

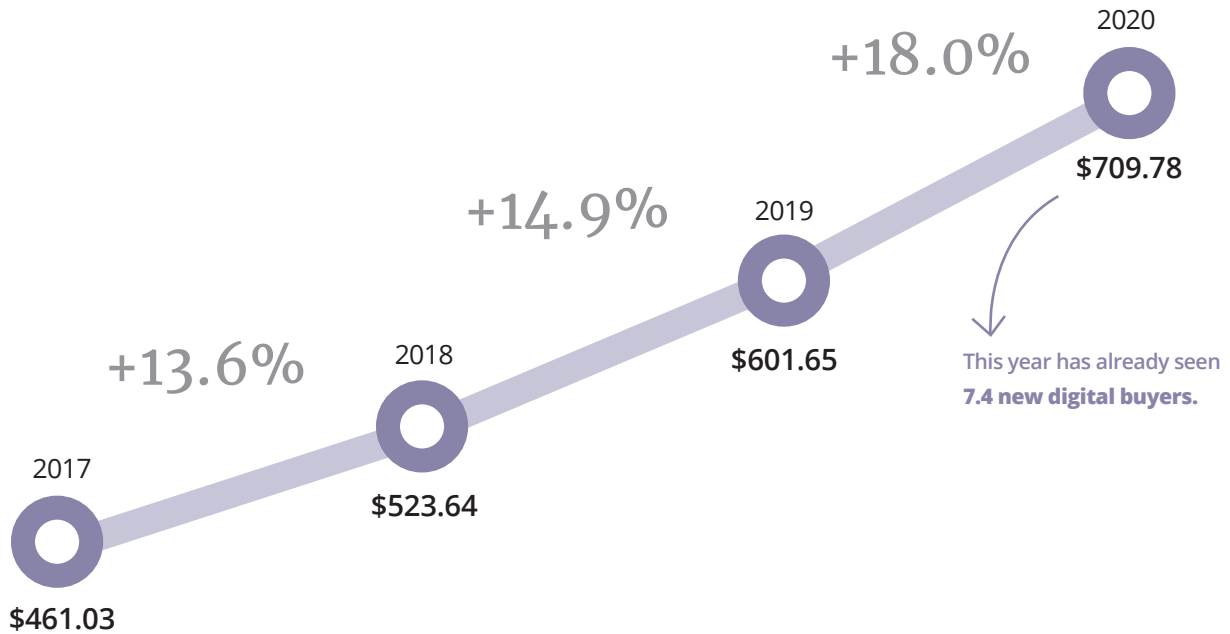
The Hero of the E-Commerce Boom Is on Your Front Porch

The cardboard box has emerged as a sustainable solution that's helping retailers keep pace with soaring digital sales during the Covid-19 pandemic. Here's how.



In the era of free shipping and two-day delivery, U.S. e-commerce sales were already growing rapidly. Months of quarantine have only accelerated that rise, with 2020 figures forecast to increase substantially.

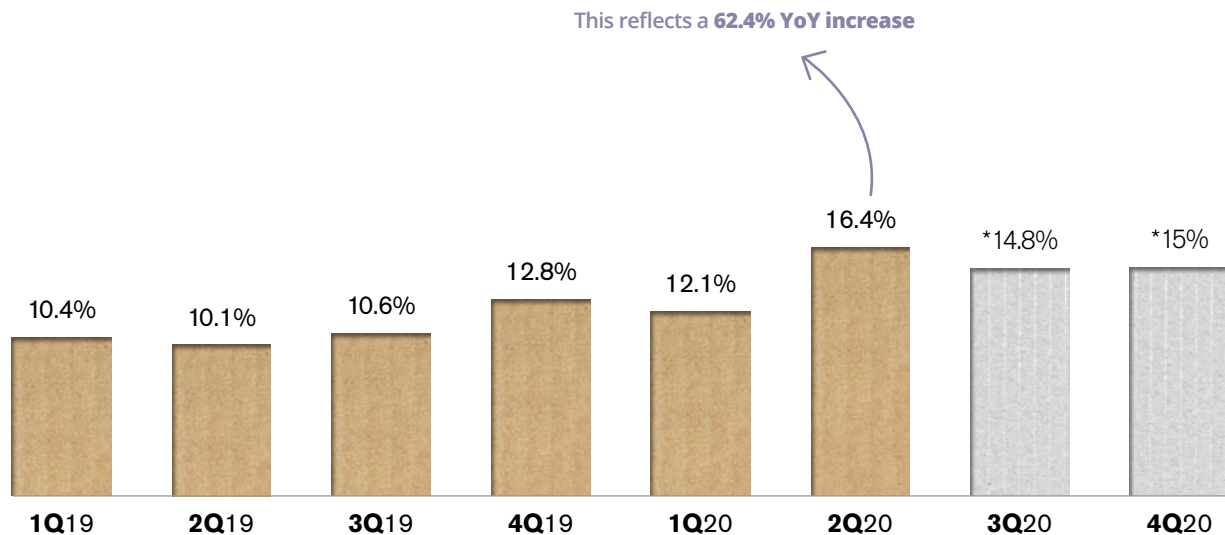
U.S. retail e-commerce sales (in billions):



Source: eMarketer, May 2020

As a result, the pandemic has helped drive the trend of e-commerce sales comprising a larger and larger portion of overall retail sales.

E-commerce as % of overall retail sales:



Source: eMarketer

*Projected

Chances are, you are one of those buyers. In the span of just one month, a survey of U.S. adults revealed a huge shift from physical to digital shopping.



Source: Ipsos/USA Today

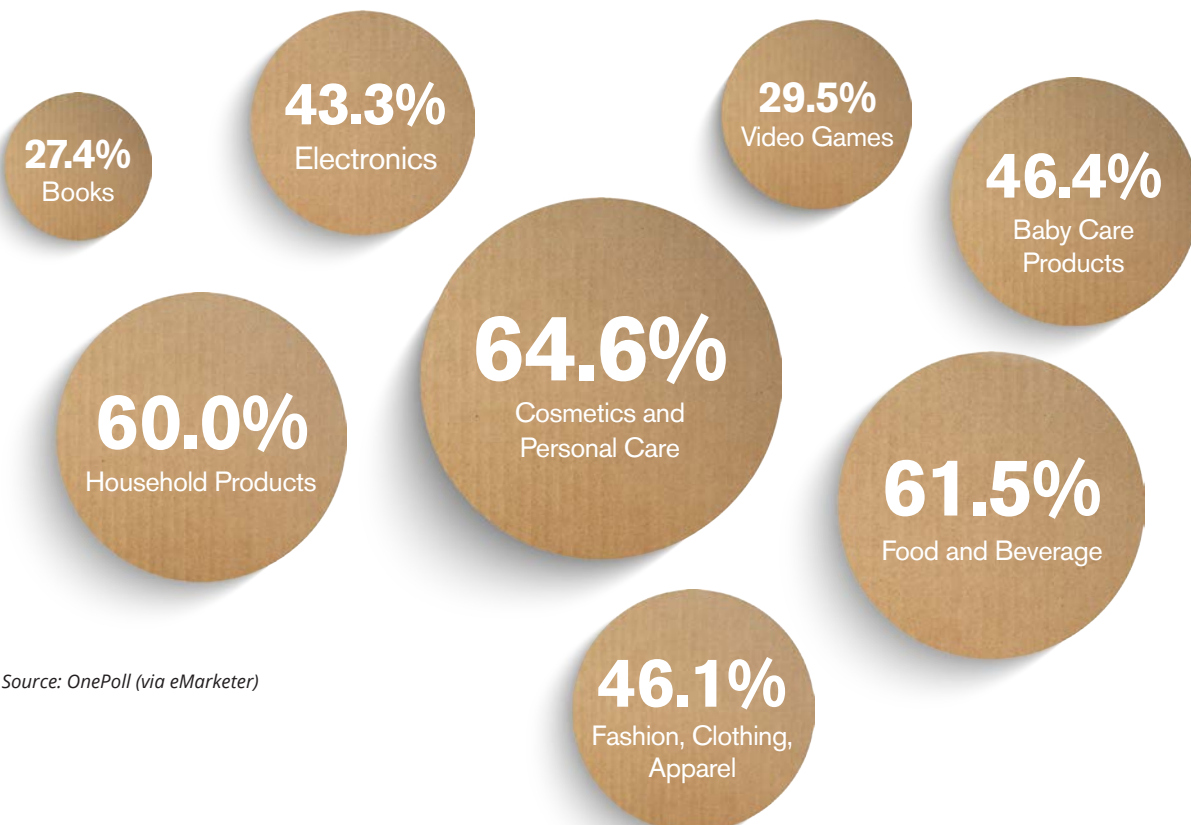


U.S. retail e-commerce sales (in billions):

This **28% increase** is actually larger than the increase in people who wash their hands more frequently (+21%)

Groceries are far from the only products that U.S. internet users are having delivered directly to their doors during the pandemic.

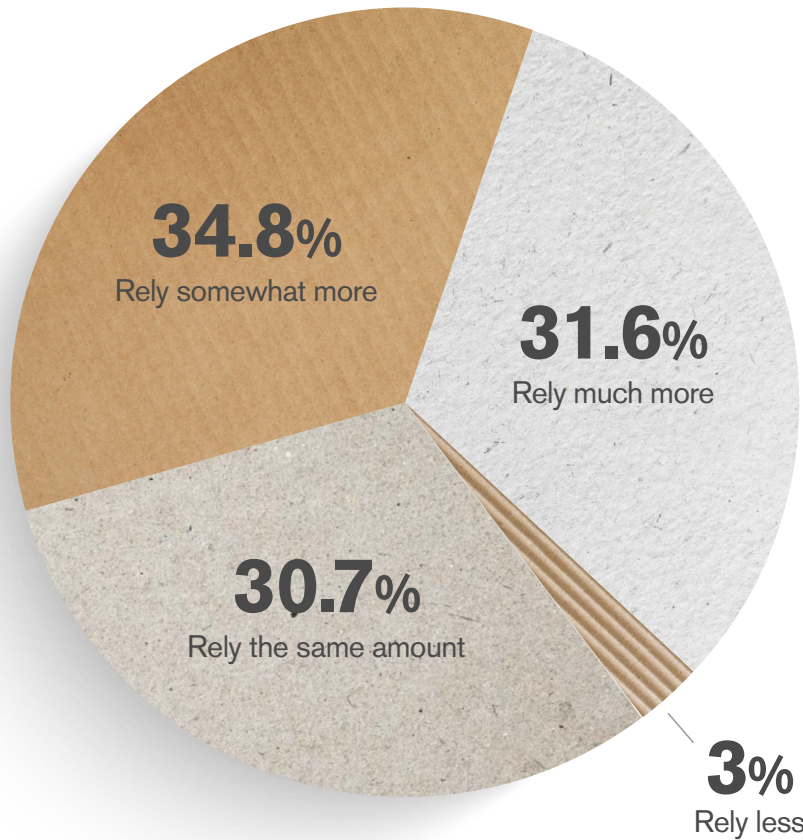
% of adults who have bought these products digitally:



Source: OnePoll (via eMarketer)

This trend doesn't only impact giant retailers. Small and medium-size businesses are also adapting, with nearly two-thirds expecting to lean more heavily on digital sales in the future.

How much will U.S. SMBs rely on e-commerce post-pandemic?



Source: Pymnts.com

Fortunately, research on consumer sentiment shows an enduring preference for the humble cardboard box.

81%

of Americans rely on corrugated cardboard boxes to ship merchandise safely on a four-year average

71%

are more likely to buy brands that package their products in paper or cardboard

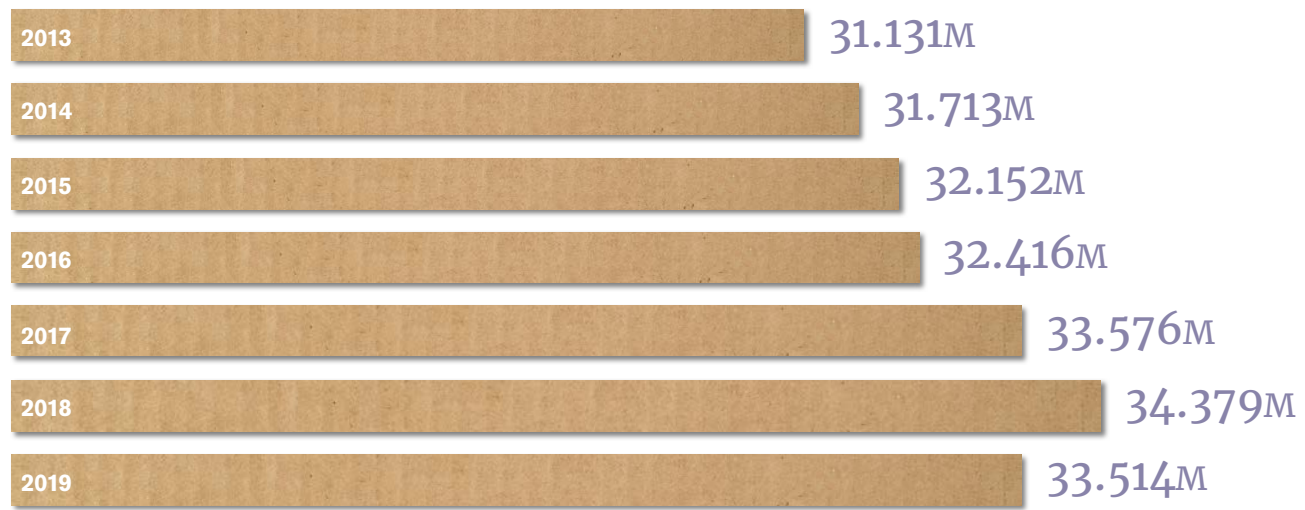
84%

agree that paper and cardboard packaging is less wasteful than other packaging

Source: Paper and Packaging Board, Ipsos

This has resulted in steady growth for the corrugated box industry in the United States.

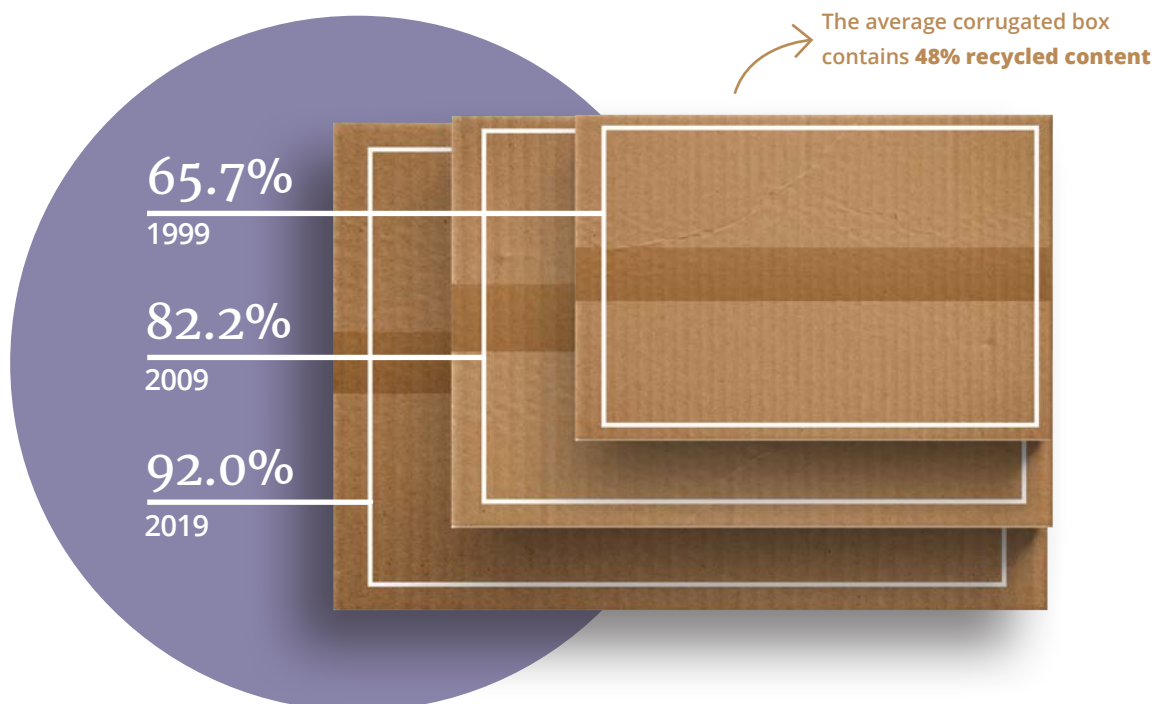
U.S. corrugated consumption in tons:



Source: American Forest & Paper Association

But the increased use of corrugated boxes hasn't come at the expense of the environment, and that includes strong forest stewardship practices. In fact, the recycling rate of corrugated packaging now sits above 90%, the culmination of decades of sustainability efforts.

Recycling rate of old corrugated containers (OCC):



Source: Corrugated.org; American Forest & Paper Association



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