

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

Affluent tech adopters present marketing opportunity for brands

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Early adopters of technology skew young, male and affluent. Image credit: Knight Frank

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Early technology adopters are a lucrative audience for brands to target since they are predominantly young, male and affluent, according to research from YouGov.

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About a fifth of global consumers are early adopters of technology, per YouGov's [Global Technology 2020](#) white paper. Luxury and premium brands should also evaluate different methods for reaching this audience, who is more tuned into various media than the general population.

"The advertising insights stood out to us the most, particularly that early adopters are twice as likely to prefer being exposed to ads while in movie theaters or during podcasts, compared to the rest of the population," said Tom Fisher, senior vice president of technology research at YouGov. "This element brings a challenge to marketers who seek to target early adopters due to the pandemic and movie theater shut downs across the country."

The research is based on 370,000 global interviews with consumers about their habits and attitudes towards technology.

Affluent adopters

The proportion of early adopters varies both regionally and nationally. YouGov defines this group as "dedicated followers" of new technology devices and services as well as "first wave" technology users.

About three in 10 consumers in Asia fall under the early adoption designation from YouGov, with 16 percent of Asian consumers are "dedicated followers" and only 26 percent categorized as "latecomers." These figures outpace both the global breakdowns and those in the Americas and Europe.

Even with in Asia, however, there are fluctuations in consumers' attitudes about technology. While 48 percent of urban consumers in India are early adopters with 30 percent being dedicated followers only 8 percent of Japanese consumers are early adopters.

Meanwhile, 18 percent of consumers in the United States are early adopters.

Almost half of this cohort are Generation Z and millennial consumers between the ages of 18 and 34, and this demographic tends to be the most engaged with technology. Two-thirds of dedicated followers in the U.S. are men, and 61 percent of first wave users are male as well.

YouGov also explored how technology users in specific countries felt about specific devices and services.

For instance, early adopters, who are more interested in technology and have more disposable income, are more likely to use smart home products than U.S. consumers overall.

They are more motivated to purchase smart appliances than the general population, and are more likely to cite factors such as convenience, cost savings and environmental benefits. However, both early adopters and the general population of U.S. consumers named data privacy as the leading concern over smart applications.



Themador cooktops can now be controlled through its mobile application. Image credit: Themador

In Great Britain, only 11 percent of consumers are early adopters but the age and gender breakdown is similar to that of the U.S.: primarily younger and male.

While both early adopters and the general population in Great Britain agree that wearable technology is too expensive, early adopters are more likely to believe the devices can encourage healthy habits, at rate of 80 to 60 percent.

"There is a demonstrated demand from early adopters for luxury items, specifically in the wearables space with luxury smartwatches," Mr. Fisher said.

In Germany, technology consumers tend to be a bit older and more discerning than other countries. Fourteen percent, however, still fall into the early adopter categories.

The majority of German consumers do not use digital assistants, such as Siri or Amazon Alexa, including almost a third of early adopters.

Those early adopters who do use the technology tend to use Alexa, 33 percent, but the general population is almost evenly split between Alexa and Google Assistant at a rate of 16 to 15 percent.

Two-thirds of early adopters access digital assistants through their smartphones, and 31 percent of these consumers also use standalone speakers such as Amazon Echo or Google Home. Almost two in 10 German early adopters use digital assistants to shop, preferring to use the technology for more informational purposes such as checking the weather or traffic.



Urban consumers in India are among the most enthusiastic about technology around the world. Again, the majority of early adopters are between 18 and 34 years of age.

In terms of disposable income, about a third of early adopters have between 10,001 and 50,000 rupees to spend on themselves a month, or about \$135 to \$678 at current exchange.

YouGov's findings in China and India also echo earlier researcher from Agility that showed affluents in Asia have been choosing to spend more money on high-end electronics during lockdowns ([see story](#)).

Marketing to early adopters

Early tech adopters favor online advertising the most, including mobile applications, social media, email and more. However, this group is more than twice as likely than the general population to be interested in podcast advertising making it a valuable venue for luxury marketers.

Luxury brands are increasingly testing their own branded podcasts to engage loyal consumers on another platform.

In June, LVMH-owned French fashion label Christian Dior launched a podcast series that tells the heritage of Dior Perfumes, giving fans a glimpse inside the origin story of the Dior brand and the fragrances that made the name iconic. The podcast plays on the brand's heritage and its history in Provence, Paris and Normandy with portraits of the people that helped develop and create Dior Perfumes ([see story](#)).

More recently, Italian fashion and leather goods maker Salvatore Ferragamo joined the parade of luxury brands dabbling in podcasts with its own series honoring its eponymous founder and his legend. "The Shoemaker of Dreams" podcast series is narrated by different "friends of the house," each putting their own spin on a chapter ([see story](#)).