

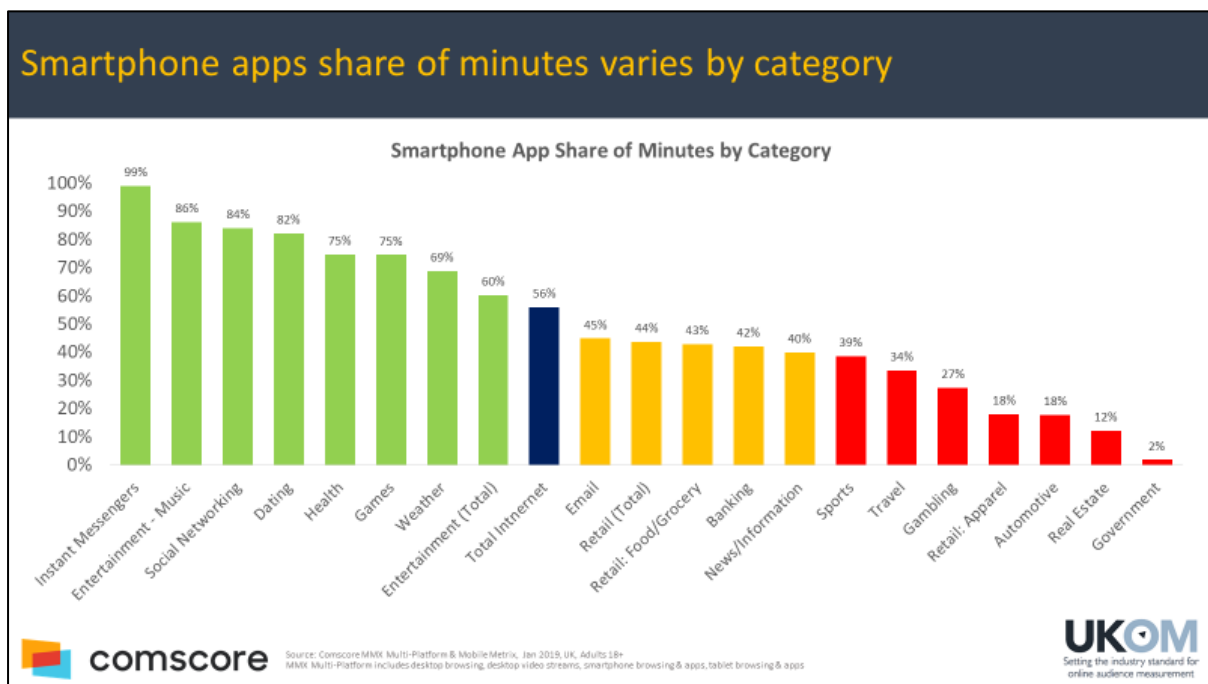
UKOM Insights

Smartphone Apps

Smartphone apps now account for 56% of total minutes online across mobile devices and pcs among UK adults and time spent is growing 24% year-on-year. However, UKOM approved Comscore data, which reports on over 2,500 smartphone apps each month, shows that the 56% average masks huge variations by category.

The high average share is skewed primarily by two sectors which generate the largest volume of online minutes overall. These are social media (including instant messaging and social networking) and entertainment (including audio and video streaming). These two categories together account for over half of all minutes on smartphone apps with a handful of global brands generating the majority. The top four apps by time spent: YouTube, Spotify, Facebook and Facebook Messenger account for over a third of all smartphone app minutes. Eight of the top ten apps by time spent fall within the social media or entertainment category - with Google Search and ebay being the two exceptions.

The chart below shows what proportion of total online time is generated by smartphone apps, by category.



Instant messaging, driven primarily by WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger has the greatest share at 99%. Spotify is a major contributor to the 86% for smartphone apps in the entertainment – music category. Facebook, Instagram and Snap generate the majority of minutes for the social networking category resulting in 84% of all time spent on smartphone apps but growth on newer services such as TikTok is also having an impact.

In addition to the big volume driver categories of social media and entertainment, other sectors where consumers spend over 75% of time using smartphone apps include gaming, dating and health - with fitness trackers driving share.

At the other end of the spectrum, smartphone apps are responsible for less than 30% of minutes for many sectors including automotive, gambling, property and government.

Retail has an average of 44%, but this headline number does not reveal the variations by product type. Whilst apps are popular among consumers for food delivery services such as Just Eat and Deliveroo, app usage is low for clothing, toys, tickets and home furnishings where very few brands have apps generating significant minutes. Only 18% of all time spent within the clothing/apparel retail category is consumed in app on a smartphone compared to 88% for books – Kindle & Audible being key drivers.

Travel also shows similar variations. Smartphone apps are almost exclusively used (91% of time spent) for car transportation services such as Uber whilst for airlines, smartphone apps still only account for 16% of minutes.

There are many hypotheses why such category variations exist. Size of screen, frequency of category usage, value of purchase, location of consumer, brand affinity, cost of mobile data and demographics are all likely to play a role in choice of access type. Some of these, for example screen size, will always impact smartphone app usage and may be more significant for categories where consumers need to read the small print or view detailed images (although mobile screens are getting bigger!). However, app awareness and availability, ease of use and customer experience is also important.

For retailers, offering consumers a reason to download and use the app e.g. loyalty points, exclusive deals, unique offerings and money off coupons encourages repeat use. For example, Wish, a shopping app that claims to offer ‘over 100 million high-quality items at 60-90% off’ currently has 5.5m UK users each month and is in the top 5 for ‘time spent’ for retail apps - ahead of apps from many popular high street stores.

The table below shows the apps which generated the most online minutes by category in January 2019.

Top Smartphone Apps by Time Spent (Total Minutes) by Category - January 2019			
	1	2	3
Social Networking	Facebook	Snapchat	Instagram
Instant Messenger	Facebook	WhatsApp	Kik Messenger
Entertainment: Video *	YouTube	Netflix	BBC iPlayer
Entertainment: Audio/Radio*	Spotify	SoundCloud	BBC iPlayer radio
Dating	POF	Tinder	Badoo
Health & Fitness	Fitbit	VeryFitPro	Sweatcoin
Games - Online Gaming	Pokemon Go	Candy Crush Saga	Words with friends 2
Weather	Weather channel - Apple	BBC Weather	AccuWeather
Email	Google Mail	Outlook	Yahoo mail
Retail	ebay	Amazon	Kindle
Retail – Food*	Just Eat	Deliveroo	Uber Eats
Retail – Grocery*	Asda	Tesco Groceries	Sainsburys
Financial Services – Banking	Barclays Mobile Banking	Santander	NatWest
News	BBC News	Apple News	Upday
Travel	Uber Driver	Booking.com	Tube map
Sport	Sky Sports	BBC Sport	Sky Sports Football Score Centre
Gambling	Sky Bet	Bet 365	William Hill
Automotive	Autotrader	Android Auto	Volkswagen Connect
Real Estate/Property	Rightmove	Zoopla	Spareroom

Of the 60 apps above which were in the top 3 for minutes in their category, only 21 of them reached more than 10% of smartphone app users. The BBC is the only British brand to feature in the top 30 smartphone apps for both reach and total minutes in the UK. Seasonality may impact usage and the top 3 within each category, however, out of the 2,500 apps tracked by Comscore very few have both high reach and engagement and those that do, tend to be global brands offering social media or entertainment apps.

For UKOM's quarterly Digital Market Overview and other Insight Pieces please visit www.ukom.uk.net

Notes on Data:

All UK data is based on UKOM industry standard and development level approved Comscore MMX Multi-Platform data. Comscore MMX Multi-Platform includes desktop browsing, desktop video streams, smartphone browsing & apps, tablet browsing & apps. Smartphone app time online data is based on Comscore Mobile Metrix, selecting All Apps Media and ranked by Total Minutes for UK adults 18+, January 2019.

*Custom-defined categories are defined below:

- **Retail – Food** is a category created by UKOM and is a subset of the Comscore category: Retail – Food/Grocery/Supermarkets and includes but is not limited to Just Eat, Deliveroo & Uber Eats.
- **Retail – Grocery** is a category created by UKOM and is a subset of the Comscore category: Retail – Food/Grocery/Supermarkets and includes but is not limited to Asda, Tesco & Sainsbury.
- **Entertainment – Audio/Radio** refers to apps within the Entertainment Category which also have the Attribute Streaming audio or Radio and includes but is not limited to Spotify, SoundCloud and BBC iPlayer Radio
- **Entertainment – Video** refers to apps within the Entertainment Category which also have the Attribute streaming video and includes but is not limited to YouTube, Netflix & BBC iPlayer.