



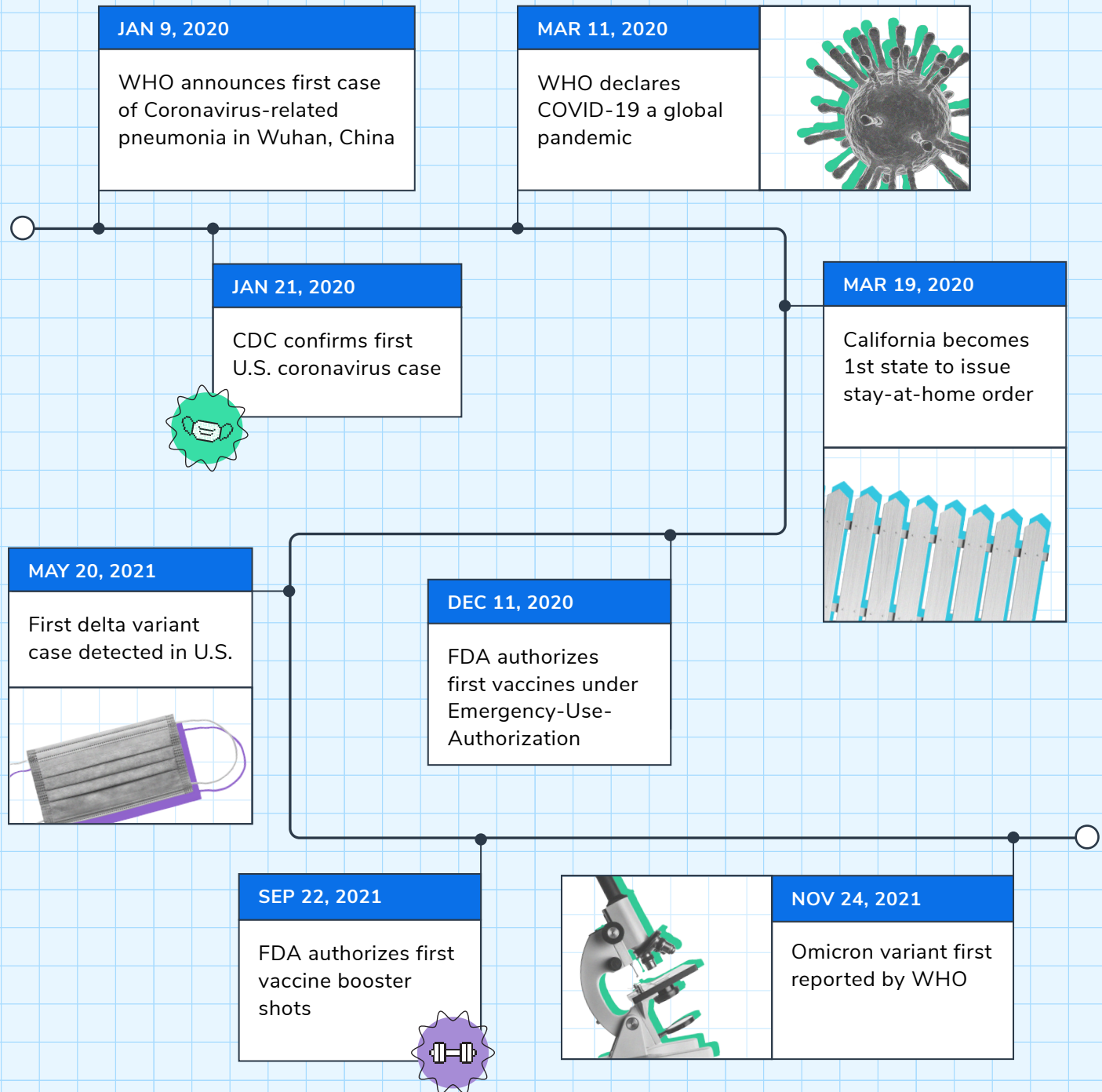
Lysol, Luggage, and The Great Lockdown:

What Amazon PPC Searches Reveal about
Online Shopping during the Pandemic



The COVID-19 pandemic irreversibly changed the world of commerce.

As quarantines and lockdown protocols took hold across the world, consumer spending and shopping habits fundamentally evolved out of necessity. Empty grocery store shelves, local business closures, frozen travel industries, and remote workforces became big parts of our lives, whether we were ready for them or not.



SOURCE
AJMC Staff. (2021, June 3). A Timeline of COVID-19 Vaccine Developments in 2021. AJMC. <https://www.ajmc.com/view/a-timeline-of-covid-19-vaccine-developments-in-2021>

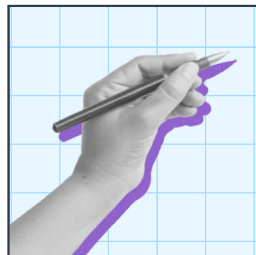


As societal survival instincts kicked in, daily life was forced online.

Perhaps the greatest indication of this online shift can be seen in e-commerce, which grew a whopping 31.8%¹ in the U.S. between 2019 and 2020. At the forefront of this online shopping explosion was, of course, Amazon. Despite a stumbling economy, a microchip shortage, and even a cargo ship getting stuck in the Suez Canal, Amazon maintained its rapid growth throughout the course of the pandemic. **By 2021, Amazon accounted for over 43.5%¹ of the share of the U.S. e-commerce market, drawing almost 200 million² unique visitors each month.**

A defining characteristic of COVID-19 shopping was the myriad of product trends and changing purchase habits that influenced online buyers. Whether it was a new strain of the virus, a hot Netflix show, a new workout craze, or a viral Tik-Tok trend, the pandemic led us all to dramatically change what we buy.

This report highlights 10 Amazon search terms and examines the intriguing trends behind them during COVID-19. The data below paints a holistic picture of consumer spending patterns from 2019 through 2022.



Author's Note

For the purpose of this analysis, anytime **“click volume”** is mentioned in this report, it is in reference to the volume of clicks sourced from PPC ads displayed in Amazon.com search results.



The mammoth size and scope of Amazon has several implications:

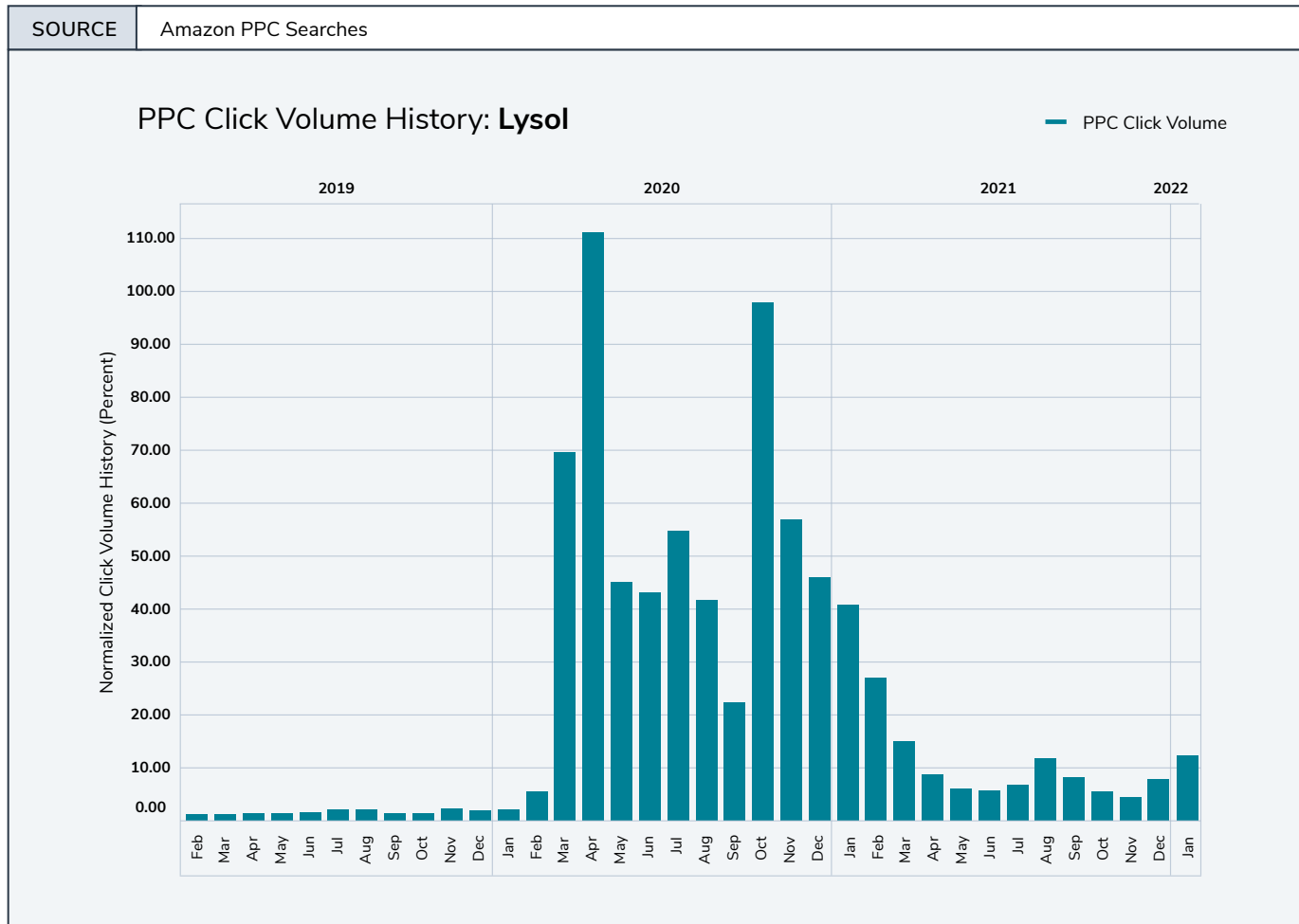
- Amazon’s endless product catalog is surpassed only by its global reach as one of the world’s leading ‘pop culture’ search engines.
- Online shopping trends on the world’s largest digital marketplace already provide us with invaluable data points when the world is normal. The ability to study Amazon click demand during a global pandemic paves the way for a very rare glimpse into macro shopping behaviors during a prolonged societal crisis. This is demonstrated by examining data from PPC searches on Amazon.

[Jump to the Methodology](#) →



Lysol

Sanitizing and panic buying: indicators of just how quickly our world changed



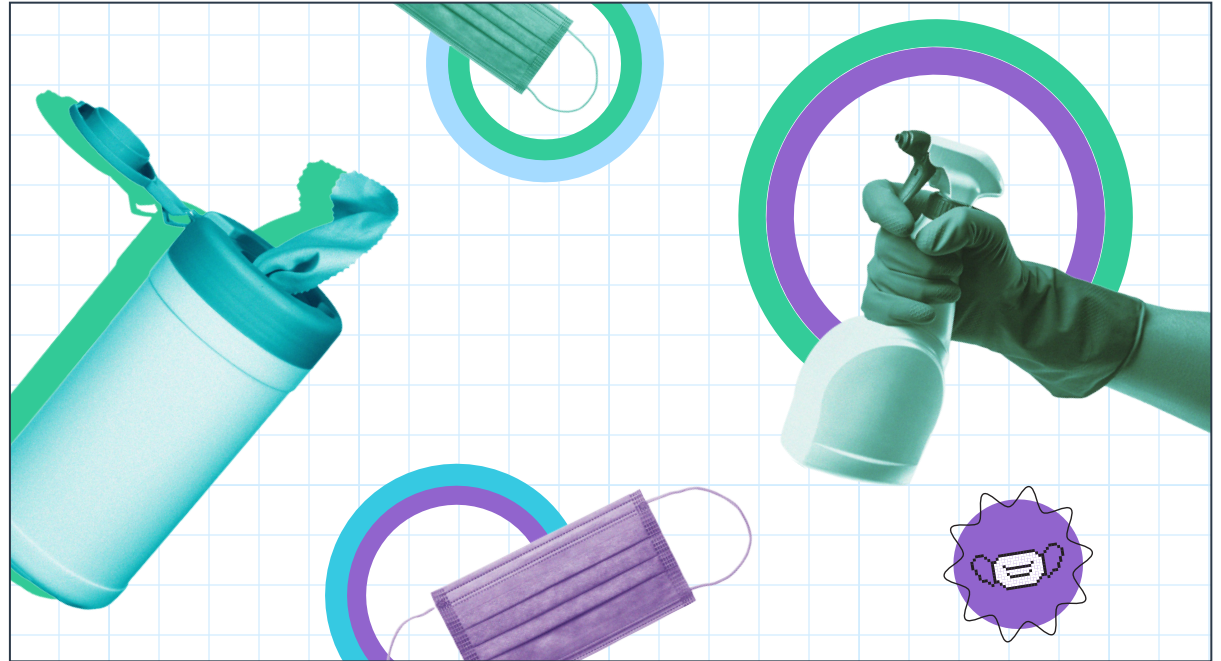
TIMING:

Clicks for Lysol hit their peaks in **April and October 2020**



7520%

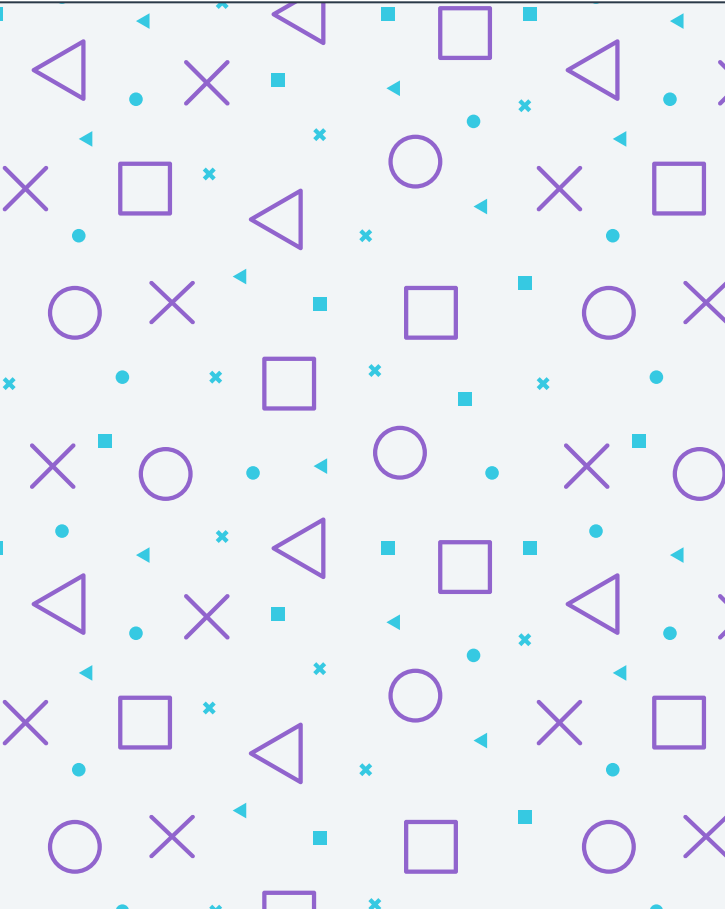
increase in click volume
comparing Spring 2019
to Spring 2020



THE DETAILS:

'Lysol' is a fascinating example as the term's click volume history precisely mirrors the evolution of the pandemic itself.

We can clearly see the spikes in the data: the original virus took hold in the U.S. during March and April 2020, and the fall wave of the original strain is reflected in the graph above. When comparing March and April 2020 against the same months in 2019, we see a monumental 7520% increase in click volume! This sheds light on how quickly and dramatically society changed during COVID-19's first year as click volume mimics the panic-buying of sanitizing products that emerged.



SOURCES

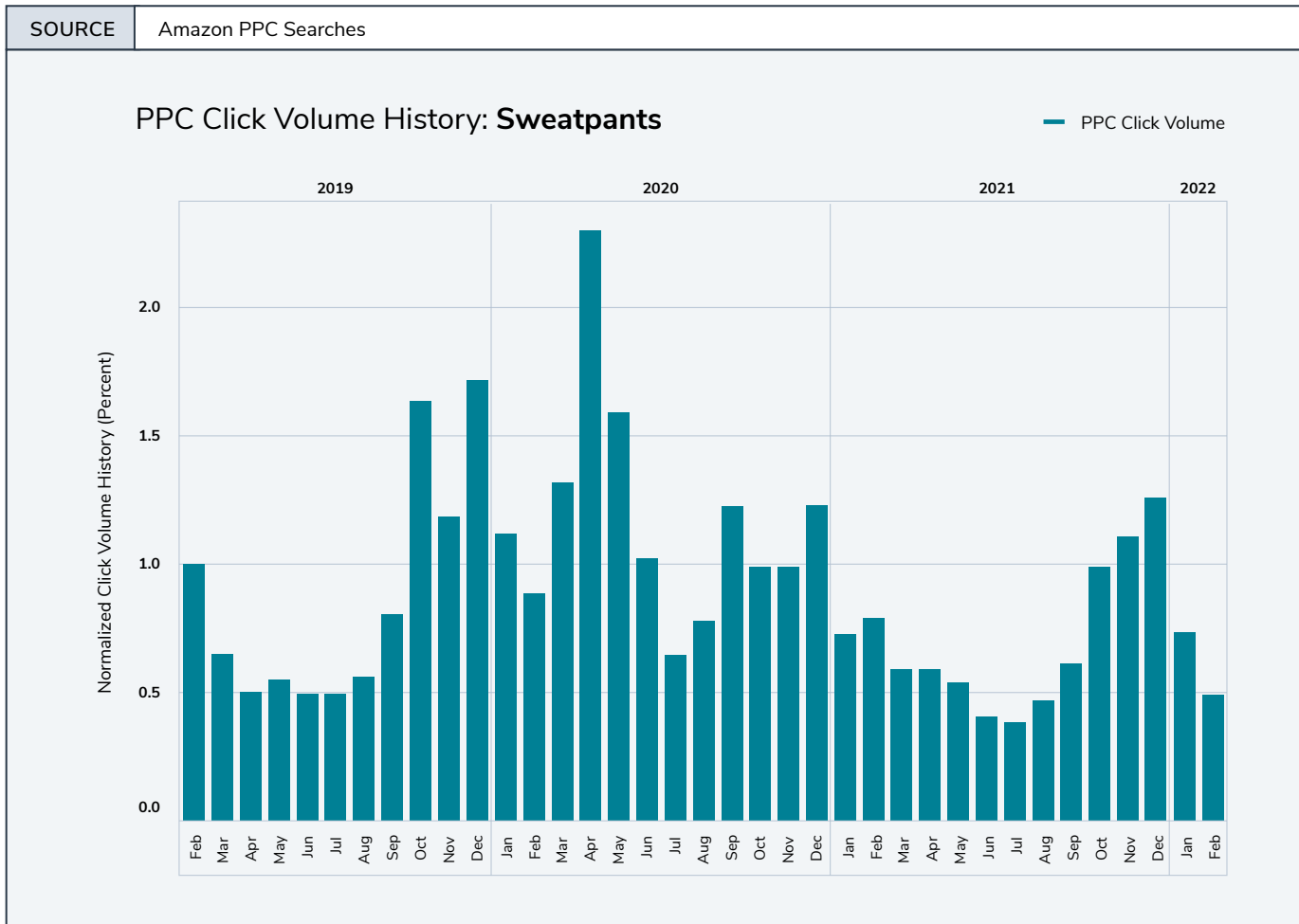
¹Young, J. (2022, February 18). US ecommerce sales grow 15.0% in 2018 | Digital Commerce 360. Digital Commerce 360. <https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/article/us-ecommerce-sales/>

²Statista. (2017, June). U.S. retail websites by visitors | Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/271450/monthly-unique-visitors-to-us-retail-websites/>



Sweatpants

The rise and fall of 'PJ-casual': why everyone on your Zoom call won't stand up



TIMING:

As stay-at-home orders went into effect during **March of 2020**, click volume spiked⁵ in April as society collectively swapped out their suit pants for sweats, and jackets for jumpsuits.

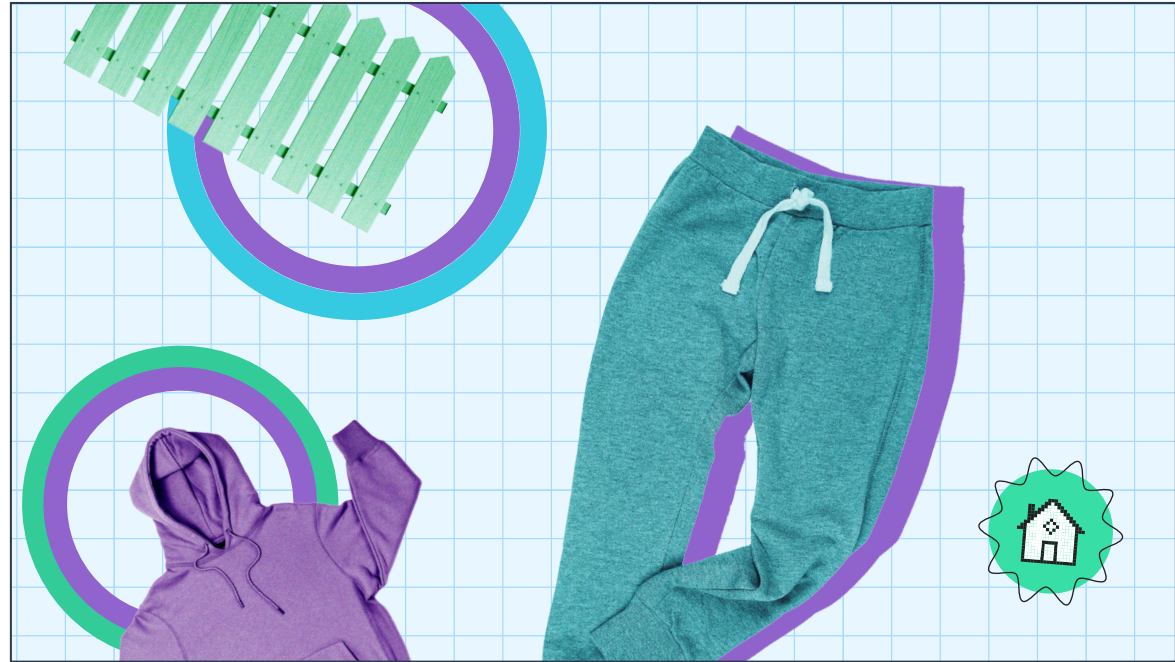


362%

increase in clicks from
April 2019 to 2020

75%

decrease in clicks in
April 2021 vs. 2020



THE DETAILS:

Sweatpants saw a 362% increase in clicks⁵ from April 2019 to April 2020, which declined by 75% the following April in 2021. As the world opened up, there was less need for comfortable, work-from-home clothing.

SOURCE

⁵Aleksander, I. (2021, January 27). Sweatpants Forever: How the Fashion Industry Collapsed. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/06/magazine/fashion-sweatpants.html>



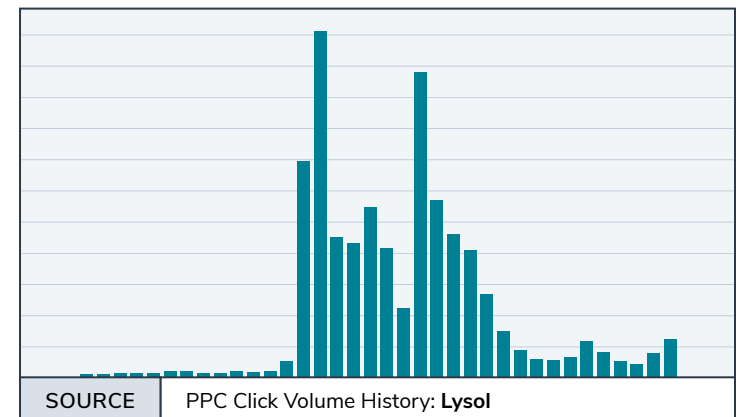
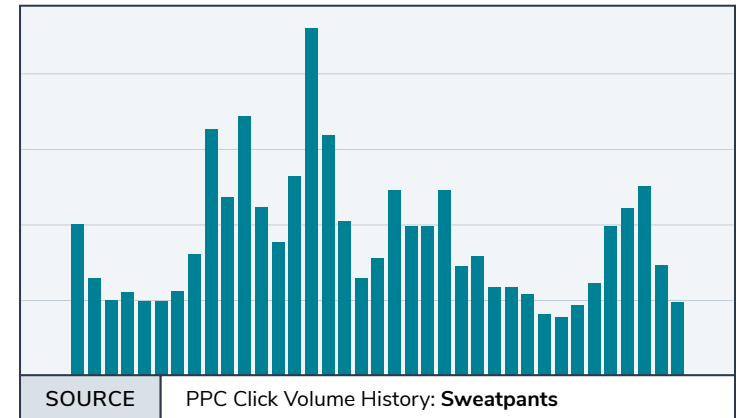
Takeaways:

A POTENTIAL 'FLASH IN THE PAN'

In April of 2020, clothing sales fell 79% in the United States, the largest dive on record. Purchases of sweatpants, though, were up 80%.³ As the world returns to normal, it's likely that manufacturers and fashion houses will need to account for the fact that much of society has been wearing comfortable, casual clothes for a large part of the past two years. Few of us, if any, are remotely excited about transitioning back to traditional 'work attire.' The reverberations of this may be felt in the fashion industry in the coming years.

It is also interesting to note the dramatic tail off of online Lysol demand in 2021 – this may be attributed to several factors:

- People stocked up on Lysol during the early pandemic due to fear of shortages. These 'reserves' meant people no longer had to re-stock the following year.
- It also isn't a stretch to look at the 2021 data and surmise that fewer people are disinfecting due to vaccinated protection, personal fatigue from COVID protocols, and new scientific research detailing, for example, how COVID is (and isn't) transmitted via common surfaces.

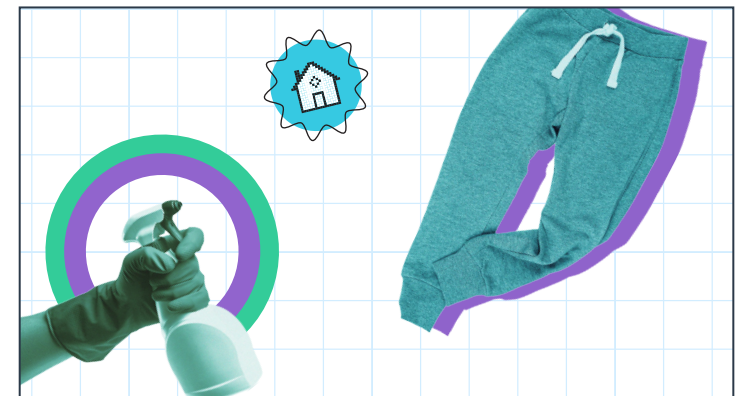


HELIUM 10 TOOL TIP

Looking Back In Time At Search Demand

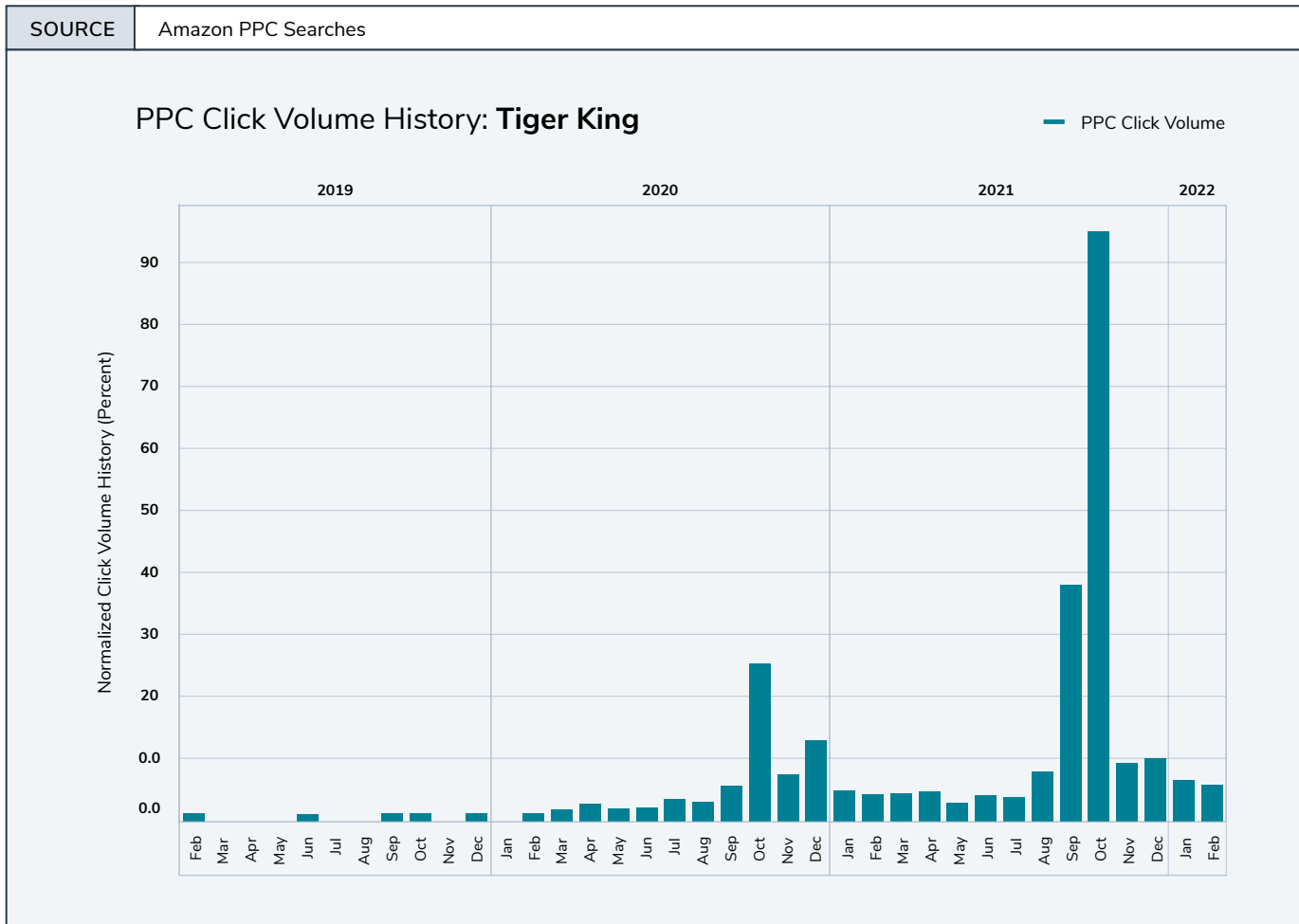
Did you know the Helium 10 Chrome Extension allows sellers to view estimated search volume history to identify past trends and inform future decisions? Now you have an instant way to discover if a product trend is a flash in the pan or offers serious staying power.

Try the Chrome Extension for free →



Tiger King

How the hit Netflix show transformed Halloween on Amazon

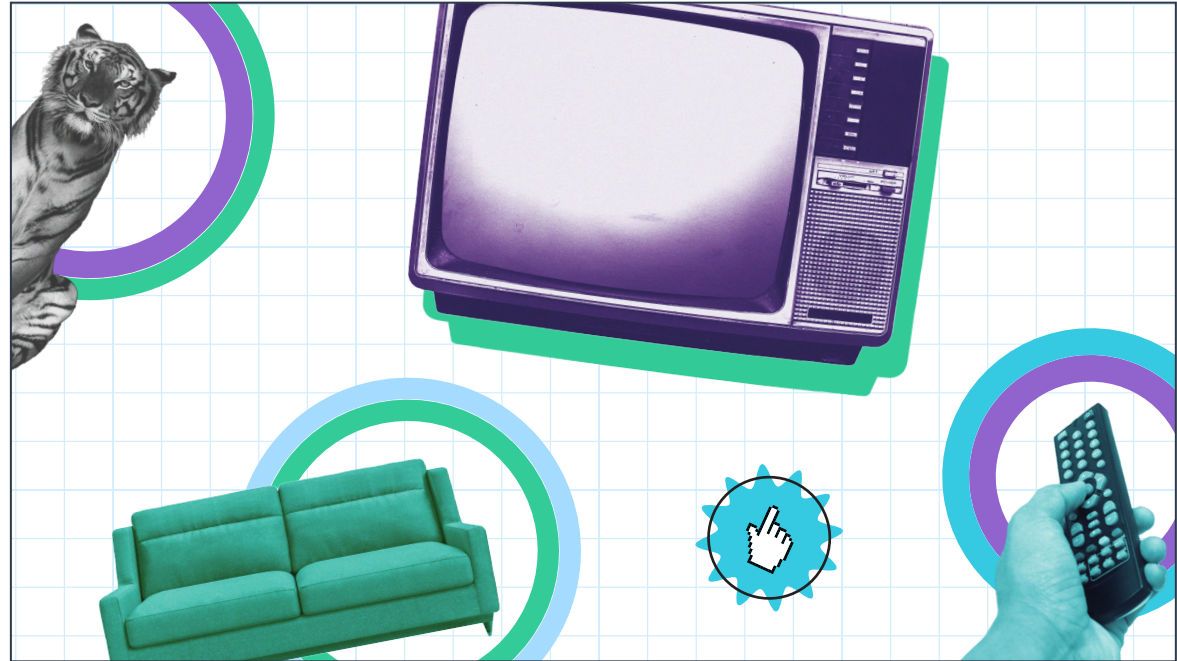


TIMING:
Tiger King was released on **March 20th, 2020** on Netflix.



277%

increase in click volume
comparing October 2020
to October 2021



POP CULTURE IMPACT:

The clear spikes in October of both years indicate Tiger King's emergence as a top Halloween costume choice.

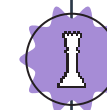
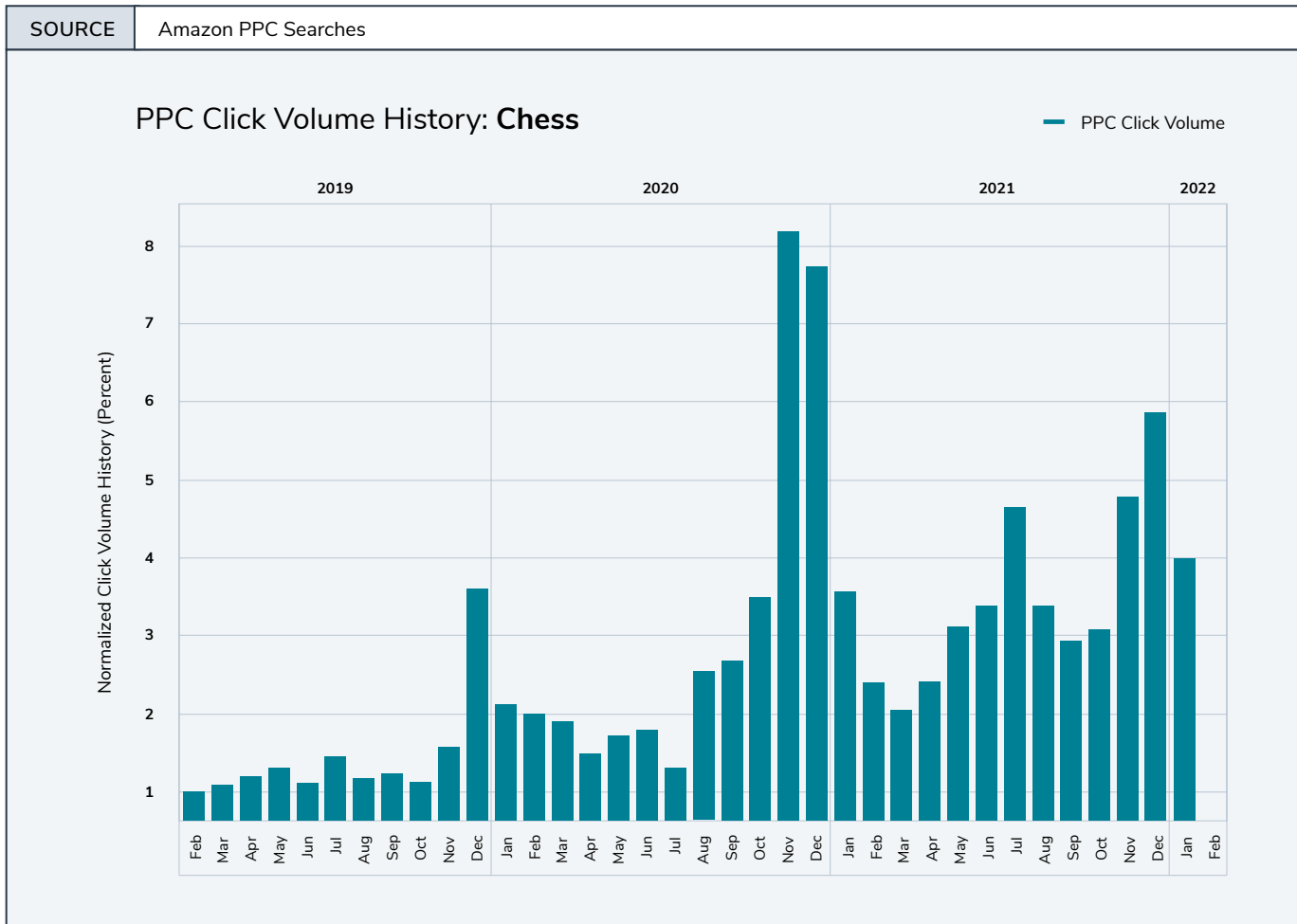
THE DETAILS:

Tiger King's popularity had a significant impact on purchase decisions. The considerable jump from October 2020 to October 2021 (a 277% year-over-year increase in clicks) can be explained by widespread vaccine availability and renewed interest in social gatherings. With 'stay-at-home fatigue' at an all-time high, people began to embrace the 'new normal' after a year of limited social interaction. The fear that epitomized much of 2020 had seemingly waned.



Chess

A streaming sensation stirs a revival
1,500 years in the making

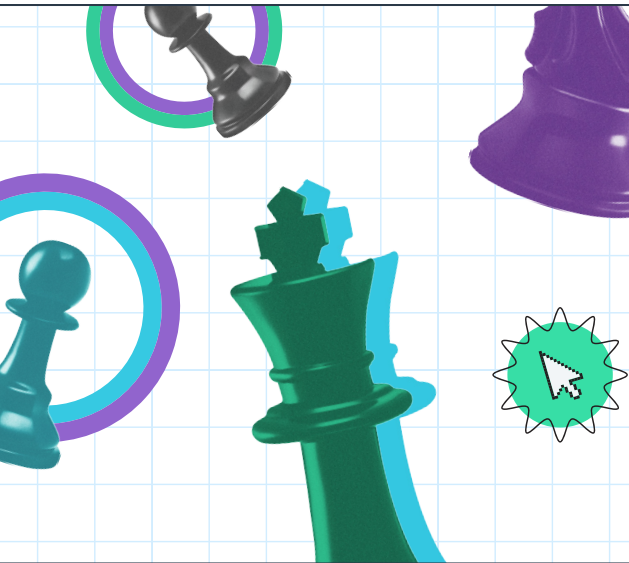


TIMING:
The Queen's Gambit was released via Netflix on **October 23rd, 2020.**



420%

increase in clicks from
November 2019 to 2020



🔍 Not sure whats trending?

The **Helium 10 Pinterest Trend Finder** is often one of the best ways to find hot products that haven't yet made it to the Amazon marketplace.

[Learn more](#) →

The ubiquity of Netflix (220 million paid memberships worldwide)⁴ means **chess was brought to a wide array of new demographics**, and due to the nature of the story, women in particular.

POP CULTURE IMPACT:

Click volume primarily indicates the revival of a game launched 1,500 years ago - chess.

THE DETAILS:

Immediately following the release, we see a dramatic spike in clicks⁵ – November 2020 shows a 420% increase over November 2019, while November 2021 shows a 42% decrease compared to Nov 2020. We can attribute the 2020 spike to the initial release of the show. While the subsequent year shows a year-over-year decrease in volume, there was still increased interest in 2021 compared to 2019. This may be an indication of how media creates permanent shifts in consumer interest regarding certain products. We see sustained, long term interest in chess sets following the initial spike in seen in 2020.

LASTING IMPACT:

62 million people watched The Queen's Gambit within the first 28 days of its release, a number bolstered by widespread lockdowns. Remember, there is no single trademark restriction on chess sets, meaning an unsuspecting Amazon seller who happened to sell a multicolored chess set might have woken up to soaring sales! Conversely, originally-branded hit shows like 'Squid Game' required custom products on Amazon to be manufactured after-the-fact.

This sets a fascinating precedent for the profitability and timing of 'unbranded' vs. 'branded' viral TV shows moving forward.

SOURCES

⁴Watson, A. (2021, February 10). *Number of Netflix subscribers 2018* | Statista. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/250934/quarterly-number-of-netflix-streaming-subscribers-worldwide/>

⁵(sourced from Amazon PPC searches for Chess & chess-related products on Amazon)

⁶Netflix [@Netflix] (2020, November 23). "A record-setting 62 million households chose to watch The Queen's Gambit in its first 28 days." Tweet. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/netflix/status/1330903941706485761?s=20&t=OoupluWLSUGfXhe1k1jFyA>

⁷Seen on Netflix, Sold on Amazon. (2021, October 7). Marketplace Pulse. <https://www.marketplacepulse.com/articles/seen-on-netflix-sold-on-amazon>



THE NETFLIX EFFECT

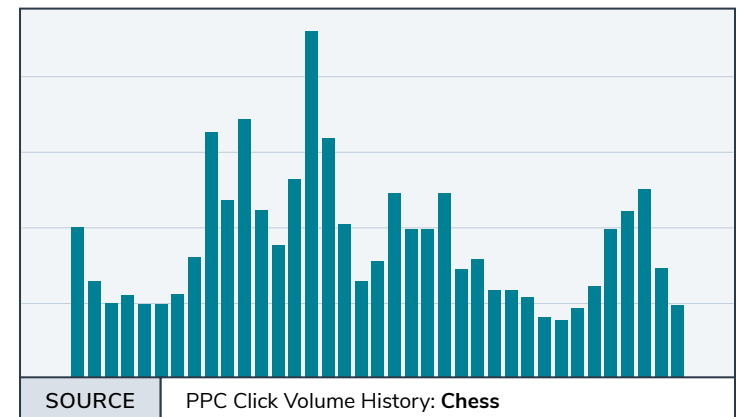
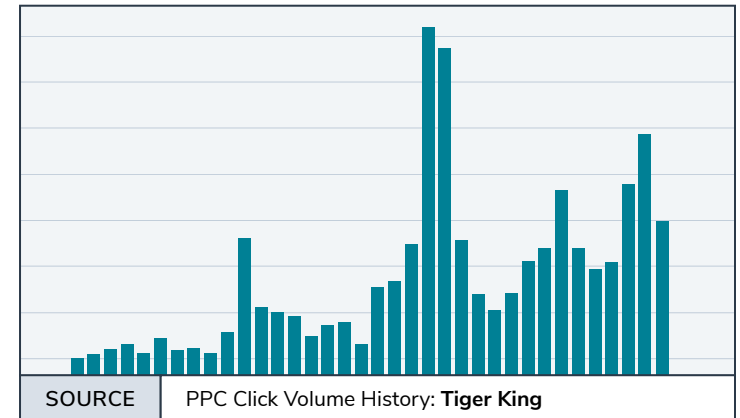
Takeaways:

THE POP TV-AMAZON CONNECTION

Trending TV shows and movies are having an increasingly powerful influence on Amazon consumer demand. 62 million people watched *The Queen's Gambit* within the first 28 days of its release⁶, a number bolstered by widespread lockdowns. Netflix's viral hit *Squid Game* was another key example. Just two weeks after the show's U.S. release, 'Squid Game' was the #1 most searched term on Amazon.⁷

However, just because two hit shows capture millions of eyeballs doesn't always mean product sales will reflect the same story.

The only certainty? Netflix's ability to influence purchase decisions has only become more evident as demonstrated by click volume on Amazon during the pandemic.



HELIUM 10 TOOL TIP

Notice Something Trending?

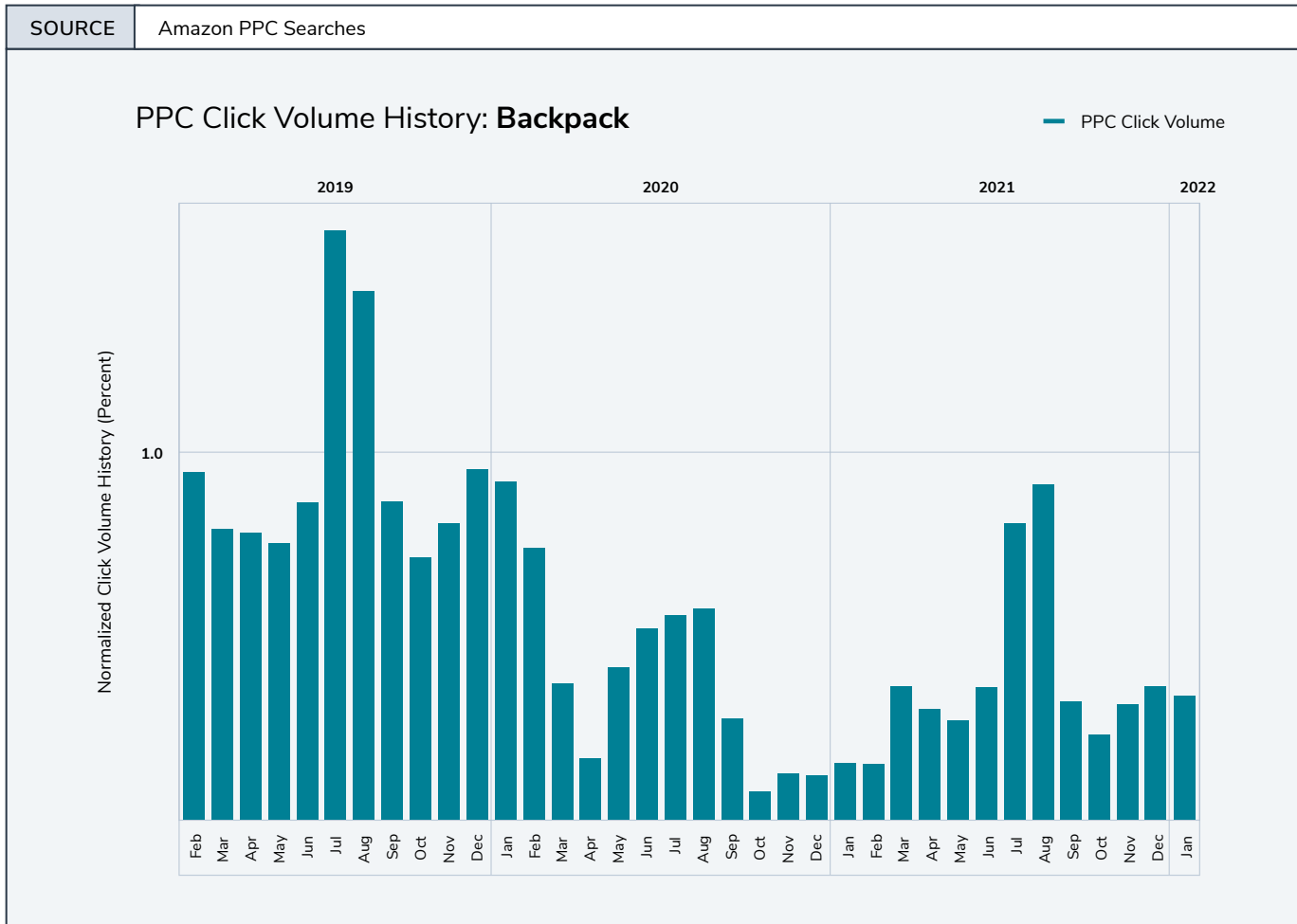
With **Helium 10's Black Box** (using the "keywords" tab), simply run a search for "chess" or "tiger king" to gather a list of related phrases, all with critical information such as BSR, estimated search volume, and best sales period.

[Learn more about Black Box →](#)



Backpack

Remote learning made 2020 a school year unlike any other



TIMING:
Clicks for Backpacks hit a low point in **April 2020**



32.3%

decrease in clicks from
April 2019 to April 2020

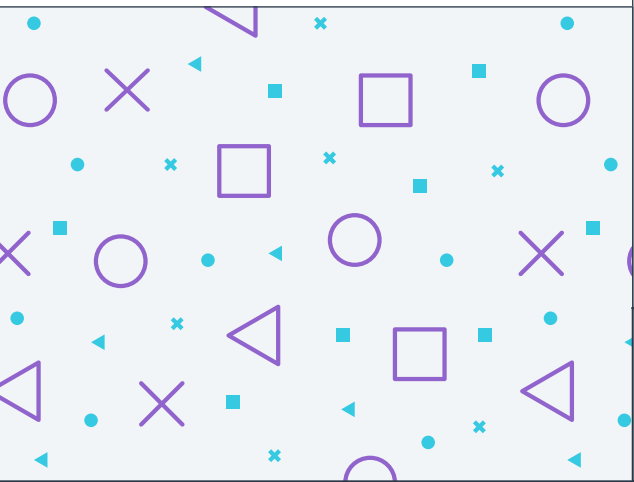
32%

increase in clicks
comparing August 2021
to August 2022



THE DETAILS:

During 2019, click volume peaked during the period of July through August. This is the time when over 70 million students head off to school or college, needing backpacks. Expectedly, backpack click volume in 2020 decreased by 32.3% compared to 2019. As universities reopened or implemented hybrid models in the fall of 2021, we see interest for backpacks rebound, with August 2021 seeing a similar 32% increase when compared to August 2020.



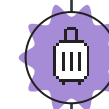
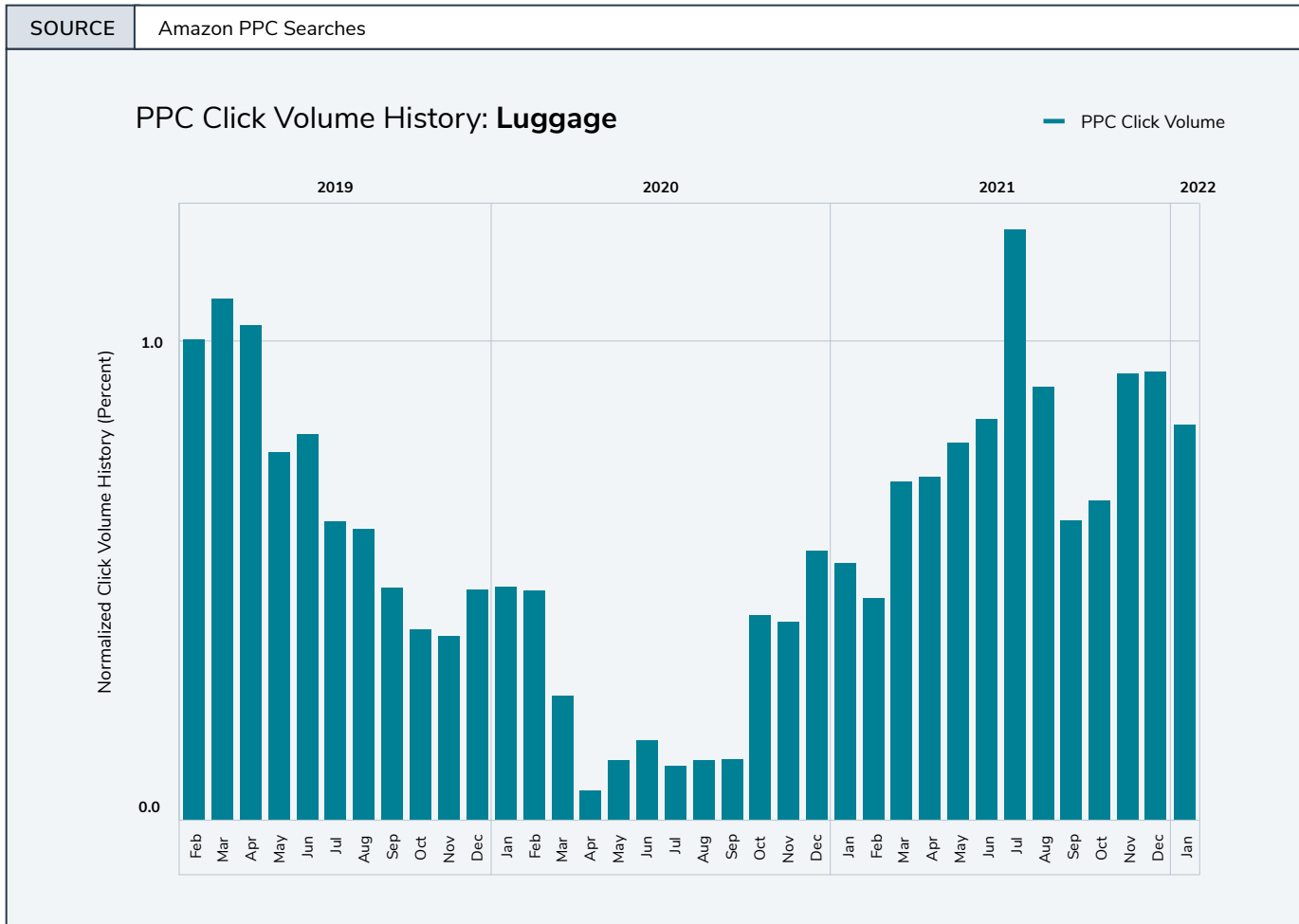
SOURCE

⁸2020 Worst Year in History for Air Travel Demand. (2021, February 3). International Air Transport Association. <https://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/pr/2021-02-03-02/>



Luggage

Travel bans kept suitcases in the attic in 2020

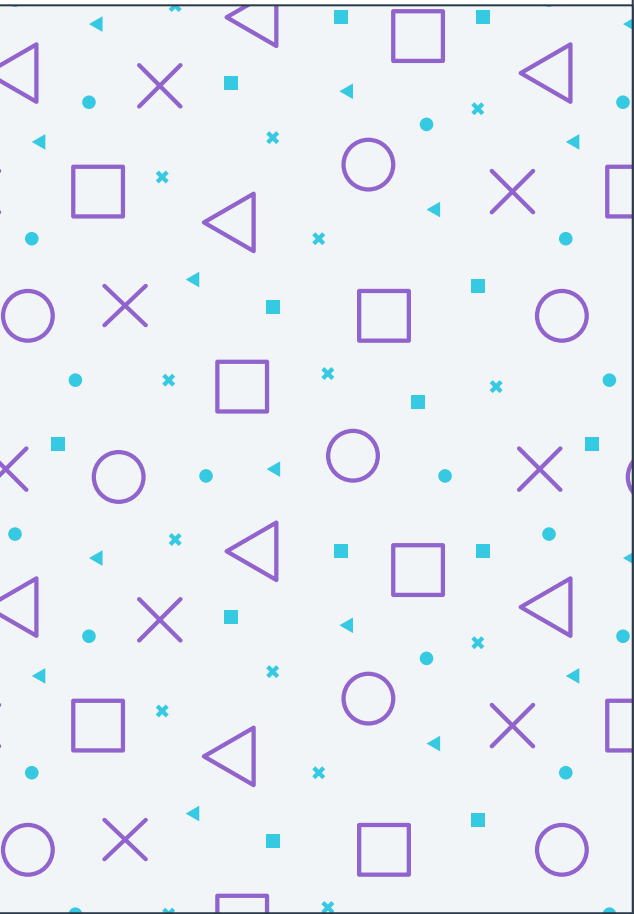


TIMING:
Clicks for Luggage hit its peak in **July 2021**



573%

increase in click volume
comparing July 2020
to July 2021



THE DETAILS:

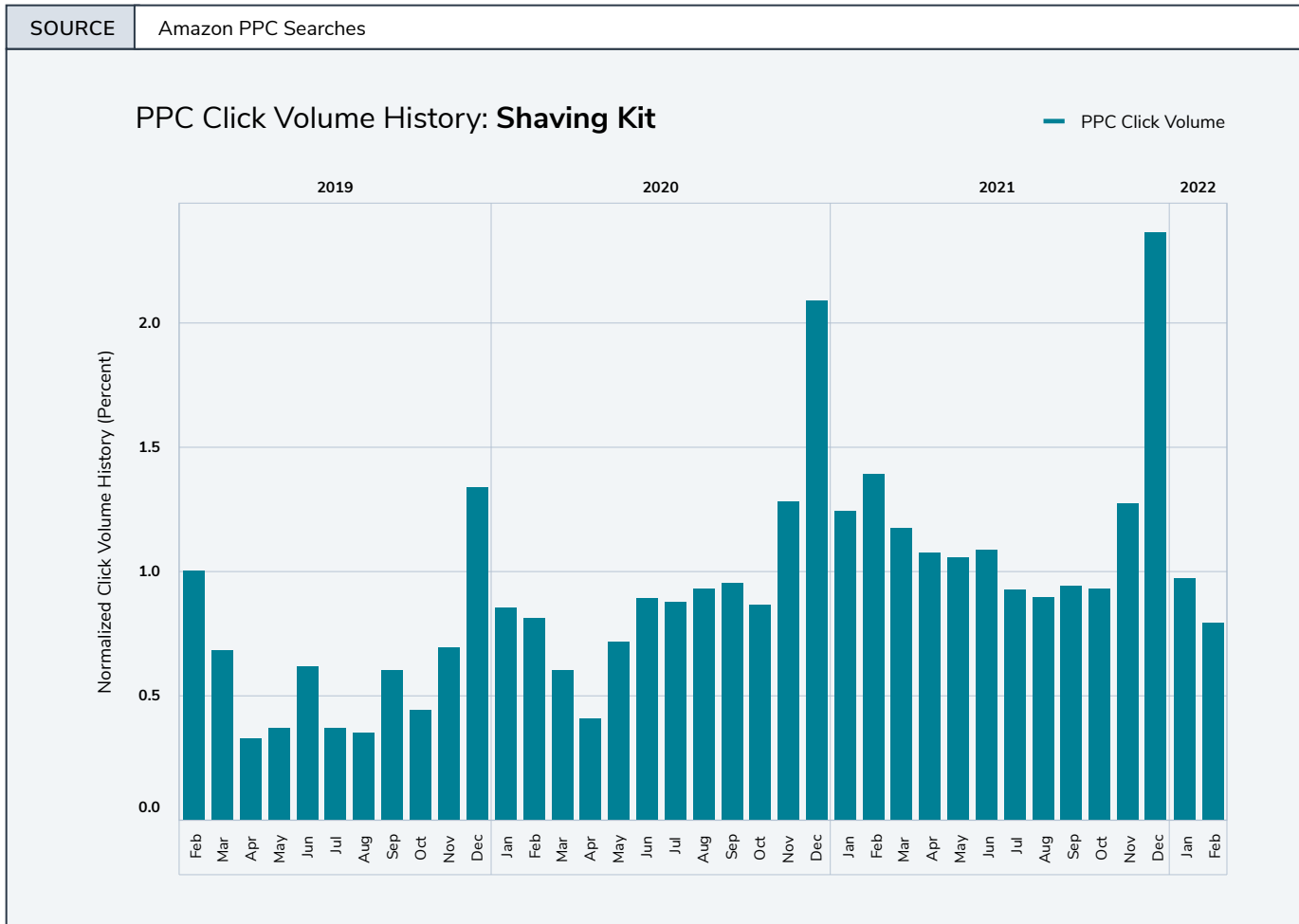
'Luggage' is another interesting term that precisely parallels the various travel bans and restrictions that were put in place across the globe during 2021. As air travel decreased, searches for luggage saw a very steep drop off, as expected.

July 2021 is a particularly telling data point, helping paint a picture of a public mutually desperate for a change in scenery – July 2021 saw a 573% increase in clicks for 'luggage' compared to July 2020.



Shaving Kit

Saying goodbye to a hairy few years

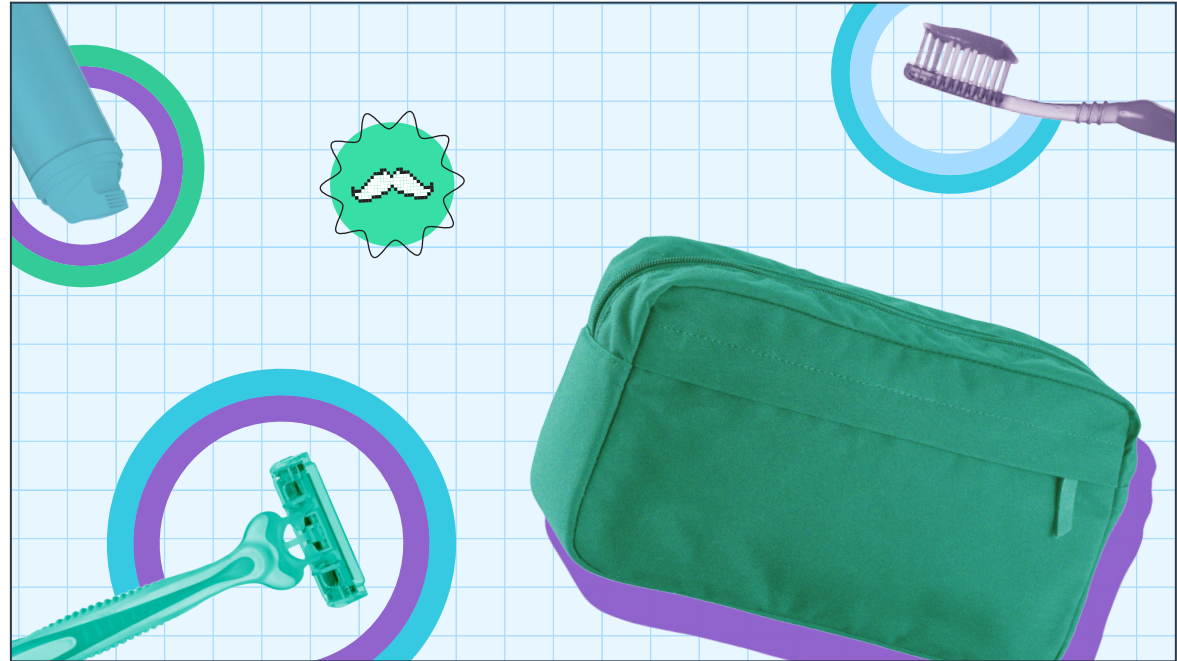
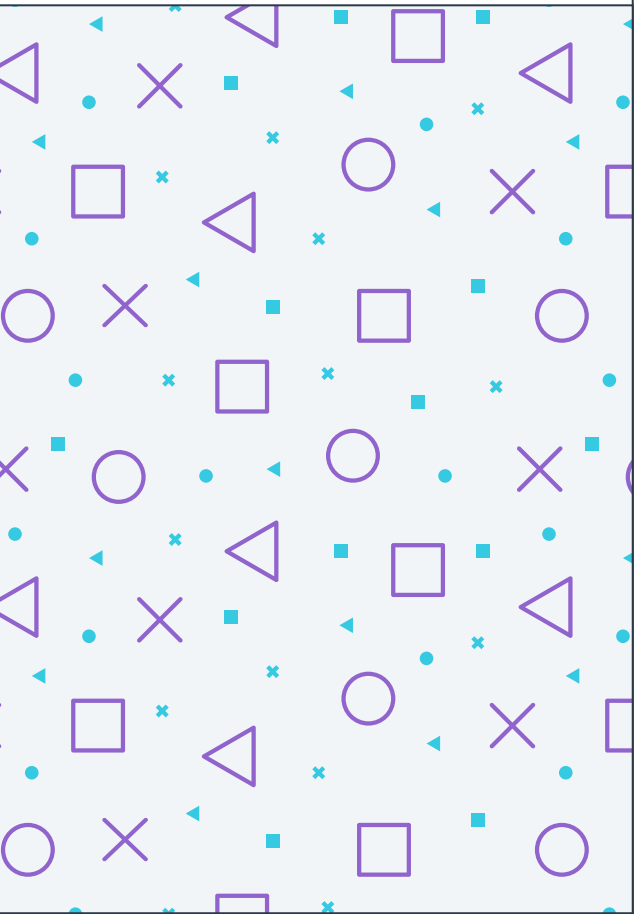


TIMING:
 Clicks for Shaving Kits hit their peaks in **December 2020** and **December 2021**



28%

increase in click volume
comparing December
2020 to December 2021



THE DETAILS:

We see a 28% increase in shaving kit click volume in 2021 when compared to 2020. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that as the world began to open up in 2021, more people bought shaving kits to remove their quarantine beards and 'staches. April of 2020 saw the lowest demand, as many of our self-care rituals were upended.



GOING NOWHERE

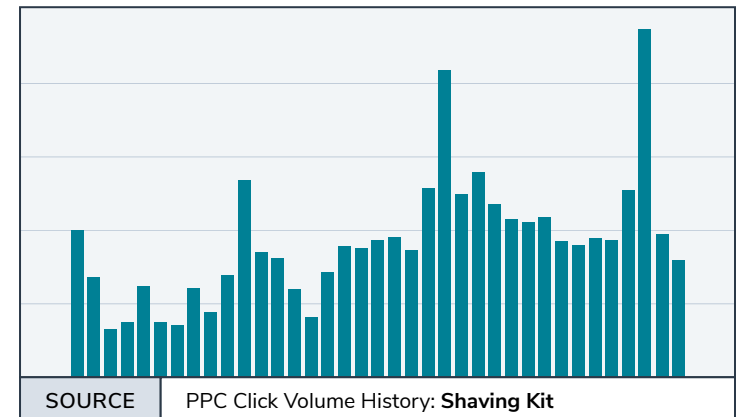
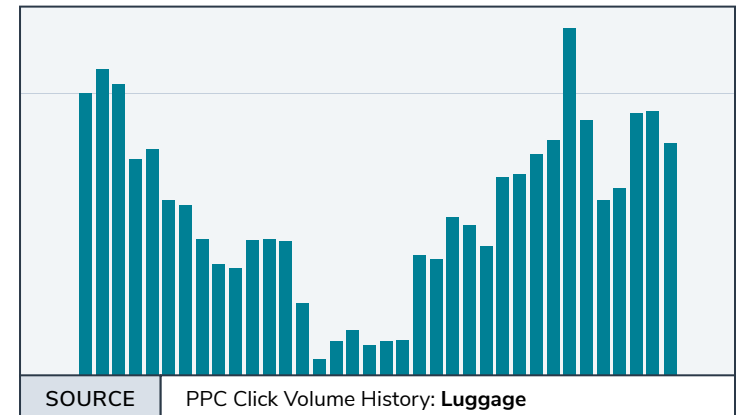
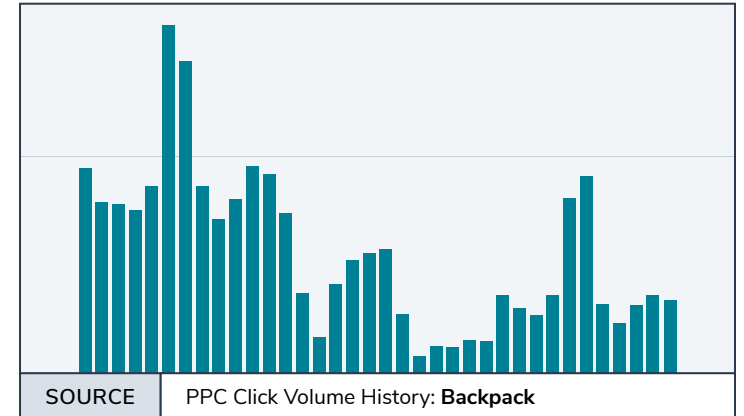
Takeaways:

BE AWARE OF WHAT'S STAYING REMOTE (AND WHAT ISN'T)

During the pandemic, few industries were hit harder than airline travel. 2020 was the toughest year for air travel demand in history. International travel was down 75.6% from 2019 levels,⁸ yet quickly and dramatically spiked again in 2021. The fact that Amazon PPC data for 'luggage' accurately reflects this real world volatility is a testament to the scope of Amazon's reach.

Demand for backpacks provides additional, albeit different colors to the past two years. As colleges embraced remote learning, commutes (and walks to campus) largely ended.⁵ We see a drastic drop off in click volume for backpacks, particularly during the onset of the pandemic in March and April 2020. The ongoing remote and hybrid learning approaches around the country may explain why click volume is still yet to rebound to pre-COVID levels.

Additionally, we notice the popularity of shaving kits as Christmas gifts: December 2021 saw 155% more clicks for shaving kits compared to October of the same year. Being aware of the seasonality of items is important - you can capitalize by selling shaving kits and accessories during Q4, despite the fact that they aren't always thought of as 'traditional' Christmas gifts.



HELIUM 10 TOOL TIP

Finding Keywords With The Most "Juice"

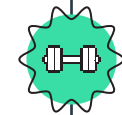
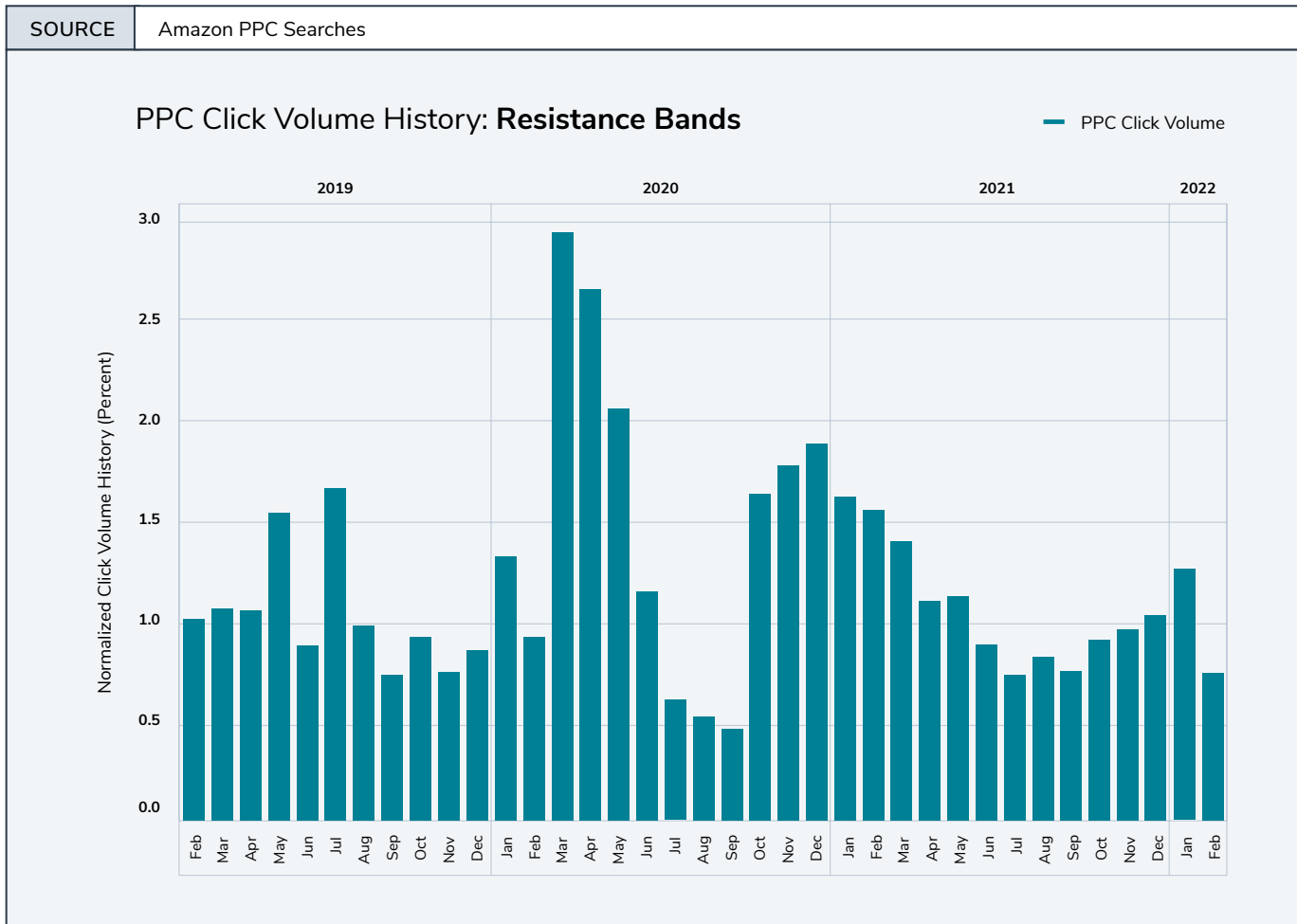
With the Helium 10 Chrome Extension, browse Amazon for products similar to your own and make use of the "Keywords Widget." This will take you directly to Cerebro, our flagship keyword research tool, to show which keywords are fueling the top ranking products on page one of Amazon search results.

[Try the Chrome Extension for free →](#)



Resistance Bands

Gym closures meant finding alternative ways of getting our sweat on

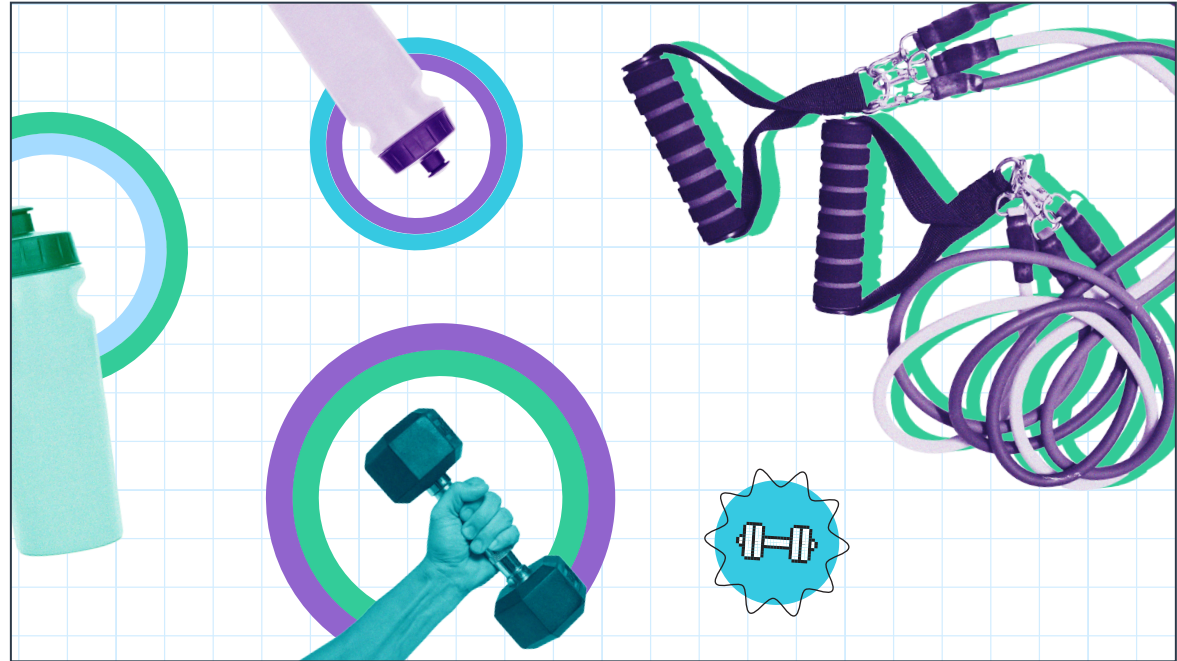


TIMING:
Sales of Resistance Bands hit their peak in **March 2020**



177%

increase in click volume
from March 2019 to
March 2020



THE DETAILS:

We notice a clear spike in clicks for resistance bands immediately after gyms and fitness studios closed down, and people transitioned towards home workouts.

We might hypothesize that the reason resistance bands spiked so much higher than other exercise equipment is that everyone started to work from home, but not everyone wanted to (or could afford to) buy a home gym setup, especially when many were predicting the pandemic to quickly pass. More traditional gym equipment was also likely to be sold out.

With 40 million U.S. residents living in apartments⁹ with limited space, resistance bands provided an affordable and portable fitness solution, hence the dramatic spike.

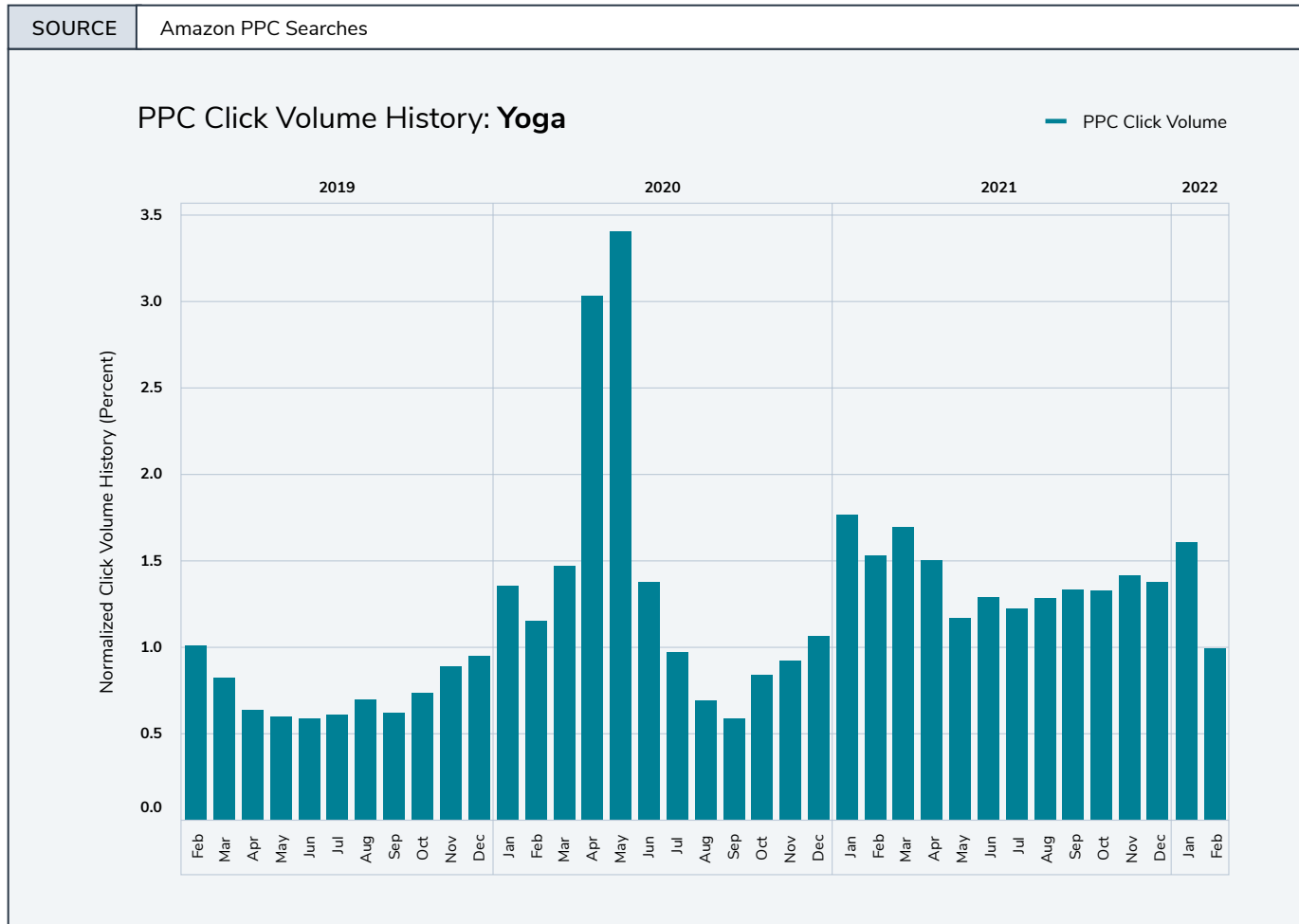
SOURCE

⁹United States Needs 4.6 Million New Apartments By 2030 or It Will. (2017, August 22). National Apartment Association. <https://www.naahq.org/news-publications/units/june-2017/article/united-states-needs-46-million-new-apartments-2030>



Yoga

If there is one thing we learned from the pandemic, it's how to stay flexible

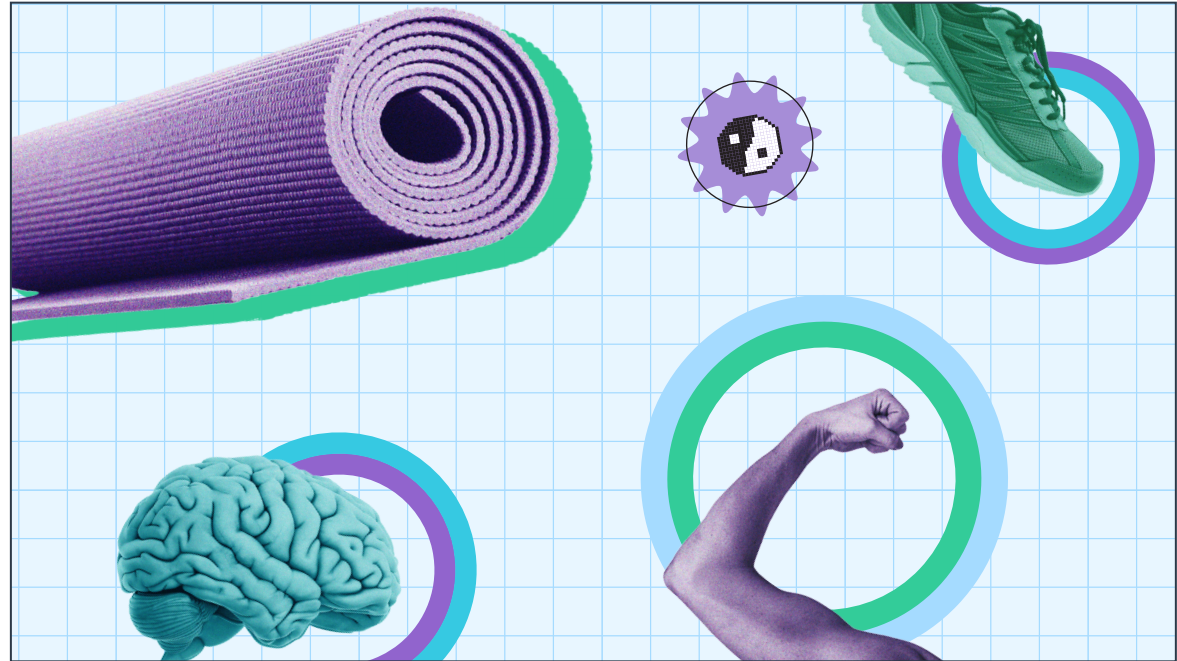
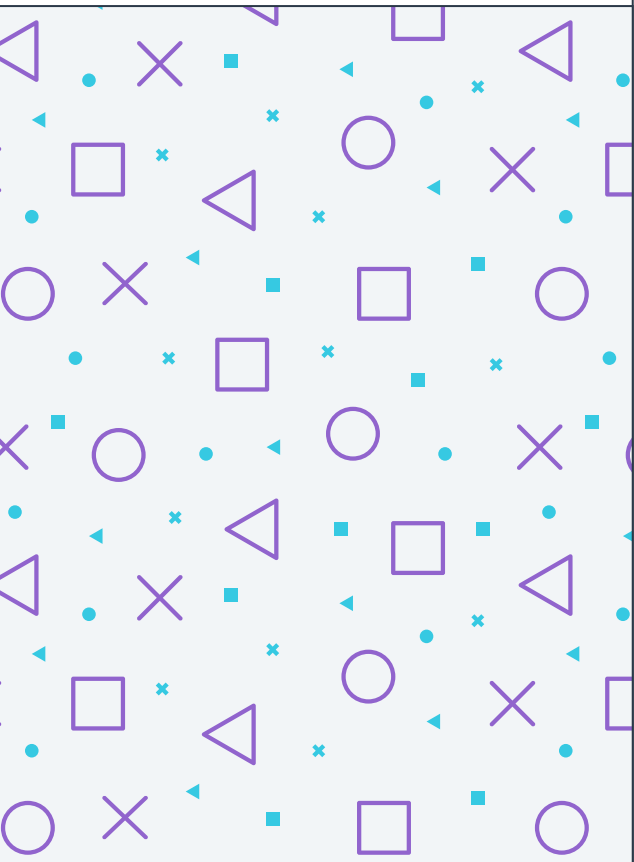


TIMING:
Clicks for Yoga and Yoga Equipment hit their peaks in **April and May 2020**



144%

increase in click volume comparing February and March 2020 with April and May 2020



THE DETAILS:

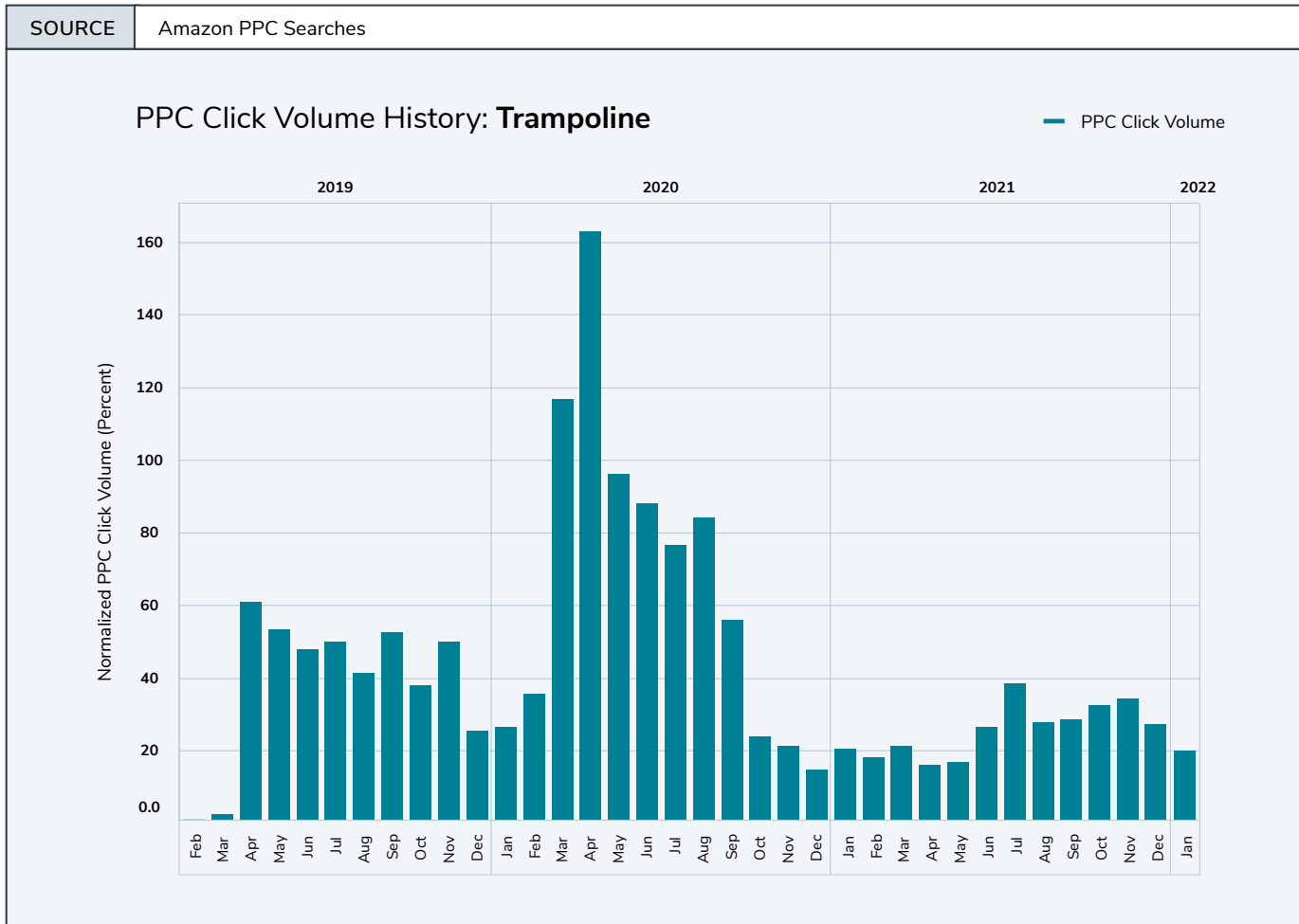
It was a similar story for 'yoga' click volume, which saw a 144% increase when looking at February and March of 2020 compared to April and May of the same year.

The ties between yoga and physical and mental health are well-documented - not to mention it is an activity that has become increasingly popular to participate in from home. It is no surprise that the turbulent-yet-monotonous period of strict quarantines and restrictions during 2020 caused people to turn to yoga. And the data backs this up.



Trampolines

Bouncing our way out of boredom



TIMING:
Clicks for Trampolines hit their peaks in **April 2020**



169%

increase in click volume
comparing April 2019
and April 2020



THE DETAILS:

Those with the space (and the children) quickly jumped at the opportunity of adding a 'play-in-place' activity to their backyards, demonstrated by the 169% increase when comparing April 2019 against April 2020. Mini trampoline workouts also emerged as a fitness trend in 2020, spearheaded by Hollywood celebrities and touted as a low-impact workout that can be done at home or virtually.¹⁰

SOURCE

¹⁰ Oliver, J. (2020, December 26). Are Mini Trampolines the Future of At-Home Fitness? W Magazine. <https://www.wmagazine.com/story/trampoline-rebounder-workout-at-home-the-ness>



THE RISE OF HOME WORKOUTS

Takeaways:

WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WEIGHT

It is clear in the above data that COVID-19 materially shifted fitness habits as people found new ways to exercise virtually and spend their time at home - be it with yoga, resistance training, or trampolines. Yes, the initial popularity of at-home workouts has since stabilized as people begin to integrate their favorite cycling or hot yoga studios (with fewer restrictions) into their routines again. However, it's undeniable that fitness has also become more accessible than ever, evidenced by the shifts in consumer behavior seen on Amazon.

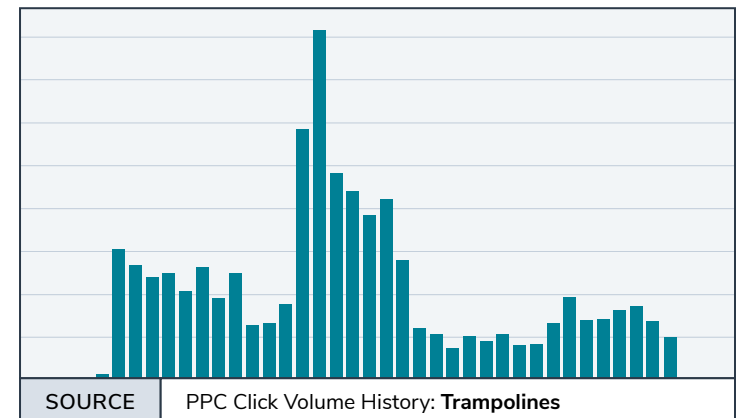
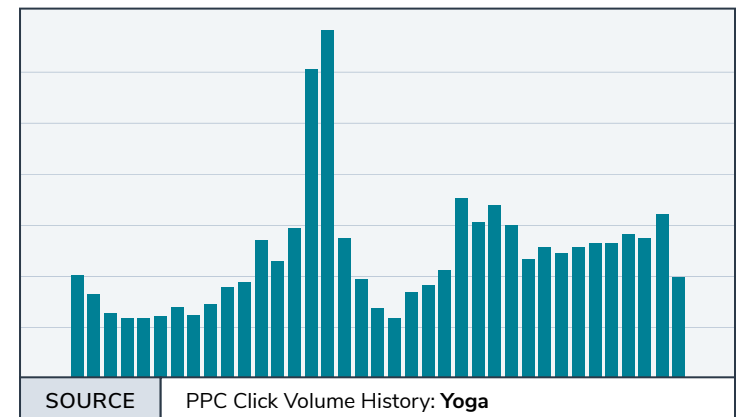
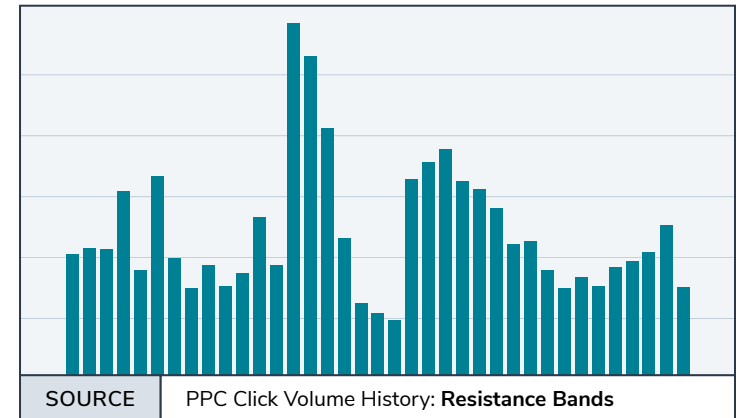


HELIUM 10 TOOL TIP

Ready To Get Started Selling On Amazon?

E-commerce's premier FBA training course, Freedom Ticket, supplies prospective sellers with everything they need to win on Amazon. This award-winning series covers everything from product selection, to international shipping logistics, to managing advertising campaigns. The best part? If you're not completely satisfied with Freedom Ticket, let us know within 7 days and we'll give you a full refund.

[Access Freedom Ticket →](#)



The Bottom Line

The past two years have completely changed the way we live, and in the process, reshaped much of the broader e-commerce landscape. But even uncharted waters can be mapped after the fact.

With the above data, we can visualize the effects of a global pandemic on shopping habits, pop culture trends, and a small glimpse into the “new normal” of our lives online.

Key Takeaways

Amazon is the default pop culture search engine for consumers. When something catches fire on Netflix or simply starts trending online, Amazon's infinite product catalog is the destination for online shoppers. Even better, Amazon captures demand without having to pay for advertising or affiliate fees.

Despite the sharp spikes and dropoffs of “viral” pop culture moments, **lasting interest in these trends can be observed long after the initial social craze.**

Popular Netflix programs like Tiger King, The Queen's Gambit, or Squid Game have all had increasingly powerful impacts on Amazon searches, proving its massive social influence on purchase decisions.

Click volume data illustrates the correlations between quarantine protocols, mask mandates, and vaccine releases as they directly relate to consumer purchase habits involving home loungewear/workout equipment, disinfectant supplies, and travel goods.

A note from Helium 10

Helium 10 is the leading all-in-one software platform for Amazon merchants, delivering accurate, data-driven solutions to sellers. Helium 10 empowers entrepreneurs globally with the power of data, ongoing education, and community support necessary to maximize their potential and thrive in the future of e-commerce.

Helium 10 brings sellers the most accurate data, offering more than 30+ tools for product research, keyword research, listing optimization, operations and analytics and marketing.

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Helium 10's robust data capabilities mean that we can examine these trends using data sourced from Amazon PPC searches.

By calculating percentage increases of total monthly clicks for each of the highlighted terms, we can understand at a relatively macro level, month-by-month interest online for a certain product or trend.

Although this is merely scratching the surface of online shopping habits, these data-driven patterns prove invaluable to sellers looking to better understand the minds of Amazon customers in a post-Covid world. 📊



📊 Data Methodology

Amazon provides performance data for searches that lead to activity on paid ads, i.e., terms that consumers enter into the search bar that result in clicks.

Analyzing click volume ensures that the user's intent in performing the search was **aligned with the content of the advertisement.**

The charts in this report represent the percent increase of total monthly clicks on PPC ads displayed in Amazon.com search results containing the highlighted term. This is shown on the y axis of each graph.

The data is normalized based on click volume available during the first month that the search term appeared. The relative size differences in subsequent months indicate changes in demand since the search term first appeared.

For example, the term 'sweatpants' includes searches for 'blue sweatpants,' 'cotton sweatpants,' as well as any other search terms that include the term 'sweatpants.'





This Report is Just the Beginning

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