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Technology at the table feeds profits

Consumers' use of mobile devices to improve their restaurant experiences has risen sharply in the last quarter and this trend is set to continue, according to the latest GO Technology report from Zonal and CGA.

Ordering takeaways and food deliveries has shown the biggest leap from 12% to 17%, followed by online reservations which have increased by 3% from April to July.

[GO Technology](#), which tracks the technology habits of 5,000 UK adult consumers, also shows another significant area of growth has been the use of tech at the table, with one in three (31%) of those surveyed agreeing that more outlets should use apps and tablets to improve service.

And it makes sense for operators to sit up and take notice as the monthly spend on eating and drinking out among those using apps is much higher at £99.35, against an all-consumer average of £76.47.

"Many people don't just want to use technology at the tables in restaurants, pubs and bars, they expect it," said Zonal's sales and marketing director, Clive Consterdine.

Driving the app revolution is consumer hunger for speed. Two in five (41%) of GO Technology respondents cite the ability to pay quicker and avoid waiting to settle bills as the main advantage of apps. Almost as many respondents mention the ability to skip queues (34%).

This also translates to orders being taken at the table by servers using tablets or electronic handheld devices, with two in five (41%) of respondents saying it enhances their overall experience. Over half (54%) believe it makes the ordering process quicker and a third (33%) think their orders arrive faster. A further 35% also believe it improves accuracy and they see less room for error on technology than the traditional handwritten order pad.

However, there is a caveat to adopting technology as it shouldn't replace human interaction. Of those who didn't believe it enhanced their experience, two in five (41%) thought it impersonal, or that servers with tablets don't interact as much as they would like.

"Hospitality operators can no longer ignore the role technology plays in the eating and drinking out experience. GO Technology supports the fact that it will never be a replacement for human interaction, but consumers do expect the benefits that mobile technology can deliver in terms of convenience, speed, accuracy and reward. By getting the perfect balance of customer service, interaction and technology in your venue, you can provide a fantastic experience every time," added Consterdine.

General confidence in apps is increasing, but trust issues remain. Nearly one in five (18%) GO Technology respondents say apps have not improved their out of home experience because they don't trust them.

Karl Chessell, CGA Business Unit Director, Retail and Food concluded: "Educating in the security and accuracy of apps can help to combat this scepticism. Use of apps is on the rise, especially among millennials and parents, who like the way that technology can speed up their experiences, simplify the jobs of researching and booking venues and reward their loyalty."

Chessell added: "There is similar upward trajectory in restaurants using tablets to take orders, which can create a positive impression among tech-savvy diners and drinkers. Technology can never replace human engagement at the table, but brands that can use it in ways that please consumers are going to have a vital edge in this ultra-competitive market in the months and years ahead."

To access a copy of the full report visit <https://www.zonal.co.uk/news/zonal/tech-at-the-table/>

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About the data:

The Technology at the Table report is based on figures from Zonal's GO Technology survey, in conjunction with CGA, using a sample of 5,000 nationally representative British consumers.

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