



CONNECTED CONSUMER

trends report

The connected world is more complex than ever. From the devices in our pockets to the systems that power our homes, automobiles, and workplaces, technology is ingrained in nearly every facet of our lives. But as technology's role grows, so do the complexities around its adoption, use, and impact. This complexity is shaping how consumers think about technology and what they expect from it. They're optimistic about the possibilities it offers, but cautious about its potential drawbacks.

This duality — hope and hesitation — is the defining theme of our Connected Consumer Trends Report. It's a signal to businesses that success in the connected world isn't just about innovation. It's about building trust, simplifying complexity, solving problems, and delivering value that resonates with real human needs.

Through our research, we've identified four distinct consumer personas, each with unique expectations and emotional drivers. We've also uncovered key trends — from the growing demand for protection plans and support to the nuanced trust divide around AI — that offer both challenges and opportunities for brands looking to lead.

Additionally, we've developed the Tech Sentiment Index, a powerful measure of how people really feel about technology. We'll remeasure and compile insights from the TSI annually, providing not just a snapshot of today's sentiment but a path forward.

At Assurant, we believe that innovation isn't just about creating the next big thing; it's about aligning those advancements with what consumers truly value. Whether it's through hyper-personalization, simplifying adoption, providing enhanced protections, or creating peace of mind, we're committed to enabling connected living that feels seamless and empowering.

I hope you find the insights in this report to be as eye-opening and actionable as we do. Together, we can create solutions that address the challenges of today while paving the way for the opportunities of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Biju Nair', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Biju Nair

EVP & President, Global Connected Living
Assurant

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The Duality of Consumer Sentiment



HOPE AND SKEPTICISM IN A TECH-DRIVEN WORLD

When it comes to technology, consumers today are torn between excitement and hesitation. On the one hand, many people are optimistic about the new possibilities technology brings. On the other, concerns about costs, usability, privacy, and even overall health can make them wary of fully embracing these advancements.

To better understand this push and pull, we developed the **Tech Sentiment Index**, a measure of how people feel about technology overall. The current TSI comes in at 58.7. While that leans slightly positive, it's clear there's a balance of emotions in play. For businesses, this signals an opportunity to address both the hope and the skepticism that define today's tech landscape.



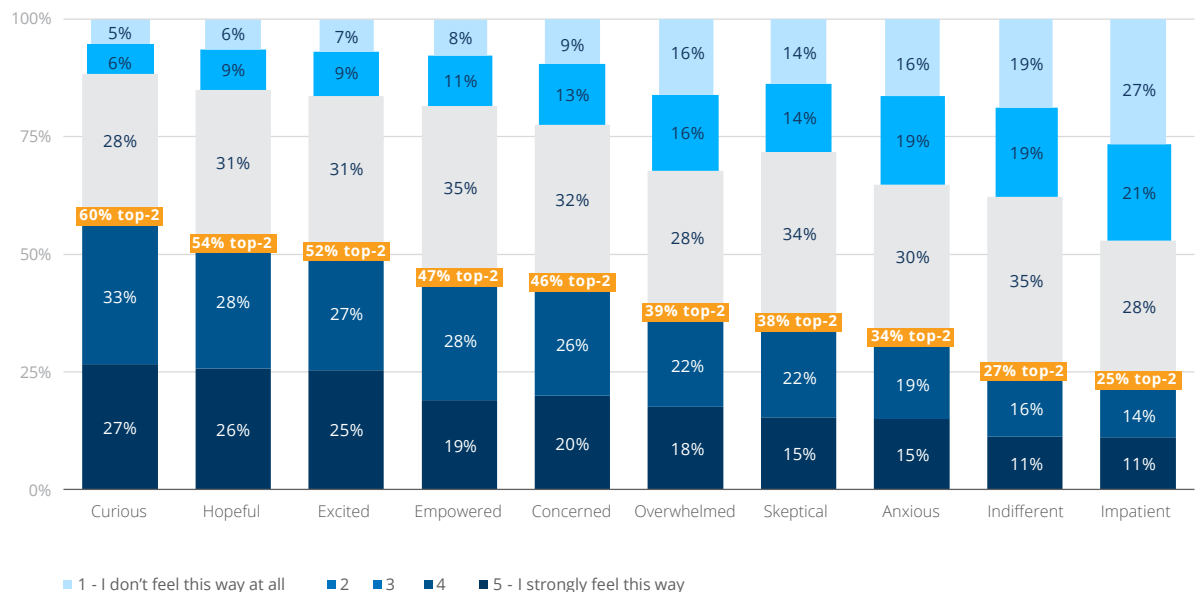
The overall Tech Sentiment Index score represents the average sentiment of respondents toward technology, ranging from 0 (very negative) to 100 (very positive).

MIXED REACTIONS TO TECHNOLOGY

The emotional responses our survey uncovered are as varied as technology itself. Curiosity (60%) and excitement (52%) are among the more prominent positive feelings, showing that people are naturally drawn to innovation. But skepticism (38%), anxiety (34%), and feeling overwhelmed (39%) are also part of the story, especially when people think about how fast technology is evolving. If we dig deeper, consumer emotions become even more complicated. When

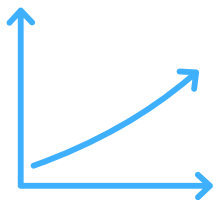
asked, for example, how technology has impacted personal relationships, consumers are almost evenly split into thirds, with 37% feeling tech has made them more connected, 30% more distant, and 33% expressing mixed feelings. This range of emotions shows why businesses have work to do. It's not just about delivering great tech — it's about building trust, reducing stress, and proving value to consumers' everyday lives.

How well do each of the following emotions describe your own feelings when you think about the pace of technological change?



HOW SPECIFIC CONCERNS SHAPE SENTIMENT

Exploring the data, we see specific factors influencing consumers' feelings about technology adoption. Here are three key themes.



The learning curve: While 51% of consumers feel positive about learning to use new technology, 23% expressed negative emotion to keeping up with constant tech changes.



Privacy worries: Data security stands out as a major concern, with 31% of people stating they're highly worried about risks to their personal information.



Mental health: 24% of participants say they're actively trying to reduce their screen time, recognizing the toll constant device use can take on well-being.

FOUR CONSUMER PERSONAS IN A COMPLEX LANDSCAPE

Understanding the wide range of emotions tied to technology becomes even clearer as we segment consumers into four distinct personas. Each group has unique feelings and behaviors, which can help businesses tailor their strategies to meet varying needs.

**Tech
Enthusiasts**

13%

**Cautious
Optimists**

29%

31%

**Tech
Resisters**

27%

**Traditional
Moderates**

**TECH RESISTERS (31%)**

Skeptical and hesitant, this group often avoids new technology unless it's absolutely necessary. For them, cost and simplicity are critical.

- ▼ 33% believe new tech is too expensive and doesn't offer enough value.
- ▼ **What they need:** User-friendly, affordable options backed by strong trust-building measures like testimonials and hands-on support.

**CAUTIOUS OPTIMISTS (29%)**

This group is excited about technology, but prefers to proceed at a measured pace. They want to see proof that a product will deliver value without breaking the bank.

- ▼ 54% are interested in new tech, but take their time making decisions.
- ▼ **What they need:** Clear and honest messaging, cost-saving options like trade-in discounts, and easy-to-access support.

**TRADITIONAL MODERATES (27%)**

Practical and no-nonsense, Traditional Moderates care about functionality and reliability. Flashy features don't impress them, but they're open to tech that makes life simpler.

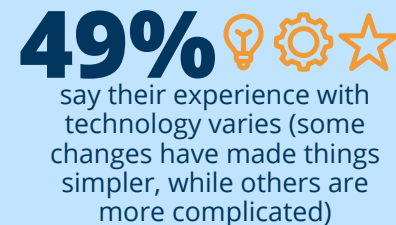
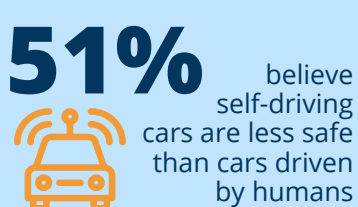
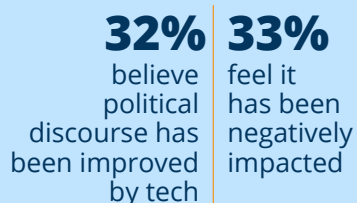
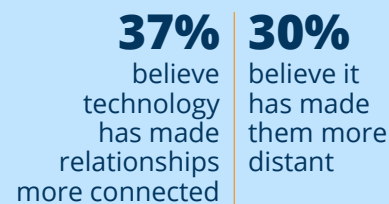
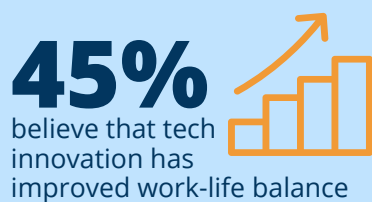
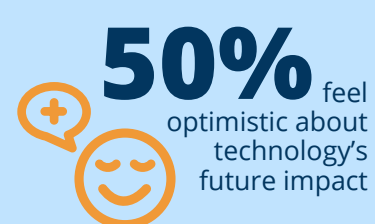
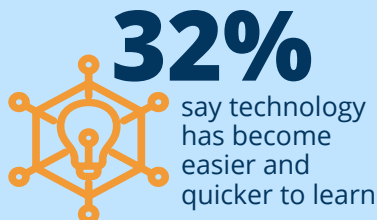
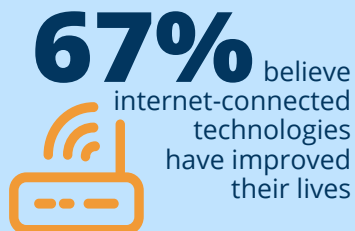
- ▼ 39% don't plan on buying extended warranties — they prefer simple, up-front costs.
- ▼ **What they need:** Products that focus on durability and ease of use, marketed with clear, simple messaging.

**TECH ENTHUSIASTS (13%)**

These are the early adopters who can't wait to try cutting-edge innovations. They're highly optimistic and are willing to spend top dollar to stay ahead of the curve.

- ▼ 91% say tech has improved their lives.
- ▼ **What they need:** Make them feel special with early access programs, exclusive perks, and all-in-one warranties.

Additional stats supporting the duality in consumer sentiment



STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

The duality of consumer sentiment toward technology is a complicated but rewarding space to explore. Sure, skepticism, anxiety, and cost concerns create friction, but these same barriers represent opportunities for companies that take the time to listen and act thoughtfully.

By building transparent and tailored strategies, businesses can ease consumer worries and spark enthusiasm about what's possible. It's not just about selling products; it's about inspiring confidence in the way technology can empower and improve lives. The key is meeting your customers where they are and addressing their concerns while illuminating the path forward.

SECTION 02

Key Consumer Trends and Opportunities



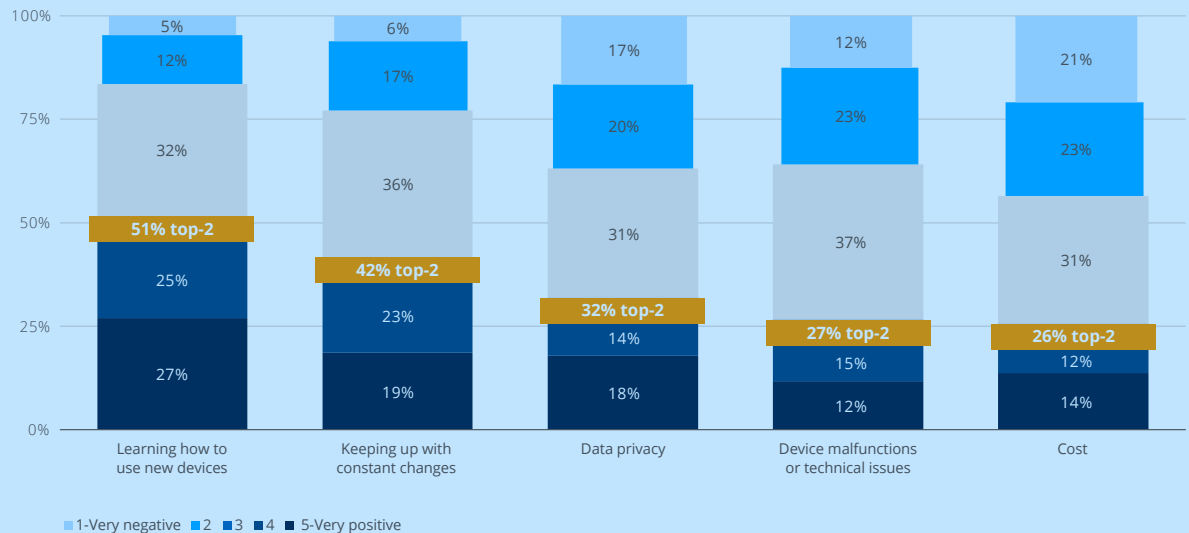
TRENDS SHAPING CONSUMER TECH ADOPTION

The world of consumer technology is constantly changing, bringing with it exciting advancements and unique challenges. While many are enthusiastic about what's next, practical concerns still play a big role in shaping how people adopt new tech. For businesses, understanding these concerns and addressing them head-on can turn hesitancy into trust and spark loyalty. Here's a closer look at four key trends that are influencing the way consumers engage with technology and how companies can turn these trends — and their corresponding challenges — into strategic wins.

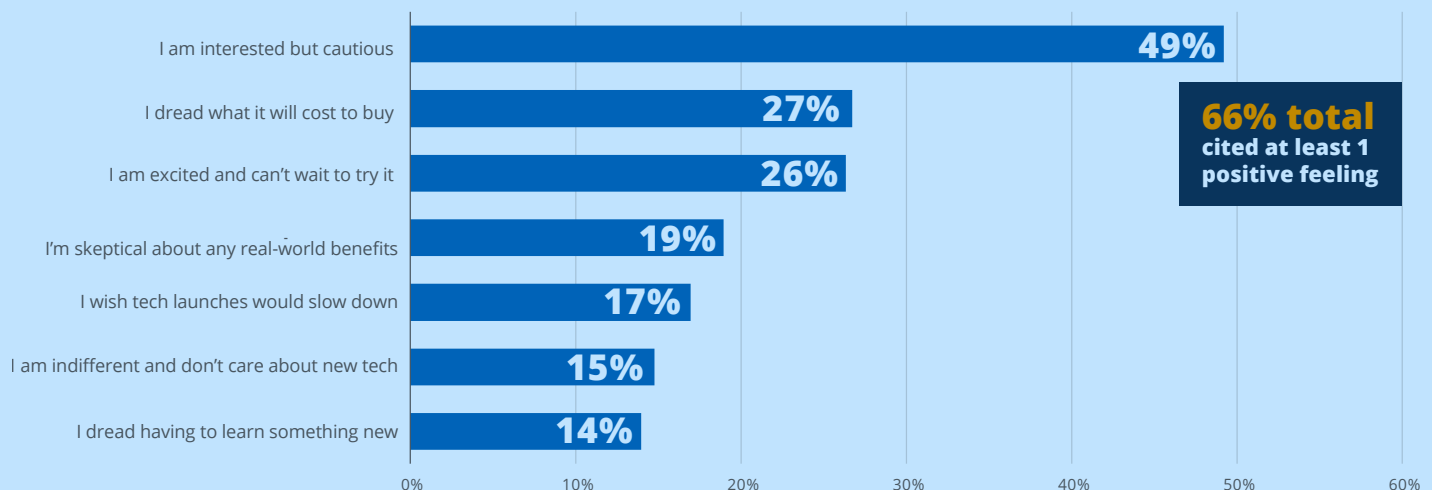
COST SENSITIVITY

When it comes to new technology, price remains a significant hurdle for many consumers. Nearly **44% expressed frustration about the high cost** of tech, making it a top barrier to adoption. Additionally, **27% admit they dread new product announcements** because of the financial pressure they feel to keep up. Many hesitate to commit to purchases because of steep up-front costs or the fear of ongoing maintenance and repair expenses.

How do you feel about the following aspects of new technologies?



How do you feel when a new technology or the next generation of a device gets announced? (Select all that apply.)



What this means for businesses: making technology more affordable

- FLEXIBLE PAYMENT OPTIONS:** Offer flexible payment plans like “buy now, pay later,” subscriptions, or no-interest installments, giving consumers more ways to budget for tech.
- LOYALTY PERKS:** Reward recurring customers through trade-in programs that lower the cost of upgrades.
- BUNDLES MATTER:** Combine products with extended warranties or subscriptions to highlight added value.

By spotlighting affordability in product design and marketing, you can make technology feel more accessible and attainable for a wider audience.

THE AI TRUST DIVIDE

Artificial intelligence is reshaping the tech industry, but consumer trust in AI is a mixed bag. When it comes to AI-enabled devices, consumers are split. *45% think it's important to have support for AI features in their next smartphone, and 42% are thinking about the inclusion of AI in their future smart home product purchase.* However, *43% of consumers don't plan to upgrade their device to an AI-enabled model* in the next six months, signaling ongoing hesitation. This divide highlights the need for clearer communication about the constructive role AI can play in people's lives.

What this means for businesses: bridging the AI confidence gap



- ▼ **BE TRANSPARENT:** Share real, relatable examples of how AI simplifies life, such as predicting device issues or automating repetitive tasks to save time.
- ▼ **EXPLAIN THE TECH:** Break down complicated concepts. Short videos, clear guides, or interactive visuals can demystify AI and show how it doesn't replace people — it enhances their capabilities.
- ▼ **COMMIT TO ETHICS:** Put your privacy and ethical AI policies front and center. Highlight how your AI protects user data, prevents fraud, or delivers personalized solutions that feel empowering.

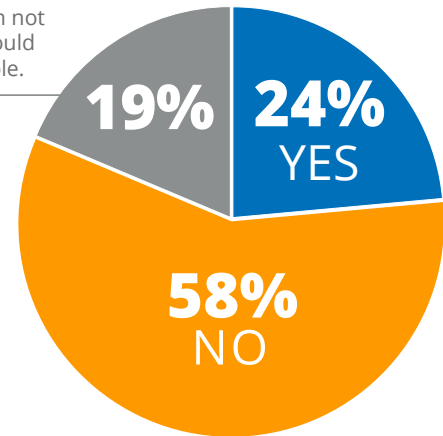
Helping consumers see AI as a problem-solver, not a job-stealer, is the first step toward building trust and excitement.

PRIORITIZING WELLNESS

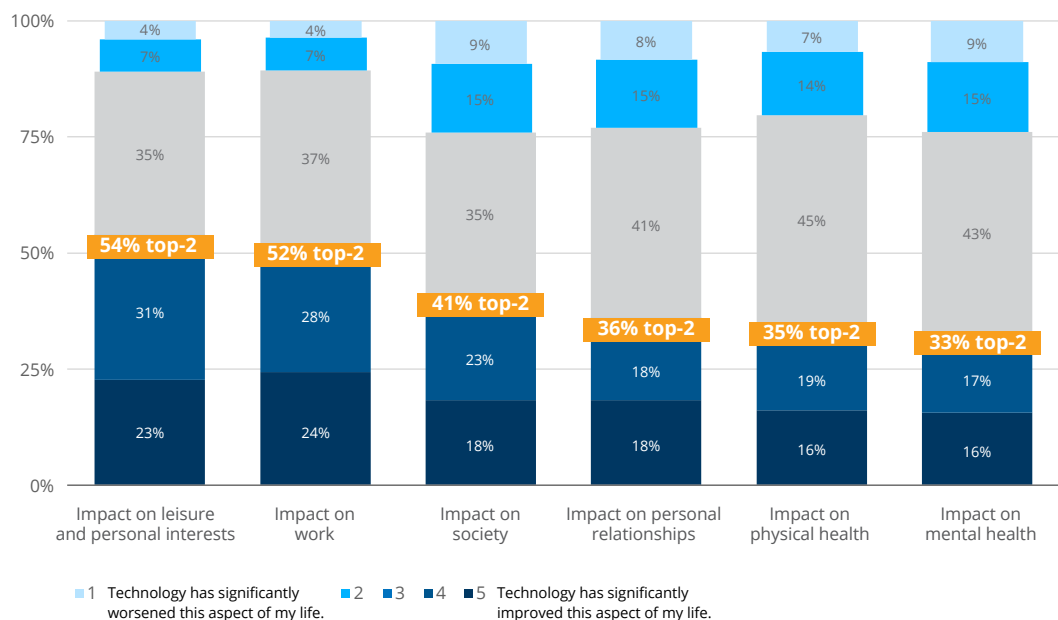
Technology's impact on wellness is more relevant than ever. **24% of consumers say they want to spend less time on their devices** to protect their well-being, though **19% doubt they'll actually be able to cut back**. Additionally, nearly half of consumers are unsure about tech's impact on both physical and mental health. This tension between staying connected and feeling overwhelmed creates an opportunity for brands to play a positive role in promoting healthier digital habits.

As part of your New Year's resolution, are you planning to reduce your screen time or digital device usage?

I would like to, but I'm not sure it would be possible.



What impact has technology had on the following?



What this means for businesses: supporting digital balance

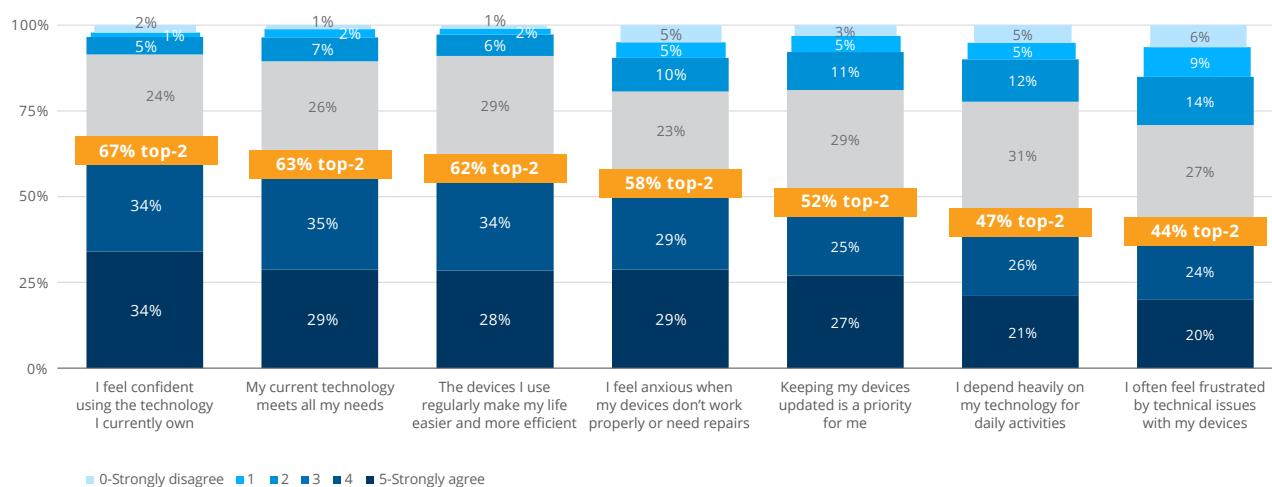
- ENCOURAGE BALANCE:** Build screen-time monitoring tools, focus modes, and digital well-being features into your products to help users stay in control.
- MARKET THROUGH WELLNESS:** Frame campaigns around the idea that technology should support balance, not disrupt it. Send a clear message that you care about their overall well-being.
- DESIGN SMARTER PRODUCTS:** Offer ergonomic devices or features that make interaction less stressful and more comfortable.

Positioning your brand as an ally in digital wellness builds trust while creating goodwill among consumers who want to feel cared for.

GROWING DEMAND FOR DEVICE PROTECTION

Consumers today want more than just the latest device; peace of mind is a key part of their decision-making process. With **47% of consumers admitting they depend heavily on technology for daily activities**, there's a lot at stake when something goes wrong. **44% of consumers often feel frustrated by technical issues** with their devices, and **58% feel anxious when their devices don't work properly or need repairs**. Protection plans can help lower that anxiety. In fact, almost half (**49%**) of consumers say that access to reliable protection plans eases their stress about potential damage or loss, and **48% admit they're more likely to invest in technology if a protection plan is included**.

How much do you agree with each of the following statements?



What this means for businesses: offering peace of mind through protection plans

- SIMPLIFY PROTECTION:** Make it easy for consumers to understand and access warranties. Offer plans that cover everything from theft and accidental damage to everyday wear and tear.
- VALUE-ADD BENEFITS:** Pair warranties with perks like on-demand tech support or rapid repair options, appealing to the “fix it now” mindset.
- HIGHLIGHT REASSURANCE:** Help consumers see the financial and emotional relief these plans provide, fostering trust and making decision-making easier.

Protection plans aren't just add-ons; they're part of the value proposition that reassures and converts hesitant buyers.

Additional stats driving trends and opportunities



65%
of respondents
use an Apple
smartphone



35%
use
Android



The most commonly owned
Wi-Fi-connected devices are:
65% laptops
59% internet-connected tvs
49% tablets
40% desktop computers



Consumers are the most
emotionally attached to:
43% laptops
41% pet trackers
40% gaming consoles



In the next year, consumers
are most likely to buy:
27% laptops
17% tablets and e-readers
14% desktop computers



Smart home appliances (**47%**) and laptops (**34%**) are the
most covered devices by a protection plan

45% don't have a paid warranty or protection plan for any of
their connected devices

28% come to regret not purchasing Extended Service
Contract coverage

Consumers want better tech support options for laptops
(**37%**) and desktop computers (**32%**)

Consumers are more likely to buy connected devices when
on-demand tech support (**33%**), extended warranties (**26%**),
trade-in discounts (**24%**), and insurance against theft/loss
(**23%**) are available

TURNING TRENDS INTO ACTION

The modern tech landscape may be complex, but it's also full of possibilities. The future is about meeting consumers where they are and proving your value with practical solutions and authentic care. Done right, this creates not only growth, but also long-lasting trust and loyalty.

SECTION 03

The Tech Sentiment Index

THE TECH SENTIMENT INDEX: UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS WITH TECHNOLOGY

Consumers feel a wide range of emotions about technology, and understanding these feelings is essential for creating products and services that truly connect. That's where the Tech Sentiment Index comes in.

The TSI offers a snapshot of how people feel about today's connected world through questions that measure emotional reactions, perceived impacts, and awareness around emerging trends. The TSI's score range (0 to 100) reflects overall sentiment toward technology. The higher the score, the more positive the sentiment.

WHAT THE TSI SCORE TELLS US



The current TSI score stands at 58.7, reflecting a cautiously optimistic attitude toward technology overall. While the lean toward positivity is encouraging, the score also reveals a significant undercurrent of hesitation and skepticism.

This mixed sentiment is a signal for businesses to not only inspire

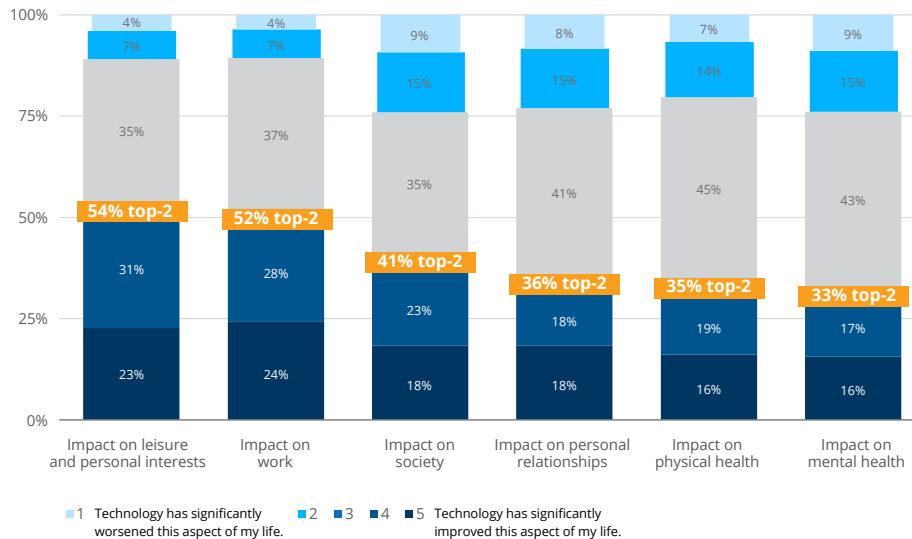
excitement about innovation, but also address the concerns holding consumers back. The TSI consists of responses to six key questions, each with its own individual TSI score indicating how consumers feel about a specific topic. The overall score of 58.7 represents the average sentiment across all respondents.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE TSI

1. Technology is a double-edged sword

Respondents overwhelmingly acknowledged that technology has positively transformed areas like leisure (54%) and work (52%). However, its impact on personal relationships and mental health isn't celebrated as much. These mixed perceptions point to an opportunity for businesses to show how tech can improve well-being and connection beyond utility.

What impact has technology had on the following?

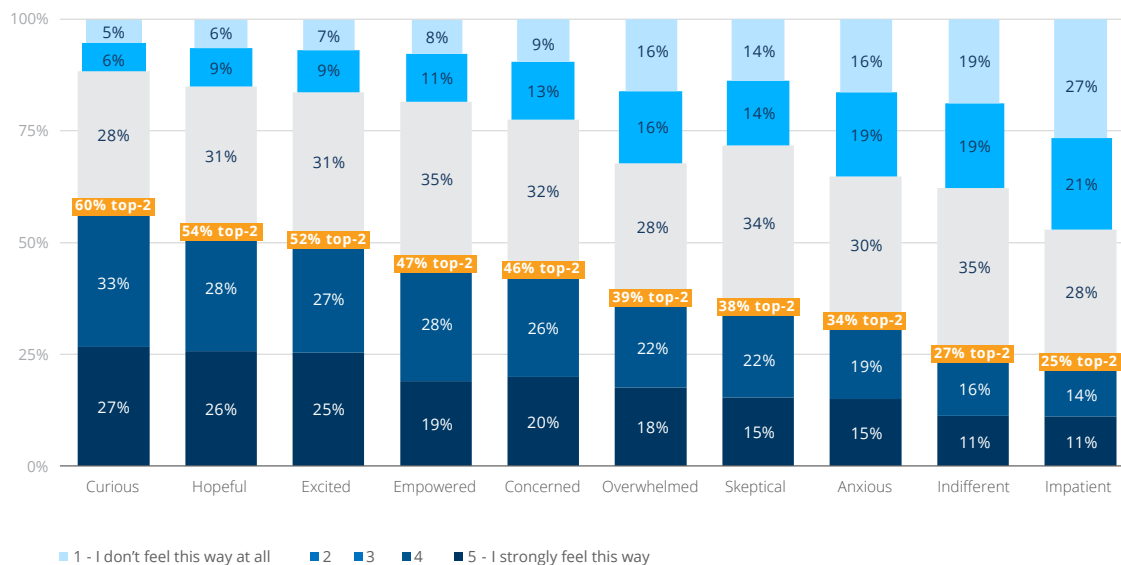


INDIVIDUAL TSI SCORE **58.89**

2. Curiosity and skepticism coexist

A significant portion of respondents expressed curiosity (60%) and excitement (52%) about new technologies. But skepticism (38%) and concerns about being overwhelmed (39%) also surfaced. This underscores the need for businesses to balance innovation with clear, reassuring communication.

How well do each of the following emotions describe your own feelings when you think about the pace of technological change?



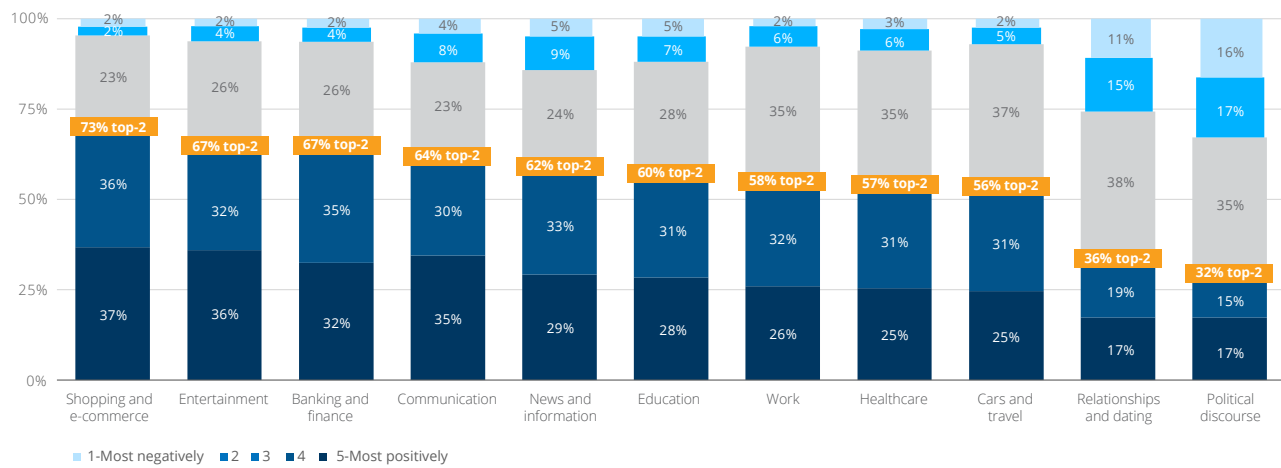
INDIVIDUAL TSI SCORE **53.80**

3. Impact and perception vary

Consumers see the most positive transformation from technology in areas like shopping and e-commerce (73%) and entertainment (67%). However, perceptions are more divided when it comes to political discourse, with only 32% viewing its impact positively and 33% viewing it negatively. This highlights the importance for businesses to understand the context in which their technology operates — and to tailor their messaging accordingly.

Do you think the following areas of life have been transformed by technology positively or negatively?

INDIVIDUAL
TSI SCORE **66.97**

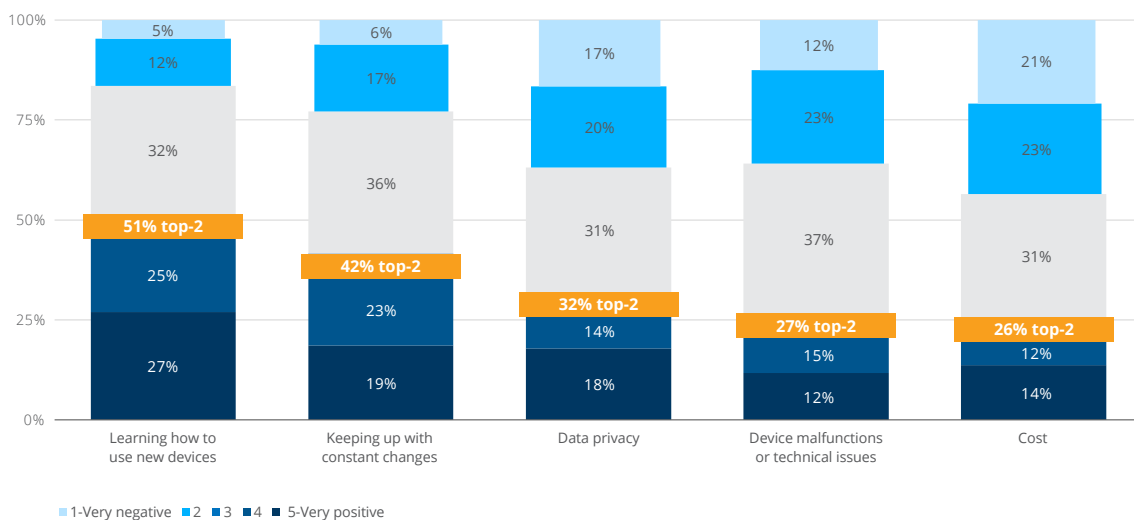


4. Cost remains a concern

Learning how to use new devices received positive feedback, but the cost of technology remains a pain point for 44% of respondents. Delivering value is critical in winning over cost-conscious consumers. Trade-in programs are an effective way for businesses to lower up-front costs for their consumers and make new devices more accessible and sustainable.

How do you feel about the following aspects of new technologies?

INDIVIDUAL
TSI SCORE **52.49**

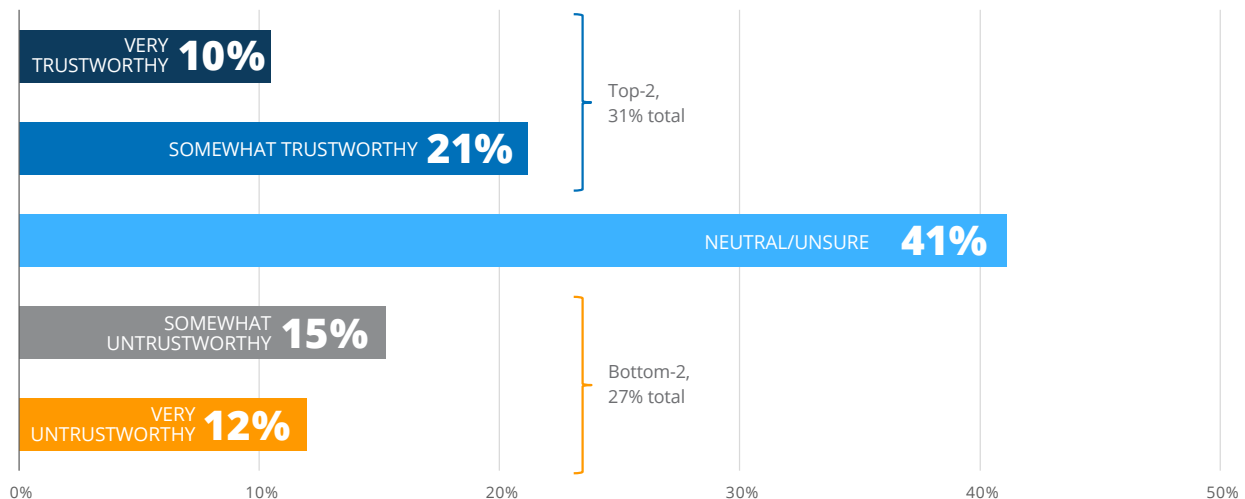


5. Reactions to AI and robotics are divided

The rise of AI and robotics has sparked mixed feelings. 31% of respondents trust AI, while 27% feel uneasy about it. Similarly, only 32% feel enthusiasm about robotics, while 23% express anxiety. These figures suggest businesses need to demystify these technologies, connecting them to everyday benefits rather than abstract concepts.

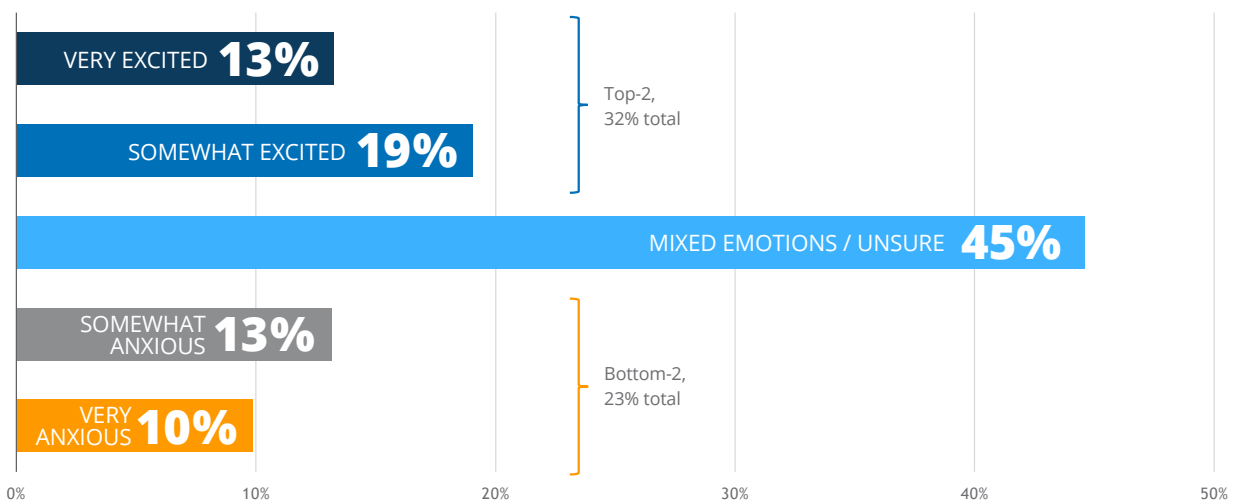
How trustworthy is AI?

INDIVIDUAL
TSI SCORE **52.27**



How do you feel about the increasing use of robotics in everyday life?

INDIVIDUAL
TSI SCORE **53.17**



TRANSLATING THE TSI INTO ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

To thrive in this dual landscape of opportunity and caution, businesses need to tailor their strategies to address these consumer sentiments. Below are actionable steps to turn insights into impactful actions.

1. Address skepticism with transparency

Consumers are eager to adopt technology but need reassurance. Whether concerns stem from privacy, cost, or AI's impact on jobs, businesses should open a dialogue built on trust.

- ▼ Be up front about the benefits and limitations of your products.
- ▼ Highlight safety features, like data-privacy protections, when introducing AI or emerging tech. Ethical practices matter to skeptical audiences.
- ▼ Use real-world examples of how the tech solves problems (e.g., time-saving AI tools like digital assistants).

2. Fuel curiosity through education

Reward consumer curiosity around new tech with educational content that highlights how technology can improve their everyday lives.

- ▼ Provide simple, digestible tutorials or videos about how to use new tech products and services.
- ▼ Share customer stories or use cases showing specific benefits.
- ▼ Develop interactive content, like quizzes or toolkits, to help consumers explore what's possible with your solutions.

3. Simplify the user journey

For consumers who feel anxious or overwhelmed, businesses can ease the process by eliminating pain points.

- ▼ Offer hassle-free onboarding experiences, whether that's through guided setup tools or personalized support.
- ▼ Implement pay-over-time options, bundles, or trade-ins to reduce the financial risk of trying out new tech.
- ▼ Design interfaces with usability in mind so even the least tech-savvy customers feel empowered.



Additional stats contributing to the Tech Sentiment Index



Gen Z is split when it comes to their feelings on the speed of technological change.

36% curiosity
37% excitement
27% skeptical
27% anxious

Millennials feel **empowered (28%) by technology**, seeing it as a driver of efficiency and productivity in their lives.



Baby Boomers recognize tech's positive impacts on certain areas of their lives.



46% shopping
41% entertainment
45% banking and finance



Higher-income consumers (\$100K+) **find AI trustworthy (48%)**.

On average, **that trust falls to 28%** among consumers making less than \$100K.



Urban consumers feel technology has improved both their **mental (43%) and physical health (47%)**.



Consumers living in rural areas are less sure, **with 27% citing positive impacts** on their overall wellness.

LOOKING AHEAD

The TSI isn't just a score — it's a reflection of where people stand in their relationship with technology. Right now, people are cautiously optimistic, full of potential for excitement, but not without reservations. Businesses that act on this data will position themselves to create more relevant, trustworthy, and innovative products and services.

The opportunity is clear. Businesses that understand their consumers will turn hesitations into opportunities and lead the way in tomorrow's tech landscape.

SECTION 04

Charting the Future of Consumer Technology

WHERE CONSUMER INSIGHT MEETS INNOVATION

The findings from Assurant's Connected Consumer Trends Report offer a clear guide for businesses navigating the fast-moving, complex world of technology. Today's consumers live in a space of contrasts when it comes to tech innovation. They're curious yet overwhelmed, excited yet skeptical. By recognizing these dualities, businesses can become trusted partners, addressing both the aspirational and practical needs of tech-savvy customers while easing their concerns.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



1. Understanding dual sentiment

Consumer feelings about technology are mixed. To succeed, businesses need to address both the functional and emotional barriers to technology adoption.



2. Tackling cost and accessibility

Affordability is a recurring challenge for consumers. Flexible pricing options, trade-in programs, and value-focused bundles can ease this pain point and encourage adoption.



3. Building trust in AI

While AI adoption continues to rise, trust remains fragile. To bridge this gap, businesses must prioritize ethical AI practices and communicate their value clearly and transparently.



4. Addressing mental health and digital balance

Digital wellness is becoming a key consideration. Companies that provide tools and features to encourage balance, like screen-time controls, can strengthen their bond with customers.



5. Protection plans as a confidence booster

Nearly half of consumers agree that protection plans ease anxiety around device damage or loss. Simplifying access to these plans and emphasizing their value can improve consumer confidence, driving both satisfaction and loyalty.

SECTION 05

Methodology



OUR RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Assurant's Connected Consumer Trends Report used a carefully designed methodology to capture quantitative data. This chapter outlines the survey framework, the Tech Sentiment Index development, and the personas crafted to decode consumer behavior.

SURVEY APPROACH

Our survey was conducted in partnership with Corus Research in December 2024. We gathered responses from a diverse panel of 1,002 U.S. consumers via web-based questionnaires. Participants were randomly chosen from a double-opt-in panel of over 28 million respondents, ensuring representation of the U.S. population across demographics.

The structure allows repeatability, making it possible to update and monitor trends over time, either quarterly or annually.

THE TECH SENTIMENT INDEX

The Tech Sentiment Index measures perception of technology on a scale of 0 to 100. It provides a bird's-eye view of consumer sentiment, ranging from very negative to very positive. Here's how it was developed.

- 1. Question selection:** Key survey items were identified to reflect emotional reactions, perceived impact, and awareness of new technologies.
- 2. Standardization:** Responses were normalized, with higher scores indicative of more positive sentiments.
- 3. Scoring and aggregation:** An average score was calculated for each respondent, summarizing their sentiment.
- 4. Index scaling:** Scores were converted to the scale of 0 to 100 for clarity and comparability.
- 5. Overall index:** The average TSI score across all respondents presents a snapshot of public sentiment.

DEVELOPMENT OF CONSUMER PERSONAS

To further decode consumer sentiment, four distinct personas were created using Latent Class Analysis, a statistical method identifying hidden subgroups within datasets. These personas reflect how different consumer segments perceive and interact with technology.

Inputs for persona development:

- ▼ **PERSONALITY AND LIFESTYLE ALIGNMENT:** Respondents rated attributes like self-reliance and stability relative to their adoption of technology.
- ▼ **TECHNOLOGY ATTITUDES:** Statements such as “I feel cautious about new technologies” provided insight into their comfort levels.
- ▼ **VIEWS ON PROTECTION PLANS:** Preferences for tech protection and warranty plans helped identify their confidence in technology investments.

SUPPORTING CLIENT NEEDS THROUGH CUSTOMER INSIGHTS

Assurant is uniquely positioned to help businesses align with consumer expectations while delivering innovative, dependable solutions. Drawing on experience from serving over 325 million customers across 21 countries, Assurant combines deep market understanding with technological expertise to develop offerings that truly resonate.

What makes Assurant a trusted partner?

- ▼ **ADVANCED SOLUTIONS:** Patented technologies and tools help minimize business risk while simplifying complex issues for consumers.
- ▼ **DYNAMIC CUSTOMIZATION:** Our tailored strategies are laser-focused on bringing value to the businesses and consumers we serve.
- ▼ **PROVEN PERFORMANCE:** With a history of providing protection products, customer service, and end-to-end device lifecycle management, Assurant enhances the customer experience at every touch point.

Partner with Assurant to explore how our tailored protection and lifecycle solutions can close the gap between innovation and trust, making technology more accessible, sustainable, and valuable for your customers.



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