

Five consumer tech trends taking over in 2021

As venture capitalists, we are afforded insights into the challenges, opportunities, and new markets that today's founders are tackling at the earliest possible opportunity. This gives VCs an unprecedented opportunity to witness innovative, market-defining technologies at their genesis.

The speed of iteration is rarely quicker than in consumer-facing technologies, where the market votes quickly and decisively by deciding not to engage, or not to spend.

At Antler, we've invested over 300 companies, and we're always looking to benefit from their insight. Working with the founders of our consumer tech companies, we uncovered the five trends likely to shape consumer technology in the year to come.

Gen Z's consuming behaviours: Content and livestream shopping

Gen Z's are spending more than they have, which is a big shift from previous generations in China. The way they shop is also evolving by buying from creators who they have a personal virtual connection with on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. We are seeing the rise of virtual shopping with

entertainment coming from East to West on platforms such as Tiktok, Douyin, Kuaishou and Didi which enables consumers to shop wherever they like. An additional trend is that, Gen'Z are consuming much shorter types of content with the rise of TikTok, Twitter Reels, Instagram stories and Snapchat.

Anyone can now become a creator

It has never been easier to express your individuality on platforms such as: Substack, Patreon, Discord and Clubhouse. With a generation shift from individuals no longer wanting to go down the typical career path, the new career path for 29% of U.S students is to become a creator according to Signalfire VC. We now have 50 million creators worldwide who have a side hustle. The upcoming trends in this space will be new platforms that cater for the creators needs such as their infrastructure, discovery, finance and data, to name a few.

Driven forward by the move to remote technologies and working practices due to the pandemic, there is a significant opportunity for consumer-facing technologists who can move fast, go global early, and capitalise on the combination of a growing market and changing trends. We expect 2021 to be a huge year for the consumer, and look forward to seeing the innovations that are yet to come.

The new era for Chinese consumers

The pandemic has changed the way we shop forever, not least in the world's second-largest retail sales market, China. Like much of the rest of the world, the country's 1.4 billion shoppers were unable to venture out during the pandemic. This has fueled an acceleration of e-commerce innovation and we are seeing these newly shaped digital shopping experiences and consumer habits last.

Live social commerce picks up the baton of experiential, merging shopping and entertainment but virtually, creating an immediate shopping experience that has the power to supercharge the already booming influencer model too.

It's happening now. During Singles Day Alibaba's live-streaming video platform Taobao Live drove sales worth \$7.5B – and that was just in the first 30 minutes of presales. Meanwhile, rival JD.com partnered with Kuaishou to reach the video streaming platform's 300m daily active users last year and is ramping up its own live-streaming capabilities. One of China's biggest influencers, "King of Lipstick" Li Jiaqi, once sold 15,000 lipsticks in just five minutes through live streaming on Taobao Live.

It will be no surprise to see the biggest retail tech trends centred around social live commerce emerging in Europe, the US and elsewhere in the year ahead.

The mind-sharing economy

We have seen a rise in audio content consumption with the likes of Clubhouse which only launched a year ago which currently has ten million active users. Twitter shortly followed with Twitter Spaces. This is a content and social shift where consumers can learn from thought leaders at a click of a button, while being in an intimate room along with fellow enthusiasts.

Social is stronger than ever

In the last year, we have seen a big rise in consumer engagement on social platforms, as we have more time on our hands. New platforms have emerged such as Clubhouse, backed by Andreessen Horowitz, which has become so influential it has sped up Facebook's adoption of audio technologies.

All of this change will be driven forward by founders. As VC's we get to meet innovative founders at the earliest possible stage, and we look forward to witnessing the future of retail from the front line.

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