AAPI SPOTLIGHT

Privacy concerns do not stop Asian Americans 40+ from spending on technology

Lower cost, awareness, and knowledge can encourage more adoption of newer technologies

A majority (52%) of Asian Americans 40+ do not feel confident their information stays private online, but privacy concerns are not keeping them from buying technology. In general, this cohort has not stopped spending on technology this past year, although many do cite cost as a major barrier to adopting new technology. In fact, a vast majority of Asian Americans 40+ own and feel confident in using technologies like smartphones, computers, and tablets to perform all kinds of tasks. From more common activities, like obtaining information and searching for news, to playing online games, to activities once done traditionally in person, like online banking or shopping, Asian Americans 40+ use these devices frequently.

One-third of Asian Americans 40+ have embraced newer technologies and are avid users

Nearly all Asian Americans 40+ own (92%) a smartphone and use it daily (99%), not surprising as they perform a myriad of tasks on this device. From text messaging (88%), to getting directions and traffic information (81%), surfing the internet (80%), getting news and information (79%), online banking (71%), making purchases (71%), and accessing social media (70%), Asian Americans seem to have embraced the many uses a smartphone has to offer.

A new study examines how Asian Americans 40+ use technology

By comparison, three-quarters (74%) own a tablet and, among these, one-half (49%) use it daily -- possibly a result of the type of activities they perform on this device. For example, the most common activity done on a tablet is watching videos or shows on sites, like Hulu or Netflix, which two in five (43%) have done so in the past three months. More than one-third (37%) use it to watch "how-to" tutorials to learn something new or get news and other information (36%).

Asian Americans 40+ are also embracing other technologies by using them frequently. Home assistant devices (e.g., Amazon Echo or Google Home) can be found in almost two in five (37%) Asian American 40+ homes with more than one-half (56%) using it daily. Daily use (84%) is even more impressive among the one-third (31%) who own smart home tech, like Nest or Ring. Owning a wearable device (30%), like Fitbit, Apple, or Samsung Galaxy Watch, also results in three-quarters (73%) using this device daily. The only exception is e-readers, like Kindle or Nook, which, while one-quarter (24%) own, only one in ten (9%) use on a daily basis.
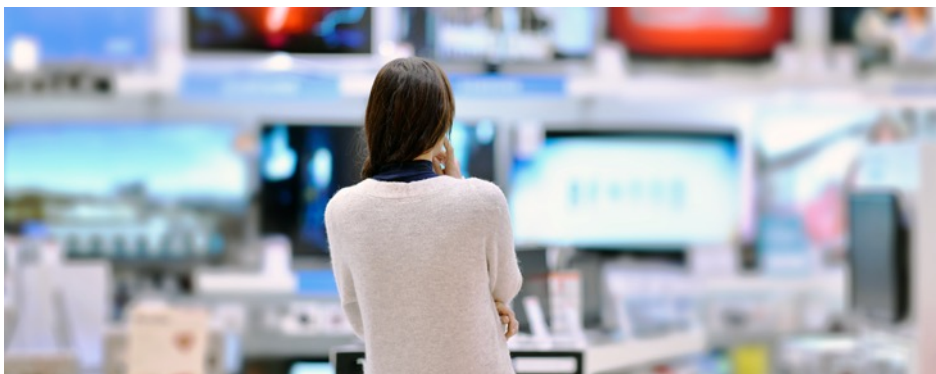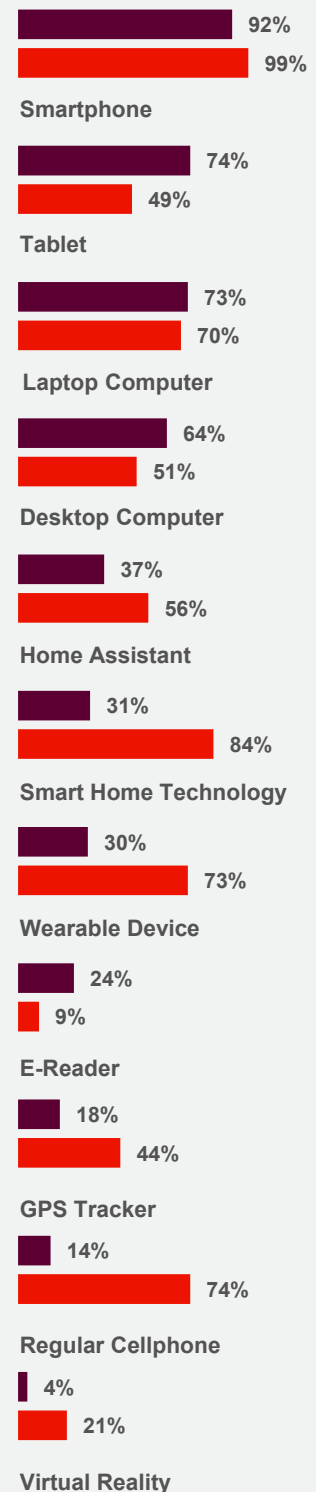
Asian Americans 40+ continued to spend on technology during COVID-19

Between September 2019 and September 2020, Asian Americans 40+ spent on average $1,300 on tech devices. Two in five (41%) bought headphones, three in ten (29%) acquired a Smart TV, one-quarter (26%) bought a new smartphone, and one in five (21%) got a laptop computer. Roughly one in five Asian Americans 40+ purchased newer technologies as well, like home assistants (19%), wearable devices (18%), and smart home technology (17%).

On average, Asian Americans are spending $91 each month on home internet, $136 on cellular phone service, $62 on cable/TV services, and $26 on streaming services, like Netflix and Hulu. One-third (34%) report

Percent who own and use tech devices daily
Among Asian Americans 40+

■ Own ■ Use Daily

Smartphone
Own: 92%
Use Daily: 99%

Tablet
Own: 74%
Use Daily: 49%

Laptop Computer
Own: 73%
Use Daily: 70%

Desktop Computer
Own: 64%
Use Daily: 51%

Home Assistant
Own: 37%
Use Daily: 56%

Smart Home Technology
Own: 31%
Use Daily: 84%

Wearable Device
Own: 30%
Use Daily: 73%

E-Reader
Own: 24%
Use Daily: 9%

GPS Tracker
Own: 18%
Use Daily: 44%

Regular Cellphone
Own: 14%
Use Daily: 74%

Virtual Reality
Own: 4%
Use Daily: 21%

technology-related expenses account for 10% or less of their monthly household expenses, although for all Asian Americans 40+ the average proportion of monthly spending related to technology is 17%.

Most Asian Americans 40+ have access to high-speed internet (85%). While access to high-speed internet does not seem to be a problem for the majority (54%), three-quarters (73%) say the cost of internet access is an issue. One-quarter (23%) say internet access cost is a major problem for them personally, and one-half (50%) say it's minor problem.

33%
One-third

of Asian Americans 40+ says cost is the biggest barrier to adopting new technology.

A majority of Asian Americans 40+ video chat more with friends and family now than before the start of the pandemic

Staying connected with others during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a priority for most people and it has not been any different for Asian Americans 40+. Nearly all (98%) say they rely on technology to stay connected and in touch with friends and family and three-quarters (77%) say they feel more positive about using technology to do this now than before the pandemic started. They connect daily primarily through email (69%), followed by texting (51%), social media (51%), and video chat (28%). Among those who stay connected with family and friends through video chat, two-thirds (64%) use their smartphone, more than one-third (36%) use a computer, and almost one-third (30%) use a tablet.

The way Asian Americans 40+ stay connected with friends and family has changed compared to how they connected before COVID-19. For example, a majority (57%) say they video chat more now than before, two in five (40%) have increased their texting habits as well as the number of telephone calls they make (39%), and one-third (33%) have increased their email exchange.
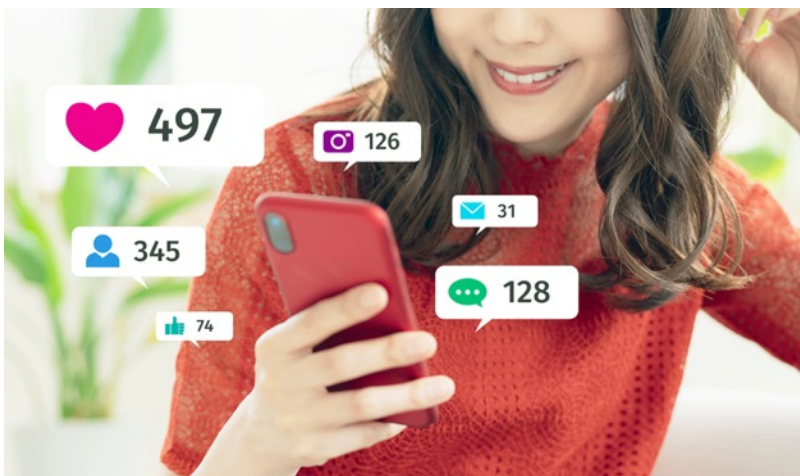
51%
One-half of Asian Americans 40+ stay connected with family and friends through social media daily and, of those, four in five or 79% do so on Facebook.

Streaming services are gaining viewership over network/cable

Seven in ten (72%) Asian Americans 40+ watch entertainment programming like movies, shows, and series through streaming services, either exclusively (12%), primarily (21%) or in combination with network/cable (38%). Netflix (69%), Amazon Prime (55%), Disney+ (34%) and Hulu (26%) are the most subscribed streaming channels among this population.

With the lack of in-person events during the pandemic, virtual events became more common. Almost two-thirds (62%) of Asian Americans 40+ say they are familiar with this type of event and one-third (33%) say they have now attended more live virtual events than before the pandemic.

50%
of Asian Americans 40+ have used their smartphone to stream entertainment programming like movies or videos in the past three months.
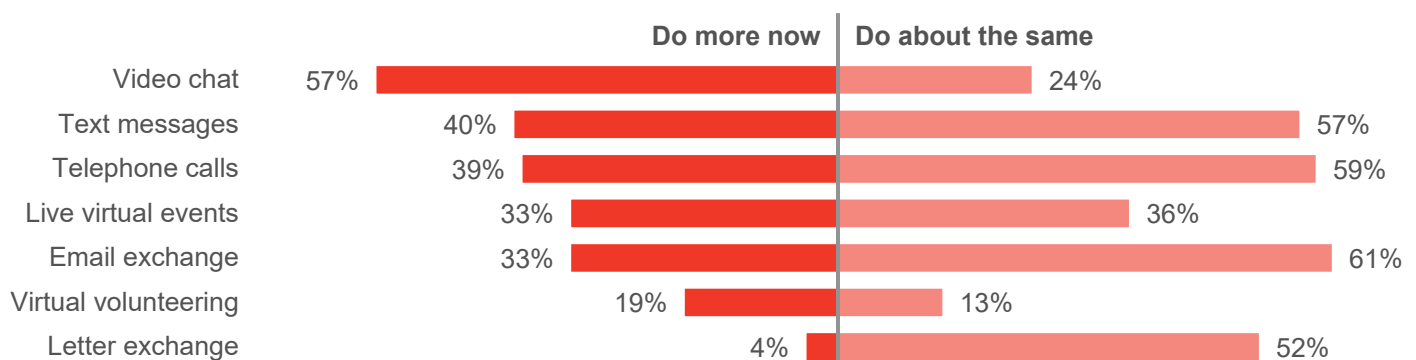
Asian Americans 40+ feel confident using established technologies and are warming up to newer ones.

Even though three-quarters (73%) of Asian Americans 40+ say they feel confident using technology, three in five (63%) say they wish they had a better grasp of technology, in general, to allow them to connect more frequently with others. Of course, the level of comfort varies by type of technology and, the newer it is, the less comfortable they feel about it. For example, it is not surprising nine in ten Asian Americans 40+ (92%) feel comfortable using the internet, as this has been widely used for decades or that they feel highly comfortable using devices most of them own, like computers (85%) or smartphones (81%).

Change in frequency of tech activities
Compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic

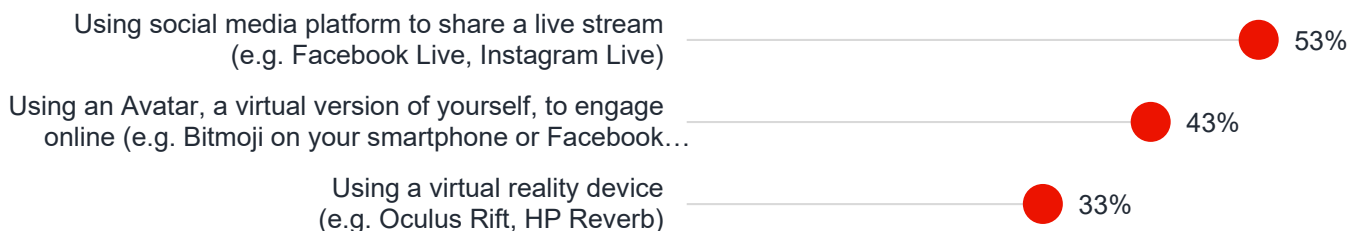| Activity	Do more now	Do about the same
Video chat	57%	24%
Text messages	40%	57%
Telephone calls	39%	59%
Live virtual events	33%	36%
Email exchange	33%	61%
Virtual volunteering	19%	13%
Letter exchange	4%	52%

It is a different story when it comes to newer technologies, like home assistants or even video chat, where less Asian Americans 40+ are likely to feel confident using this type of tech (26% and 36%, respectively).

The good news is the majority of Asian Americans 40+ (55%) do not think learning about technology is a burden nor have they had a bad experience using technology (57%). One-half (54%) would use technology more in their daily life if they knew how, with only one-third (36%) considering themselves tech savvy. While two-thirds (68%) describe themselves as a person who usually tries technology after it has been around for a while, more than one in five (22%) consider themselves early adopters.

32%
One-third

prefer to have a friend or family member show them how to use technology.

Percent who say they are familiar with...

Using social media platform to share a live stream
(e.g. Facebook Live, Instagram Live) 53%

Using an Avatar, a virtual version of yourself, to engage
online (e.g. Bitmoji on your smartphone or Facebook… 43%

Using a virtual reality device
(e.g. Oculus Rift, HP Reverb) 33%

Privacy concerns are not stopping most Asian Americans 40+ from using technology, even though many misunderstand online privacy policies

A majority of Asian Americans (52%) do not feel confident that what they do online on a wireless device, laptop, smartphone or tablet stays private, with only three in ten (30%) citing privacy concerns as one of the top two barriers to acquiring new technology. However, many lack knowledge on how online privacy policies work. For example, a majority (58%) do not know a website, even one with a privacy policy, can share their personal information without their permission or that a "third party" on a privacy policy agreement refers to an advertising agency (57%).

Asian Americans 40+ would exchange their personal information for:

51%
CASH
REWARD

46%
FREE PRODUCTS
AND SERVICES

Implications

While a majority (52%) of Asian Americans 40+ do not think their personal information stays private when using tech devices, privacy does not seem to be a major barrier to acquiring new technology. Once they embrace new technology, they become avid users. Cost, rather than privacy concerns, is what keeps many from not adopting new tech as twenty-eight percent (28%) say one-fifth or more of their monthly household expenses are tech-related. This leaves little room for acquiring new tech. Tech companies should keep this in mind when marketing tech products and services to Asian Americans 40+ and market low-cost alternatives which are more likely to be purchased.

Asian Americans 40+ are more likely to embrace new technologies once others have tried them, even though one in five (22%) already consider themselves early adopters. These early adopters can be instrumental in helping others experience and ultimately acquire new technology as most Asian Americans 40+ prefer to learn from people they know.