

Smartphones - UK - 2023

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This report looks at the following areas:

- UK market size and forecast for mobile phones.
- Brand of smartphone that consumers owned and the impact of the updated iPhone SE on Apple's market share.
- The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on smartphone buying and selling.
- Preferred ways to buy a smartphone and how it affects future upgrade intentions.
- Types of apps used on a smartphone.
- The ongoing measures to tackle digital addiction.

For the first time in recent years, Apple (40%) overtook Samsung (36%) as the most-owned smartphone brand. Generation X predominantly drove this change, with their ownership of the iPhone increasing from 26% in 2022 to 37% in 2023. This is likely to be due to the release of the latest iPhone SE, with Generation X prioritising price in smartphones and the vast majority not being engaged by the latest features.

22% of smartphone owners have delayed the purchase of a new smartphone due to the cost-of-living crisis. Smartphones remain the priority purchase within technology, though, as it was consistently the device that people were most likely to have bought or planned to buy throughout 2022.

The European Commission has called for manufacturers to make repairability a focus of smartphones through the 'Right to Repair' regulation. 75% of smartphone owners only change their phone when their current one stops working, and the impact of the regulation could cause fewer sales due to consumers keeping their devices even longer.

However, the impact of the regulation could shift the market to fewer but more expensive upgrades. If consumers know they will not change their device for a long time and will get it repaired instead in due course, it could give them more confidence to spend higher amounts when buying.



"With smartphone brands potentially needing to make repairability a greater focus of their products, it is likely to mean that consumers keep hold of their devices for even longer."

– Zach Emmanuel, Consumer Technology Analyst

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