

TECHNOLOGY AND THE 50-PLUS: Understanding Tech Trends among Racially and Ethnically Diverse Adults



A 2024 Tech Study
reveals tech trends
among African
Americans, Asian
Americans, and
Hispanic Americans

Adults 50-plus have embraced many common tech devices and activities, from smartphones and Bluetooth headsets to online shopping and banking. However, there is still room to grow in the adoption of health-related apps to help them manage and track their health and well-being. A closer look at racially/ethnically diverse 50-plus populations reveals some differences in tech spend and newer tech adoption but, overall, show similar trends in ownership, use, and comfort with technology.

**Three in five (62%)
adults 50-plus** think it
is important a new
technology purchase
works seamlessly with
tech they already own.

AFRICAN AMERICANS

African Americans 50-plus purchased three tech devices in 2023, and, on average, own six devices.

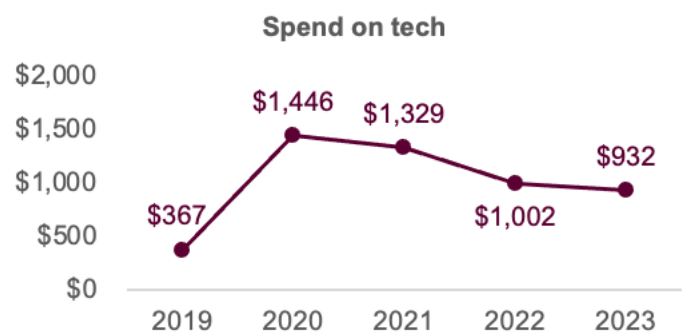
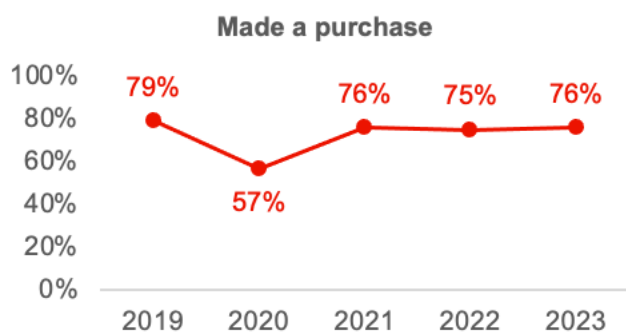
Although two in five African Americans 50-plus feel tech today is being designed with their age in mind (44%), two-thirds usually wait to try new technology after it has been around for a while (67%). Furthermore, one-third feel the design of new tech falls short because devices are still hard to use (36%), perhaps explaining why almost three in five feel some hesitation when considering the purchase of new devices (57%).



Nonetheless, while the percentage of African Americans 50-plus who made a purchase last year remains the same from a year prior, on average, in 2023 African Americans spent \$932 on three tech devices, down from \$1,002 from the year prior. Tech expenditure has been trending down among this group since peak spending in 2020 (\$1,446).

Percent who made a tech purchase and average spend on tech

Among African Americans ages 50+, 2019–2023



African Americans, on average, own six tech devices:



87%
Smartphones



80%
Smart TVs



60%
Tablets



59%
Laptops



53%
Bluetooth
headsets



59%
Digital home
device

More than two-thirds (68%) own at least one digital home device:



30%
Home assistant



21%
Gaming system



26%
Smart home tech

In 2023, one in three African Americans 50-plus purchased



36%

Smartphones



33%

Smart TVs

While one in four purchased:



28%

Smartphone accessories



25%

Bluetooth headsets



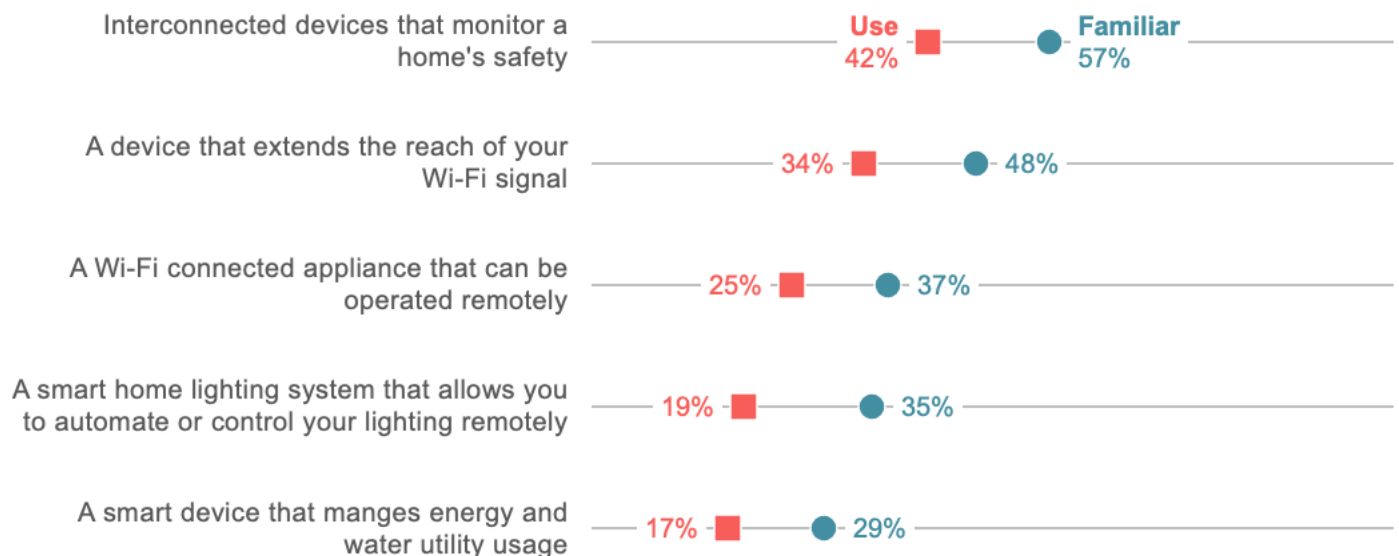
Owning a smartphone allows African Americans 50-plus to do a plethora of activities on the go.

On average, African Americans 50-plus have engaged in 11 different online activities in the past three months. More than two-thirds have shopped online (68%) and sent emails, texts, or instant messages (67%) in the past three months via a website or mobile app, and almost one-half have played mobile games (49%), listened to music (48%), or engaged in online banking (47%). To a lesser extent, over one-third have consumed sports content (35%), while one in five has ordered food for delivery (22%).

A smartphone is likely the gateway to smart home technology, as at least three in 10 African Americans 50-plus are already familiar with this tech. One-quarter or more already use technology, such as Wi-Fi connected appliances, Wi-Fi extenders, and home safety monitoring devices.

Percent familiar with and who use smart home technology

Among African Americans ages 50+, by type of device



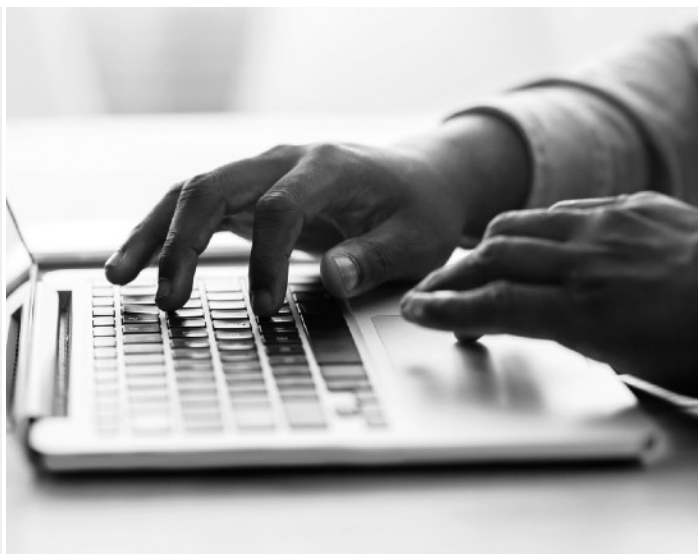


Almost four in five (77%) African Americans 50-plus have heard of generative AI , but less than one in 10 (5%) have used it.

African Americans have yet to take full advantage of the ways technology can positively affect their health and well-being.

Mobile apps can also enable adults 50-plus to manage or track their health, although not many African Americans 50-plus use such apps to improve their health and well-being (12%), even when a majority believe technology enables them to lead a healthy life (52%). For example, three in 10 have used medical apps (30%), while one in five have used health or fitness tracking apps (19%). Furthermore, only one in 10 have used mental health and wellness (10%) or telemedicine apps, such as Teladoc or MDLive (10%), which could help them keep track of their health and well-being, especially because one-half of African Americans 50-plus report having two or more chronic or serious medical conditions (50%).

Three in five (64%) African Americans 50-plus say they have the necessary digital skills to take full advantage of being online.



ASIAN AMERICANS

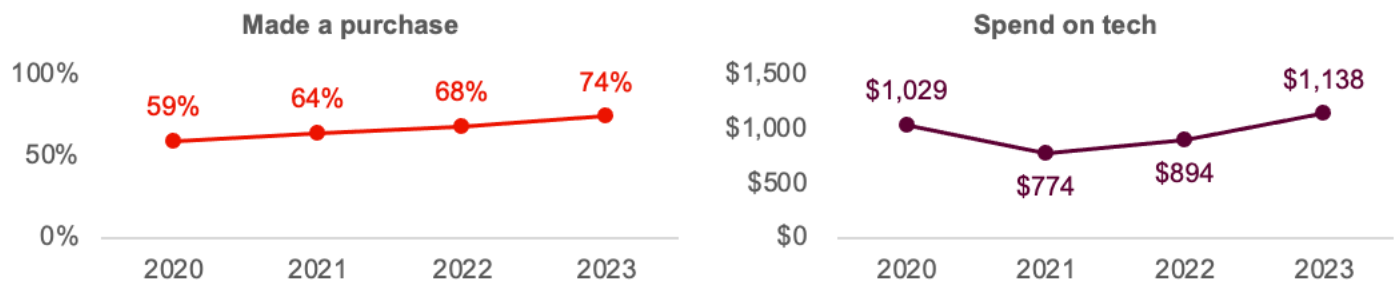
Average spend on tech among Asian Americans 50-plus jumped significantly in 2023 from a year prior, surpassing peak spend during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On average, Asian Americans 50-plus own eight tech devices, most commonly smartphones (91%), laptops (83%), tablets (72%), smart TVs (65%), and Bluetooth headsets (58%). Like other people 50-plus, two-thirds also own at least one digital home device (67%), including home assistants (30%), smart home tech (27%), and home audio equipment (27%).



In 2023, Asian Americans 50-plus spent an average of \$1,138 on tech devices, up from \$894 in 2022 and \$774 in 2021. In fact, in 2023 Asian Americans reached tech spend levels only seen back in 2020 (\$1,029), purchasing, on average, three tech devices in 2023.

Percent who made a tech purchase and average spend on tech Among Asian Americans ages 50+, 2020–2023



Specifically, in 2023 Asian Americans 50-plus purchased smartphones (36%), smartphone accessories (28%), Bluetooth headsets (26%), and laptops (26%), and about one-half (49%) say the reason for their purchase was to replace an old or broken device. However, Asian Americans 50-plus, in some instances, are less sure about purchasing new technology, with only two in five saying tech is being designed with their age in mind (45%) and one-third saying design of new tech falls short because of its complexity (35%). Two-thirds are hesitant to purchase new tech (67%) citing concerns around ease of use and relative value as reasons. This concern might explain why most Asian Americans 50-plus also tend to wait to see how new tech works before jumping into acquiring a new tech device (77%), although one in seven does consider themselves to be an early adopter (15%).

Asian Americans 50-plus are embracing smart home tech as between roughly one-quarter and one-half (46%) own a device that extends the reach of a Wi-Fi signal



41%

interconnected devices that monitor a home's safety



28%

a smart device that manages energy and water utility usage



21%

a remote lighting smart home system



26%

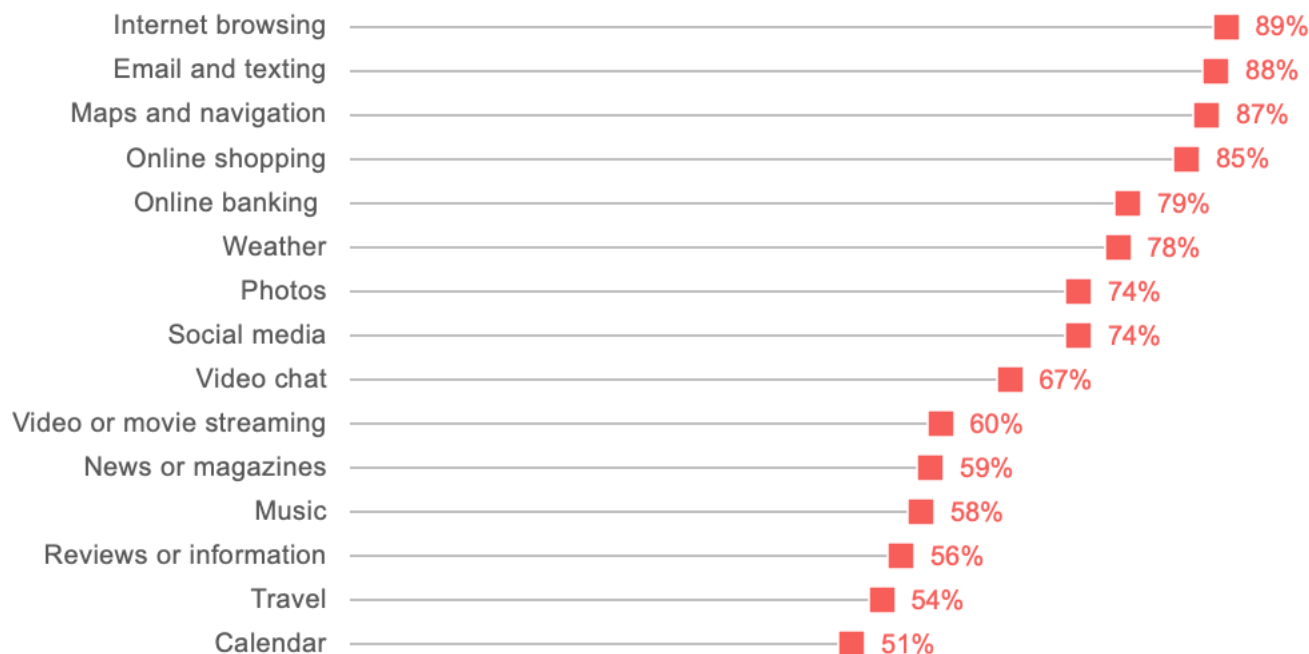
or a Wi-Fi connected appliance which can be operated remotely

Digital skills allow Asian Americans 50-plus to perform most tasks online with comfort.

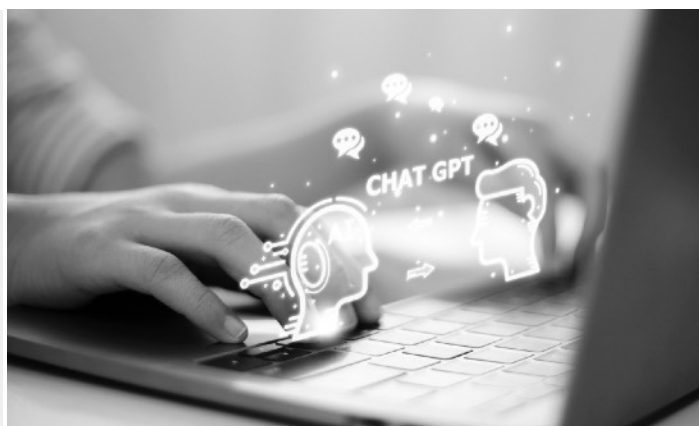
Seven in 10 Asian Americans 50-plus think they have the digital skills to take full advantage of being online (69%), which seems to be the case, as they engaged, on average, in 16 different activities through a website or a mobile phone in the last three months.

Percent doing the following activities on a website or mobile app

Among Asian Americans ages 50+, in the past three months



A majority of Asian Americans have heard of generative AI (86%), with one in seven already using it (17%).



While Asian Americans 50-plus seem comfortable using apps and performing activities online, this same level of activity does not translate into health-related apps as few use telemedicine (14%) or mental health and wellness (8%) apps, in line with less than one in 10 who say they currently use tech to improve their health and well-being (9%). However, medical apps may be an exception as two in five do use GoodRx, Life Alert, or other health records apps (45%). Nevertheless, even when three in five have a chronic medical condition (62%), and two in five have two or more such conditions (38%), only one in six currently use technology to manage their chronic ailments (18%). Nevertheless, a majority of Asian Americans 50-plus still believe tech enables them to lead a healthy life (57%).

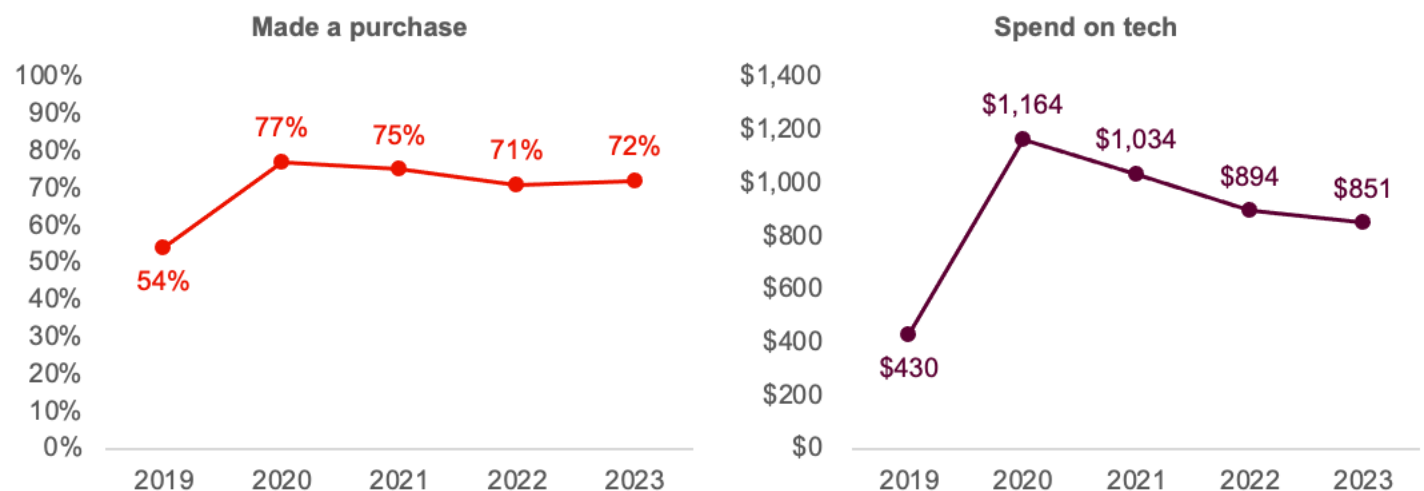
HISPANIC/ LATINO AMERICANS

Tech spend among Hispanic Americans 50-plus remained stable in 2023 compared to 2022.

Roughly two-thirds of Hispanic Americans 50-plus, on average, try a new tech device once it has been on the market for a while (64%), Hispanic Americans own six tech devices, with most owning a smartphone (87%) or a smart TV (80%). Three in five have a laptop (62%) or a tablet (59%), followed by one-half who own a Bluetooth headset (51%). Like other adults 50-plus, Hispanic Americans also own at least one digital home device (64%), such as a home assistant (35%), smart home tech (24%), or a gaming system (24%). Tech spend has come down from a peak high in 2020, when Hispanic Americans 50-plus spent an average of \$1,164 in a 12-month period to \$851 in 2023, remaining somewhat stable from 2022 (\$894); they averaged two tech purchases in 2023.



Percent who made a tech purchase and average spend on tech
Among Hispanic Americans ages 50+, 2019–2023



In 2023, Hispanic Americans 50-plus purchased:

31%
Smartphones

27%
Smart TVs

22%
Bluetooth headsets

9%
Wearable

Over one-half of Hispanic Americans 50-plus believe tech today is not designed with their age in mind (54%), and three in ten say designs fall short because the devices are still hard to use (30%). Moreover, three in five feel some hesitation when considering the purchase of new tech (61%), with ease of use being the main reason behind their hesitation. Hispanic Americans 50-plus have different preferences on how they like to learn to use new tech, but a plurality prefers to do so through a family member or friend (28%).

Hispanic Americans 50-plus have embraced some smart home tech more than other cohorts.



34%

interconnected devices that monitor a home's safety



20%

a smart device that manages energy and water utility usage



21%

or a Wi-Fi connected appliance which can be operated remotely



32%

use a device to extend the reach of their Wi-Fi



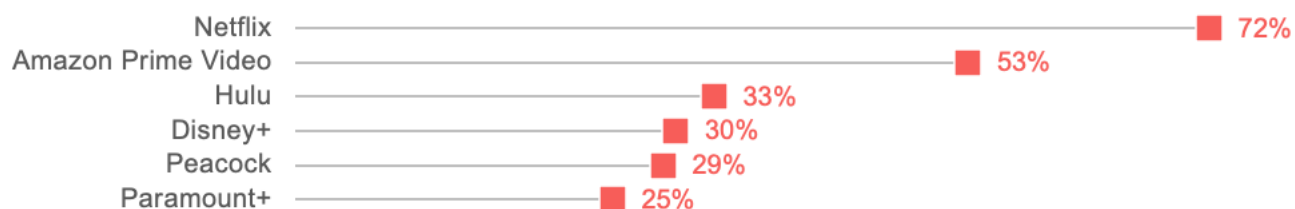
Hispanic Americans 50-plus feel just as comfortable online as their peers.

Two-thirds of Hispanic Americans believe they have the skills necessary to take full advantage of being online (66%), and they get online for different reasons. For example, four in five say they use tech to stay connected with others (79%), with seven in ten having sent an email, text, or instant message in the past three months via a website or mobile app (70%), and just as many have spent time on social media (71%). They also use tech to make tasks such as retail shopping (67%) and online banking (54%) more convenient, although they are less enthused about food delivery, as only one in five has done so to date (19%). Hispanic Americans 50-plus also get online for entertainment purposes, as one-half has streamed video or a movie (51%) or listened to a music streaming app (49%) in the last three months; in fact, almost seven in 10 pay a fee to subscribe to an entertainment streaming service (68%), while almost one-half pay to access music online (46%).

Percent using the following paid streaming services

Among Hispanic Americans ages 50+

Average number of services: 4





Seven in 10 Hispanic Americans have heard of generative AI (73%), but only one in 10 have used it (10%).

About one-half of Hispanic Americans 50-plus believe tech enables them to live a healthy life (49%), but few are taking advantage of health and wellness apps to support their health. Even when three in five Hispanic Americans 50-plus suffer from a chronic or serious medical condition (63%), only one in eight use technology to manage their chronic health issues (12%). One in five use medical apps (22%), one in six use a health or fitness tracking app (17%), and even fewer use apps for telemedicine (9%) or mental health and wellness (6%).

Summary

Whether using mobile apps for entertainment purposes or shopping on the go, African Americans 50-plus are comfortable when they go online. In general, they feel tech can help them with their health and well-being. However, few use health-related apps, even when they could benefit from technology to manage chronic illnesses or simply track their health day to day. Like other 50-plus people, African Americans tend to adopt new technology when it has been on the market for a while. More and more are using smart home tech, while most have yet to try generative AI.

Like other people their age, the tech spend for Asian Americans 50-plus was significant during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and decreased the following two years. However, Asian Americans 50-plus increased their technology spend in 2023, surpassing this peak. This cohort is confident in their digital skills online, performing an average of 16 different tasks online in a three-month period, most notably sending text messages, shopping, and banking. Furthermore, one in six (15%) Asian Americans 50-plus have used generative AI already. Adopting health-related apps is lagging among this group, even when roughly three in five (57%) believe tech enables them to lead a healthy life.

Hispanic Americans 50-plus, like their counterparts, feel comfortable doing similar tasks on their mobile devices, and four in five (79%) like to stay connected online with family and friends. While their tech spend remained stable in 2023, it has been decreasing steadily since their peak spend in 2020, with an average of two purchases in 2023. Nonetheless, Hispanic Americans 50-plus keep spending on other areas of technology, such as subscribing to an average of four entertainment streaming services. Similar to others 50 or older, Hispanic Americans prefer new technology to be on the market for some time before trying it, and they want a family member or friend show them how to use new tech instead of figuring it out themselves.



For more information on the survey and methodology please contact:

Brittne Kakulla, bkakulla@aarp.org; **For media inquiries:** contact media@aarp.org

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