

Tech and Asian Americans 50+



Awareness, Interest, and
Use of Technology Among
Asian Americans 50+

While Asian Americans 50-plus continue to be engaged with technology and use it for different purposes, their use of tech devices is as varied as the devices themselves, owning and using everything from smartphones to smart home devices. Although many feel technology is not designed with all ages in mind, they also lack awareness of many devices that can help them extend their independence and safety. However, the desire to use technology is present and needs to be tapped.

Asian Americans 50+ use a myriad of tech devices for different purposes

Nearly all Asian Americans 50-plus own a tech device (98%) like a smartphone, computer, or tablet, and smartphones continue to be the most common device owned as four in five have one (85%, 2021; 87%, 2020) and continue to use it daily (96%, 2021; 94%, 2020). Ownership of other devices in 2021 also remains similar as seven in ten continue to own a laptop computer (70%, 2021; 73%, 2020), and more than one-half still own a tablet (58%, 2021; 55% 2020). Laptops and tablets are more commonly used weekly, and at least for laptops, their weekly use significantly increased in 2021 from 2020 (87%, 2021; 77%, 2020). About four in five Asian Americans 50-plus prefer to use a computer to surf the internet (78%), but they also use their smartphone device (63%) or tablet (61%) for this purpose. They gravitate to the smartphone to send texts and messages to family and friends (88%) and search for directions or check traffic (73%), not surprising since it's a tech device they likely always have on them. Tablets, on the other hand, are preferred by two in five (39%) for watching how-to tutorials to learn something new compared to three in ten (31%) who do so through their smartphone. Seven in ten (70%) use their computers to make purchases, and two-thirds (65%) use this device for online banking, while two in five do so on their smartphones (40% and 46%, respectively).

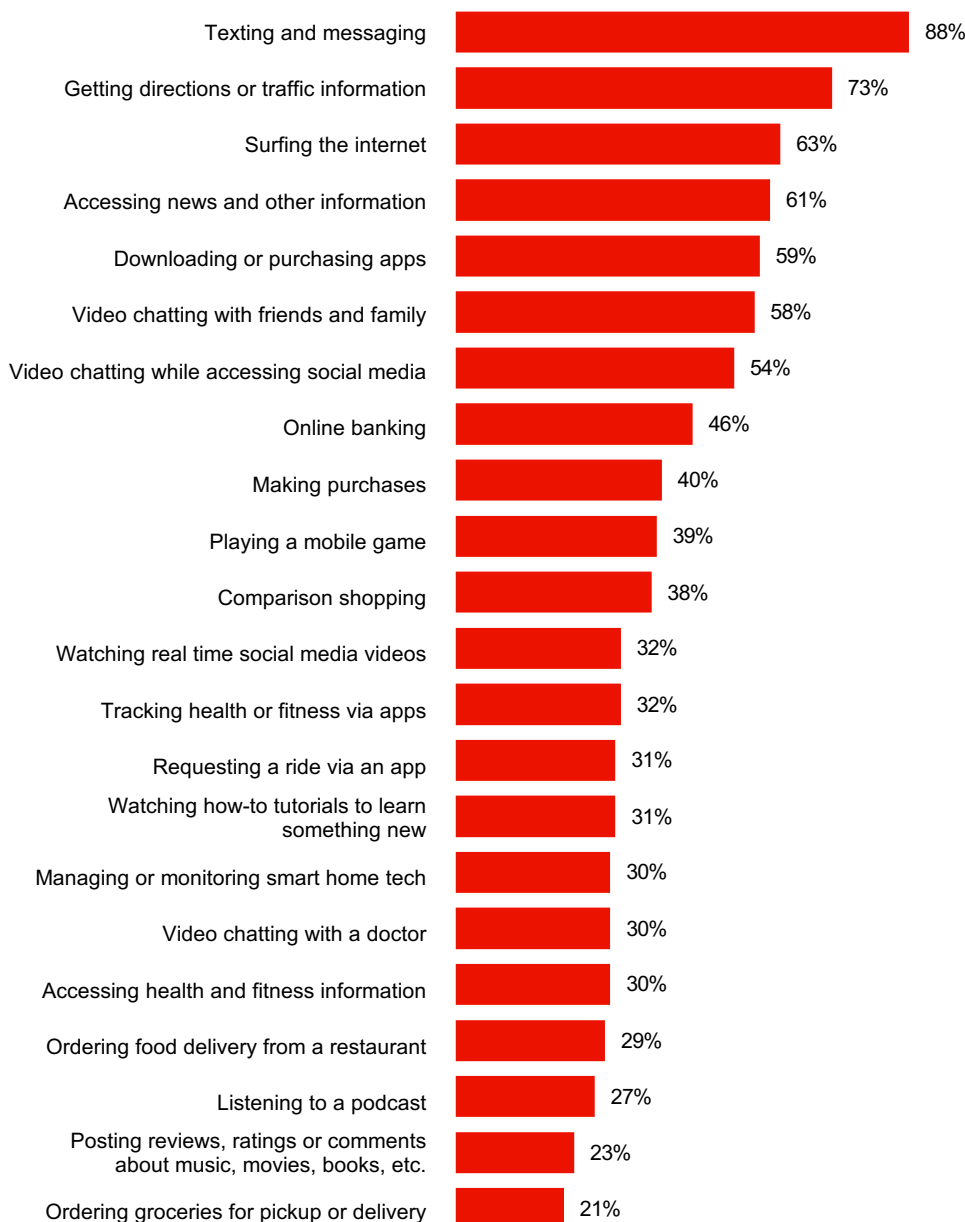
Almost two-thirds (64%) of Asian Americans 50+ purchased a tech device in a 12-month period, spending on average \$774



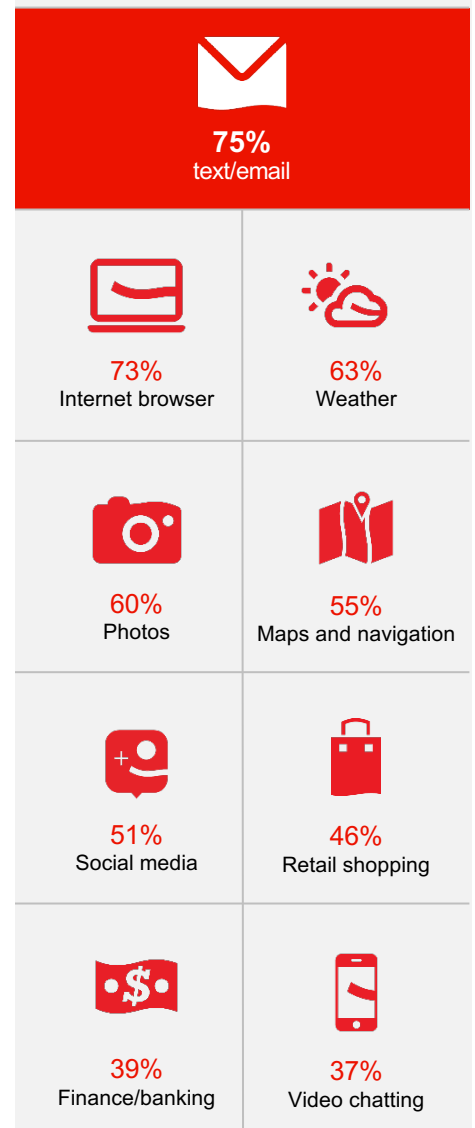
Asian Americans 50+ are using their smartphones to replace some in-person tasks

Almost two-thirds (64%) of Asian Americans 50-plus feel comfortable using a smartphone and they conduct numerous tasks on this device, from texting (88%) and getting directions and traffic information (73%), to surfing the Internet (63%) and getting the news (61%), to downloading apps (59%) and video chatting with friends and family (58%) or accessing social media (54%). Asian Americans 50-plus are also using the smartphone for tasks that were once more commonly done in-person. From banking (46%) and shopping (40%) and even video chatting with a doctor or other medical professional (30%) as well as tracking their health or fitness via an app or website (32%), Asian Americans 50-plus have demonstrated they embrace new uses of this device.

What Asian Americans 50+ do on their Smartphones



Most used weekly mobile apps among Asian Americans 50+:



Different motivators drive Asian Americans 50+ to use technology

Asian Americans 50-plus have embraced newer tech like wearables (27%), home assistants (26%), and smart home devices (23%), and use all three devices daily (80%, 61%, and 83% respectively). However, not many Asian Americans 50-plus invested in newer technologies in the past year, as less than one in ten bought a home assistant (5%), or smart home device (7%), while one in nine purchased a wearable device (11%).

Enabled by the devices most purchased in 2021, smartphones (33%), smartphone accessories (21%), laptops (17%), and Smart TVs (15%), Asian Americans 50-plus are motivated to use technology to meet their needs and wants. For example, among those who would like to use technology if they knew how to, two-thirds (66%) would like to use social media to connect with others, an activity commonly done on a smartphone. Almost three in five (58%) are motivated to learn technology for entertainment purposes like streaming shows and listening to podcasts, activities a smart TV and Bluetooth headphones can facilitate. One-half mention the desire to use technology to manage responsibilities like using a calendar (52%), a task once again suited for smartphones, or helping them stay healthy by tracking their nutrition (51%), an opportunity to encourage the use of wearables. About two in five (43%) would like to use technology to learn a new skill, over one-third (36%) would use it to pursue a passion, and three in ten (31%) would use it to keep their independence, this last one an activity that could be realized with the use of a home assistant.

One in five (19%) used technology to pursue a passion. Watching videos or searching for “how-to videos” are the top activities.



New technology can help older adults maintain their independence

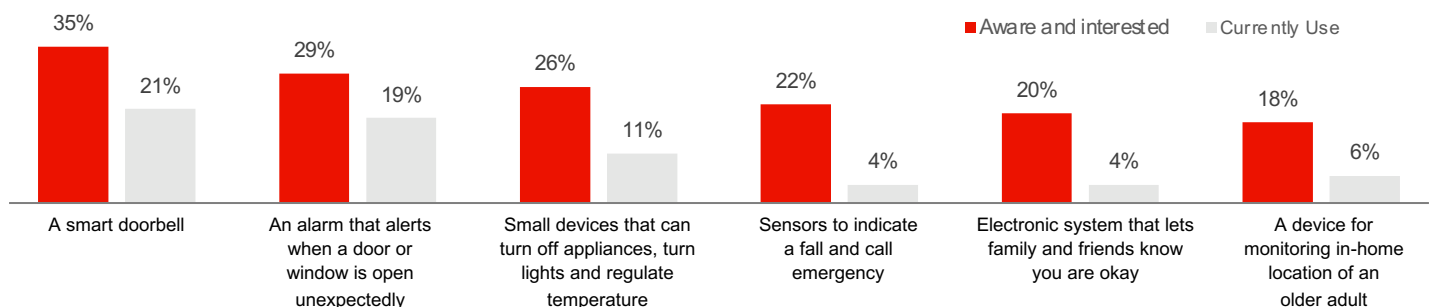
While two in five (40%) feel technology is not designed for all ages in mind, one-quarter of Asian Americans 50-plus are also interested in cutting-edge new technology, like clothing that responds to body temperature and keeps a person warm or cool (27%), in-home devices like robotic vacuums or lawnmowers (24%), and even driverless cars (24%). One in five (21%) are interested in smart toilets that can provide diagnostic testing for health conditions such as cancer or diabetes. While these devices can have a positive impact helping older adults continue independent living, few Asian Americans 50-plus know they exist, and even fewer currently use them.

Although seven in ten (69%) say they usually try new tech once it's been around for a while, Asian Americans 50-plus are aware and interested in newer technology. More than one-third (35%) of Asian Americans 50-plus know about and are interested in a smart doorbell, a device that enables a person to see who is at their front door, and three in ten (29%) are interested in an alarm that could tell when a door or window has been opened or closed when not expected. These smart home devices can give them peace of mind and adding security to their homes, especially when an older adult lives alone.

One-third (32%) of Asian Americans 50+ mention age-specific reasons why they think new tech design falls short



Awareness and Use of Smart Home Technology by Asian Americans 50+

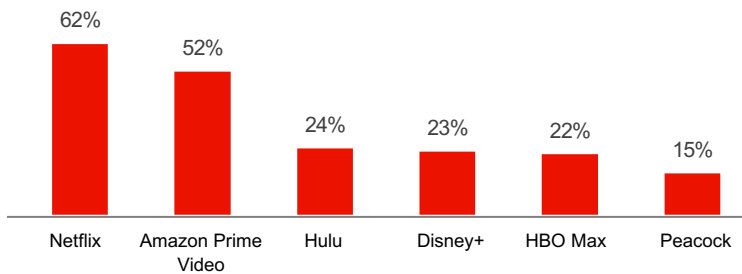


One-half of Asian Americans 50+ now stream programming

The quality of streaming entertainment is closely related to having access to high-speed internet which four in five (80%) Asian Americans 50-plus have, even when one-half (50%) say its cost is a problem to them. With almost three in five (56%) Asian Americans 50-plus owning a smart TV, it is not surprising to see that one-half (50%) now stream entertainment programming like videos, shows, and movies. Of those who stream programming, one-quarter does so daily (24%) or a few times a week (26%). On average, they subscribe to three streaming services, although the majority subscribe to two services, after which subscriptions decrease sharply. Asian Americans 50-plus most often subscribe to Netflix (62%) and Amazon Prime Video (52%), followed by Hulu (24%), Disney + (23%), or HBO Max (22%).

Two in five Asian Americans 50-plus say they have trouble finding what to watch and where (39%), or believe they need to subscribe to multiple streaming services to have enough content from which to choose (44%). Regardless, almost one-half (46%) think they pay too much for these services. Yet, one-quarter say they either have been baited to buy a new streaming service for a single show or original content (23%) or have signed up for a free trial subscription and were charged because they forgot to unsubscribe (23%).

Asian Americans 50+ Streaming Subscriptions



In the past three months, **about one-third of Asian Americans 50+** have streamed video content on their tablets (37%) or computers (32%), while one in five has done so on their smartphones (20%).

Implications

A high percentage of Asian Americans 50-plus believe new technology is not designed with all ages in mind, and this has several implications. Tech devices designed with the 50-plus population in mind are already in the market, but the majority of Asian Americans 50-plus are simply not aware of them, even when they feel motivated to use technology to solve the very issues these existing devices address. Addressing this awareness gap is key to increasing the adoption of new technology among this cohort.

Many Asian Americans 50-plus have the desire to learn new skills, connect with others, and even track their health and safety using technology, but without a clear understanding of which devices would help them do these tasks or how to use them. Usage rates of newer devices by those who own them demonstrate the biggest barrier is giving it a try, as once Asian Americans 50-plus own a device, they will use it often.

Asian Americans 50-plus are performing tasks on their smartphones they previously were more likely to do in person, like online banking and shopping, demonstrating their willingness to embrace new ways of using a device with which they are already very familiar. This opens the possibility for other tasks enhanced by technology which could help improve their well-being like telemedicine, tracking their health and safety, ordering groceries for pick up or delivery, and even exploring a passion by learning a new skill. While some use a computer for these tasks, they should be encouraged to use the more readily available smartphone since it is owned by most. As long as Asian Americans 50-plus see the benefits of using technology, the likelihood of adopting tech increases, making it very important to cater to their needs and wants.

As with newer technology, Asian Americans 50-plus have also embraced streaming programming on smart TVs, smartphones, and tablets. Perhaps the sharp decrease after the second subscription to a streaming service by Asian Americans 50-plus serves as an example of how the cost of these services and high-speed internet is more than a problem to this cohort. Making high-speed internet more affordable for older adults could result in an increase in membership to streaming channels, which would help meet the need for a variety of entertainment content.



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2022 Tech Trends and the 50-Plus: Top 10 Biggest Trends. Washington, DC: AARP Research, January 2022.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00493.013>