

RETAIL

US, UK consumers spending more time on shopping apps

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U.S. consumers are slated to spend more than 900 million hours on mobile shopping apps. Image credit: MomentFeed

By KATIE TAMOLA

More U.S. consumers are taking advantage of the products at their fingertips, turning to mobile retail applications ahead of the upcoming shopping season.

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A new [report](#) from [App Annie](#) predicts that U.S. consumers are going to spend more than 900 million hours on mobile shopping apps in the fourth quarter, an increase of 20 percent year-over-year. With this increase in mobile commerce, consumers are turning to buy-now-pay-later mobile apps, as they are some of the most downloaded shopping apps in the region.

"Consumers are turning to shopping apps more than ever for a number of reasons, as the mobile shopping habit was catalyzed during COVID-19 by providing a socially distanced option for shopping," said Lexi Sydow, head of insights at App Annie.

"As consumers have found this easy, frictionless and convenient, this has increasingly become the go-to experience," she said. "Mobile apps can provide more tailored, customized and personal experiences than web."

Shopping on-the-go

Several ecommerce habits solidified during the COVID-19 pandemic from BNPL to click-and-collect services and more continue to appeal to consumers as the holiday shopping season approaches.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, ecommerce sales reached \$200 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020. By Q2 2021, that figure was already surpassed with nearly \$225 billion in online sales.



Klarna and Afterpay ranked the third and fourth in breakout shopping apps in the United States, respectively. Image credit: Afterpay

Ecommerce shopping also accelerates mobile shopping, with App Annie estimating that U.S. shoppers will spend more than 900 million hours on shopping apps in Q4 2021 alone.

Mobile app usage is also increasing around the world.

The United Kingdom is on pace to spend more than 145 million hours on commerce apps this season, compared to 138 million hours last year, which were seemingly fueled by lockdowns during the 2020 holiday season.

Time spent on shopping apps is also predicted to increase by 45 percent from Q4 2019, in conjunction with more in-person shopping as consumers continue to value brands' omnichannel experiences.

Amazon continues to thrive in its ecommerce offerings, but mainstream shopping apps including Shein, Blush Mark, AliExpress Russia and H&M are serving as the top breakout shopping apps worldwide by downloads in 2021.



Luxury consumers are becoming increasingly interested in resale and secondhand fashion opportunities. Image credit: Vestiaire Collective

In May, Shein overtook Amazon as the number one shopping app worldwide by Google Play and iOS downloads in the U.S.

Other apps had huge breakout years as well, specifically BNPL offerings, as Klarna and Afterpay ranked the third and fourth in breakout shopping apps in the U.S., respectively.

Resale surges

Circular fashion remains a sought-after offering, with consumers flocking to shopping apps for resale items.

Between the COVID-19 pandemic and various environmental crises, consumer interest in sustainable fashion consumption has dramatically evolved, launching the resale market into hyperdrive.

What originated as hand-me-downs or thrift finds, secondhand fashion is now making waves within the luxury space as brands and retailers such as Gucci, Alexander McQueen and Mytheresa invest in consignment and rental platforms. As sustainability continues to drive the industry and its consumers, circular fashion is poised to stick ([see story](#)).

When Poshmark launched in Australia in February 2021, it rose to the top of the charts. Secondhand online marketplaces Vinted, Vestiaire Collective and Meesho also ranked among global breakout shopping apps in 2021.

The Vestiaire Collective app ranked fourth in top breakout shopping apps in France.

In February, resale platform Vestiaire Collective partnered with British fashion label Alexander McQueen to launch a "brand approved" program, as luxury brands look to become more directly involved with circular fashion initiatives.

Vestiaire Collective and Alexander McQueen are yet another partnership highlighting the fashion industry's commitment to sustainability and circularity. Through the collaboration, shoppers are invited to sell their preowned pieces and receive a credit to buy new pieces from specified McQueen stores ([see story](#)).

Mobile apps continue to offer consumers a much-appreciated sense of selection and convenience.

"Consumers can also shop on-the-go or from the comfort of their couch, where they are often second-screening," Ms. Sydow said. "Mobile apps provide benefits for in-store experiences, such as contactless payment, loyalty redemption, navigating the store, requesting additional sizes, among others.

"Combined, this puts mobile at the heart of the customer experience."

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