In January 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in the United States. It has been nine months since then, and as of today, COVID-19 has taken the lives of more than 202,617 Americans. By February 2020, the world was facing a pandemic level crisis from COVID-19 virus. The United States was adapting to life-changing regulations dictated by the government and The Center for Disease Control (CDC) to prevent the virus from spreading. American citizens leaned on Google search to look information on COVID-19 prevention, cases, and symptoms as well as restaurant options and Facebook.

According to Google Trends, a tool that analyses trillions of Google searches, between February 2020 and September 2020, people were more concerned about Facebook than the current pandemic, Instagram, or the news. Why could Facebook be more important that COVID-19 cases or the news? From April 9th to June 23rd, an estimated of 79 out of 100 Americans were searched for Facebook, 10 out 100 searched for Twitter, and 35 out 100 searches were COVID-19 related, which was very close to the number of searches related to “the news”.

From Google trends we saw on March 31 people turned to look for news, being at the highest of 99 out of 100 google searches. These searches relate to the news concerned protests eruption from a sixth day across the US over the death of George Floyd, beating Facebook as searches went down to 49 out 100 this brought the news to the top search of interest. It is almost as people were using social media platforms to escape from the reality of COVID.

Another topic of interest involves the correlation between restaurants and COVID. Studies have shown that many new COVID cases are a result of eating out in public setting. Upon looking at the Google trend of people searching for open restaurants vs searches for COVID symptoms there was an interesting correlation. As seen in Figure 1, during the summer months of May – June where COVID quarantine seemed to take a toll on people searches for “restaurants open” rose from their almost nonexistent searches during the early months of quarantine. Although people were actively searching for open restaurants simultaneously, they were also searching for COVID cases and symptoms but at a far lower rate. It was as if people were willing to see past COVID red flags just to get a dine in experience.

The script quickly changed as June approached and COVID cases spiked. Upon the start of June searches for open restaurants diminished just as fast as COVID related searches rose. It appears these searches are the aftermath of dining out. Perhaps all the searches for open restaurants resulted in the new spread of COVID and people were exposing themselves voluntarily to COVID just to eat out. Are American people being more concerned keeping up a social life whether online or in person or are they trying to find out what other people were doing in pandemic times? Whatever the case may be these trends seem to point that people are essentially trying to forget their reality.

As people are staying home and resorting to other forms of entertainment this brought our 3rd topic of interests the demand of Sony’s PlayStation 5 versus Microsoft’s Xbox Series X. There is a lot to factor in when making an early buying decision. The next-generation is all about power, speed and eye-popping visuals and when it comes to the internal specs used to achieve these things, the PS5 and Xbox Series X aren’t too far apart, though Microsoft does appear to have the edge on paper. There are lot of criteria to think before buying a video game console. It could be game type, cost, performance, backward compatibility, online service, storage, controller, exclusive games etc.

Upon using Google trends, we found some interesting results in terms of interest, cost, and GPU (see Figure 2). It seems both PlayStation 5 and Xbox X are close in terms of people’s interest however PS5 has little edge over Xbox X. Regarding demand be country it appears through Figure 3. that European countries have a higher demand for PS5. When the focus is turned to the United States, we see an important factor to buy a product is the price, particularly of the Xbox X (see Figure 4). Throughout the US we see searches in terms of GPU, XBOX X the clear winner. Although this is a common trend throughout the US, we do see one state, California, who is partly interested in the PlayStation 5’s GPU as well as seen in Figure 5.

Figure 1:

A screenshot of a social media post

Description automatically generated

Figure 2:

A screenshot of a social media post

Description automatically generated

Figure 3:

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

Figure 4:

A close up of a map

Description automatically generated

Figure 5:

A screenshot of a social media post

Description automatically generated