

# Student Tech in 2022: Gen Z Plans for Tech Buys

**A research-backed look at Gen Z's tech shopping behaviours and plans**

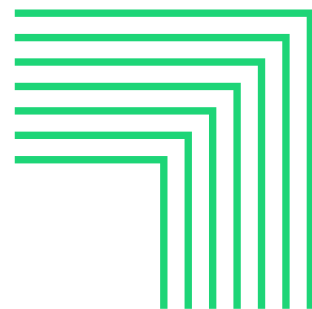
Gen Z: everybody wants a piece. As the biggest generation worldwide, Gen Z represents **40% of the total consumer base with \$360 billion<sup>1</sup> in disposable income (more than double the estimate from three years ago)<sup>2</sup>.**

With an increasing cost of living worldwide, post-pandemic freedom driving a desire for 'phygital' shopping experiences and recent pandemic tech purchases still fresh, some brands are unsure how to win – and keep – the business of Gen Z.



***“Driving affinity with Gen Z, a generation with a \$360 billion annual global spend power, is crucial for brands in the current climate, especially given that 60% of Gen Z have admitted that their brand loyalties have changed since the start of the pandemic.”***

***– ALEX GALLAGHER, Chief Strategy Officer***



# Key insight #1

## LESS MONEY, LESS TIME

**Gen Z is tightening the purse strings.** The UK and other countries are experiencing a rising cost of living, and students are feeling the pinch. Demand for financial help is rising in the UK, US and Australia – whether through family financial assistance, credit cards, or monthly instalments. In the UK, **40% of students** rely on parental support and loans as their main income source; overall, 1 in 4 students do not feel financially secure. The impact of all of this is prevalent in their tech spending both in 1) *how much* they're willing to pay and 2) *how* they're able to pay. 1 in 10 students will cut back on tech products if expendable income is reduced compared to a +40% increase in groceries spend.



While students still prefer to buy tech items outright themselves, the number of UK students buying tablets independently **fell by 10% from 2020 to 2022**, as many turned to their family for help with payment or opted for monthly instalments. US students are favouring credit cards to purchase tech, with **increases of 6% for laptops, 3% for games consoles and 8% for tablets** since 2020.

# 25%

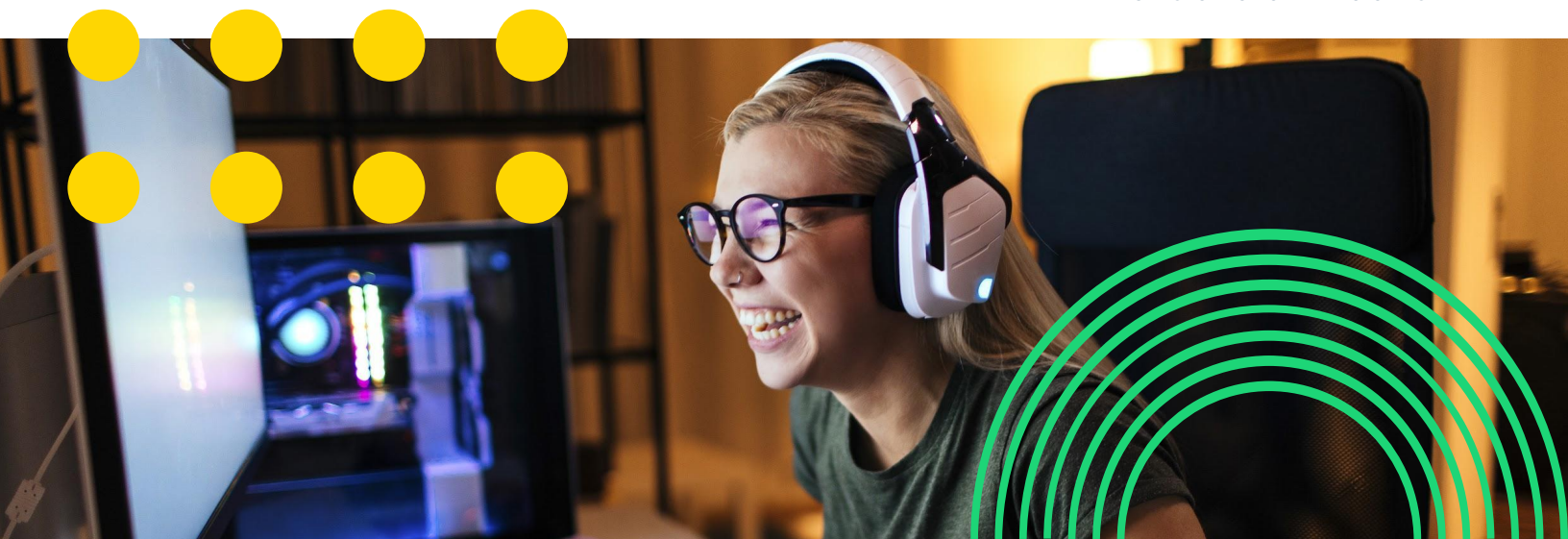
OF AUS STUDENTS RECEIVED  
FAMILY HELP BUYING PCs

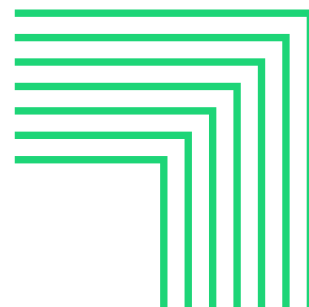
# 5%

DROP IN RESEARCH BEFORE  
A TECH PURCHASE AMONG US  
STUDENTS SINCE 2020

# 7%

DECREASE IN YOUTUBE RESEARCH  
AMONG UK STUDENTS SINCE 2020








# Key insight #1

## LESS MONEY, LESS TIME

As pandemic restrictions are lifted, competition for Gen Z's time and money is growing. With more freedom to do as they please, students now have less time to spend on research before a purchase, with decreases of **6% in the UK, 5% in the US and 9% in Australia**. Many tech sites, along with YouTube, have suffered losses in usage as students have dedicated less time to online research.

For tech sellers, this means more attention needs to be placed on the online sales journey, especially as it now looks different for many students. Think about questions such as:

-  1.) **What evidence or research needs to be provided on-page to convert visitors?**
-  2.) **How to choose a tone and language that both sells and reassures?**
-  3.) **Should you consider placing research on other platforms (e.g., TikTok) so students see it more passively rather than needing to seek it out?**





# Key insight #2

## GEN Z GETS 'PHYGITAL'

**Phygital** is the combination of the physical and digital worlds. For brands, this means bringing together the best online and offline aspects of the customer experience.



5%

DECREASE IN  
ONLINE PURCHASES  
OF PCs AMONG  
AUS STUDENTS

10%

INCREASE IN ONLINE  
PURCHASES OF LAPTOPS  
AMONG US STUDENTS

6%

OF UK STUDENTS  
SHOPPING FOR  
CAMERAS BOTH  
ONLINE AND  
IN-STORE



In Australia, students prefer to shop in-store for most tech categories, but **phygital shopping is preferred for smaller tech**, such as tablets and fitness trackers.



In the US, in every tech category, at least 30% of US students choose to shop both online and in-store.



In the UK, phygital is the trend across the board as students do their browsing in-store but buy online with discounts in mind. Since 2020, there's been a **12% boost in TVs purchased in-store**, while 6% of students shopped for cameras both online and in-store.



These figures show that students want the best of both worlds – the physical and the digital – and as brands vie for Gen Z's attention, they should enable these dual experiences.

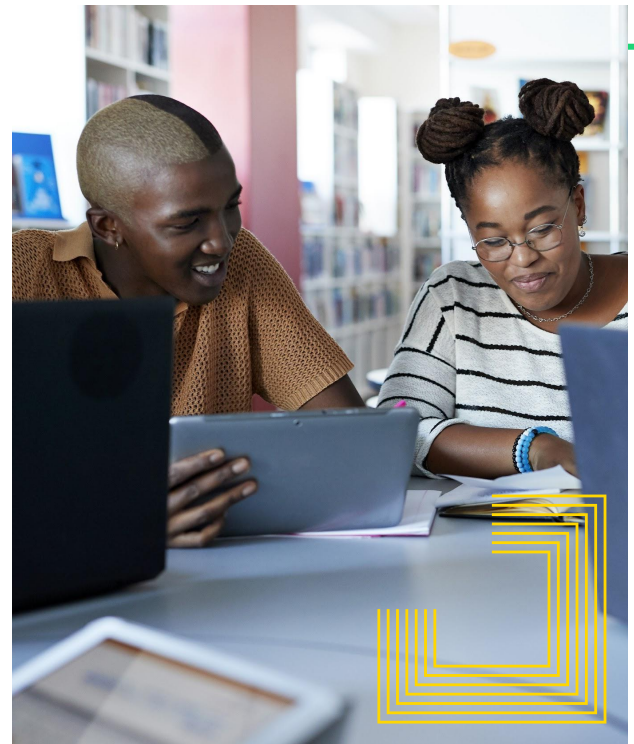


# Key insight #3

## PANDEMIC TECH BUYS ARE STILL FRESH

**2020 was the year where tech was treasured more than ever to stay connected with the world outside. Now, in 2022, those pandemic purchases continue to stay fresh to students as they balance their cost of living challenges.**

Let's take a look back at 2020. Tech purchases soared and big launches like the PS5 captured huge sales (and attention). Big ticket tech items like these are still considered new; couple this with increased costs for essentials and it's easy to see why students could be tightening their belts when it comes to tech:



UK	Purchased laptop in last 12 months	Plan to purchase laptop in next 12 months
2020	33%	22%
2022	29%	20%
Australia	Purchased smartphone/ in last 12 months	Plan to purchase/contract in next 12 months
2020	36%	30%
2022	34%	29%
US	Plan to purchase games console in next 12 months	
2020	21%	
2022	18%	

# Key insight #3

## PANDEMIC TECH BUYS ARE STILL FRESH

In the US, more students have bought tech over the past 12 months for **7 of 9 product categories compared with 2020**, meaning fewer will buy over the next 12 months. In fact, **1 in 4** US students' monthly expenditure on tech was estimated to be \$1-50.

Globally, it's safe to say that the current economic climate is causing Gen Z to think twice about non-essentials, and we're foreseeing a **decline in tech purchases over the next 12 months** across all three regions we surveyed.



As a brand, how can we  
connect with Gen Z  
despite these challenges?

## ENGAGING GEN Z IN 22/23



Purchase intent is down; brands should consider whether they can drum up this buyer's interest with additional incentives, discounts, products and features. When upgrading tech items, **40% of Gen Z students actively look for offers/discounts and 29% wait for an offer or discount.**



Competition for brand affinity with Gen Z will also be key to winning tech purchases going forward – and it will require ongoing effort to maintain, with **60% of Gen Z** saying their brand loyalty has changed since the start of the pandemic.



18%

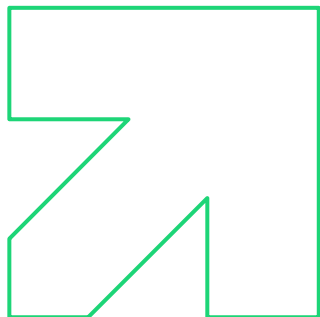
OF US STUDENTS PLAN  
TO PURCHASE A GAMES  
CONSOLE THIS YEAR

34%

OF AUS STUDENTS PURCHASED  
A SMARTPHONE/CONTRACT IN  
LAST 12 MONTHS

20%

OF UK STUDENTS PLAN TO  
PURCHASE A LAPTOP IN NEXT  
12 MONTHS



2022 is a crucial year for tech companies, as Gen Z shifts their shopping behaviours post-pandemic and tech lifecycles inch toward a restart. With the right price, easy access to reviews and enablement of 'phygital' shopping experiences, Gen Z are ready to find their next piece of great tech. Will it be yours?

# Thanks!

**Have a question for verified students?**

[Learn more about insights](#)



**Want to put your brand, product, and/or discounts in front of Gen Z?**

[Learn more about the UNiDAYS App](#)



<sup>1</sup>[UNiDAYS Fashion Report, 2022](#)

<sup>2</sup>[Bloomberg, 2021](#)

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