

Record tech spending expected in US, show organizers say

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Procter & Gamble's chief brand officer displays a smartphone-activated robot that delivers toilet paper to the bathroom when summoned

Consumer technology spending is getting a boost from wearables, smart devices and streaming media services and should hit record levels in the

United States this year, organizers of a major tech gathering said Sunday.

Kicking off the 2020 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, organizers said they expect \$422 billion in sales of some 300 kinds of consumer tech products and services in the US market, a gain of four percent from last year.

The Consumer Technology Association (CTA), which organizes the annual gathering, said popularity of streaming services and wireless earbuds and the promise of new devices using superfast 5G connectivity and artificial intelligence is driving consumer interest.

"More and more [consumers](#) are embracing the faster connectivity, advanced intelligence and seemingly infinite content that technology offers today—pushing consumer technology industry revenues toward another record-setting year in 2020," said Gary Shapiro, the association's president and chief executive.

"We'll see advancements in 5G connectivity and AI play out across the CES 2020 show floor this week—from digital health to self-driving vehicles and smart homes—vital technologies that are changing our lives for the better."

The show opens Tuesday against the backdrop of mounting concerns on how data gathered from connected devices can be exploited by marketers, governments and hackers.

There has also been a wave of attacks from politicians and activists against dominant tech platforms, as well as intense trade frictions between the world's economic and technology powers, the United States and China.

CTA's forecast shows strong consumer interest in a number of sectors including digital health—a broad category including smartwatches, fitness trackers and connected health monitoring devices—with sales of around \$10 billion.

For streaming—including video, music and gaming—the group expects 11 percent growth in spending to \$81 billion.

CTA said it is seeing consumer interest in new kinds of wireless earbuds, led by those from Apple and Samsung, with expected sales of 67 million units worth \$8.2 billion in revenue.

The forecast suggests smartphone sales will break out of their torpor with a two percent increase in sales, helped by new 5G handsets.

But 5G handset growth is likely to be slow at first, and it will be 2020 before the faster technology accounts for two-thirds of US handset sales, according to Lesley Rohrbaugh, director of market research at the association.

Rorhbaugh said however that new chip technology is making possible many more kinds of devices, such as those for the home, infused with [artificial intelligence](#) using object detection and voice recognition.

"Voice is going into everything. And it's not just our mobile devices. It's not just our speakers, it's every product and like those smart appliances," she said.

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