrate Insights found that 13% of US consumers now use visual search, compared with 9% in November 2018. Among the

technologies, visual search also generated the most interest among consumers, with 56% of non-users claiming they were at least somewhat interested.

How Interested Are US Internet Users in Using Visual Search* Retail Shopping Technology?
% of respondents, by demographic, Aug 2019

Gender

Female
| 6% | 30% | 31% | 22% | 9% | 2% |

Male
| 7% | 29% | 28% | 21% | 11% | 3% |

Age

18-34
| 7% | 22% | 29% | 29% | 9% | 4% |

35-54
| 5% | 24% | 33% | 23% | 13% | 2% |

55-65
| 8% | 42% | 28% | 12% | 7% | 2% |

Total
| 7% | 30% | 30% | 22% | 10% | 3% |

■ Don't know what this is
■ Have not used and not interested
■ Have not used, but somewhat interested
■ Have not used, but very interested
■ Have used before, but don't use regularly
■ Use it regularly

Note: 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 June 2019 by Bizrate Insights, Aug 6, 2019

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However, not all visual technologies have received the same interest. Just 6% of US consumers have used AR and VR, per Bizrate Insights.

Though it has potential—AR/VR shopping was up from just 4% in November 2018, and 39% of non-users expressed interest in the technology in the August 2019 poll—it still lags behind social commerce and visual search.

How Interested Are US Internet Users in Using AR* and VR While Shopping?

% of respondents, by demographic, Aug 2019

Gender

	Use it regularly	Have used before, but don't use regularly	Have not used, but very interested	Have not used, but somewhat interested	Have not used and not interested	Don't know what this is
Female		6%	16%	25%	43%	9%
Male	1%	3%	11%	25%	49%	11%

Age

	Use it regularly	Have used before, but don't use regularly	Have not used, but very interested	Have not used, but somewhat interested	Have not used and not interested	Don't know what this is
18-34	1%	8%	17%	26%	39%	9%
35-54		4%	15%	26%	46%	8%
55-65		2%	10%	24%	52%	12%

Total

	Use it regularly	Have used before, but don't use regularly	Have not used, but very interested	Have not used, but somewhat interested	Have not used and not interested	Don't know what this is
Total	1%	5%	14%	25%	46%	10%

- 🟥 Use it regularly
- ⬛ Have used before, but don't use regularly
- Have not used, but very interested
- Have not used, but somewhat interested
- Have not used and not interested
- Don't know what this is

*Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; *for example, trying on clothing or makeup by superimposing an image onto yourself*
Source: "The eMarketer Ecommerce Survey" conducted in August 2019 by Bizrate Insights, Aug 6, 2019

249260   www.**eMarketer**.com

"The reality is that social commerce took a full decade to catch its stride, and new technologies like visual search, AR and VR are still very early in their adoption curve," Lipsman said. "As these visual enhancements get introduced into social media environments, they will eventually find useful applications for shopping—but will take some time before becoming mainstream."