

COVID-19 and Technology: A Year On - UK - 2021

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the technology market and what the sector's recovery will look like
- How COVID-19 shaped consumer behaviour
- Who the winners and losers were from the pandemic
- How the pandemic will shape consumers' behaviour and their future technology purchasing habits
- What products and services consumers used during the pandemic and which products and services will see greater use and prominence post pandemic.

Time spent at home during the pandemic has increased the consideration given to technology products, including those that many people may not have previously considered buying, such as smart home devices. Just 10% say they owned a smart thermostat prior to the pandemic, however 16% who don't own one think they would be interested in buying one in the next 12 months. Similarly, 8% say they owned a smart home security product (eg a Ring doorbell) before COVID-19, but 19% say this is something they would consider buying in the next 12 months.

Although the closure of retail had a detrimental effect on purchasing, with consumers unable to see devices in person for long periods during the pandemic, digital services such as mobile apps for commerce and gaming have seen greater traction. Meanwhile, video calling was instrumental in connecting friends and families in lockdown. The pandemic has ushered in a new era of digital literacy, and tech adoption, especially for older consumers, which can be a platform for technology products and services to build on with this demographic.

However, COVID-19 saw supply chain issues such as factory closures in the early stages of the pandemic impact on sales of devices such as computers, TVs smartphones, and there is a legacy of ongoing disruption in the form of a



"The pandemic has demonstrated the convenience and efficiency digital technologies can provide across consumers' work, entertainment and shopping routines, and 2021 can cement their place as digital habits are maintained."

– Joe Birch, Consumer Technology Analyst

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global shortage of semiconductors used in electrical goods and technology as a result of that early disruption and increased demand throughout the pandemic. This will likely continue meaning the supply of PCs, Laptops, phones and gaming consoles will still suffer through 2021 and potentially could mean higher prices for consumers at the checkout.

Time spent at home has meant technology products and services have had an increased importance in people's lives. From voice interactions to online shopping, usage of technology can grow from a platform of increased confidence and habitual use. This can be a driver to add additional tech products to the household such as smart home devices as well as drive digital upscaling, for instance moving to faster broadband connections. Health and wellbeing will also be at the forefront of people's minds, meaning tech supporting these areas such as wearables and apps and services will continue to gain in popularity.

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Executive Summary

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Table of Contents

- OVERVIEW
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- CATEGORY WINNERS AND LOSERS
- HOW THE PANDEMIC UNFOLDED
- THE POST PANDEMIC OUTLOOK FOR TECHNOLOGY
- THE ECONOMIC IMPACT
- MARKET SIZE AND PERFORMANCE
- MARKET FORECAST
- COVID-19 SCENARIO PERFORMANCE
- CONSUMER CONCERNS OVER THE IMPACT ON HEALTH
- CONSUMER CONCERNS OVER THE IMPACT ON LIFESTYLES
- IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLD FINANCES
- HOW THE PANDEMIC SHAPED CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR
- THE CONSUMER – KEY TAKEAWAYS
- TECHNOLOGY ACTIVITIES DURING COVID-19
- TECHNOLOGY PURCHASING PRE AND POST COVID-19
- POST PANDEMIC TECHNOLOGY HABITS
- APPENDIX – DATA SOURCES, ABBREVIATIONS AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION
- APPENDIX – CENTRAL FORECAST METHODOLOGY

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