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Why Knowing When Your App Users Are Active is Key to Your Re-Engagement Strategy



Credit: Getty Images by alexsl



By **Kia Saedi**

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2020 Retail Technology Report

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Overall, the app economy has shown [enormous resilience](#) in the face of COVID-19-related challenges, but it's clear different categories are seeing very different impacts. While some app categories are in a boom cycle, others seem to be stagnating. The first quarter of 2020 has been a mixed bag for e-commerce apps. Data from Adjust's latest [App Trends](#) report shows that installs have been trending below the established baseline for 2020, down 12 percent week-over-week.

However, the news isn't all bad for mobile retail. In mid-March, Instacart, Walmart Grocery, and Shipt set records for downloads of their mobile apps, according to [Apptopia](#). Meanwhile, Adjust found Food & Drink apps have seen a 73 percent increase in sessions, and a 21 percent increase in installs, as many restaurants and their customers were forced to turn to takeout-only. With social distancing here for the foreseeable future, more and more customers will turn to e-commerce in lieu of going to the store. It's up to marketers to make the most of this moment — and re-engagement will be crucial.

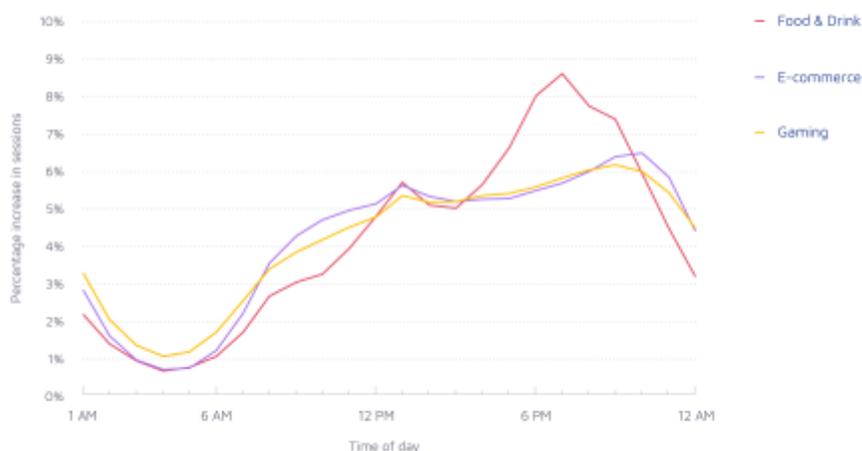
If you're one of the marketers looking to give your retail app a bit of a boost during these difficult times — and remain top of mind when your users are in need — there's one data point you need to focus on: "when," not "what."

Why 'When' Matters

Having deep insight into the peak times your users are active allows you to plan accordingly and opens a fantastic window of opportunity that allows savvy marketers to employ reactivation campaigns. [Adjust research tells us](#) that this tactic is especially important for e-commerce apps, with 73 percent of attributions for this vertical coming from [retargeting](#) efforts. For instance, perfectly timing a simple push notification during periods when you can be sure users are active is a smart way to drive more consumers back to your app, hopefully resulting in more conversions. As app retargeting startup Rmerge puts it, "retargeting is the well-oiled cog that will make your entire strategy function smoothly."

Adjust's data tells us that e-commerce apps see a peak of sessions both at lunchtime, between noon and 2 p.m., and again in the evening, with sessions between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., accounting for a quarter of their daily total. Similarly, Food & Drink apps see a spike in usage between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., accounting for 31 percent of their total daily sessions. While this makes logical sense — people like to shop, or at least browse, during their downtime and turn to Food & Drink apps when they're cooking or ordering dinner — we now have the data to support it.

How does app usage change throughout the day?



Based on anonymized data collected over 2019 and across the top 1,000 best-performing apps on Adjust's platform.



Credit: Adjust

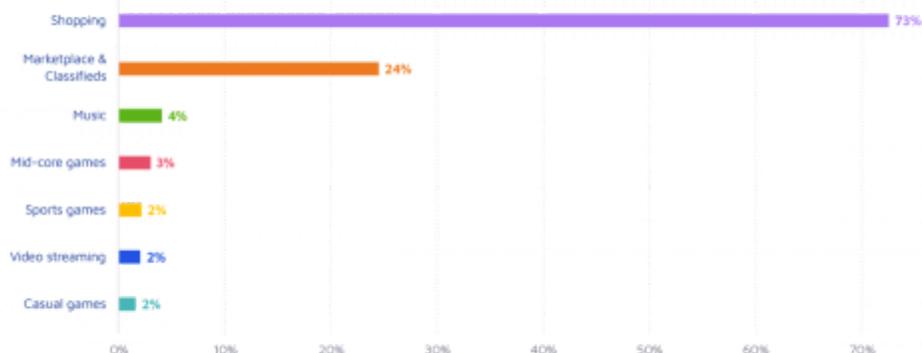
Re-Engagement in Action

Imagine this scenario: Adam looks at his watch at 6 p.m. and realizes it's his turn to cook dinner. He hasn't made a meal plan, but Kate and the kids will be hungry soon. So he grabs his phone and gets a push notification from GrubHub for a free salad with his pizza from the restaurant just down the street. With just a few swipes, dinner is taken care of.

Later, Kate has just put the kids down to bed after a long day of attempting to home-school them while also hopping on conference calls and trying to answer emails. She crashes onto the couch, thinking about the weekend and how she'll keep the kids entertained through another rainy day during the quarantine. She opens her phone at 8 p.m. and heads to Facebook, where she sees a carousel of ads for the interactive toys she's been eyeing on your website. Before you know it, she's in your app ready to make a purchase.

Re-engagement by the numbers

% Share of reattributions vs. attributions



Based on anonymized data collected over 2019 and across the top 1,000 best-performing apps on Adjust's platform



Credit: Adjust

E-commerce apps are especially well-suited to capitalize on re-engagement. Shoppers have a way of making their intent especially clear by browsing and adding items to their carts only to abandon them later. Add that to their past purchase histories, and retailers have a treasure trove of data with which to serve them highly targeted ads at just the right times.

“Timing is everything” is a cliché for a reason — because we all know it’s so often true. Getting your timing right has never been more important, as users — spoiled for choice — have more options than ever before and re-engaging them becomes key to successful marketing strategies. In 2020, retargeting is taking off as the most effective and efficient activation tool.

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