

SEPTEMBER 2026 · CONSUMER & BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

Fast Tech Consumer Study

How low price, modest expectations and easy replacement make fast tech ordinary in Europe.

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CARRIED OUT BY

Bellegarde Scientific Consulting

Executive summary

Fast tech has become an ordinary consumer choice, mainly due to its high convenience: low cost, immediate usefulness, little financial risk if the product disappoints, quick replacement options, easy to discard and easier to keep thanks to its rather small size.

- Fast tech consumption cannot be explained simply by a lack of knowledge or lack of care for the environment. European consumers surveyed often recognise the products as being cheap, anticipating their limitations, yet still find buying and using them acceptable.
- Ownership is wide: **86.8% own at least one fast tech item** (excluding e-vapes) and 77.6% bought at least one during the previous 12 months.
- Most purchases have a purpose: temporary replacement, keeping a spare and meeting everyday needs are more common explanations. **Buying without any real need is not common.**
- A short life does not automatically create disappointment: **57.9% recall a shortest-lived item lasting no more than six months, yet 60.9% are satisfied overall.** That is consistent with consumers accepting the implicit deal fast tech devices offer: a disposable piece of tech that “does the job” for a while and can be easily replaced if need be.
- There’s a selective interest in durability: **80.3%** would have paid more for at least *some* longer-lasting alternatives, but **59.1%** would still replace a broken product with **another inexpensive device**. It seems consumers separate fast tech items from more durable ones, giving each a purpose and different expectations.
- **The environmental costs of fast tech are less visible than its durability limits**, disposal often follows habit and convenience, and social disapproval of buying fast tech is not common.
- Along with age, **attitude is the clearest behavioural marker**. The more respondents are favourable towards buying fast tech, the more likely they are to have bought some. Perceived approval also matters.
- **Durability perceptions** are linked with what respondents say they would pay, how they would replace a broken device and whether they intend to buy less in the future.

THE IMPLICIT FAST TECH DEAL

Fast tech devices may not last long, but they “do the job” and can easily be bought again if they break. The findings suggest that most consumers accept this deal, rather than considering fast tech as bad for the environment, undesirable objects, or even a rip-off. That’s probably why most of the respondents intend to continue consuming fast tech.



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About the study

1. Purpose and definition

The WEEE Forum and its participating members commissioned this study for International E-Waste Day 2026. It examines how surveyed European households acquire, use and stop using fast tech devices, qualified for the study as *small and inexpensive electronic devices*, and the perceptions about durability, replacement, environmental impact and responsibility.

The expression fast tech has no single, widely accepted operational definition. The questionnaire therefore did not talk about “fast tech”. Instead, we designated fast tech devices as “small and inexpensive electronic devices”, along with indicative price ceilings adapted to the category and market. This neutral wording reduces the risk that the label itself would bias respondents toward a negative or environmentally conscious answer, mentioning “fast tech” could create a link to “fast fashion”.

We divided fast tech into three families:

- **Charging and lighting products**, including chargers, cables, adapters, LED strips, bulbs and small lamps, under €10,
- **High-tech devices**, including audio products, power banks, wearables, computer accessories and game controllers, under €20,
- **Gadgets and lifestyle items**, including small appliances, electronic toys, beauty devices and home or pet gadgets, under €20.

Disposable single-use e-vapes were included in selected ownership and disposal questions but kept separate from the three core categories throughout the analysis.



2. Sample

10,245 European adults completed the online survey through an access panel in July 2026.

Table 1. Respondents by country

COUNTRY	N	COUNTRY	N	COUNTRY	N
France	1,505	Belgium	1,503	Romania	1,205
Poland	1,009	Ireland	1,003	Switzerland	1,000
Norway	505	Greece	504	Netherlands	504
Portugal	503	Spain	503	United Kingdom	501

The results were globally weighted to better reflect age, gender and the relative population size of the 12 participating countries, at European level. This report presents the European results as a whole and does not compare countries.

3. Questionnaire

The questionnaire is available on this link:

<https://bellegarde.co/clients/weee-forum/fast-tech-questionnaire/questionnaire-fast-tech.pdf>

It covers fast tech ownership, purchasing, recent use, reasons for stopping use, end-of-life behaviour, satisfaction, willingness to pay, replacement intentions, social norms, policy opinions and awareness. It also covers basic demographics: respondent's age, gender, education and employment status, as well as household income and area of residence. Some of these questions are used as study filter (age, language).

4. Note about the findings

The study does not include all European countries and is therefore not representative of Europe as a whole. It nevertheless provides a strong cross-national evidence base: 10,245 adults in 12 countries, at least 500 completed interviews in every country, 1,200 in Romania and about 1,500 in both Belgium and



France. Weighting aligns the pooled results with age, gender and the relative population size of the participating countries. This breadth supports robust findings across the countries studied, while conclusions about all European consumers should remain cautious. This report does not provide systematic country-level analysis of fast tech or systematically compare countries. The only country-level results concern ownership and purchasing during the previous 12 months. **As these estimates are not weighted within countries, they should be interpreted as indicative patterns rather than nationally representative figures.**

Some questions allowed more than one answer and some apply only to previous buyers, recent buyers or non-buyers. Because the evidence is observational and self-reported, it can reveal coherent patterns but cannot infer causation without solid theory to back it up.



Part 1 - Understanding the fast tech consumer journey

The findings follow the journey of fast tech consumption: products are already common, purchases are casual and easy to justify, performance is judged against modest expectations, replacement is affordable, and neither environmental understanding nor social pressure seems to break the cycle.

1. The implicit promise

Fast tech is not a marginal or occasional category of electronic devices. Across the three families, 86.8% of European consumers surveyed own at least one item. At least 44.1% own more than five, indicating that **fast tech devices are familiar**.

Purchasing is similarly widespread: 87.4% of the respondents have bought at least one fast tech product and 77.6% did so during the previous 12 months (August 2025 to July 2026). It is less of an exceptional choice than a routine part of shopping.

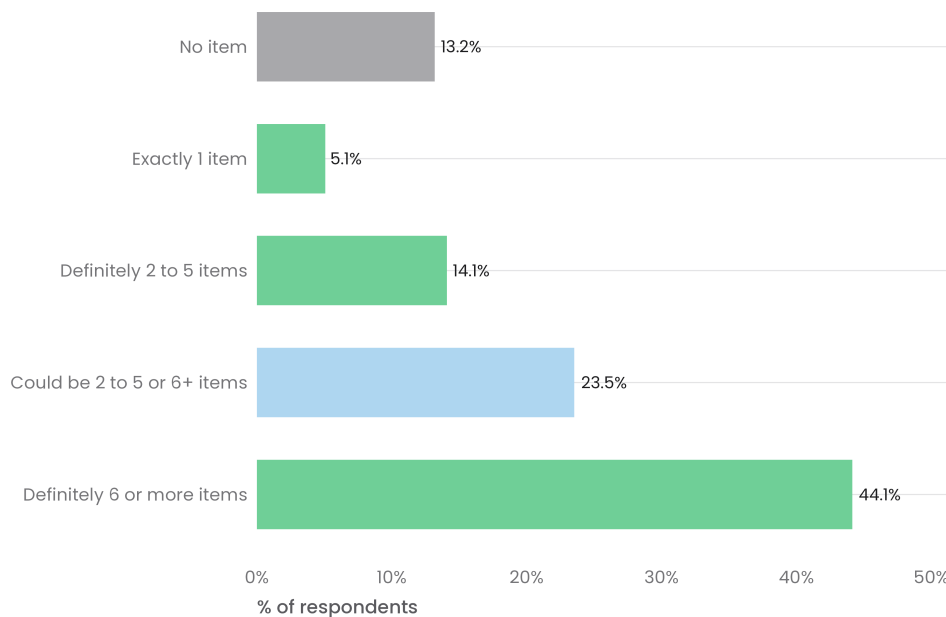


Figure 1. Combined quantity of fast tech items owned across the three core categories



1.1. Low price changes the decision threshold

The most distinctive advantage of fast tech devices is their small financial consequence. Price is cited by 55.2% of the buyers as a general reason for choosing fast tech devices. Promotions follow at 35.8%, while availability or prominent display is cited by 28.5%.

Together, these conditions seem to lower the thinking a purchase requires. A consumer can solve an immediate problem, try something unfamiliar or buy a backup without needing strong confidence that the product will be excellent or last for years. The promise is therefore partly about reducing the cost of being wrong, altogether reducing the mental load.

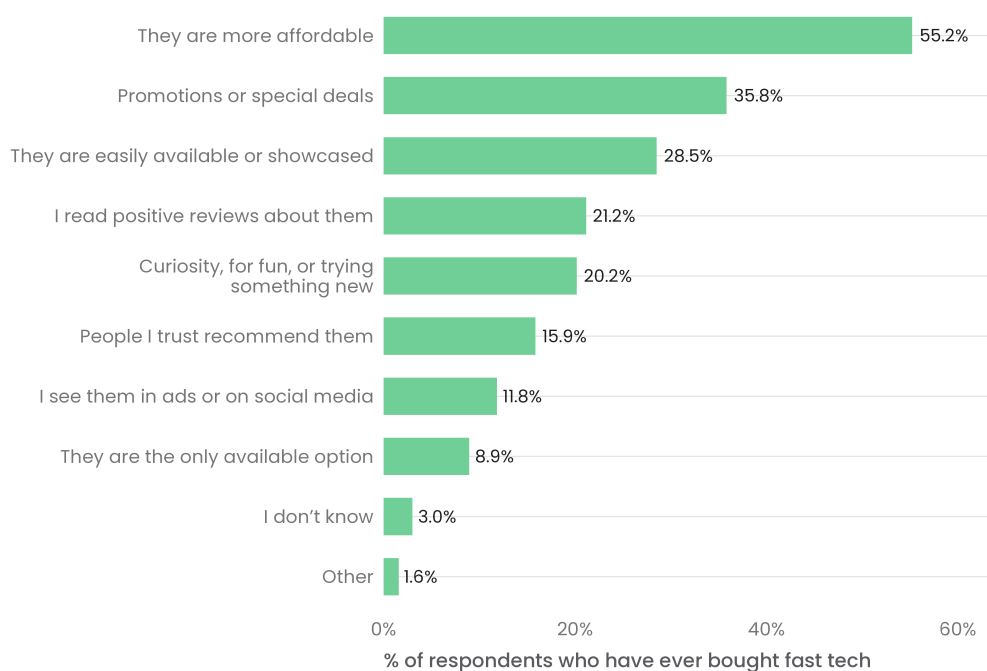


Figure 2. General reasons for choosing fast tech over more expensive alternatives

1.2. Most reported purchase have a purpose

The leading use cases of fast tech are mainly practical: temporary replacement (40%), keeping a spare (39.6%) and work, study or everyday use (36.4%). Wanting a newer version is also common at 34.4%. These motives justify the purchase even when the product is not expected to become a long-term possession.

There is also room for purchases that don't fill a need: 22.7% of buyers say they bought despite not really needing the item in at least one category. The point is **not that all fast tech is unnecessary, but that affordability makes the boundary between useful and tempting easier to cross.**

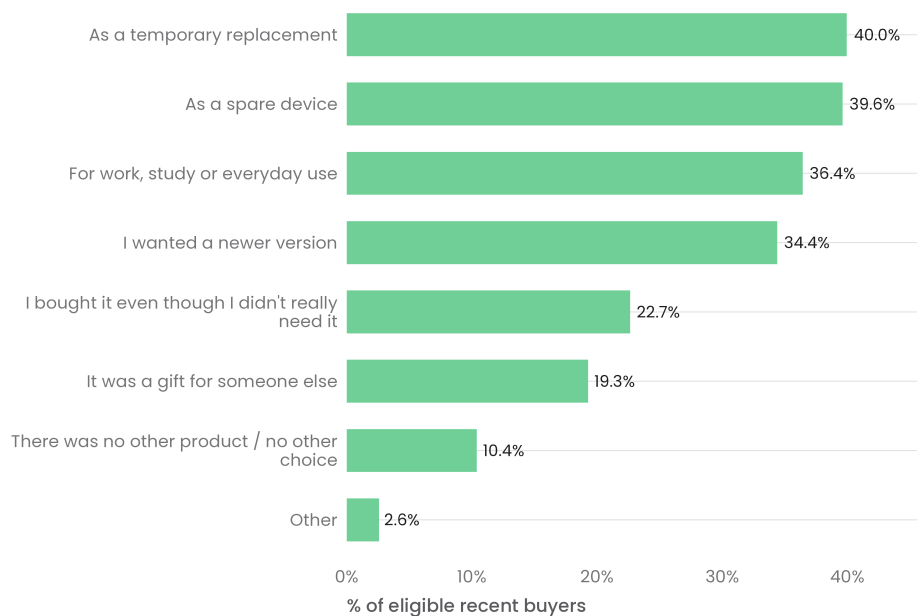


Figure 3. Reasons for buying across the three core product categories

About half of the respondents indicate buying fast tech online or in physical stores, and only 6.1% bought some at the airport or a train station, where it is rarely a planned purchase.

The contrast with non-buyers reinforces this reading. Their leading explanation for not having bought any fast tech is that they simply do not need the product or already own something similar (51.7%). Preference for a higher-quality, longer-lasting alternative follows at 26.8%, while environmental concern is much less common at 10.6%.



2. Consumers recalling short lifespan cases

The fast tech promise implies limited durability, and it seems to be accepted by most buyers. When they recall the shortest period for which they used any fast tech device, 38.6% describe an item discarded without use, after one use or within one month. For 57.9%, the shortest-lived item lasted no more than six months.

Note: this measure deliberately captures the worst remembered case. It is not an average lifespan. It should not be read as evidence that most products fail within six months. However, it does show that extremely short use is familiar to a large share of fast tech consumers.

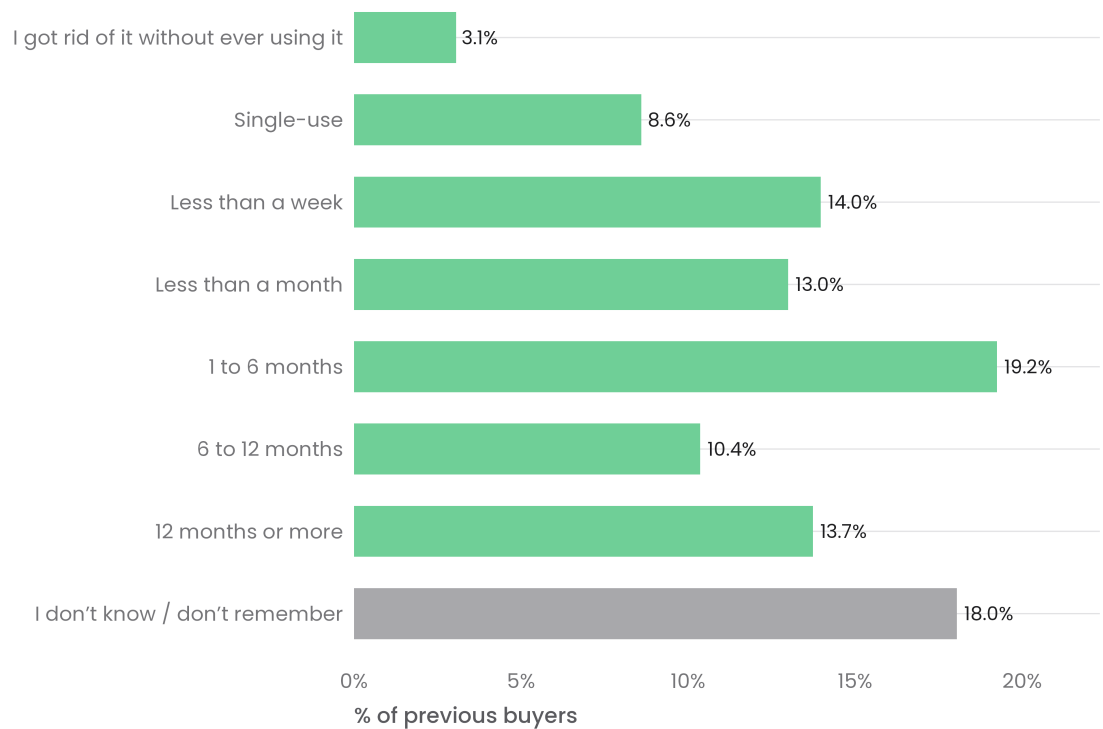


Figure 4. Shortest recalled period of use before discarding a fast tech device

ARE CONSUMERS OK WITH A SHORT LIFESPAN?

While a majority can recall a device used for less than six months, the association with the next results suggests that the risk of a very short lifetime is accepted.



2.1.Failure is common, but not disappointment

We could imagine that frequent failure may lead to widespread dissatisfaction. It’s not the case. Among fast tech consumers, only 8.4% declare themselves dissatisfied. Overall, 60.9% are satisfied, 30.7% are neutral. Most also say that their devices met or exceeded expectations for lifespan (73.2%) and quality (76.5%).

The results are coherent if the standard of success is not long life, but adequate performance at a low price. A product can “do the job”, meet the expectation, and still be replaced soon afterwards.

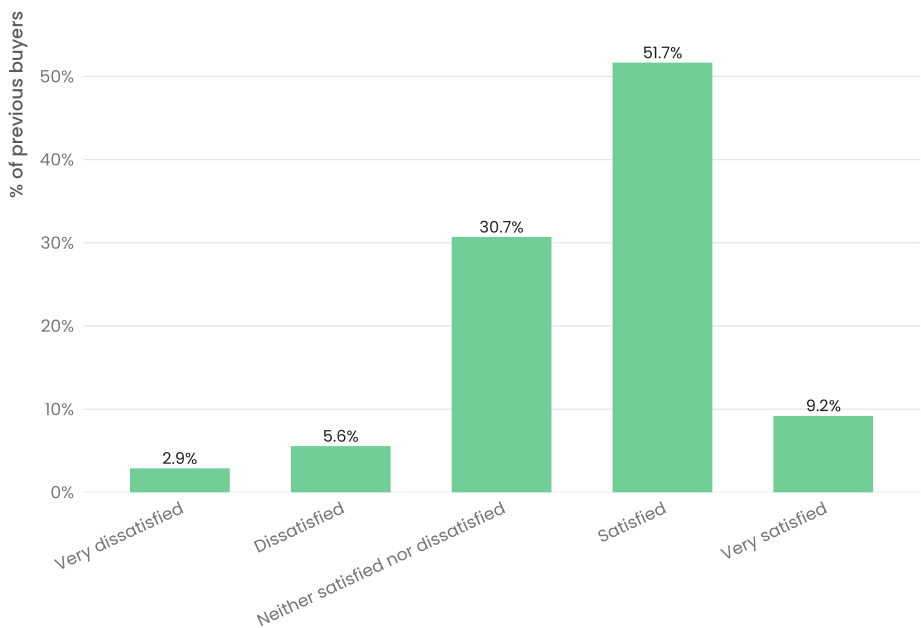


Figure 5. Overall satisfaction with fast tech devices



2.2. Durability matters selectively

Despite previous results, consumers are not indifferent to durability: 80.3% say they would have paid more for longer lasting alternatives, for at least some fast devices they have bought, though not necessarily for every device they have bought.

Replacement intentions reveal the limit of that preference. If a fast tech device broke, 59.1% would still replace it with the exact same kind of device. Only 33.2% would move to a more expensive alternative and 6.5% would not replace it. Durability therefore competes with a familiar and immediately available default rather than with indifference alone.

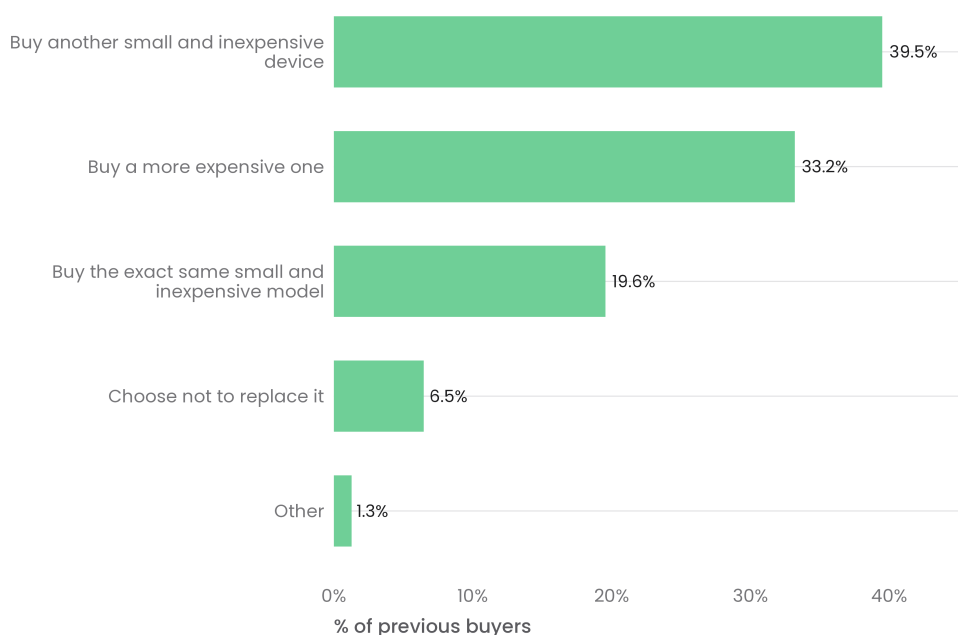


Figure 6. Intended response if a fast tech device broke

FAST TECH VS HIGHER-END PRODUCTS

The opportunity for durable alternatives is there, but the advantages of fast tech seem to remain stronger.

2.3. Durability is more visible than environmental cost

When fast tech is compared with more expensive alternatives, 45.8% expect it to have a shorter lifespan. An interesting 21% see it as more harmful to the environment. The remaining 79% see equal or lower environmental harm. Consumers therefore appear more aware of the durability trade-off than of the possible environmental consequences of repeated production and replacement.



The two perceptions overlap only partly. Just **16.2% simultaneously see fast tech as both more harmful and shorter-lived**. For consumers, short lifespan doesn't seem to rhyme with a bad environmental signal.

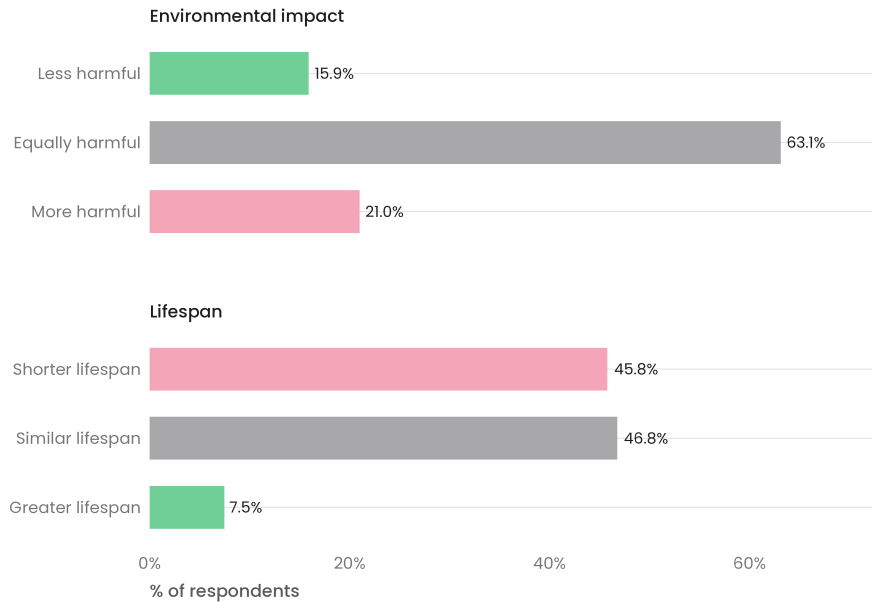


Figure 7. Perceived environmental impact and lifespan compared with more expensive alternatives

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHT

The environmental story must connect short life to repeated replacement, resource use and electronic waste. The survey suggests that consumers do not consistently make this chain of consequences on their own.

3. End-of-life choices mix intention, habit and confusion

Once use stops, no single route dominates. Keeping the device at home is the most common response at 29.3%; it is common to see the hoarding solution being the first one for a wide variety of products (c.f., Naczaj, 2020, 2021). Recycling centres or municipal facilities follow at 27.4%, and 18.9% report returning at least one item to an in-store collection point. Correct routes are therefore present in the consumer repertoire, but they compete directly with storage and ordinary waste habits.

Household waste is reported by 22.5%, a plastic-waste bin by 20.8% and a street bin by 6.5%.

Because respondents could report more than one route, these behaviours can coexist within the same person. A consumer may recycle one device, keep another in a drawer and discard a third incorrectly.

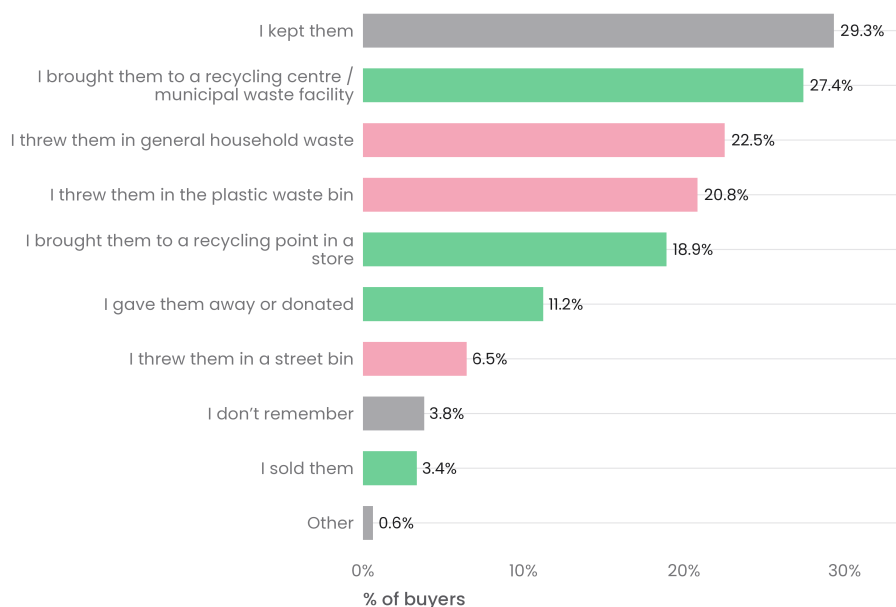


Figure 8. What consumers did with fast tech devices they stopped using

How to read: 31.9% report only recycling or reuse routes, 26.9% only waste-disposal routes, 15.5% only keeping devices, and 25.6% combine routes. These four mutually exclusive profiles cover all buyers.

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHT

Communications could focus on fast tech as *electronic* devices which have to be recycled or reused. Keeping devices can be shown as a loss of reuse opportunity, even if fast tech devices are not characterised by their longevity, therefore offering an hypothetical small reuse potential.

3.1. Good intentions, wrong routes

Habit is the most frequently selected explanation for end-of-life choices (38.6%), followed closely by environmental protection (34%) and convenience (33.6%). Consumers do not choose between environmental concern and pure convenience. The same discarding decision can be habitual, easy and believed to be environmentally responsible.

Among respondents who report only waste-disposal routes (general household waste, plastic bin or street bin), 20.6% explain using those for environmental protection. The answer is likely sincere but reflects an incorrect belief about which route is environmentally appropriate.

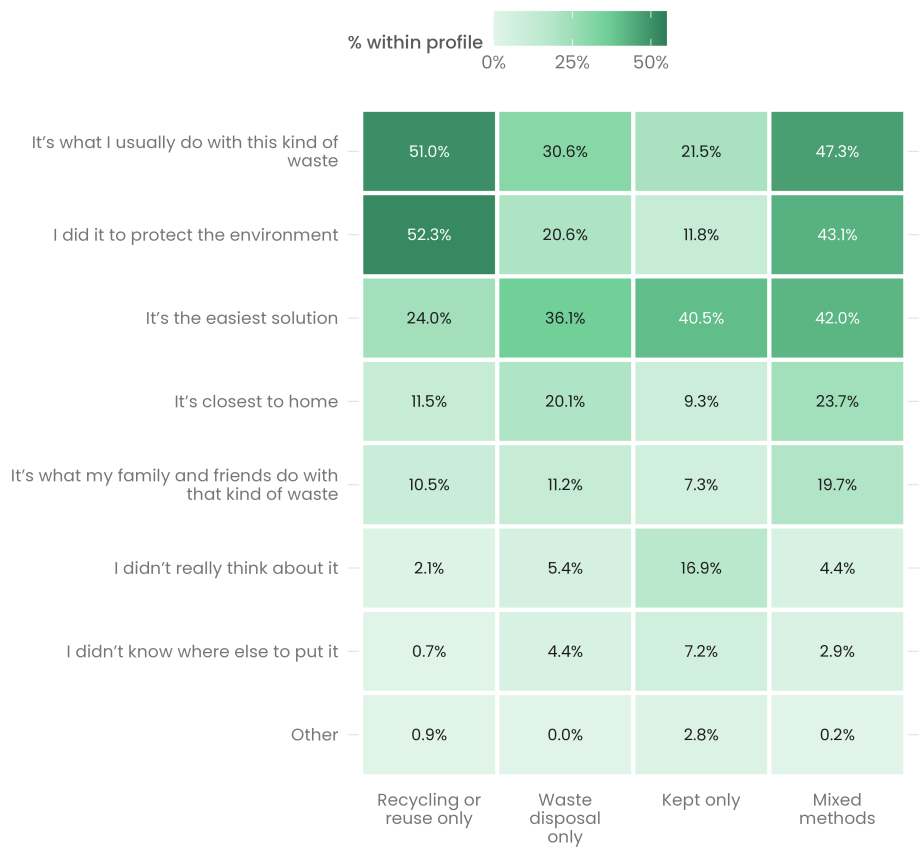


Figure 9. Reasons for end-of-life choices, by disposal profile

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHT

There is a lack of awareness about environmental impact. Some respondents are throwing their electronic devices in the bin thinking they protect the environment doing so.



3.2. Knowledge about fast tech

82.7% of European consumers surveyed know that fast tech devices contain electronic components. The consumption and discarding patterns cannot be explained with simple ignorance about what the products are, but more about their potential impact on environment once discarded.

Only 29.1% knew that online platforms selling electronic devices are legally required to contribute financially to electronic-waste collection and recycling; 13.8% had heard of the requirement without knowing the details, while 57.1% were unaware.

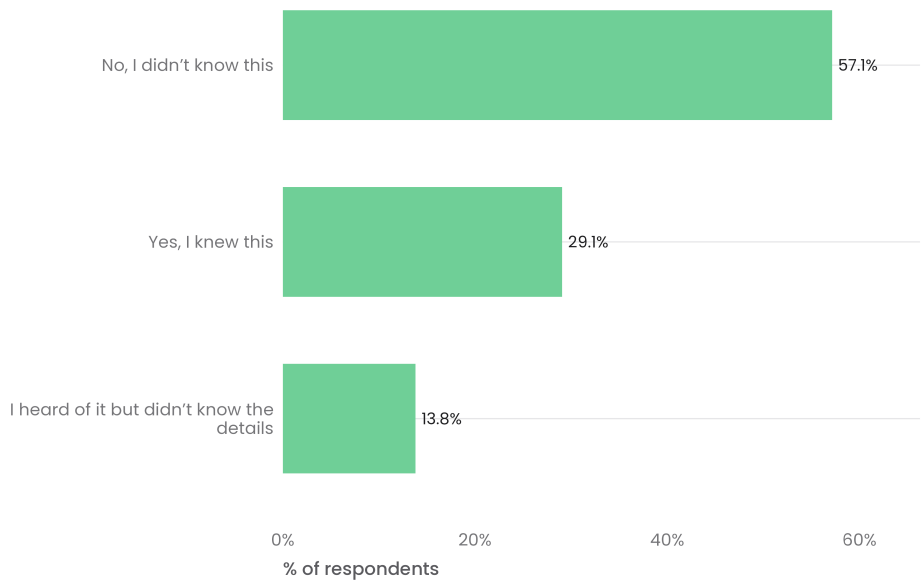


Figure 10. Awareness of online platforms' financial contribution requirements



4. Norms, attitudes and intentions

Fast tech purchasing is neither socially accepted nor widely rejected: 36.8% describe their own attitude as favourable and 17.3% as unfavourable (the largest part remain neutral). The expected opinion of important others (i.e., the injunctive norm) follows the same pattern: 51% anticipate neither approval nor disapproval, 35.3% expect approval and only 13.7% expect disapproval. Attitudes mirror perceived injunctive norm. It mainly shows that, coherently with the consumption patterns we have seen so far, **European fast tech consumers we have surveyed don't reject fast tech and don't think society expects them to.**

Considering that almost half also believe that more people are buying fast tech than before (which can make purchasing feel increasingly normal or not a problem), it is logical to see that **63.9% do not intend to reduce their fast tech purchasing.** If we add that almost 3 buyers out of 4 declare being exposed at least once a week to fast tech (whether their own or anyone else's), the external incentives to buy are plenty.

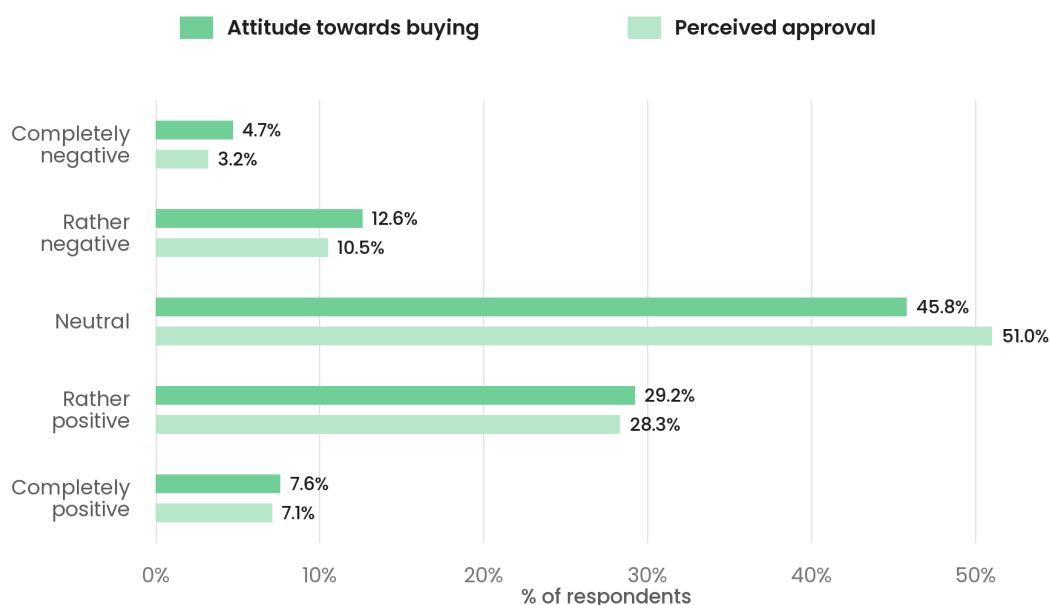


Figure 11. Buying attitude and perceived approval follow the same broad pattern

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHT

Overall, fast tech consumers don't see a problem with it. They largely buy fast tech, think (rightfully) that others buy and are okay with it or don't care, and think that more and more people buy fast tech as well. These results could indicate a continuity if not an increase of the fast tech consumption dynamic.

Changing this pattern means interrupting a routine that many people expect to maintain, not only persuading the smaller group that plans to buy more.



5. To sum up the descriptive analysis

The descriptive results reveal a consistent consumer system. Fast tech is common at home, encountered through ordinary shopping channels and cheap enough to solve many immediate problems. Most respondents agree with its implicit promise: a device that should work well enough for the need, not necessarily become a durable possession, as it is, after all, easily replaceable.

Fast tech is widespread and familiar. Price, promotions and availability are strong incentives to buy, reducing the need for deliberating over buying. Practical motives (replacement, backup and everyday use) give the purchase a legitimate role.

Extremely short use and product failure are familiar, even if our study cannot generalise to all fast tech devices. Satisfaction remains high, sign that many fast tech devices meet the expectations attached to them. Consumers can value durability and still return to the low-cost option when replacement becomes necessary.

The wider consequences are less visible. A shorter lifespan is recognised more readily than greater environmental harm. Once use stops, correct collection competes with storage and familiar waste routes, and even environmentally motivated choices can lead to the wrong destination when the appropriate action is unclear.

Finally, the social environment provides little resistance. Most people expect neutrality or approval from those around them and do not intend to reduce their own purchasing. The cycle does not require strong enthusiasm, it only requires the next inexpensive device to remain easy, acceptable and useful enough. Fast tech is common across the 12 surveyed countries, mainly thanks to its high convenience.

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHT

Fast tech consumption cannot be reduced to misinformation or disregard for durability. It persists because consumers often accept a limited but credible exchange: low price and immediate usefulness in return for modest expectations and easy replacement. Knowledge about environmental consequences and end-of-life responsibility remains partial, but it operates within this broader system rather than explaining it on its own.

Part 2 - Behavioural insights

This section explains relationships between fast tech consumption and other measured variables, like age, perceptions or knowledge. There are three types of analysis:

1. Simple correlational associations, to see what variables are linked, while not necessarily the cause of consumption dynamics,
2. Behavioural models, to weight the influence of different factors with past and expected behaviour related to fast tech consumption,
3. Profiles based on the most significant differences between fast tech consumers and non-consumers.

Their purpose is to feed communication campaigns and messages, with testable hypothesis backed by science.



1. Recent purchasing

1.1. Exposure, ownership and recent purchasing

Exposure, ownership and recent purchasing rise together. Respondents who say they encounter fast tech more often also report more devices at home and more purchases during the previous 12 months. The relationship is clear, but the causation is not one-way only: exposure may encourage buying, while owning and buying more may also make fast tech easier to notice.

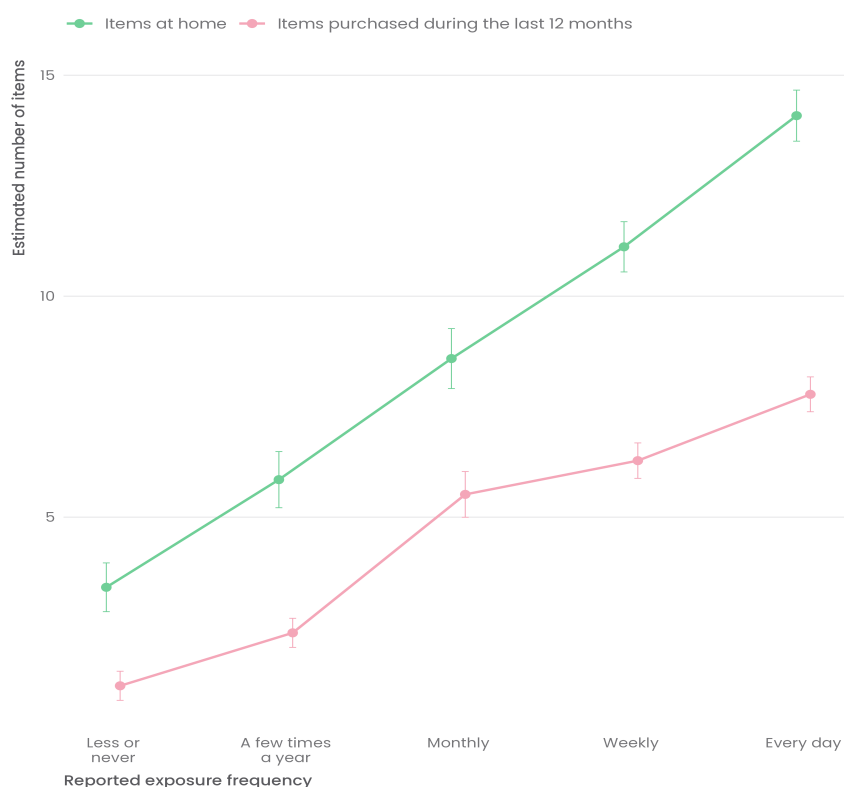


Figure 12. Exposure to fast tech and estimated item volumes

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

Repeated visibility can make a product category familiar and mentally easy to process. This is consistent with research on repeated exposure, even if the survey does not test that mechanism directly (Bornstein & Craver-Lemley, 2017; Zajonc, 1968). A potential response is to make durable, repairable or reused alternatives just as visible, especially at the moment of choice.

1.2. Purchasing and ownership by country

Fast tech is widespread in every surveyed country, although levels vary. The share of respondents who have ever bought fast tech ranges from 82.6% in France to 95.6% in Greece. Purchasing during the previous 12 months ranges from 70.1% in the Netherlands to 88.8% in Greece. Greece records the highest recent purchasing rate, followed by Ireland (87.7%) and Romania (86.6%), while France (70.6%) and the Netherlands (70.1%) sit at the lower end.

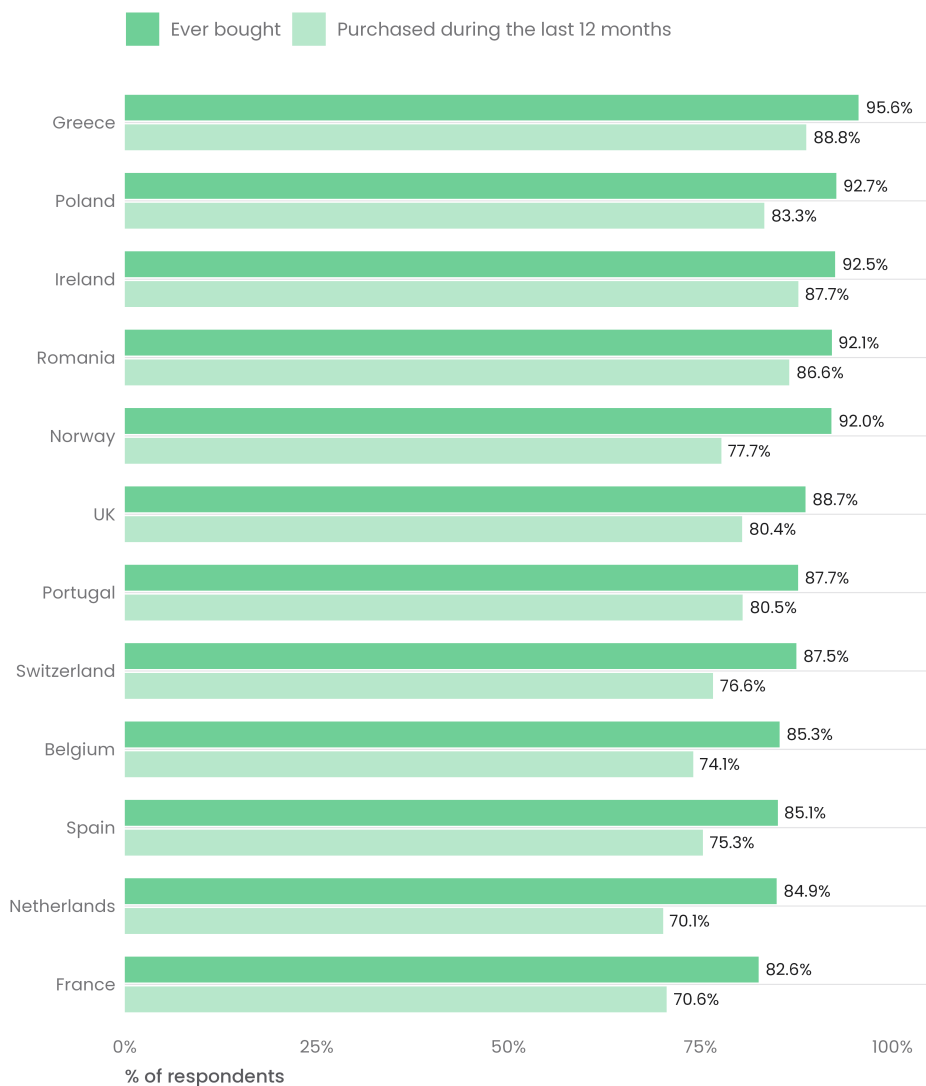


Figure 13. Ever having bought and recent purchasing, by country

How to read: darker bars show the share who have ever bought fast tech; lighter bars show purchases during the previous 12 months. Percentages are calculated separately within each country.

1.3. Purchasing and ownership by country and category

The same broad country pattern appears across the three product groups. Greece and Ireland are consistently among the countries with the highest levels of ownership and recent purchasing, while France and the Netherlands are generally lower. Charging and lighting devices are the most widespread category overall: 82.6% of respondents own at least one, and 68.0% bought one during the previous 12 months. Across countries, ownership ranges from 73.8% in France to 90.9% in Ireland, while recent purchasing ranges from 59.5% in France to 80.3% in Greece.

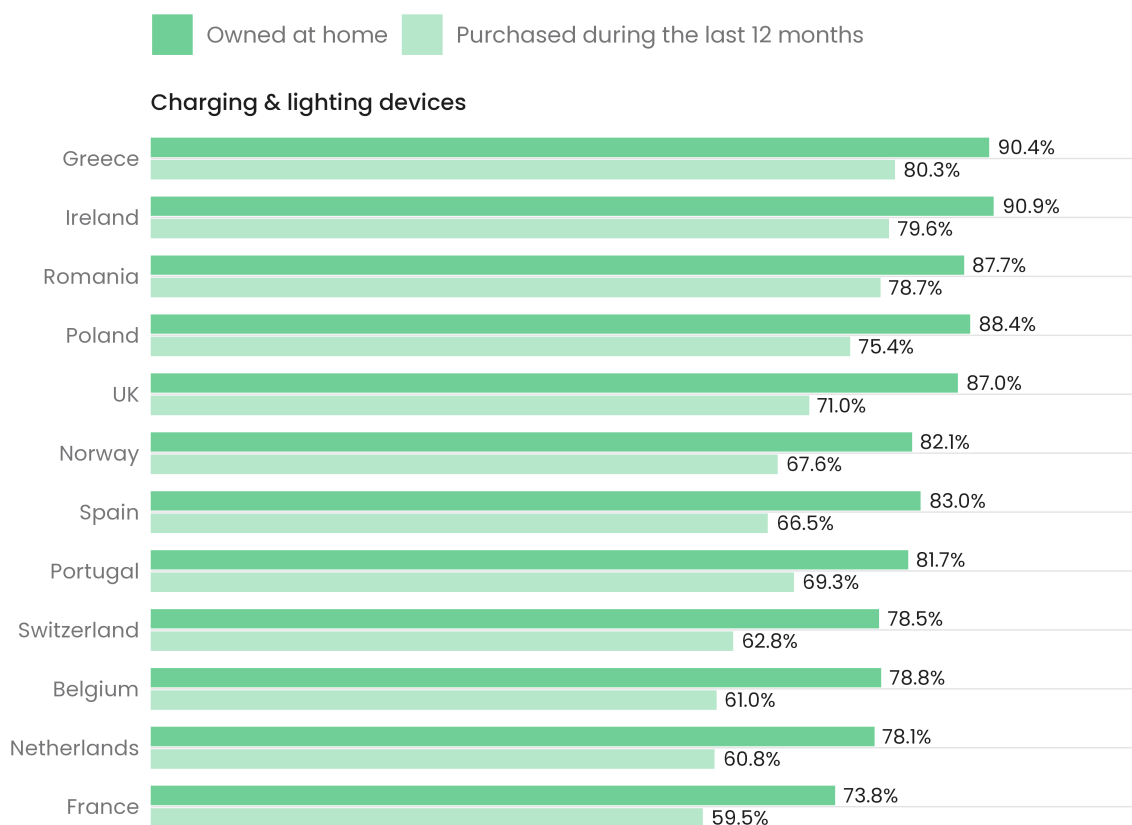


Figure 14. Ownership and recent purchasing by country: charging and lighting devices

High-tech items are less common than charging and lighting devices overall, particularly for recent purchasing: 69.5% of respondents own at least one, and 51.9% bought one during the previous 12 months. Across countries, ownership ranges from 60.8% in France to 82.2% in Greece.

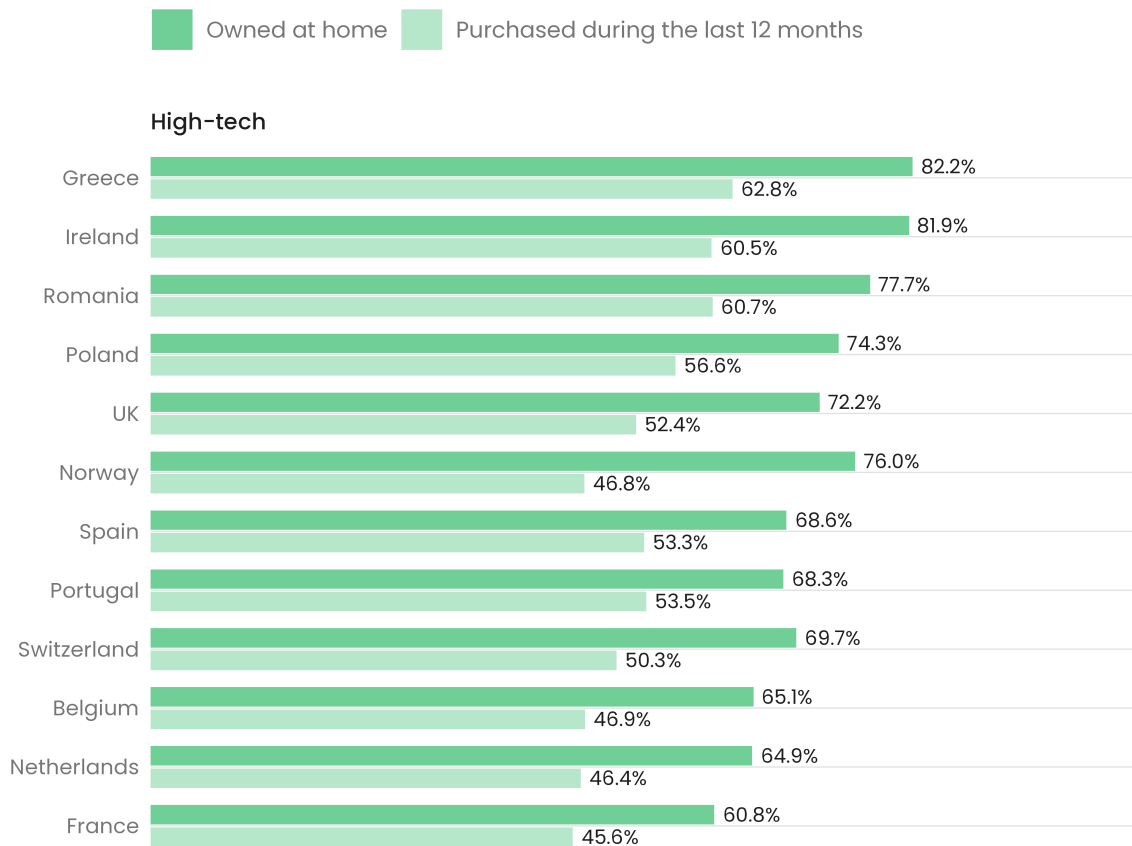


Figure 15. Ownership and recent purchasing by country: high-tech items

Gadgets and lifestyle items are owned at almost the same overall rate as high-tech items (69.4% and 69.5%, respectively) but were purchased more often during the previous 12 months (57.5% compared with 51.9%). Across countries, recent purchasing ranges from 44.0% in the Netherlands to 70.1% in Greece.

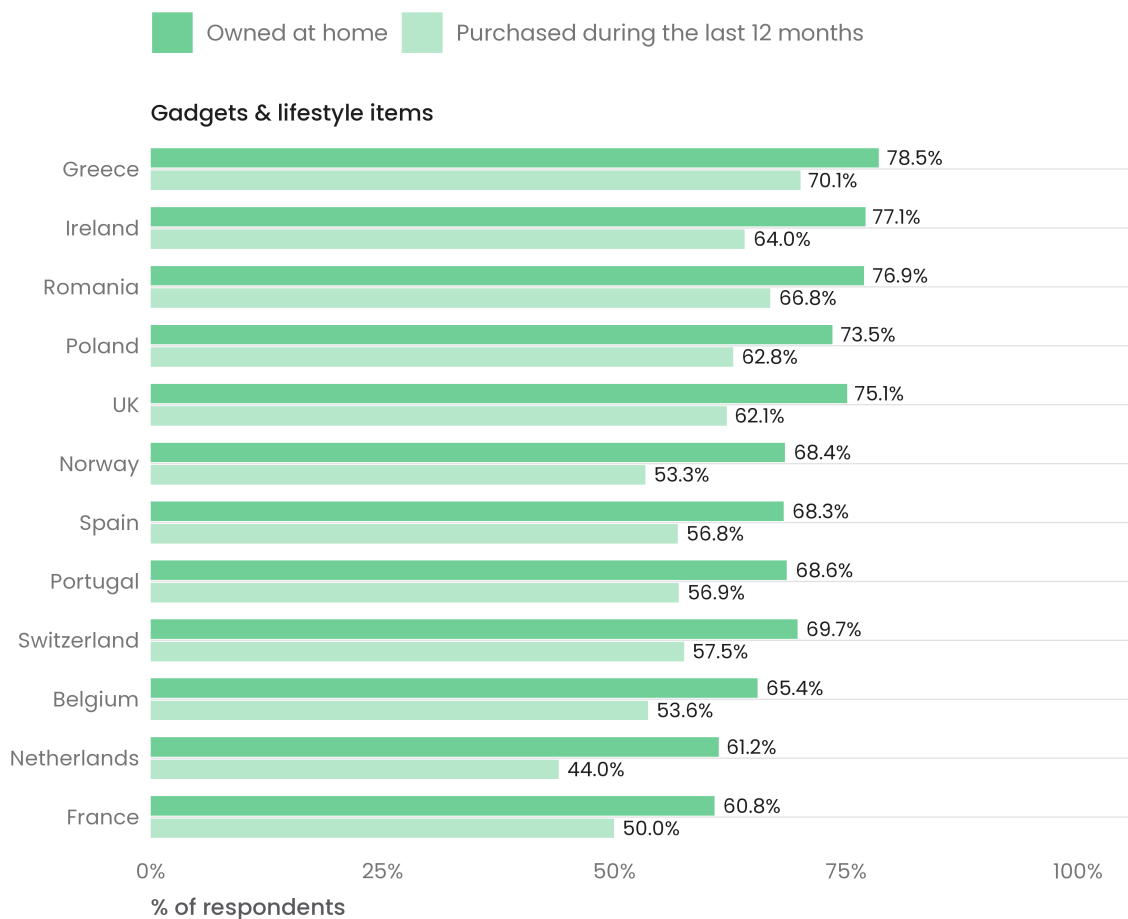


Figure 16. Ownership and recent purchasing by country: gadgets and lifestyle items

1.4. Recent purchasing by age

Recent purchasing decreases consistently with age: 93.1% of the youngest respondents (18 to 29 years old) purchased at least one fast tech item during the previous 12 months, compared with 61.3% of the oldest (65 or older).

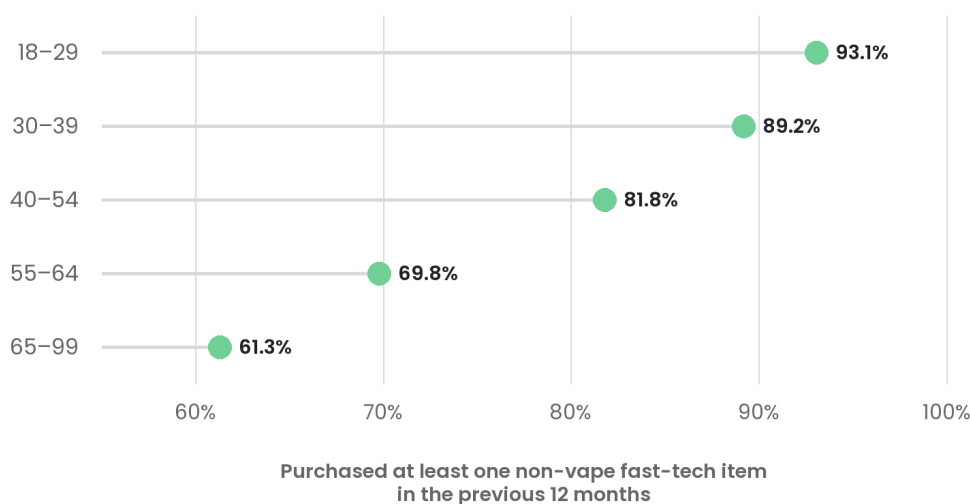


Figure 17. Purchase of fast tech during the previous 12 months, by age.

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHT

Age is one of the strongest factors associated with ownership and particularly recent fast-tech purchasing. Interventions should target the situations during key moments:

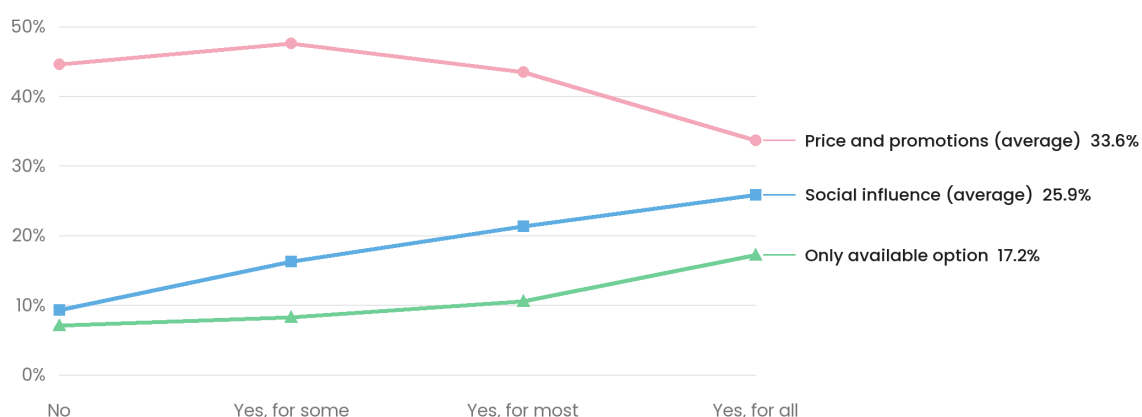
- **At product discovery**, use short messages on social media, marketplaces and influencer content to make the immediate consequences of fast-tech purchases salient (ex: expected lifespan, replacement frequency or the amount of electronic waste generated).
- **At the moment of choice**, introduce a simple reminder of the potential devices they already own or that can be borrowed. Present alternatives, or give information about durability, showing longer-lasting alternatives. Use **trusted voices**: tech reviewers and creators already followed by younger consumers. Content could compare fast-tech devices with more durable alternatives, in terms of lifespan, cost per year or reparability.
- **After purchase**, provide an immediate route for returning or recycling the device being replaced, rather than communicating about end-of-life options only when the new product is discarded.

Evidence on youth climate engagement suggests that information alone is rarely sufficient, while values, framing, psychological distance and trusted communicators shape engagement (Corner et al., 2015).

2. Buying reasons and willingness to pay more

Of all the reasons mentioned to buy fast tech, affordability is the most clearly connected with willingness to pay for a longer-lasting alternative.

As we can see with the directions of the lines, on figure 18, consumers buying fast tech for its price are less likely to be willing to change all their devices for longer-lasting alternatives. It's the other way around for consumers who declared being influenced (by social media or relatives).



Willingness to pay more for longer-lasting alternatives

Figure 18. Averaged buying-reason by willingness to pay more for longer-lasting alternatives

How to read: among respondents willing to pay more for *some* longer-lasting alternatives, the average selection rate across price and promotions is 47.6%.

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

Affordability is the main buying reason. Research suggests showing simple and comparable lifespan information, as well as displaying the cost per year of use. For example, showing the additional price together with expected years of use or cost per year (e.g., €10 a year, or €0.20 per use; Cox et al., 2013; Milios & Dalhammar, 2023).

3. Purchasing volume and end-of-life disposal

The estimated number of fast tech devices purchased, and the estimated number disposed of during the same 12-month period are positively correlated (0.57). Respondents who report buying more devices also tend to report disposing of more.

However, purchases and disposals do not increase one for one. Reported disposal volumes are generally lower than reported purchasing volumes, particularly among respondents who buy the most. This does not identify a single explanation. Devices purchased during the period may still be in use or kept at home, while devices discarded during the period may have been bought earlier

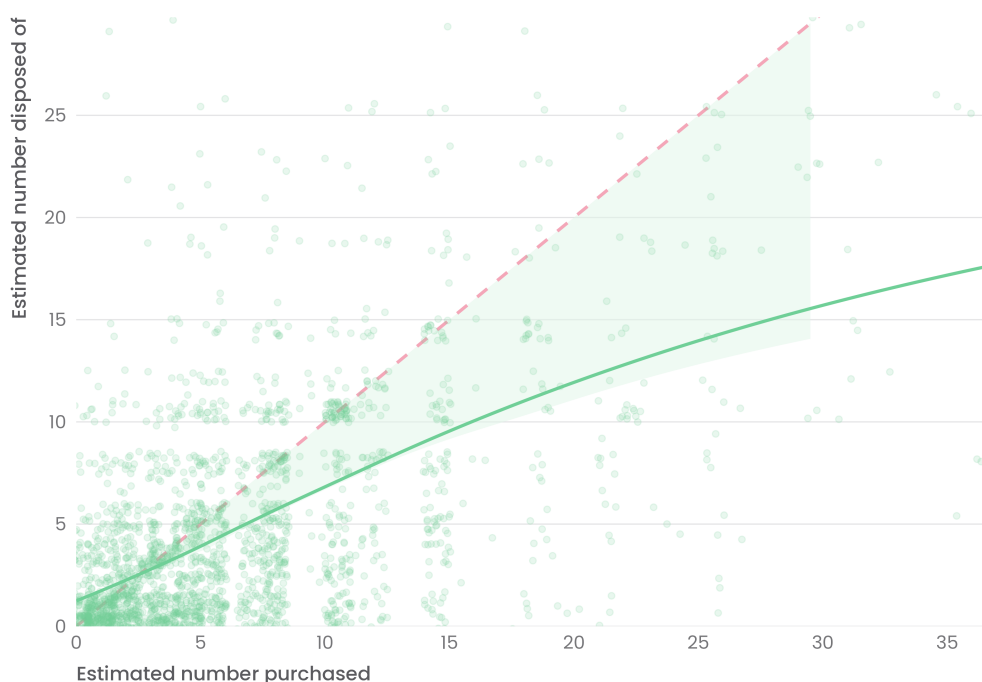


Figure 19. Estimated number of fast tech items purchased and disposed of

How to read: The pink dashed line is a one-for-one reference, where reported purchases and disposals would be equal. It is not an expected or predicted relationship. The green line summarises the observed association between the two estimated volumes.

3.1. Three interpretations

Why don't the number of discarded fast tech devices strictly follow the number of devices bought (as displayed by the reddish dashed line), set aside the possibility of imperfect recall, forgetting some devices they threw away?

1. **Durability and accumulation:** recently bought fast tech devices may not have reached the end of their use. The more durable the fast tech devices, the less likely consumers need to discard them.

Furthermore, the more we have, the less we might be using them, and while some devices remain in use, are kept as spares or are stored after use.

2. **Dynamic of growth:** consumers buy faster than they discard. If fast tech is more and more bought, the quantity of devices old enough to be discarded during the past 12 months should be lower than the quantity of devices bought on the same period.

4. Disposal profiles by country

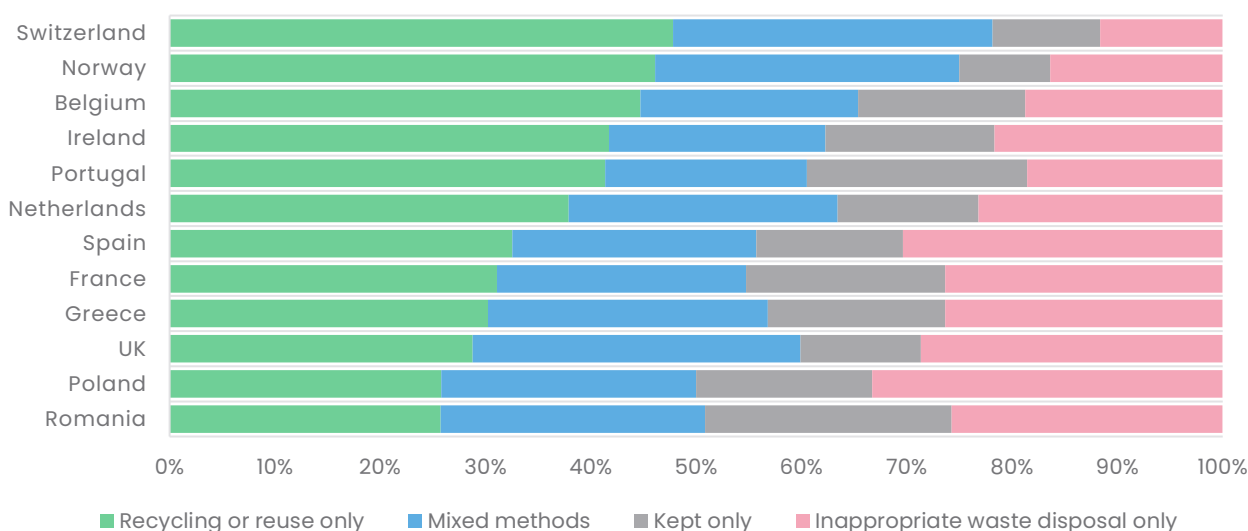


Figure 20. Disposal routes by country

Country patterns differ. Recycling or reuse only ranges from 25.7% in Romania and 25.8% in Poland to 46.1% in Norway and 47.8% in Switzerland. Inappropriate waste disposal only is highest in Poland (33.3%) and lowest in Switzerland (11.7%). Keeping devices only is most common in Romania (23.4%).

How to read: percentages are calculated within each country and sum to 100%. "Other" and "I don't remember" are excluded. Mixed methods combine identifiable methods from more than one disposal profile.

5. Behavioural models

The models ask a simple question: when respondents differ on several characteristics (different age, knowledge about fast tech, attitude, perceptions...), which factors remain linked with an outcome that matters? For example, if we isolate the influence of household size and country, what are the other factors that remain linked to fast tech consumption among age, attitudes, norm perceptions?



5.1. Buyer vs non-buyer

Three factors distinguish buyers most clearly: attitude, perceived approval (injunctive norm) and the age. The younger, the more favourable and the stronger the perceived approval, the more likely to have bought fast tech, and perhaps, to keep on buying.

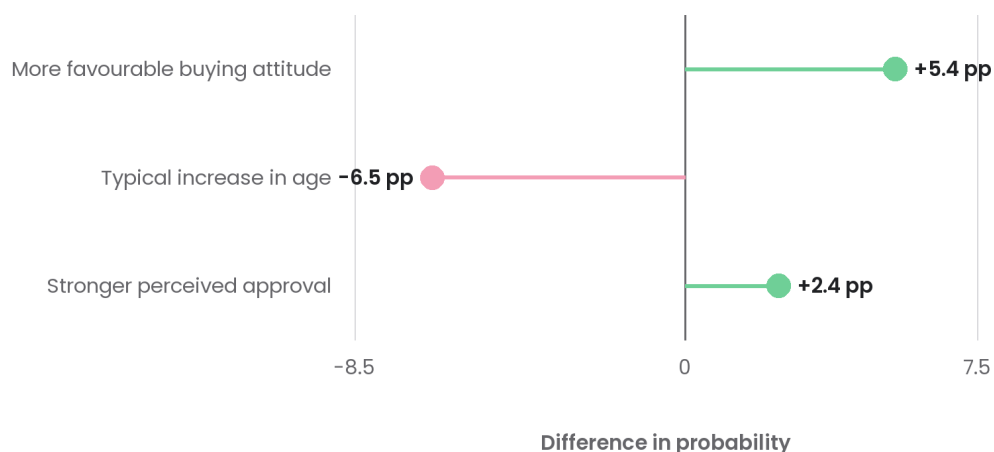


Figure 21. Top three factors linked with having bought fast tech

How to read: negative value (pink) indicates a lesser probability of being a buyer as age increases, positive value a higher probability as favourability and perceived approval increase.

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHT – MOBILISING THE TOP THREE FACTORS

Attitude: make the immediate trade-off visible. Low price now versus expected life, replacement effort and cost per year.

Age: prioritise younger audiences and the retail or social channels where they encounter fast tech.

Perceived approval: show that repairing, keeping or choosing a durable device are also socially approved. Avoid messages that normalise fast tech, while it might not be the case in certain social groups (Farrow et al., 2017; Bergquist et al., 2019).

5.2. Future buying intention

Three behavioural factors stand out. Seeing fast tech as shorter-lived than alternatives is linked with a 0.21-point lower intention score on the 0-5 scale. Stronger support for buying fewer items is linked with a decrease of about 0.16 points. This is almost tautological, but it shows that convincing consumers can have an impact. A more favourable attitude toward buying is linked with an increase of buying intention of about 0.15 points.

Measuring buying intention is useful because it shows whether buying is being considered. It is not, though, an infallible forecast of future purchasing, as research on green consumption documents a recurring gap between what people intend and what they do (ElHaffar et al., 2020).

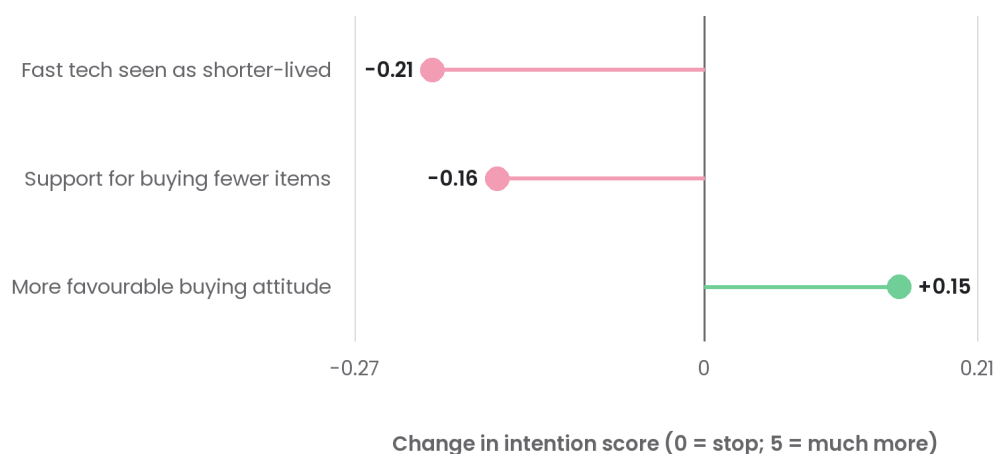


Figure 22. Top three behavioural factors linked with future buying intention

How to read: negative values indicate an intention to buy less; positive values indicate an intention to buy more on the 0-5 scale.

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHT – MOBILISING THE TOP THREE FACTORS

Comparative lifespan: use a credible lifespan or durability comparison at the point of choice. ‘Lasts longer than the low-cost option’ is more concrete than a general environmental claim.

Support for buying fewer: check what is already at home, wait before buying, repair, borrow or choose one product that covers the need.

Influencing attitude: make the durable option easy, available and good value. Information is unlikely to change behaviour if the preferred alternative still feels inconvenient or expensive.

6. Typical observed profiles

The profiles below summarise average or most common answers, distinguishing buyers from non-buyers. They are not fixed consumer segments and should not be used to label individuals. They show how the results tend to cluster in the observed sample.

Table 2. Typical observed profiles of buyers and non-buyers

CHARACTERISTIC	BUYER	NON-BUYER
Mean age	47.7	59.5
Mean household size	2.7 people	2.0 people
Most common education	Secondary or high school (33.9%)	Secondary or high school (47.5%)
Most common employment	Employed (55.7%)	Retired (45.8%)
Most common lifespan compared to longer lasting alternatives	Similar (48.6%)	Shorter (58.8%)
Mean buying attitude /5	3.3	2.6
Mean perceived approval /5	3.3	2.8

The typical buyer is younger, lives in a slightly larger household (not one person more), is more likely to be employed, and reports both a more favourable buying attitude and stronger perceived social approval of fast tech consumption. The typical non-buyer is older, more often retired, and more likely to say that fast tech has a shorter lifespan than alternatives. The profile reinforces the main interpretation: buying is age-dependent and relies on a tacit agreement on expected lifespan.



BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHT – TWO DIFFERENT INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Buyers have a more favourable attitude towards fast tech, perceive greater approval from others and are more likely to see its lifespan as comparable to that of alternative products. For this group, providing general environmental information is unlikely to be sufficient. Interventions should instead challenge the perceived equivalence between products and interrupt the purchase decision: display expected lifespan and cost per year, ask consumers to consider whether a device they own could meet their need, and make longer-lasting alternatives easy to identify.

Non-buyers express less favourable attitudes, lower perceived approval and a stronger belief that fast-tech products have a shorter lifespan. They require less persuasion about the drawbacks of fast tech. Communications should reinforce and facilitate their existing behaviour by presenting keeping, repairing, borrowing or buying durable products as convenient and socially valued choices.

That can be done through the same awareness campaign for everyone: interrupt and redirect purchasing among buyers, reinforce and facilitate avoidance among non-buyers.



Part 3 – Conclusions of the analysis

Fast tech consumption is voluntary, consumers are aware they contain electronics, and about half of them are conscious that their devices won't last long and are easily replaceable. This study's results lead to the idea that it is even a tacit agreement. The more important blind spot to this is about their consequences: the environmental cost and the correct end-of-life route are less consistently understood.

Taken together, the findings point to an accepted consumer contract. Fast tech is inexpensive, widely available and often bought for legitimate, immediate uses. Buyers do not necessarily expect it to last for years; they expect it to do the job at limited financial risk and to be easy to replace.

Country comparisons show that this pattern is widespread across the surveyed markets. In every country, more than four in five respondents have bought fast tech at least once, and at least seven in ten purchased it during the previous 12 months.

Younger respondents, people with a more favourable attitude towards buying fast tech, and those who perceive greater social approval are more likely to be buyers. Future buying intention follows the same logic: it rises with favourable attitudes and falls when people see fast tech as shorter-lived or support buying fewer items.

For many consumers, this trade-off appears acceptable and may even be part of the appeal. Information alone will therefore not be enough to change the dynamics. Communication and policy need to make durability, cost over time and end-of-life consequences more visible, preferably at the moment of choice, while making repair, reuse, durable alternatives and correct return routes easy and socially supported.



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About the authors

Bellegarde Scientific Consulting is a behavioural science consultancy that helps organisations understand and change behaviour, analysing their social and psychological dynamics, their barriers and drivers, and design interventions that can be tested in the field. **Bellegarde's** work spans environmental issues, health and social intelligence. In the circular economy, the team combines scientific research with 13 years of operational experience in e-waste collection, take-back, repair and reuse.

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