

Press release

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Virtual interactions ‘as good as being there’ for nearly a quarter of online consumers

Internationally, 23 percent of online consumers say virtual interactions can be as good as being there in person.

Nuremberg, February 25, 2016 – GfK has published findings from a 22-country survey showing that just under a quarter (23 percent) of online consumers agree¹ that virtual interactions with people and places can be as good as being there in person. This compares to just 15 percent who disagree¹.

Opportunities for virtual interactions are increasingly common in daily life – whether its video-conferencing at work, ‘face-timing’ via a smartphone, instant text chat via Facebook or WhatsApp etc, or even exploring cities and venues such as restaurants or museums using Google Street view or 3D-Panorama. But are these interactions as good as being there in person?

Agreement that virtual interactions can be as good as real life peaks with those aged 20-29 and 30-39, with at 28 percent and 27 percent respectively agreeing. This puts them comfortably ahead of teenagers, who are the next most ‘virtually minded’ generation, at 22 percent.

Unsurprisingly, agreement falls off rapidly amongst older generations. One in five (20 percent) of 50-59 year olds disagree that virtual interactions can be as good a in-person contact, compared to just 15 percent voting the opposite way. And, for those aged 60 and over, almost a third (27 percent) disagree versus just one in ten (11 percent) who agree.

Brazil and Turkey are most ‘virtually minded’; Germany and Sweden are least

Brazil and Turkey top the list for online consumers who believe virtual interactions can be as good as being there in person, with a third (34 percent) in each country claiming this. They are followed by Mexico (28 percent), China (27 percent) and Russia (24 percent).

These findings have applications for almost all businesses. Whether it’s using augmented reality to enhance marketing and advertising or embracing video conferencing to bring down travel costs for meetings - knowing which markets and consumer segments are most open to virtual interactions is an essential starting point.

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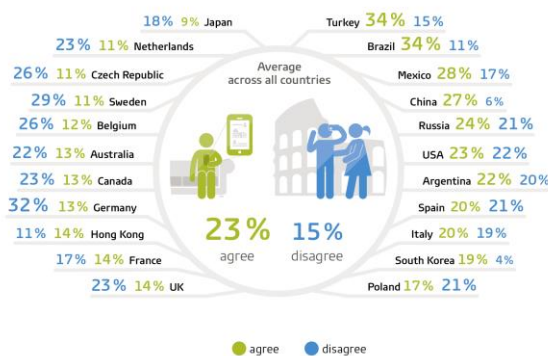
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VIRTUAL INTERACTIONS WITH PEOPLE AND PLACES CAN BE AS GOOD AS BEING THERE IN PERSON



Country results



Source: GfK survey among 27,000+ Internet users (ages 15+) in 22 countries – top 2 boxes (agreement) / bottom 2 boxes (disagreement) out of 7-point scale – rounded © GfK 2016

http://www.gfk.com/fileadmin/user_upload/dyna_content/Global/images/Infographics/GfK-Infographic-Virtual-interactions-Countries-Web-RGB.jpg

The other end of the scale is lead by Germany, with nearly a third (32 percent) on online consumers there disagreeing that virtual can be as good as in-person interactions. They are followed by Sweden at 29 percent, and then two ‘tied’ results: the Czech Republic and Belgium at just over a quarter (26 percent) and the Netherlands and UK at just under a quarter (23 percent).

To download the full 22-country findings, go to www.gfk.com/global-studies/global-study-overview/

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Notes for the editor

¹Top two / bottom two box responses from a 7-point scale where "1" means "disagree strongly" and "7" means "agree strongly. The survey question asked: Please indicate how strongly you personally agree or disagree with the following statement: “Virtual interactions with people and places can be as good as being there in person”.

About the study

GfK conducted an online survey with over 27,000 consumers aged 15 or older in 22 countries. Online data were collected using a staggered field start that completed in June 2015 and weighted to reflect the demographic composition of the online population age 15+ in each market. The countries included are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, UK and USA.

About GfK



GfK is the trusted source of relevant market and consumer information that enables its clients to make smarter decisions. More than 13,000 market research experts combine their passion with GfK's long-standing data science experience. This allows GfK to deliver vital global insights matched with local market intelligence from more than 100 countries. By using innovative technologies and data sciences, GfK turns big data into smart data, enabling its clients to improve their competitive edge and enrich consumers' experiences and choices.

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