



Tech trends key to retail

The data around Black Friday confirms the rise of smartphone shopping, while one trend to look out for next year is the growing use of blockchain technology, says **Daniel Murray**

The results are in and with a reported huge 91% of brands in the UK participating in the crazed shopping event that is Black Friday, it's not surprising to see consumer appetite rising too, with a 12% increase in sales in the UK compared with last year.

Surprisingly (or not; as people shop at work), desktops won the race this year as the main channel. However, smartphones saw a staggering 47% rise in sales this year, making them the number one device over laptops and tablets.

Smartphones and voice

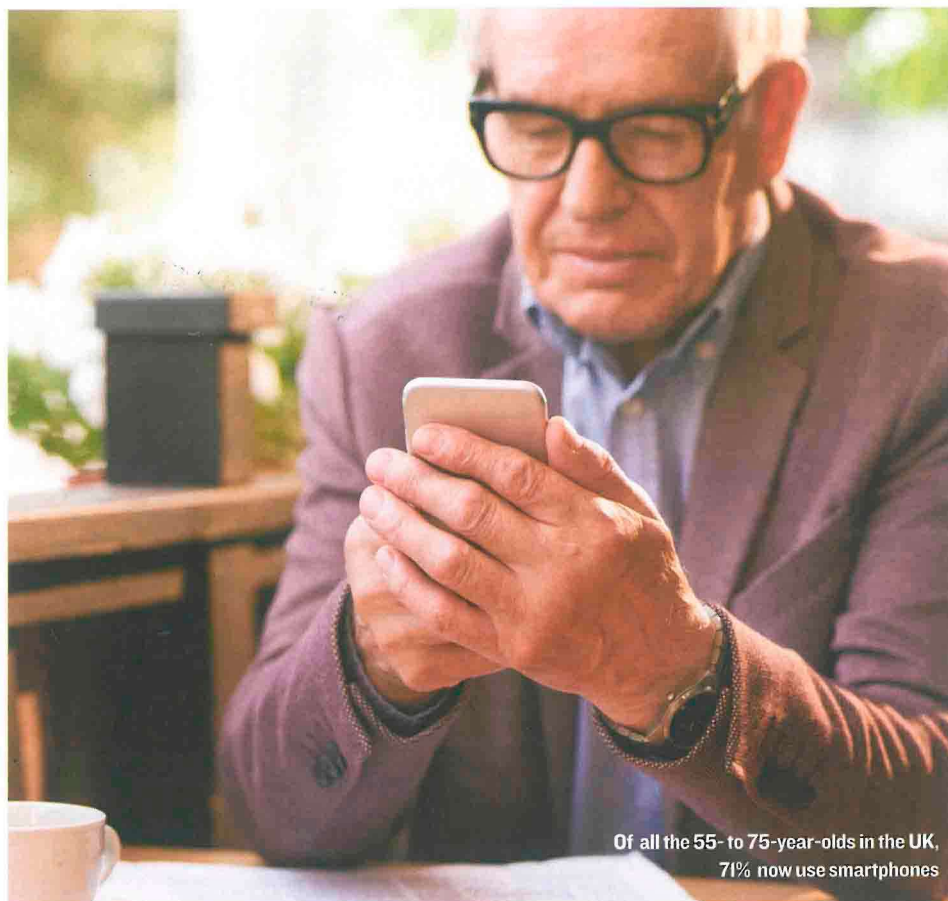
According to Deloitte, 85% of UK adults shop from their mobile phone, up from 52% five years ago, and adoption for the under-45s is at 90%. Not surprising, really.

But the real opportunity lies elsewhere – 71% of 55- to 75-year-olds in the UK now use smartphones.

This baby-booming age bracket own a majority of the wealth in the country and are often under-targeted, so if you are thinking about where to capitalise next year – don't just think about mobile for teens any more.

When you see your grandparents using their smartphone to buy products through their favourite brand's app, then you've hit the mainstream.

It's hard to know which innovation was most exciting for retail in 2017, but I think



Of all the 55- to 75-year-olds in the UK,
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it's fair to say voice won the day. With Amazon's Alexa and Google's Home fighting for a spot at running your life, the clear thought here is to wonder how Apple managed to miss this so badly after actually creating the trend with Siri.

Turns out that the early bird doesn't always catch the worm.

Mobile web

In terms of the narrative between 2017 and 2018, it's clear that the majority of retail innovations start and end on a smartphone – whether that's omnichannel PoS

systems, location data, native apps or augmented reality.

The glaring omission here is that most brands don't have native apps themselves, and talk a lot about these experiences but fail to accept that none of them operate within the mobile web.

At the time of writing less than 1% of all ecommerce brands in the UK have a native app, yet all the innovations in 2017 and 2018 that people get excited by start with an app that you download on your phone – even with Alexa.

How did you set it up? You downloaded the app.

Power of blockchain

But while AI and the connected home are fascinating, what I'm most excited about is blockchain. In 2018 it will go mainstream.

You might have heard of Everledger, which is used to track diamonds all the way from the mine to the retail store, or provenance technology that tracks all supply chain data, meaning you can see where your food is.

Mind-blowing stuff, really.

This overwhelming data distributes power between consumers and brands and presents a really fascinating turning point for retail.

Welcome to the future, my friends. **RW**

Daniel Murray is the co-founder of mobile commerce app Grabble

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