**Introduction**

Welcome to Blueshift Research’s and SurveyMonkey’s fourth edition of its monthly business research tracker entitled Trends Tracker. This is a monthly survey that tracks U.S. consumers’ opinions and actions on roughly 20 of what we think are the most pressing questions affecting U.S. citizens and their choices that could affect business and investment theses. These current trends will be monitored on a monthly basis to see how the opinions evolve over time and will be updated with new issues that emerge from current work and observations at Blueshift.

This month’s edition of Trends Tracker is a survey of 1,093 respondents that captures a general sample of the U.S. public. SurveyMonkey utilizes U.S. Census data to balance the respondents by gender and age, so that the sample aligns with the general population.

We went out into the field with the same questions as the previous month. Here are our initial findings:

**Summary of Findings**

- You’ve seen ads popping up everywhere, and that’s one of the reasons mobile and digital wallet use is on the rise and our hottest trend this month. We saw a dramatic increase in adoption and use on a daily basis of mobile and digital wallets over the previous quarter, as PayPal spun off of eBay and launched a large marketing campaign, in addition to Apple’s entry to the market with 10 million and growing sales of its iPhone 6 and 6 Plus. So far these marketing campaigns are showing a rising tide effect on the sector as more consumers try out mobile and digital wallet offerings.
  - Adoption of digital or mobile wallets exploded over the quarter, rising 28 percentage points, and is in the hands of 39.6% of consumers in the U.S., while daily use of the services increased 7 percentage points over the quarter.

- Cord-cutting, the kryptonite of cable companies is growing and will continue to do so as more subscription, OTT services emerge. HBO will allow cable subscribers to subscribe to its HBO Go streaming starting in 2015, while CBS rolled out a subscription, streaming service this month for $5.99 a month. This trend of moving to digital will perpetuate the move away from cable, specifically from cable’s largest group, those who subscribe to just basic cable.
  - Cutting the cord is becoming more popular, with cable use decreasing at a rate of 1% per month. The number of cord-cutters who cancelled their subscriptions (20%) grew 1.3 percentage points over the quarter. 33% of consumers subscribe to basic cable services, drop of 4 percentage points over the quarter.

- GMO opposition continues to fester and grow, as consumers desire for GMO labeling remains a must for over 80% of consumers. Multiple states will vote on GMO labeling in them mid-term elections next month with a high probability of passing. Monsanto and other corporate giants (Starbucks, Nestle, and Coca-Cola), view this as a major threat and are already suing Vermont, which passed a GMO-labeling law, to prevent the law from going into effect. If the corporate giants don’t win and more laws are enacted, they could be faced with severe negative impacts.
  - Respondents in favor of GMO foods dropped significantly, 16.7 percentage points, over the quarter, as those that were indifferent on the matter rose 13 percentage points to 38.1% of respondents currently.
  - For the fourth straight month consumers showed that they want GMO’s labeled, indicated by 81% of consumers, a 1-percentage point dip from the previous quarter.
Topics

1) Mobile and Digital wallet use on the rise, sector heats up

The mobile and digital wallet sector is heating up, as use and adoption skyrocketed over the quarter; adoption's up 28 percentage points, while use on a daily basis escalated 7 percentage points. One major change in the arena of mobile and digital wallets is the spin off of eBay's PayPal as a standalone company, which could allow PayPal to be more nimble and create a bigger push than it could have tied to eBay. PayPal is already making some changes by releasing apps for android tablets, and launching a massive marketing push, which you can see over-and-over again if you are a Hulu+ subscriber. While PayPal is trying to secure the top spot in a budding market, Apple Pay is coming out swinging with deals with 6 of the largest banks, including Bank of America and Wells Fargo, as well as big names like McDonalds, Whole Foods, Starbucks. Plus, any app developer can integrate its software for payments. Apply Pay is also getting exposure through the World Series, as both stadiums have started to accept the service and other NFC chips, giving the sector a rising tide effect. In addition to the marketing push, Apple just sold more iPhones 6 and 6Plus’s than expected, over 10 million in the first week, giving its payment service a massive potential user base. Some predict that Apple's entry could have a rising tide effect on the entire sector, while other view it as dampening the effects of its competitors.

Have you used a digital or mobile wallet in last month?

- Adoption of digital or mobile wallets exploded over the quarter, rising 28 percentage points, and is in the hands of 39.6% of consumers in the U.S.
- Daily use of the services increased 7 percentage points over the quarter.
- This is the first quarter we saw adoption from another age group, 30-44 year olds (44.1%), outpace our youngest demographic, 18-29 year olds (40.8%).
- All age groups have at least 30% of consumers adopting a mobile or digital wallet.
- Adoption of mobile and digital wallets grows at a rate of 1.4% each month.

![Chart showing adoption rates by age group and month](chart.png)
2) Cord-cutting continues to gnaw away at cable subscription as more streaming services surface

Cutting the cord continues to grow at a rate of 1% a month, and is affecting cable’s biggest group of subscribers, basic cable subscribers. Add-on services are still surviving the cord-cutting shift, but will be faced with more difficulties as one of its biggest add-on services HBO Go spins off a standalone service in 2015. This could mark the beginning of the end of cable services, as one of the biggest services in TV allows users to cut ties with their cable provider, and starts the trend of moving away from cable. Others are already following suit, with CBS launching a standalone service for $5.99 to challenge streaming giant Netflix. As more and more cable companies jump from cable to digital, like FOX sports allowing users to stream The World Series live on computers and mobile devices, it feels like only a matter of time until more and more consumers cut the cord.

Do you use cable in your household?

- 31.4% of consumers have cable with add-on services currently, a 1.5 percentage point increase over the quarter, while those with basic cable, 33%, drop 4 percentage points over the quarter.
- Cutting the cord is becoming more popular, with cable use decreasing at a rate of 1% per month. The number of cord-cutters who cancelled their subscriptions, 20%, grew 1.3 percentage points over the quarter.
- Those who have never had cable, 14.6%, grew 1.5 percentage points over the quarter.
- Each age group, except those ages 30-44, had a rising number of consumers that never had cable, while those age 30-60 were the most likely to cancel their subscriptions over a month ago.
- Add-on services still have support across all age groups, but those age 60+ are leading the charge.
3) GMO opposition growing, labeling a must

Opposition to GMO foods continues to press forward over the course of our four-month survey. As opposition grows, the desire for GMO labeling remains stable. The threat of the pending GMO labeling law in Vermont is so high that Monsanto, and other corporations like Starbucks, Nestle, and Coca-Cola are suing the state to block it. This shows how real the threat of GMO labeling is as it comes on the ballot this November in states such as Oregon, and Colorado. Currently the battle in Oregon is at an all-time high as both sides of the debate have spent a collective 12 million dollars to defend GMO labeling or repel such notions. Our polls indicated over the quarter that Americans want GMO’s labeled to allow the consumer to decide which products they want to buy, making voting for GMO labeling in Oregon and Colorado a high probability of passing.

Are you opposed to buying GMO (genetically modified) foods?

- Respondents opposing GMO foods and not buying the products grew 1.4 percentage points over the quarter, while those that oppose the products and still buy them grew 2 percentage points over the same period.
- Those in favor of GMO foods dropped significantly, 16.7 percentage points, over the quarter, as those that were indifferent on the matter rose 13 percentage points to 38.1% of respondents currently.
- Those ages 44-60 have consistently grown in opposition of GMO foods at approximately a rate of 3.5 percentage points per month to 44.6% of their age group. 44-60 year olds are now the age group with the highest percentage of respondents opposing GMO’s.
- At least a quarter of all households are opposed to GMO foods and do not buy them. Those making $50,000 to $99,999 are the most opposed (38.4%) growing 3.4 percentage points over the quarter. Consumers making $150,000+ have grown in numbers every month, boasting a 13.5 percentage point rise over the quarter.
Should GMO foods be labeled?

- For the fourth straight month consumers showed that they want GMO’s labeled, indicated by 81% of consumers, a 1-percentage point dip from the previous quarter.

4) Likelihood of adoption for wearable technology is waning

After all the excitement of the new Apple Watch last month, consumer’s interest in wearable technology seems to be dropping. More consumers than in the previous two months are not at all likely to adopt wearable technology in the next 3 months. One survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers of 1000 respondents, showed that 1 in 5 American’s have a wearable. This data includes action cameras like GoPro’s, which are popular and set apart from our data. The survey made suggestions to increase the adoption of wearable tech, included making seamless integration with other devices, providing meaningful data, alleviating stress, instilling trust (most users are afraid their data is being used and invading privacy), and focusing on employers. Another interesting fact is that 80% of wearable technology users stop using the devices after 6 months. That’s an astronomical number that feeds directly into our data, which indicates people are starting to move away from wearables. If wearables providers want adoption to reach the levels predicted by many, they need a change and innovate, which may come with new skin-like patches, solar embedded clothing, or medical tracking clothing.
How likely are you to adopt wearable technology in the next 3 months?

- 65.3% of consumers are not at all likely to adopt wearable technology in the next 3 months, the highest in the last 3 months.
- Those likely to adopt in all age groups dropped over the last month, but those age 45-60 rose 3.7 percentage points over a two-month span.

5) Local grocery store chains dominate grocery market as specialty stores rise in popularity and Big-box stores suffer

Six out of 10 consumers use local grocery store chains to get their groceries. While local grocery store chains remain a staple in consumers’ daily routines, specialty stores like Trader Joes, Whole Foods, and Sprouts are starting to become more popular, particularly among those age 45 and above and those with household incomes above $25,000. Big-box stores like Walmart on the other hand are starting to slip in popularity from households that make above $25,000. This battle and shift over consumers can be linked back to organic produce, which Whole Foods, and other healthy grocery stores like Sprouts, pride themselves on, and is a key market Walmart wants to join as the healthy, ethical movement grows. Currently Whole Foods is winning the battle and plans to widen the gap with its first national ad campaign to shed its pricey image, but Walmart’s sheer size has the ability to drop prices and woo customers into stores, and Kroger is rapidly growing its organics sections. As the battle for organics and ethical food continues we will see who can attract the most customers on a frequent basis as strategies unfold.

Where do you shop for the majority of your groceries?

- The majority of consumers (61.8%) shop at local grocery store chains, a stable grouping over the last two months.
- Specialty grocery stores now encompass 14% of the grocery market, a 2-percentage point increase over the last two months, while Big-box stores dropped 2.5 percentage points over that time to 21.1%.
- Younger customers, age 18-44, are moving toward Big-box stores, while those age 45 and above are starting to move toward specialty grocery stores.
- Specialty grocery stores are gaining customers from households that make more than $25,000 and losing those that make less than $25,000, while Big-box stores are gaining customers that make less than $25,000 and losing those that make more than $25,000.
6) Traditional radio dominates entertainment in car; Embedded systems adoption slowly rising

Traditional radio continues its stranglehold on the car entertainment market. Embedded systems saw an influx in adoption as satellite use decreased and smartphone use remained stagnant. Satellite radio provider Sirius XM may already be feeling the effects of slowing adoption and the new fees it will have to shell out for music made before 1972, since it released a plan for a lower-tiered subscription offering at a one-year price of $49.95 to entice potential customers in new and used vehicles. This may help Sirius continue to grow its subscription rate moving forward and defend against the plethora of new features entering cars like Ethernet, Android entertainment systems, and others. The battle for consumer's attention in the car is coming to head with new innovations around every corner.

How do you consume most of your entertainment in your car?

- Traditional radio continues to dominate the market, with 53.9% of consumers using it the most compared to other forms of entertainment, no change from the previous month.
- 5.4% of consumers consume entertainment through their embedded car system, a 1.3 percentage point increase over the previous month, while satellite radio took a 1.6 percentage point dip to 12.5%.
- Those age 30 and up are increasing their use of embedded car systems, while smartphone use continues to be led by those age 18-29. Satellite radio use decreased across all age groups, except among those age 45-60 which rose 1 percentage point.
7) Solar power adoption stutters

After seeing a slight uptick in consumers likely to adopt solar power last month, consumers likely to adopt solar dipped 2.6 percentage points over the previous quarter. Our numbers show lower-income family likelihood of adopting the power source significantly dropping over the quarter. Those that can definitely afford the new source of energy, households with $150,000+, are now more likely to adopt solar in the next 6 months. EnviroMedia points out one reason for this slow-down in adoption: a lack of knowledge of the true cost of solar. 70% of consumers in their survey stated price was a main factor for not adopting solar. Although after learning about the plummeting cost of solar and solar leasing, 67% of their respondents indicated they were very or somewhat interested in installing solar. NRG, the sixth largest residential installer of solar in the first half of 2014, is actively acquiring solar companies to continuously drop the price of solar for the general public, and recently purchased Pure Energies Group. SolarCity is also making solar more affordable for residential installations through leasing and power purchase agreements. If the general public remains uneducated, solar will continue to be adopted at a slow rate. Although if the general public starts seeing the price is affordable more American will jump on board and perpetuate the decline prices and increase adoption rates.
How likely are you to adopt solar power in your home during the next 6 months?

- The likelihood of consumers adopting solar in the next 6 months shrunk 2.6 percentage points compared to the previous quarter.
- Roughly the same (3.1%) of consumers have already adopted solar power in their homes.
- All age groups, except those ages 60+, had the likelihood of adopting solar power drop compared to the previous quarter, with those ages 60+ remaining stable around 27.3%.
- Those with income $150,000+ are 2.8 percentage points more likely to adopt solar than the previous quarter.
8) Electronic cigarettes grow in popularity as cigarette market shrinks

After adding two potential answers, pipes and hand-rolled cigarettes, we saw a slight increase of non-smokers, who are still the vast majority at 82.6%. Our survey showed 17.4% of consumers in America smoke tobacco, roughly the same as the 18% given by the Federal Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and prefer to use a bought cigarette, followed by the second most popular method, electronic cigarettes. This is the first time that electronic cigarettes have taken the second spot, showing their rising popularity. As they rise in popularity, particularly among minors, they may also be helping decrease the market they inhabit by being the most effective method of helping tobacco smokers quit. Minors are starting to be forced out as well as states enact laws to ban sales to minors. A shrinking market spells disaster for tobacco companies like Reynolds American, Altria Group, and others, unless they get a share of the electronic cigarette market. Smith and Ramsey is starting to embrace change and rolling out a line of eLiquids for vaporizers at the end of October.

How do you smoke most of your tobacco?

- 82.6% of consumers do not smoke tobacco products, a slight 0.7% rise from the previous two months.
- Cigarettes are the preferred method of smoking tobacco with 57.5% of tobacco smokers, a 9.4 percentage point decrease over two months, which was partially caused by the 5.6% of tobacco smokers who chose hand-rolled cigarettes, a new answer this month. Electronic cigarette use is up 4.4 percentage points since August, down 0.8 points from last month.
- Tobacco smokers age 18-29 and those with household income below $25,000 are still the most common users.
- Electronic cigarette use rose for all age groups compared to two months ago, as well as households making over $150,000, which increased to 5.7% from 0 in the same timeframe.
9) Recreational Marijuana support climbing

Legalization continues to gain support as voting on the matter comes to a head November 4th. On November 4th Oregon, Alaska, and Washington D.C. will be the next to vote on the legalization of marijuana, while Florida is voting for medical use. Alaska’s most recent polls have 43% support for legalization, while DC has 63% support, and Oregon’s recent polls show 52% support for legalization. Florida has 48% support for medicinal marijuana after having above 55% over multiple polls this year. None of these polls give a 100% on if the bills will be passed, but show a general trend of roughly half of consumers for legalization. While voting closes in, the political arm of the Oregon State Sheriff’s Association is funding opposition of the measure, while one Sheriff in Washington urges Oregon voters to pass the measure since DUI’s are down in Washington and money from the measure goes to the police force and schools. Support around the country is growing for such measures, just look at Delaware, which won’t be able to vote on the matter till 2016, already has 56% support for recreational use in the state. We see that these measure have a good chance of being passed, but won’t know for sure until people go out and vote next month.
What should the current law be regarding marijuana?

- 44.9% of consumers believe marijuana should be completely legal, a 2.4 percentage point jump over the previous quarter. Medical use and low-punishments also received a 2 percentage point increase over the quarter, while controlling marijuana on a state-by-state basis dropped 4.3 percentage points, and support of high-punishment fell 1.6 percentage points to a minimal 5.1%.

- All age groups, but those ages 45-60, are increasing their backing of legalization, lead by those age 18-29.

- Higher income households are also increasing the support of legalization.
10) Console gaming escalating, as smartphone posed for explosive 2015

Computer gaming continues to lead the gaming pack, but the gap is shrinking and console gaming interest is on the rise over the previous two months, while smartphone gaming is taking a slight reduction. Console gaming is currently seeing escalating interest as Microsoft’s Xbox One, which saw sales gains ahead of the PS4 for the first time as it cut prices this month, and Sony’s PS4 explodes with a massive 200% increase in sales over last year, and will try to continue this pace with the pending launch of its slim version of the PS4. Although consoles are currently selling like hotcakes, the mobile gaming is expected to surpass revenue sales of consoles in 2015. Since smartphones are so common, mobile gaming has a key advantage of being portable and in the pockets of nearly every U.S. citizen, which could grow the market it is trying to dominate.

How do you play the majority of your video games?

- Computer gaming is still the most common form of gaming with 15.7% of consumers, while smartphone gaming (13.8%) continues to outpace console gaming use (12.7%). Console use saw a slight 1 percentage point increase over the previous two months, while all other gaming forms held relatively consistent.
- 18-29 year olds dominate both console and smartphone gaming, while tablet gaming is being lead by those ages 45 and above.
- Those with household incomes $50,000 and below are leading the console gaming market, while those $25,000 and above, specifically those in the $50,000 - $99,999 range, and leading the smartphone gaming market.
11) Verizon continues domination of mobile carrier market, as AT&T slips

Consumers remain loyal to Verizon as the mobile carrier giant continues to dominate the market. Wireless carriers are constantly jockeying for position in the market with new innovations and changes. Currently, AT&T launched an increase in data on shared plans, which Verizon and Sprint both mimicked with their own plans to double data. T-mobile is taking a slightly different route for trying to attract customers by beefing up its network to increase security for customers, in a time when security is at the forefront of consumer’s minds. Things could start shifting as user continue to adopt the new iPhone 6’s sim card that allows you to choose your wireless carrier over having to buy a new phone for a specific wireless provider, making it even easier for consumers to switch. Carriers still have incentives in place to entice customers to leave their current provider, like pay early termination fees, making the market an exciting one to watch.

Who is your current wireless carrier?

- Verizon sits atop the wireless carrier market with 37.7% market share, a 2 percentage point gain over the previous month, while the second most popular carrier AT&T took a 5.4 percentage point drop, but retained the number 2 spot, while T-mobile gained 1.8 percentage points to take the third spot from Sprint, who dropped to fourth.
12) 11main.com opens its doors, but receives minimal use after massive IPO exposure

After its IPO last month, Alibaba finally let consumers enter its site 11main.com, and sign-up for its services. The company is currently still unknown in the U.S. with the same number of individuals hearing about the site, 1.7%, over the previous quarter, which is reiterated by the minimal 1,226 likes it received on Facebook, as of October 21st, compared to Amazon’s massive Facebook following of 25,444,768. 11main.com is coming out swinging as the holiday season approaches, trying to entice consumers to use its platform over Amazon and other competitors by offering to cover up to $5 of shipping cost for all purchases now through Dec. 1st, or how some know that date as Cyber Monday. One advantage pointed out by a merchant using 11main.com is that the site only allows merchants from the U.S. to sell on the site, giving the site a competitive edge in attracting merchants over eBay, which squeezes U.S. merchants out as Chinese merchant offer considerably cheaper offerings. Now that the site is open to the public and promotions are in place for the holiday season we will see if 11main.com can compete with industry giants in the U.S.

Have you heard of 11main.com?

- 98.3% of respondents have not heard of Alibaba’s 11main.com, even after the company went public two months ago, which is almost identical to numbers from the previous quarter in July.
13) Facebook showing a kink in its armor

Facebook continues its dominance of the social media space, but is shown to have a decrease of 1.1 percentage points in users frequenting its site over the quarter. Although our survey only sees those age 18+, there are polls that show teens, a key demographic for advertisers, are abandoning Facebook at an alarming rate. A recent Washington post poll gives great data on teens decreased use of Facebook from Spring (72%) to fall (45%) this year, and flocking to Instagram (Facebook’s other social media site). Moving to other social media sites, we see that LinkedIn is more popular than Twitter, which was also expressed by BI Intelligence. As consumers shift their favorite social media sites, and social media sites start selling data to advertisers, I’m looking at you Facebook, some users want an ad-free site. Ello is a new social media site that is currently invitation-only, but promises to be ad-free, which .2% of our respondents have already started using more than other sites, like MySpace, Tinder, and Vine. We will keep an eye out if this ad-free trend fares well for the budding social media company or if users don’t really care and will stay where their friends are, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Which social media platform do you use the most?

- Facebook remains the most used social media with 57.2%, but took a 1.1 percentage point hit over the quarter. Pinterest had the biggest gain, a 2.1 percentage point rise or doubling of its most frequently used consumers, while Google+ dropped .8 percentage points.

- Instagram lost some of its 18 to 29 year old users, down 1.6 percentage points over the quarter, while Twitter is gaining 30-44, and 60+ year olds, all but those age 18-29 decreased their use of Facebook, those age 45-60+ decreased use of Google+, and LinkedIn gained .9 percentage points of users age 18-29.

[Diagram showing social media usage trends]
14) Apple dominates smartphone market with new iPhone 6 and 6 Plus

Apple retains its dominant position in the smartphone market, growing its share 2.2 percentage points compared to the previous quarter on the back of the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus release. Although the release was plagued with videos of consumers bending their new iPhone 6 Plus, Apple still sold a record 10 million plus in its opening week, and is working hard to meet the demand of the consumers by ramping up production. In other news, Microsoft is ditching the Nokia brand name, changing its new phone from Nokia Lumia smartphones to Microsoft Lumia. This may entice more users to buy the phones, since we have seen low adoption rates for Nokia. Sony is not going to wait to be pinched out of the market and recently announced that its new Xperia Z3 and Xperia Z3 Compact smartphones will have a battery that lasts 2 days, yes 2 whole days. This is huge news for consumers who have to regularly charge their phones throughout the day, I know I do, and could push Sony into the forefront of consumer’s minds.
Who made the smartphone you currently own?

- Apple remains the dominant smartphone in the market with 35.7% of consumers, a 2.2 percentage point increase over the quarter. Samsung’s share remained flat at 21.7%.

- Google smartphones are picking up some steam growing 1.3 percentage points from .2% in the previous quarter. Motorola decreased 1.8 percentage points over the quarter.

- The smartphone market itself grew 2.3 percentage points over the quarter, now roughly 80% of consumers own a smartphone.
15) Consumer will not hold back robot-assisted surgeries, though some concerns have been raised

Robot-assisted surgeries are still largely an accepted way consumers will get surgery, although we did see a small 1.9 percentage point dip in those who are comfortable with robot-assisted surgeries, the vast majority, 81.3%, are comfortable with the transition. ISRG, the maker of the da Vinci robot, just reported earnings and revealed that the company sold 10 more robots over the previous year, and a 10% in revenue year-to-year. This growth can be seen in the utilization of places like Palos Community Hospital, which just performed its 500th robot-assisted surgery in 2 years. One factor that may be effecting the slight decrease in consumers comfortable with robot-assisted surgeries are the rising costs, and a small increase in intraoperative (during surgery) complications, mainly ureteral and bladder injuries during oophorectomy (removal of one or both ovaries) and cystectomy surgeries compared to traditional surgery found by one study. If studies continuously find that complications are rising, it could shutter ISRG’s growth, as consumer would shy away from possibly more harmful surgeries.

How comfortable would you feel about a doctor using a robot to assist in one of your surgeries?

- Those who are not comfortable with robot-assisted surgeries rose a minimal 1.9 percentage points over the quarter.
- 81.3% of consumers are comfortable with robot-assisted surgery, 15.4%, a 1.3 percentage point increase over the previous quarter, are extremely comfortable with robot-assisted surgery.
- 27.9%, the largest grouping, are moderately comfortable with robot-assisted surgery.
16) Large majority improving living habits, but at a decreased rate

Consumers are still improving their living habits, but at a decreased rate. Our survey indicates that the percentage of consumers improving living habits decreased, while those decreasing their living habits increased. Although there has been a shift, the majority of consumers are still increasing their living habits or keeping them the same. One observation showed healthy snacks, think Kale chips and veggie sticks, prominently displayed in a Sheetz in Pennsylvania, instead of the usual candy display as you walk in the door. McDonald’s is taking the biggest hit, directly in revenue, from this change in taste, and is trying to regain consumers by looking at selling new products, which could include organics. The company already uses organic milk and juices in Germany and France. Another area of healthy living habits is exercise, and with the winter on its way gyms will start to see an influx of bodies flocking to their facilities, not just normal everyday joe’s, but Federal workers as well. This could re-amp the healthy craze from not only a food standpoint, but a physical one as well.

Compared to 6 months ago, how have your living habits (diet, exercise, sleep, etc.) changed?

- 2.5 times the number of consumers are improving their living habits in the last 6 months compared to those who have decreased their living habits.
- 44.4% of consumer increased their living habits, a 5.5 percentage point decrease from the previous quarter.
- 18% of consumer decreased their living habits, a 4.6 percentage point increase over the previous quarter.
17) Slow or delayed Internet is so last quarter

For the first month since we started this survey, we are seeing a decrease in slow or delayed Internet speeds. This decrease in slow or delayed Internet speeds is perfectly portrayed in a quarterly report done by Internet infrastructure provider Akamai, which revealed that all but 2 states, poor Rhode Island and Nevada, experienced an increase in Internet speeds between the first two quarters of the year, some even experienced double digit increases. Another factor that is helping this decrease is Netflix’s payment to Verizon for a direct connection to its network, which now tops the speeds of all other Internet services for the platform. Many customers of Netflix have expressed problems with delayed services over the past months, and this may help alleviate some of the problem. All in all it looks like slow or delayed Internet problems are on their way out.

Are you having more problems with slow or delayed Internet compared to six months ago?

- 30.7% of consumers are experiencing slow or delayed Internet services, a 1.9 percentage point decrease over the quarter.
18) First-time home buyers jump in October

The housing market remains stable, returning to norms of the previous quarter. However, there may be some pent up demand from first-time buyers, which shot up 9 percentage points over the previous quarter, and 11 points over the previous month, as they face investors and foreign buyers mentioned in last months edition of the Trends Tracker. Our numbers showed a slightly higher number of first-time home buyers in the market, 36.8% in September, compared to 29% presented by the National Association of Realtors due to the 6 month range we provide in comparison to those first-time buyers that made purchases during September. In contradiction to our data, some are expecting first-time home buyers, mostly those ages 25 to 35, to decrease as they face a tough environment due to the recession, low wages, and high unemployment for that age range. On the other hand, a factor that could benefit first-time buyers going forward is the conception of programs that help get grants for both first-time and veterans, as they try to gather the funds for down payments, and find low-interest rate loans for housing payments.

Are you looking to buy a home in the next 6 months?

- Roughly 8.6% of U.S. consumers are in the market for a home in October for the next 6 months, relatively the same as the number of buyers a quarter ago (July).

- The percentage of first-time homebuyers however shot up this month to 47.7% of homebuyers, a 9 percentage point increase from a quarter ago.
19) Confusion surrounds the economic prospects in the U.S.

Consumers remain split and confused on the economic prospect in the U.S, and hold neither party responsible for their respective thoughts on the matter. In contrast to the confusion in the general public, the street is seeing a positive signal as unemployment claims dropped to its lowest level since 2000, and industrial output exploded in September. One factor that could hold growth back in the U.S. is its link to the slowing economy in China, which grew 7.2% from July to September, slower than its 7.5% growth the year before, and its slowest pace in 5 years.

Do you think economic prospects in the United States are improving or declining, and which political party, if any, is responsible?

- Consumers continue to be split on their opinions about the economic prospects in the U.S. with 50.4% of respondents thinking the economy is improving, while 49.6% believe it’s decreasing.
- 44.8% of consumers do not believe either party is responsible for the economic prospects.
20) Anti-vaccination movement remains tiny

The large majority of consumers (94.9%) believe children should be vaccinated. Younger Americans were more likely to not believe that children should be vaccinated, most likely caused by celebrity endorsers like Rob Schneider, which resulted in State Farm removing his ad due to it being the unpopular choice in the states. Many citizens have taken to blogs to urge parents to vaccinate their children, as well as politicians urging people to get flu shots as the upcoming flu season approaches. The anti-vaccination movement can be seen slowly growing in our survey, up .6% over the previous two months, and is in line with the small pockets of anti-vaccinators popping up around the country, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. These pockets raise concerns for the spreading and rebirth of diseases around the country, and we will continue to monitor if this trend goes mainstream.

**Should children be vaccinated?**

- Support for not vaccinating children rose .6 percentage points from two months ago to 5.1% of consumers.
- Those age 18-29 are the most likely to not support the vaccination of children, and those 45-60 are also growing in opposition.

21) Fitness, social media, NFL, Uber, and RetailMeNot are some apps consumers are adopting

**What apps/mobile games are you using now that you were not using a month ago?**

- Some of the most common apps that consumers are using this month include: Waze, WhatsApp, 2048, Facebook messenger, LinkedIn, NFL related apps, Uber, RetailMeNot, MyFitnessPal, Groupon, Meetup, and MapMyRun.

22) PayPal in stores, solar power, Ello, and people leaving social media, specifically Facebook are some of the trends pointed out by consumers

**What is the most interesting new trend you have seen in the last month?**

- Consumers have ears on the ground when it comes to seeing trends, and this month was no different as consumers spotted the following trends; Ebola, gas prices dropping, climate change awareness, tinder, ecigs, Ello, Wearables, iPhone 6, Apple Pay and Digital wallets, gluten intolerance, marriage equality, solar power, people leaving social media and Facebook, boots, drones, PayPal in stores, real time data being sent to medical providers, and connected homes.
The Author(s) of this research report certify that all of the views expressed in the report accurately reflect their personal views about any and all of the subject securities and that no part of the Author(s) compensation was, is or will be, directly or indirectly, related to the specific recommendations or views in this report. The Author does not own securities in any of the aforementioned companies.

OTA Financial Group LP has a membership interest in Blueshift Research LLC. OTA LLC, an SEC registered broker dealer subsidiary of OTA Financial Group LP, has both market making and proprietary trading operations on several exchanges and alternative trading systems. The affiliated companies of the OTA Financial Group LP, including OTA LLC, its principals, employees or clients may have an interest in the securities discussed herein, in securities of other issuers in other industries, may provide bids and offers of the subject companies and may act as principal in connection with such transactions. Craig Gordon, the founder of Blueshift, has an investment in OTA Financial Group LP.

© 2014 Blueshift Research LLC. All rights reserved. This transmission was produced for the exclusive use of Blueshift Research LLC, and may not be reproduced or relied upon, in whole or in part, without Blueshift’s written consent. The information herein is not intended to be a complete analysis of every material fact in respect to any company or industry discussed. Blueshift Research is a trademark owned by Blueshift Research LLC.