

# UK Social Buyer Audience Will Grow to 10 Million This Year

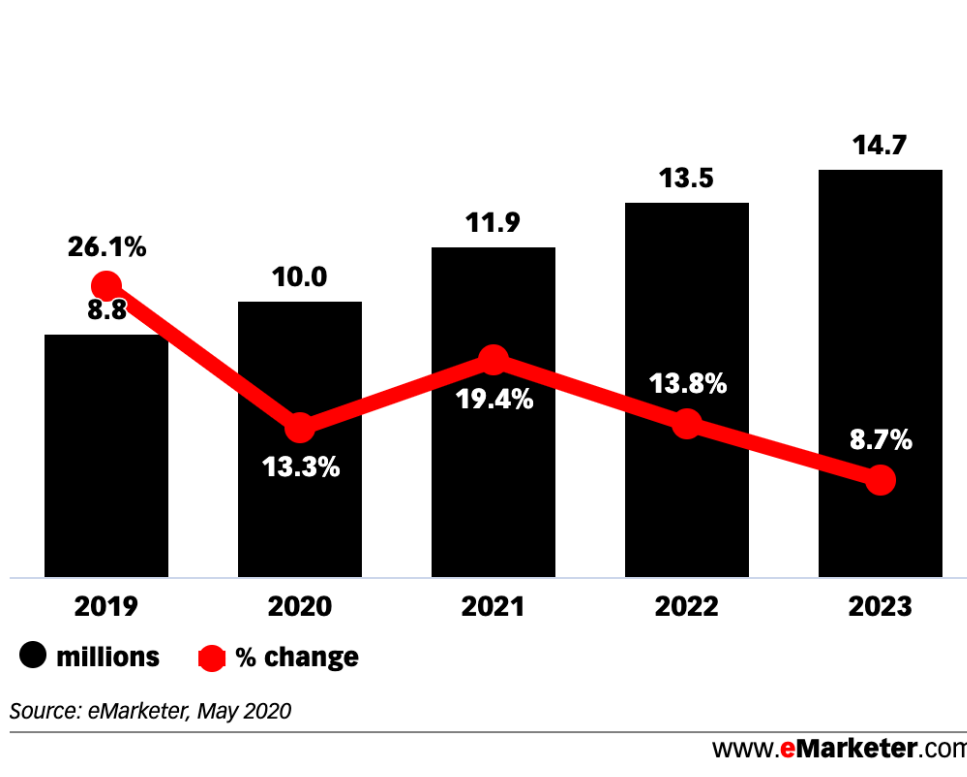
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**T**he number of social buyers in the UK will rise to 10.0 million in 2020, a 13.3% increase from 2019, according to our estimates.

## Social Buyers

UK, 2019-2023



Annual growth rates will be strong during our forecast period, and the social buyer audience will reach 14.7 million by 2023. But the UK still has room to grow, especially since platforms like Facebook and Instagram tend to launch new commerce features internationally about a year or two after doing so in the US. For example, we expect there will be 76.5 million social buyers in the US this year, and that figure will surpass 100 million by 2023. To frame it another way, 38.4% of social network users in the US are social buyers, whereas that share is 26.2% in the UK.

Getting consumers to feel comfortable shopping via social also involves a learning curve. Even in the US, consumers will use social media for research and browsing but ultimately make the purchase on the retailer's site.

"As shoppers spend more time on their mobile devices and on social platforms, there will undoubtedly be tremendous growth in social

buying in the coming years,” said Oscar Orozco, eMarketer senior forecasting analyst at Insider Intelligence. “With ad dollars shifting to social platforms and targeting capabilities improving, consumers will soon find that social purchases fall less in the 'impulse' category and more on the 'planned and meditated' spectrum. Further driving this behavior are shopping features on Facebook and Instagram, which are better equipped to accommodate social sales.”

As mentioned, we expect growth will continue to rise as more social features become available to UK consumers. That includes Facebook Pay, which some predict will launch in Europe in 2021, as well as Instagram Checkout—which allows shoppers to not only view product information from a brand's post, but also make a purchase by clicking a “Checkout on Instagram” button.

Last month, Facebook announced the launch of Facebook Shops, which will make it easier for small businesses to set up an online store that consumers will be able to access on both Facebook and Instagram. While it’s uncertain when this feature will become available to small businesses and consumers in the UK, we believe it will be another contributing factor behind social buyer growth.

“The launch of Facebook Shops amid the pandemic was no coincidence, and the expectation is for this to be a game changer for small businesses as consumers continue to shift more of their shopping online,” Orozco said. “The impact should begin to be felt in 2021, as businesses adapt their product catalogs to this new digital storefront and different payment options become more integrated on the platform.”