

CONSUMER RESEARCH: HOW COVID-19 IS ACCELERATING THE MOVE TO DIGITAL

ANTHONY GOONETILLEKE | 05.11.2020 | AMDOCS VOICES



There's no going back to pre-COVID-19. Social distancing will create a ripple effect, with consumers now understanding we can achieve a lot digitally that we used to do in person. If Moore's Law takes the credit for our technological acceleration, then COVID-19 may deserve a nod for accelerating the change in human behavior with respect to the adoption of technology.

To better understand how consumer behavior has changed, [Amdocs surveyed 1,000 consumers over the age of 18](#). It found consumers have changed the way they relate to day-to-day activities, whether for work, school, healthcare or entertainment – and that opens new opportunities for service providers globally.



Anthony Goonetilleke, group president, Media, Network and Technology, Amdocs

Here are some of the key findings:

Remote experiences are creating opportunities for lifelong customers

30 percent of consumers are experiencing remote work for the first time, and 20 percent have tried remote learning for the first time. As remote connections continue to grow, the rollout of 5G will play a critical role in supporting next-generation workforces and education by breaking down barriers between the physical and virtual environments. Why? Because consumers will demand the same experiences seamlessly across the globe. Zoom is not just a company, it has entered the vernacular of technological nouns. We all understood when someone had to "Google" something, "tweet" about an experience or post a "selfie." Now we are all familiar with "getting on a Zoom." In the background, collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams and Slack are also accelerating the work from home productivity of a fluid workforce.

Consumers are also taking advantage of new offerings that make life easier and more connected: **32 percent are taking advantage of new online food or grocery services, 29 percent are trying new media and subscription services (with 69% of those being Gen Z and millennials), while 26 percent have signed up to new free trials (HBO, Apple TV+, etc.).**

With regard to the latter, over-the-top (OTT) consumption has also accelerated not just in the video content space, but in all sorts of digital services trying to build brand awareness and customer loyalty. It also provides service providers with the [opportunity](#) to partner with OTTs as a means to incorporating third-party content into their own bundles via a unified platform.

We believe that this advent of what we call "bundle 4.0" will be powered by the long tail of a partner ecosystem, providing consumers a choice of best-of-breed offerings, but still allowing key aspects such as subscription management and user settings to be controlled centrally for an added level of privacy.

We're just scratching the surface on telehealth

Consumers say telehealth has been the second-most valued service during the current pandemic – after remote work. **18 percent are experiencing the technology for the first time, while 21 percent say they'll continue using these new services once the crisis subsides.**

Younger generations are leading the charge: of the above 21 percent, over half were either Gen Z or millennials. But for service providers to keep up with this demand, it will require them to ensure secure and stable video connections that meet [HIPAA compliance](#). On the other hand, most consumers trust service providers with securing their data and maintaining their privacy [more than others](#).

Enterprises also stand to benefit by re-inventing their private 5G networks to better support stress on broadband networks; especially as robotics start to regularly play a part in telehealth services.

More than ever, consumers see consistent connectivity as a must-have

With in-home connectivity as important as ever, there is an opportunity for service providers to focus on the need for a consistent broadband experience. Especially as consumers are expected to have [upwards](#) of 14 network-connected devices each by 2022. If you are a family of four with the typical phone, iPad and/or laptops, you are likely well over this number. Once you add connected TVs, Apple TVs, Xbox and Nintendo Switch, for example, you're rising well into the teens of connected devices.

With such an influx, consumers are more willing to buy devices that improve WIFI connectivity (24 percent). Service providers [can set themselves apart](#) by offering consumers intelligent ways to manage their broadband experience and quickly identify issues throughout the home. Prioritization and transparency of traffic starts to become a vital factor. Being able to monitor and control this via a central mechanism while maintain privacy becomes crucial.

Further demonstrating why experience is critical, **25% of respondents said new services that provided them with the ability to connect with family and friends have turned them into lifelong customers.** During this pandemic, video conference was not just for work meetings, they were used to connect grandparents with their families, and sadly, even people on their death beds. Seamless and guaranteed connectivity moved from being a nice to have to a lifeblood for many.

I believe the big winners post-COVID-19 will be those who help accelerate seamless digital experiences, ensure better, more seamless connectivity and improve sustainability of networks. That's why now especially is the time for service providers to pay close attention to the experiences consumers want to have, and then use them as a basis of creating a strategy that provides real value – both now and in the future.

SUMMARY

An Amdocs survey of 1,000 U.S. consumers shows many are venturing into new territory. What opportunity does this open for service providers?

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