![Adobe]

Adobe 2020 Content Management Report

Why digital needs to get physical.

Just the basics

With 2020's sudden shift, everyone has had to rethink the ways they work and operate. Still, businesses will always need to be thoughtful about the balance between the use of digital technology and creating meaningful in-store retail experiences.

"When we talk about digital transformation, there's been a big focus on online channels, while in-store hasn't changed much."

Loni Stark
Senior Director of Strategy & Product Marketing, Adobe

"Over the next couple of years, we're going to see massive transformations, even bringing mobile and mobile apps to the shopping experience. So marketers will need to think about how to connect online experiences to the foot traffic that's coming into their physical locations."

This is just one of many valuable insights we uncovered for the *Adobe 2020 Content Management Report.*

To provide a more complete view of what consumers and marketers are facing when it comes to content, we've merged the results of our *Consumer Content Survey* and our *Brand Content Survey* for the first time to create one comprehensive report.

The report answers some of your biggest questions around the following:

- How people consume content

- Which channels have the most influence on brand engagement and purchase decisions

- What the biggest content challenges are for consumers and marketers

- Where consumers and marketers stand on personalization

- How shoppable content can increase conversions

- What the role of emerging media is in immersive experiences

The consumer story

Consumers are hungry for content—marketers have to serve it up right

Consumers can't seem to get their fill of content. They're consuming it across every channel and using all kinds of devices, from laptops and phones to gaming consoles and smart speakers. They're even looking for content, like price information and promotions, while in stores.

That means marketers have to provide customer experiences that merge the digital and physical. And more importantly, get those experiences right. Forty-three percent of respondents say they'll stop engaging with brand content as soon as they have a frustrating experience, like ads that follow them repeatedly or content that feels overly promotional. And while they want content that shows that brands understand who they are and what they want, and they're willing to share some personal information to get it, they'll abandon a brand if the experience feels too creepy.

41%
of consumers use smartphones or other connected devices while in a store.
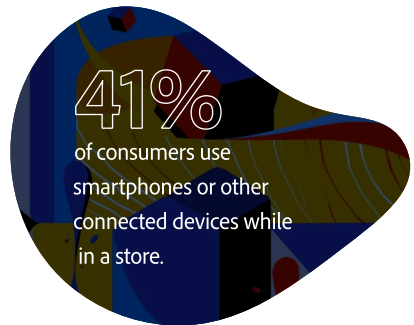
A snapshot of the consumers we surveyed

We gathered feedback from 5,860 adult consumers (54 percent female and 46 percent male) in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, and France. All of them owned a mobile device.

Generational breakout

| 5% | 30% | 22% | 37% | 6% |
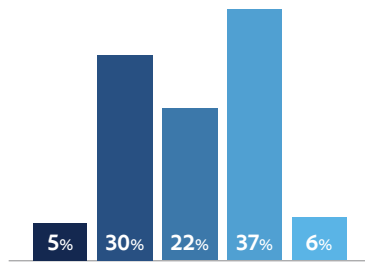
- ■ Gen Z: Born 1996 and later
- ■ Millennials: Born 1977 to 1995
- ■ Gen X: Born 1965 to 1976
- ■ Baby Boomers: Born 1946 to 1964
- ■ Traditionalists: Born 1945 or earlier

Every kind of content, on every kind of device

While most consumers use smartphones and laptop or desktop computers to access content, imagine the landscape in five years. The list will be topped by emerging devices like set-top boxes and smart speakers, with countries like the United States and UK leading the pack in adoption. We'll continue to see more connected devices—not only in personal use, but in physical experiences that brands are delivering in-store.

Device ownership and brand interaction

Smartphone
87%
52%

Laptop/desktop computer
86%
57%

Tablet
55%
22%

Gaming console
34%
7%

Smart speaker/home assistants
28%
6%

Set-top box/ TV streaming devices
27%
5%

Wearable device
20%
4%

Digital display
4%

■ Devices consumers own
■ How consumers interact with brands
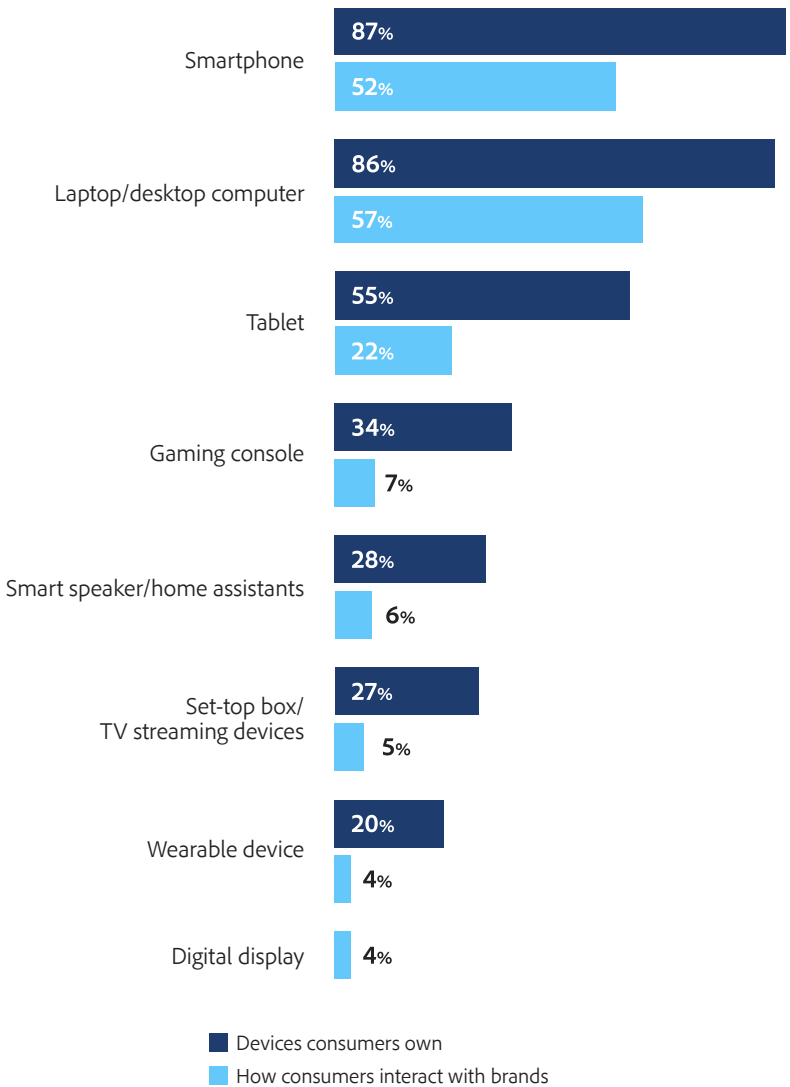
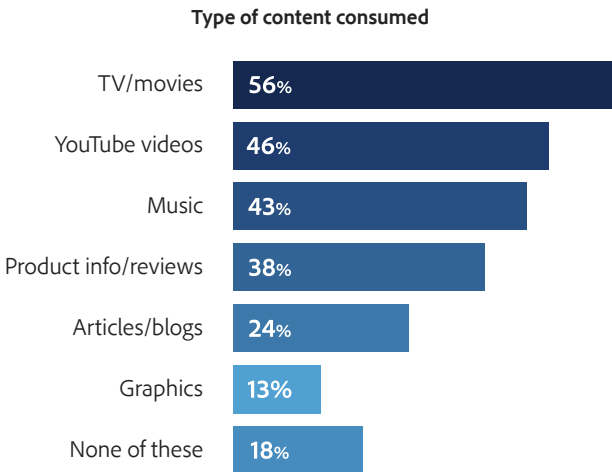**Consumers have the time—marketers need the content**

High-quality, engaging content is essential for connecting with consumers, especially since they're spending so much time with it. Our survey showed consumers spend a median five hours a day interacting with brand content across their devices. And 17 percent spend 12 hours or more per day, making it critical that you keep their attention with relevant content that's waiting for them wherever and whenever they need it.

47%

of consumers are more likely to stay on a brand's content if video is included. For Gen Z it's 67%.
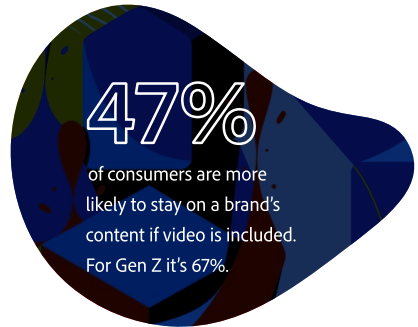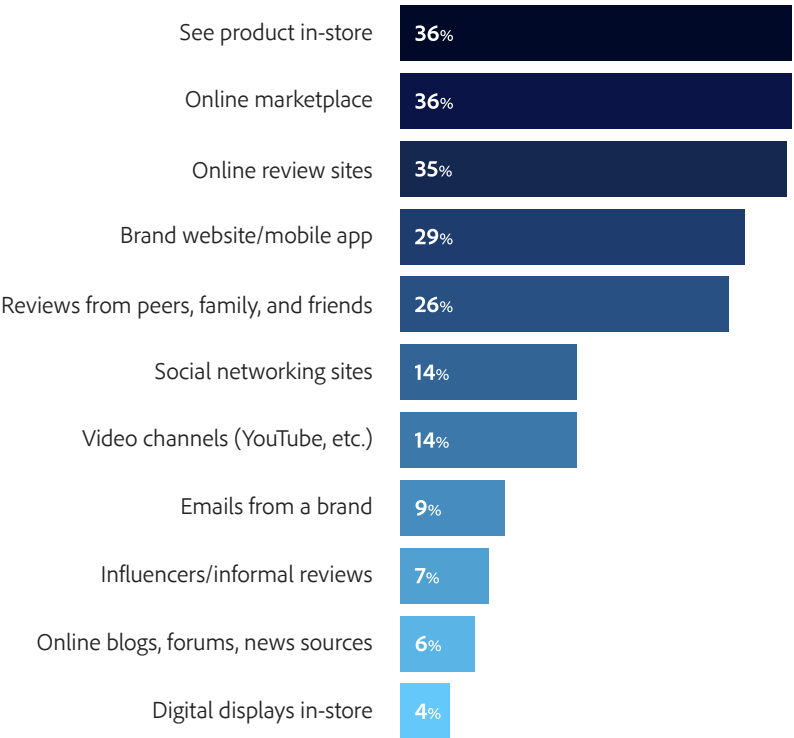
Movies, videos, and music are the top types of content being consumed, with Gen Z consuming more video than other generations.

Type of content consumed

Type	Percent
TV/movies	56%
YouTube videos	46%
Music	43%
Product info/reviews	38%
Articles/blogs	24%
Graphics	13%
None of these	18%

Two worlds, one experience

The digital and physical worlds are merging into one customer experience. While most shoppers prefer to see and hold a product before they purchase, many are also using online channels like review sites, marketplaces, and brand websites or mobile apps to research before they purchase. According to our *Consumer Content Survey,* almost half of consumers use their mobile devices to do research while inside a store. Options like buying online and picking up in-store give consumers the best of both worlds, which is why they've become so popular.

How consumers research purchases

See product in-store	**36**%
Online marketplace	**36**%
Online review sites	**35**%
Brand website/mobile app	**29**%
Reviews from peers, family, and friends	**26**%
Social networking sites	**14**%
Video channels (YouTube, etc.)	**14**%
Emails from a brand	**9**%
Influencers/informal reviews	**7**%
Online blogs, forums, news sources	**6**%
Digital displays in-store	**4**%

The study also revealed the increasing impact that social media influencers have on purchases, especially among Gen Z consumers. This younger generation, more than their older counterparts, tends to rely more on video reviews and social media than people in their personal circles.
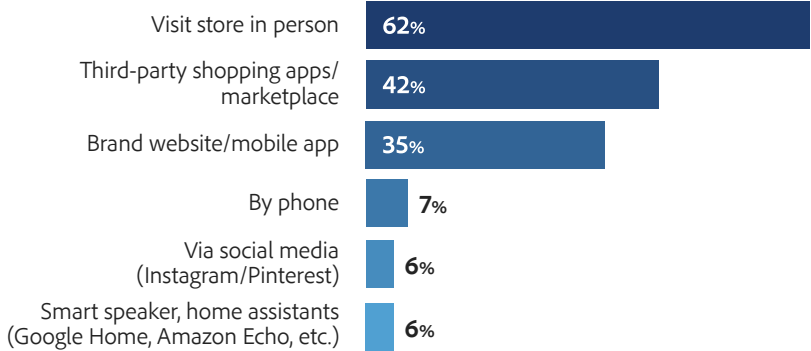
How consumers buy: in-store, online, and more

When it comes to researching and purchasing items, consumers have made it loud and clear that the physical store is still a huge part of the customer experience. Two-thirds prefer to purchase in-store, while 42 percent buy through third-party shopping apps or marketplaces like Amazon and eBay.

Top reasons consumers use a device in-store

65% compare prices

37% find promotions

35% read customer reviews

How consumers are most likely to purchase

Visit store in person	**62%**
Third-party shopping apps/ marketplace	**42%**
Brand website/mobile app	**35%**
By phone	**7%**
Via social media (Instagram/Pinterest)	**6%**
Smart speaker, home assistants (Google Home, Amazon Echo, etc.)	**6%**

"I've seen a growing number of retailers, financial institutions, and even transportation organizations look at the in-person experience and how can it be enhanced by digital experiences. I think that's going to be a really important area, and it's also why we've been investigating augmented reality, virtual reality, and 3D. Because those are types of content that can meld the physical and digital worlds."

Loni Stark
Senior Director of Strategy and Product Marketing, Adobe

Germany shows an especially strong use of online marketplaces for research and purchase. While in Australia, in-store experiences and advice of friends and family have the most influence.

Consumer reviews—for better or worse

When it comes to reporting on their buying experiences, most consumers choose to do so through a brand's website. If the experience is positive, 24 percent will share using online review sites, 17 percent through social networking sites, and 15 percent will visit a store in person. However, if the experience is negative, 21 percent of shoppers will post to online review sites or send an email to the brand, while 17 percent will visit the store in person.
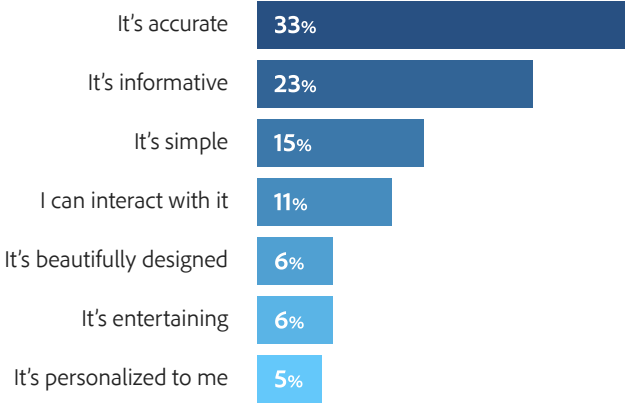
Younger shoppers are more likely than older consumers to share their experiences with brands, using online reviews or social media when they're

positive, and a variety of channels when they're negative. When older consumers share their experiences, they're more likely to use a brand's website or review site for positive feedback, and phone or email when it's negative. And about one-third of all consumers don't post reviews at all.

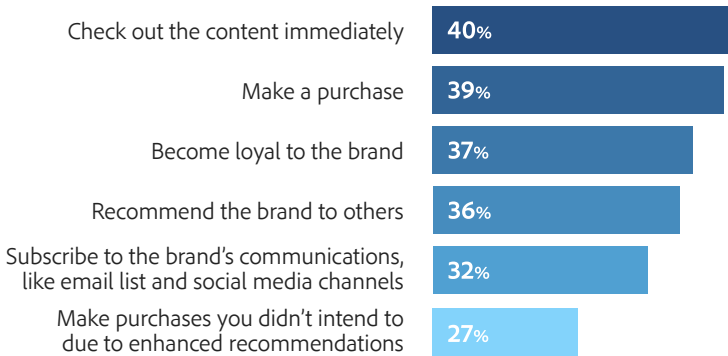**Preferences, personalization, and positive experiences**

While surprise and delight are important components of the customer experience, consumers above all want information that's accurate, informative, and simple.

Which content characteristic is most important to you personally?

|	
It's accurate	**33**%
It's informative	**23**%
It's simple	**15**%
I can interact with it	**11**%
It's beautifully designed	**6**%
It's entertaining	**6**%
It's personalized to me	**5**%

One-quarter of respondents also said they want content tailored to their personal preferences, or based on previous purchases or buying behavior. According to our research, consumers who receive relevant content are more likely to view the content immediately, make a purchase, or recommend the brand.

**If a brand personalizes their content, customers
are more likely to do the following:**

Check out the content immediately	**40**%
Make a purchase	**39**%
Become loyal to the brand	**37**%
Recommend the brand to others	**36**%
Subscribe to the brand's communications, like email list and social media channels	**32**%
Make purchases you didn't intend to due to enhanced recommendations	**27**%

On the other hand, they're frustrated by challenges like spam email, pop-up ads, and content that follows them everywhere. The classic example is when a customer looks up a product and is then inundated with ads for that product on social and digital channels. That's why it's so important for marketers to get personalization and targeting right.
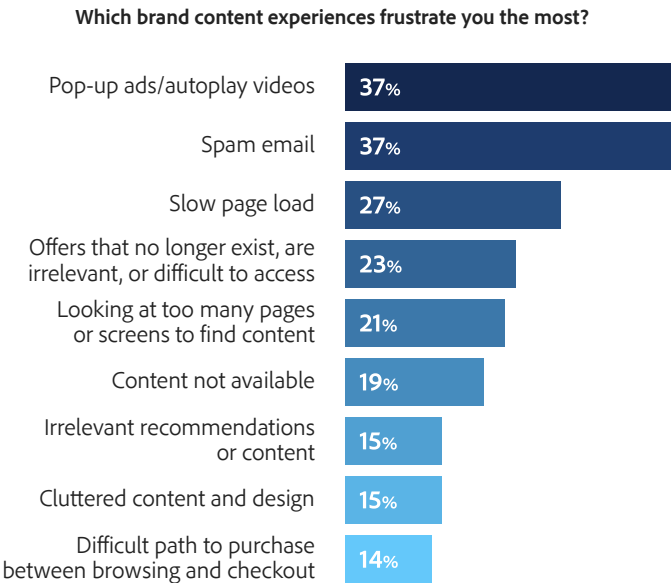
60%
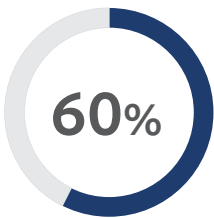
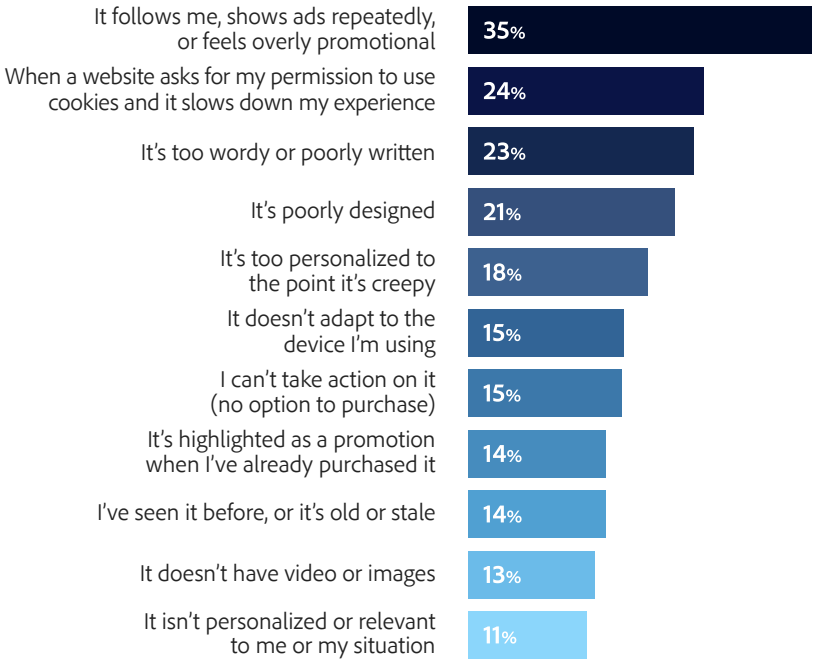60% say an annoying experience would prevent them from making a purchase.

82%
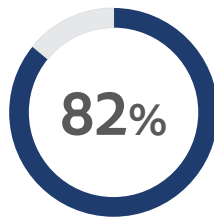
82% would stop purchasing from a brand if it crossed the line with a creepy personalized experience.

"Personalization, when done really well, isn't noticed, which may be why people rate personalization as having moderate to low importance," explained Lori Reiser, principal consultant at Advanis. Yet when brands deliver the right content at the right time—and not too much of it— consumers are more likely to have a positive experience.

Which brand content experiences frustrate you the most?

Experience	Percentage
Pop-up ads/autoplay videos	37%
Spam email	37%
Slow page load	27%
Offers that no longer exist, are irrelevant, or difficult to access	23%
Looking at too many pages or screens to find content	21%
Content not available	19%
Irrelevant recommendations or content	15%
Cluttered content and design	15%
Difficult path to purchase between browsing and checkout	14%

Which aspects of brand content are most annoying?

Aspect	Percentage
It follows me, shows ads repeatedly, or feels overly promotional	35%
When a website asks for my permission to use cookies and it slows down my experience	24%
It's too wordy or poorly written	23%
It's poorly designed	21%
It's too personalized to the point it's creepy	18%
It doesn't adapt to the device I'm using	15%
I can't take action on it (no option to purchase)	15%
It's highlighted as a promotion when I've already purchased it	14%
I've seen it before, or it's old or stale	14%
It doesn't have video or images	13%
It isn't personalized or relevant to me or my situation	11%

Give something to get something

As we've seen in past surveys, consumers are willing to share some personal information to get more relevant experiences, though German and French consumers are less likely to do so. Most consumers expect brands to keep their data safe.

Brands have to be open about asking for customer data—then be prepared to give something in return. If a clothing retailer asks about fabric preferences but they don't have that kind on their e-commerce site, the move can backfire. And it could possibly be a reason someone "fires" the brand, which consumers say they'll do for a variety of reasons. Some of these include bad customer experiences, poor service, or deceptive marketing practices. Consumers would also fire a brand if they adopt caused-based marketing campaigns or support causes that conflict with their values.

59%

said they trust that the brands they engage with are respecting their privacy and have the best of intentions with the data they gather.

As brands try to connect with people around having a higher purpose, many find it challenging to understand their own core values and what they want to project. As Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg discussed in his 2020 Silicon Slopes Tech Summit keynote, your company's core values already exist. Rather than write down platitudes like "be honest," or how you wish to operate, simply be clear about what you stand for, and understand that values should be something that people can legitimately disagree with.

The marketer story

More content, more channels, more challenges

According to our *Brand Content Survey*, some of the biggest content challenges marketers face include the following:

- Keeping up with the rising demand for content

- Making it easier for customers to buy as they consume content

- Using emerging content to merge online and offline experiences

While 37 percent of marketers consider their content best in class for performance, many struggle with a lack of resources and technology to keep up with the insatiable demand for great content everywhere and anytime. In addition to the sheer volume of content, brands are figuring out how to make their content more "shoppable." For example, they might include links or "buy" buttons in content like video to help consumers easily purchase based on content they just consumed.

Finally, in the ongoing struggle to merge content and commerce, marketers are exploring emerging technologies like AR, VR, and 3D. By getting a better understanding of these technologies, marketers can determine how they affect brand engagement and purchase decisions.

A snapshot of the marketers we surveyed

We gathered feedback from 2,005 marketers, equally divided across five countries: the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, and France. These are the industries represented:
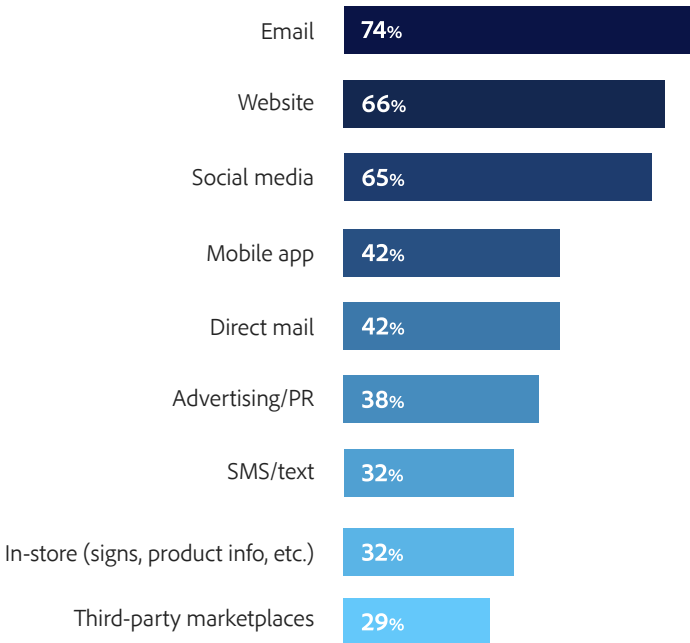
- Manufacturing (17%)

- Technology (B2B and B2C) (15%)

- Retail and consumer packaged goods (14%)

- Financial services and insurance (10%)

- Media and entertainment (8%)

- Healthcare/life science (8%)

- Professional services (8%)

- Travel and hospitality (4%)

- Automotive (4%)

- Education (4%)

- Government/military (3%)

- Advertising/consulting (2%)

- Other (5%)

Channeling consistency

From email and websites to mobile apps and social media, reaching out to consumers on their preferred channels is now table stakes. Email is the number one way brands connect with consumers, but it's important to remember that the biggest source of frustration for consumers is spam, so marketers need to focus on sending relevant messages to reduce unsubscribes.

How brands engage with customers

U.S. and Australian marketers report the highest usage of each
channel to reach consumers.

Channel	Percentage
Email	**74**%
Website	**66**%
Social media	**65**%
Mobile app	**42**%
Direct mail	**42**%
Advertising/PR	**38**%
SMS/text	**32**%
In-store (signs, product info, etc.)	**32**%
Third-party marketplaces	**29**%

To create a meaningful conversation with customers and to build lasting, valuable relationships, brands have to connect the dots between every channel—ensuring customers get the same experience everywhere they go. To accomplish this, most organizations have a branded content strategy that is targeted and optimized to different channels and devices. But many marketers indicate that their strategies are still being refined.

Another way to make stronger connections is with consistent content across websites. According to the survey, only 32 percent of marketers said their mobile and desktop websites had the same content, while 53 percent said their sites are similar with certain differences. Fifteen percent said their mobile content is completely different from what visitors see on a laptop or desktop.

90%
of companies have a branded content strategy.

**36%** say theirs could improve.
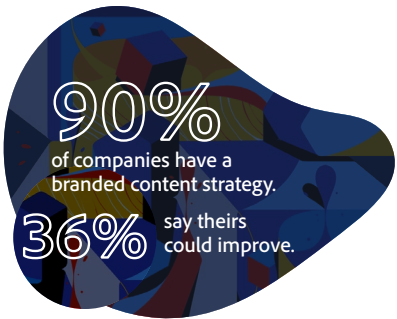
Finding the true measure of good content

Measuring the ROI of content marketing is a challenge for many brands, but getting it right is important. Not only for budget and strategy reasons, but because it can also help marketers more effectively reuse content— especially when targeting similar segments or profiles.
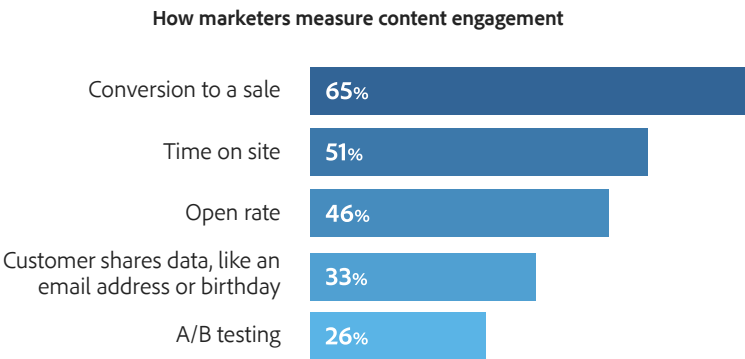
This year, social media tops the list as the channel with the highest-perceived ROI, followed by web and email.

Top three channels with highest perceived ROI

Channel	
Social media	**48**%
Web	**47**%
Email	**45**%
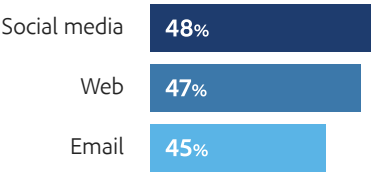
When we asked how brands measure engagement, two-thirds said it's through sales conversions. And while conversions are one metric for success, it's important to remember that conversions are only part of the story. The right metric depends on the objectives and goal for the content.
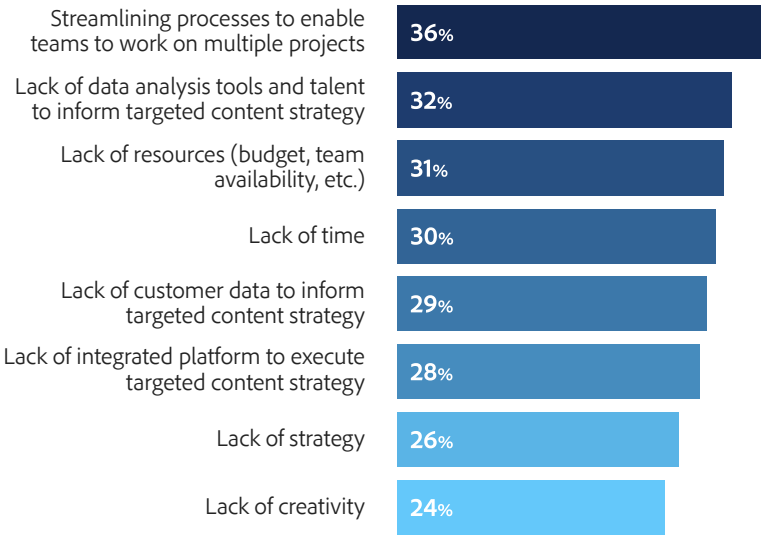
About half of our respondents track time spent on their site as well as open rate, and one-third say they're successful when a customer shares data, like an email address or birthday. This shows that marketers understand the value of knowing their customers.

How marketers measure content engagement

Metric	Percentage
Conversion to a sale	65%
Time on site	51%
Open rate	46%
Customer shares data, like an email address or birthday	33%
A/B testing	26%

Faster, better, stronger content creation

Getting timely, relevant, and engaging content in front of consumers as fast they demand it is an ongoing challenge for marketers. Some of the biggest barriers include lack of resources, lack of time, and the inability to streamline processes for better team collaboration.
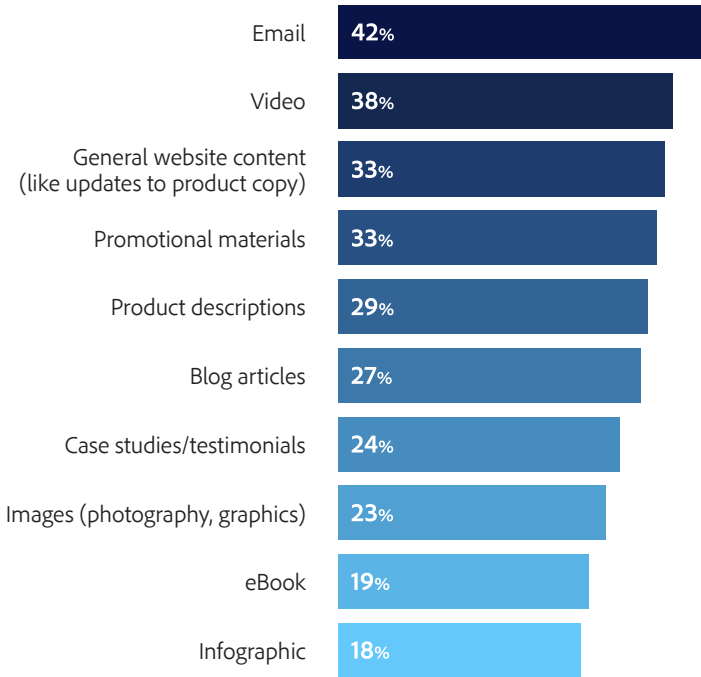
Barriers to creating effective content

Barrier	Percentage
Streamlining processes to enable teams to work on multiple projects	36%
Lack of data analysis tools and talent to inform targeted content strategy	32%
Lack of resources (budget, team availability, etc.)	31%
Lack of time	30%
Lack of customer data to inform targeted content strategy	29%
Lack of integrated platform to execute targeted content strategy	28%
Lack of strategy	26%
Lack of creativity	24%

"We talk a lot about content but we're also seeing companies roll out website features or interactions to create a more app-like experience," said Stark. "And those are becoming higher velocity, too. So it's not just content, but capabilities that brands and marketers are expected to quickly implement."
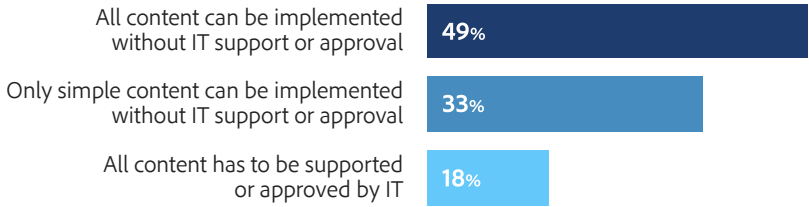
Marketers typically create 10 different types of content across channels. Consistent with the rest of our survey data, organizations are prioritizing email, video, promotional materials, and website content this year.

Content pieces by priority

Content	Percentage
Email	42%
Video	38%
General website content (like updates to product copy)	33%
Promotional materials	33%
Product descriptions	29%
Blog articles	27%
Case studies/testimonials	24%
Images (photography, graphics)	23%
eBook	19%
Infographic	18%

One major obstacle that keeps teams from completing updates faster is having to rely on IT. By empowering marketing teams to manage and publish their own content through templates and other tools, organizations can keep content updates flowing while allowing IT to work on more strategic projects.

Content team reliance on IT

All content can be implemented without IT support or approval
49%

Only simple content can be implemented without IT support or approval
33%

All content has to be supported or approved by IT
18%

In addition, 5 percent of marketers say it takes days and requires a ticket to IT to make changes, 49 percent say updating their website could be made easier, and 46 percent spend only a few minutes completing updates.
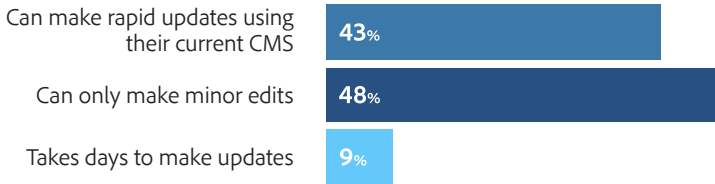
Data plays an important role in delivering content when and how consumers want it—including content updates. Seventy-one percent of marketers say the frequency of their content updates are informed by data. Yet that frequency varies.

The U.S. is considerably ahead in this aspect, as 76 percent of U.S. marketers say they use data to inform content. Only 63 percent of UK marketers say the same, followed by 61 percent of French, and 59 percent each of German and Australian marketers.

56%
of marketers update websites hourly/daily.

40%
of marketers update websites weekly/monthly.
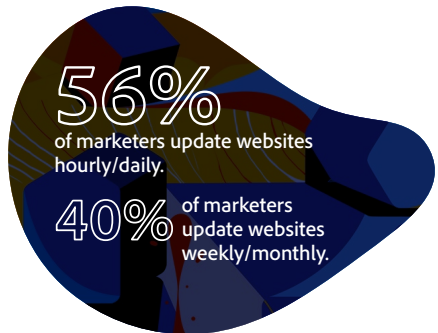
Regardless of how often brands update their sites, 9 out of 10 marketers say they'd like to issue more updates to help them better engage their customers. Yet many face barriers with their content management systems (CMS).
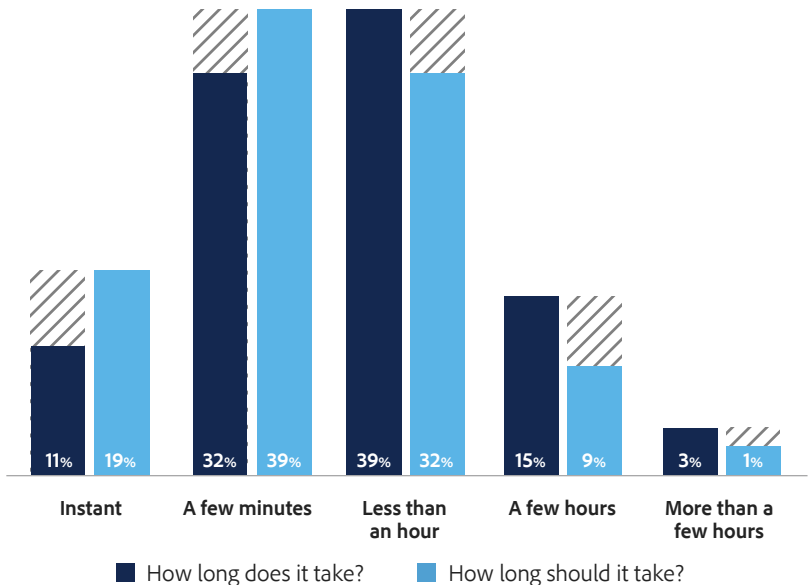
Ease of updates

Can make rapid updates using their current CMS
43%

Can only make minor edits
48%

Takes days to make updates
9%

So many assets, so little time

Marketers don't have time to manually search through thousands of assets for the perfect image, video, or other piece of content. So we asked how long they think it should take to find assets in their system, compared to how long it really takes. For the most part, actual times did meet expectations, although their expectations were fairly low, and it seems likely that marketers will increasingly want instant access.

Tracking assets in a CMS

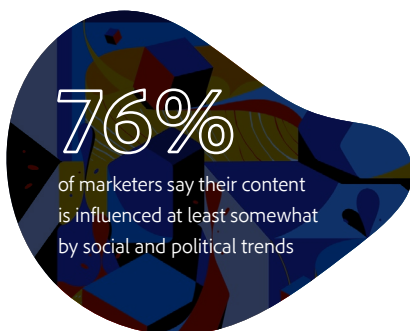|	Instant	A few minutes	Less than an hour	A few hours	More than a few hours
How long does it take?	11%	32%	39%	15%	3%
How long should it take?	19%	39%	32%	9%	1%

■ How long does it take?   ■ How long should it take?

Tracking licensing requirements and approvals is a challenge as well. Yet when asked whether they have an automated system to keep content licenses up to date, only about a third said they do. Both of these areas are critical for increasing how fast marketers can deliver content. When designers have instant access to assets and marketers can quickly see a history of approvals and digital rights, content can get delivered in record time.
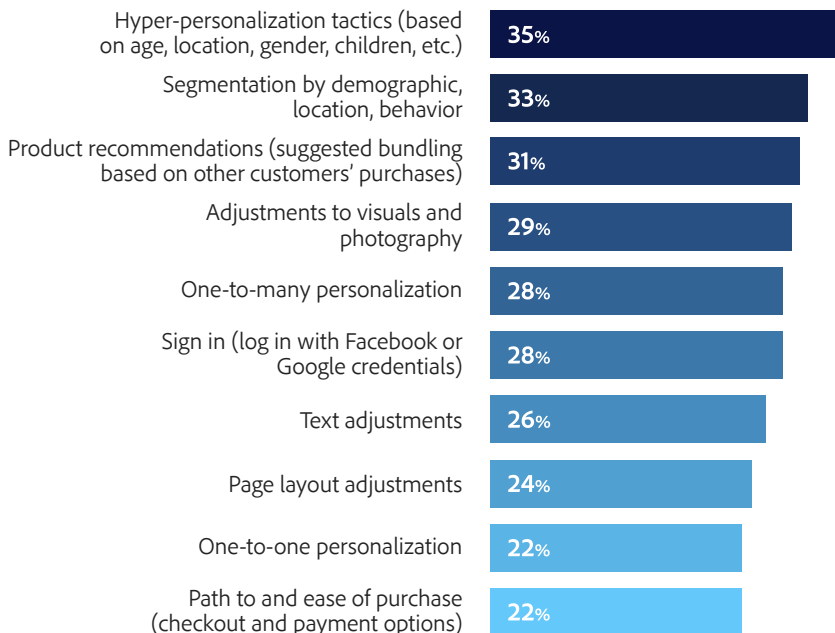
Staying relevant and getting personal

Brands that get closer to their customers will not only earn their attention, but their business. By using the data you collect about their behaviors and customer preferences, you can provide more meaningful, personalized experiences across the entire journey. And not just

76%
of marketers say their content is influenced at least somewhat by social and political trends

online, but with in-person interactions and on the phone. Add contextual data around location, weather, or even news and social trends and your content becomes even more relevant. The coronavirus pandemic has made this all too clear. No wonder 76 percent of marketers say their content is influenced at least somewhat by social and political trends.

According to our research, marketers are seeing the most impact from segmentation by demographics/location/behavior and hyper-personalization tactics like providing content in context—including age, location, and financial status.
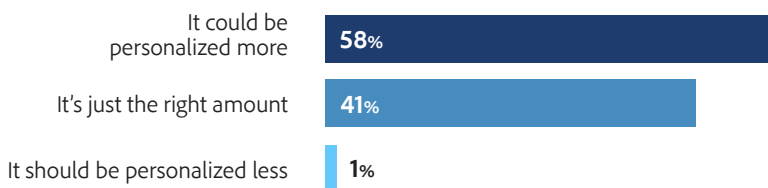
High-impact personalization practices

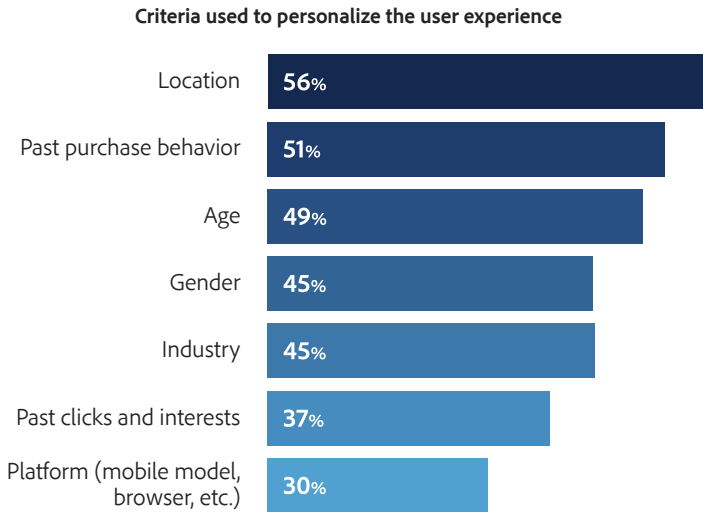| Practice	Percentage
Hyper-personalization tactics (based on age, location, gender, children, etc.)	35%
Segmentation by demographic, location, behavior	33%
Product recommendations (suggested bundling based on other customers' purchases)	31%
Adjustments to visuals and photography	29%
One-to-many personalization	28%
Sign in (log in with Facebook or Google credentials)	28%
Text adjustments	26%
Page layout adjustments	24%
One-to-one personalization	22%
Path to and ease of purchase (checkout and payment options)	22%

Digging a little deeper, we asked marketers about how they personalize their websites. We found that 47 percent use data to target their web content—but 34 percent say they have limited data access, an 10 percent note they have lots of data but not enough resources to use it effectively.

How do you feel about how much you're personalizing website content?

	Percentage
It could be personalized more	58%
It's just the right amount	41%
It should be personalized less	1%

When asked what marketers are personalizing, the top responses were images (53 percent), text descriptions (52 percent), and frequency of emails (43 percent).

Finally, we asked participants about the criteria they use to personalize a user's experience. We found that not only do they use demographic and location information, but behavioral data such as past purchase behaviors and interests, as well.

Criteria used to personalize the user experience

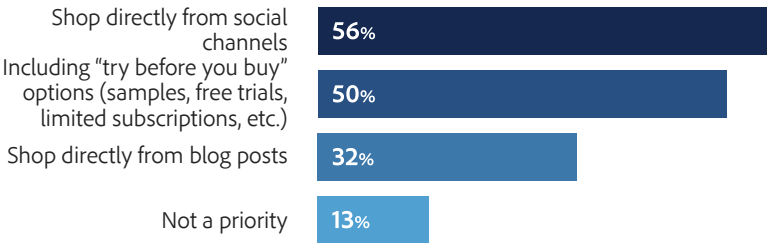| Criteria	Percentage
Location	56%
Past purchase behavior	51%
Age	49%
Gender	45%
Industry	45%
Past clicks and interests	37%
Platform (mobile model, browser, etc.)	30%

Personalization is still a challenge for most marketers. But with the right foundation, and technologies like AI and machine learning, you can serve up the most relevant content based on what matters most to consumers.
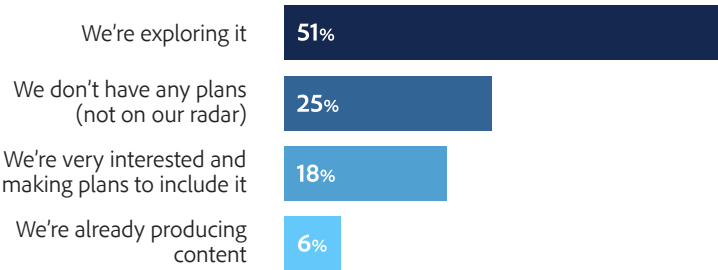
Exploring new dimensions in content

Customer expectations are higher than ever, so brands need to explore new forms of content to keep them engaged and excited. Consumers expect more video, more images, and more interactivity, like shoppable content. Rather than thinking of content as simply something to consume, brands need to explore ways to make it easier to buy directly from their content.

How are you making content more shoppable?

Shop directly from social channels	**56%**
Including "try before you buy" options (samples, free trials, limited subscriptions, etc.)	**50%**
Shop directly from blog posts	**32%**
Not a priority	**13%**

Furthermore, as brands continue to look for ways to bring digital and physical shopping experiences together, emerging technologies like 3D, VR, and AR are becoming important alternatives to consider. Not surprisingly, more than half of organizations are still exploring these technologies. Yet those that embrace them will gain the edge.

What are your organization's plans for emerging media and content types?

We're exploring it	**51%**
We don't have any plans (not on our radar)	**25%**
We're very interested and making plans to include it	**18%**
We're already producing content	**6%**

"Brands are definitely looking at 3D, even to extract 2D product spots because consumers want more product imagery to help them make better decisions," says Stark. "I do think that AR and VR will take hold—VR sooner than AR—because of the whole digital transformation of the in-store experience. So it's important to start exploring these technologies now."

Make extraordinary your new normal

It's clear that consumers want highly relevant experiences. Their purchase behavior is complex, and quality content in the right place at the right time can have a real impact. Yet marketers still struggle to create this kind of content at scale. But with modern content management systems, asset management systems, commerce systems, and personalization engines working together, you can deliver quality, relevant content when and where consumers expect it.

"In terms of being creative, and delivering a differentiated customer experience, the golden age of technologies to enable those experiences is now here," explained Stark.

Technology might be the enabler, but as the survey shows, only when you understand your customer preferences and support their values can you deliver truly extraordinary experiences.

Adobe can help

Adobe Experience Manager Sites is a cloud-native, hybrid CMS that provides marketers and IT out-of-the-box capabilities to quickly create content with reusable components, layouts, and templates. With rich APIs and Adobe Sensei AI technology, our digital foundation is extensible, and automatically adapts experiences for different channels and screens based on customer and content performance data.

Adobe Experience Manager Assets is a digital asset management system within Adobe Experience Manager that helps you create, manage, and deliver images, video, and other content to any screen or device in a governed way. Adobe Commerce Cloud is a flexible, scalable platform that helps organizations manage and personalize the commerce experience across the entire customer journey.

Together with Adobe Analytics and Adobe Target, powered by Adobe Sensei AI and machine learning, these solutions form a strong digital foundation for delivering personalized experiences at scale.

Learn how we can help you start delivering the highly personal experiences your customers expect.

Get details

Sources

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