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Fast Facts:

International Survey Results on the Use of Digital Purchasing Tools by Age

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We surveyed the degree to which, and the span of, digital technologies that are used throughout the decision-making process across four nations – China, India, Ireland, and the USA. In total, 216 respondents completed the survey in China, 105 in India, 100 in Ireland, and 216 in the USA.

We broke the respondents down by age categories to determine whether or not there are age-based differences in digital tool usage. Of those in China, 28.7% (62) were between the ages of 21-35, and 71.3% (154) between 36-55 years old. Of those in India, 18.1% (19) were between the ages of 21-35, and 74.3% (78) between 36-55 years old, and 7.6% (8) 56 years old and older. Of those in Ireland, 11% (11) were between the ages of 21-35, 66% (66) between 36-55 years old, and 23% (23) 56 years old and older. Of those in the USA, 8.3% (18) were between the ages of 21-35, 53.2% (116) between 36-55 years old, and 37.6% (82) were 56 years old or older.

We divided respondents into three commonly used generational categories.

Millennials = 21-35 years old (n = 110 across three countries)

Gen X = 36-55 years old (n = 414 across three countries)

Baby Boomers = 56+ years old (n = 113 across three countries)

For each of five, critical purchasing tasks, we asked respondents to rate the frequency with which they used various digital tools to assist them with the decision-making process. The rating scale ranged from 0 to 5, where 0 = do not use and 5 = use very frequently. The tables below summarize results. For the sake of brevity, we report the percent of respondents from each country who use each tool somewhat frequently, frequently, and very frequently.

In the tables below, you will find digital tool usage by task by age category.

AGE—Results

How often do you use the tools below to KEEP UP WITH MARKET AND TECHNOLOGY TRENDS?*

Across Four Countries

	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Social Media	52.8%	47.6%	21.3%
Online groups	47.3%	43.6%	34.5%
Online resources from a trade association	58.2%	55.6%	39.8%
Blogs	40.0%	28.4%	7.9%
Podcasts	20.9%	18.5%	8.1%

How often do you use the tools below to FIND NEW PRODUCTS AND VENDORS?

Across Four Countries

	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Search engines	80.9%	83.7%	85.0%
Purchasing sites	47.3%	40.4%	21.3%
Social media	40.2%	37.3%	11.4%
Online groups	46.4%	40.8%	23.9%
E-mail promos from suppliers	57.3%	42.3%	26.7%
Ads on websites	35.4%	31.5%	18.6%

How often do you use the tools below to EVALUATE PRODUCTS AND VENDORS?

Across Four Countries

	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Social media	48.2%	33.3%	7.0%
External product and supplier review sites	49.1%	45.9%	19.5%
Risk management software	37.3%	28.9%	5.2%
Internal vendor scorecards	45.5%	43.0%	38.9%
Vendor management systems	51.8%	36.1%	16.8%

* Percentages indicate those respondents who selected very frequently, frequently and somewhat frequently.
Narus et al.

**How often do you use the tools below to MANAGE ORDERING, DELIVERY,
INVENTORY, AND PAYMENT?**

Across Four Countries

	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Corporate resources planning system (ERP)	64.9%	63.0%	50.5%
Vendor management system	45.5%	32.3%	12.4%
Spend analysis software	37.3%	30.6%	7.9%
Internal software	47.3%	58.0%	63.7%

How often do you use the tools below to COMMUNICATE INTERNALLY?

Across Four Countries

	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Email	95.3%	92.3%	97.3%
Text	82.7%	72.6%	59.3%
OneNote	30.0%	26.0%	3.5%
Sharepoint	37.3%	36.0%	19.5%
Yammer	27.3%	24.2%	1.7%
Jive	48.2%	17.9%	0.0%

Next, we divided respondents into two industry categories, manufacturing versus non-manufacturing to assess differences in digital tool usage. The samples included:

Manufacturing Sample: China = 40; India = 58; Ireland = 25; USA = 86

Non- Manufacturing Sample: China = 175; India = 47; Ireland = 75; USA = 134

INDUSTRY—Results

How often do you use the tools below to KEEP UP WITH MARKET AND TECHNOLOGY TRENDS?*

	Across Four Countries	
	Manufacturing	Non-Manufacturing
Social Media	34.0%	48.2%
Online groups	38.3%	44.8%
Online resources from trade associations	54.9%	52.5%
Blogs	21.2%	29.2%
Podcasts	13.4%	17.4%

How often do you use the tools below to FIND NEW PRODUCTS AND VENDORS?

	Across Four Countries	
	Manufacturing	Non-Manufacturing
Search engines	88.3%	82.5%
Purchasing sites	31.1%	38.3%
Social media	20.8%	36.5%
Online groups	31.6%	41.7%
E-mail promo from suppliers	32.4%	42.2%
Ads on websites	21.2%	32.8%

How often do you use the tools below to EVALUATE PRODUCTS AND VENDORS?

* Percentages indicate those respondents who selected very frequently, frequently and somewhat frequently.

	Across Four Countries	
	Manufacturing	Non- Manufacturing
Social media	20.4%	35.3%
External product and supplier review sites	35.5%	39.5%
Risk management software	20.3%	29.7%
Internal vendor scorecards	53.2%	44.6%
Vendor management systems	29.2%	39.9 %

**How often do you use the tools below to MANAGE ORDERING, DELIVERY,
INVENTORY, AND PAYMENT?**

	Across Four Countries	
	Manufacturing	Non- Manufacturing
Corporate resources planning system (ERP)	62.7%	58.7%
Vendor management system	21.3%	35.5%
Spend analysis software	20.6%	31.2%
Internal software	69.9%	61.1%

How often do you use the tools below to COMMUNICATE INTERNALLY?

	Across Four Countries	
	Manufacturing	Non- Manufacturing

Email	99.0%	83.3%
Text	71.3%	72.2%
OneNote	16.5%	26.0%
Sharepoint	29.9%	34.8%
Yammer	16.9%	22.8%
Jive	14.1%	16.1%
