Press Release

March 23, 2026
transcosmos inc.

transcosmos announces the results of the Global Online Shopping Survey in 8 Cities 2026

AI “searches,” humans “assist” purchases — Shanghai, Bangkok, and Mumbai lead in AI-driven shopping

transcosmos has conducted its proprietary “Global Online Shopping Trends Survey 2026,” summarizing the latest trends in AI-powered shopping using generative AI. The survey compares how consumers in eight major cities utilize AI at each stage of the shopping process—from product discovery and comparison to final purchase—and where they still prefer human support.

Visit here for Global Online Shopping Survey in 8 Cities 2026 full report (no translation available):
https://blog.trans-cosmos.co.jp/research/20260311_onlineshopping-survey.html

■Survey overview
Method: Global online research panel, multilingual questionnaire (respective local language options available)
Regions: Japan (Tokyo), Shanghai (China), Seoul (South Korea), India (Mumbai), Thailand (Bangkok), Jakarta (Indonesia), London (U.K.), Los Angeles (U.S.)
Respondents: Men and women aged between 15 and 49 years old that have used online shopping (made a purchase) in the past 1 year
Samples: 320 x 8 cities = Total 2,560
Period: January 28 – Feburary 10, 2026
Research agency: Cross Marketing, Inc.

Note: Due to stricter personal data protection regulations, respondents under 20 were excluded in Bangkok.

■Key findings

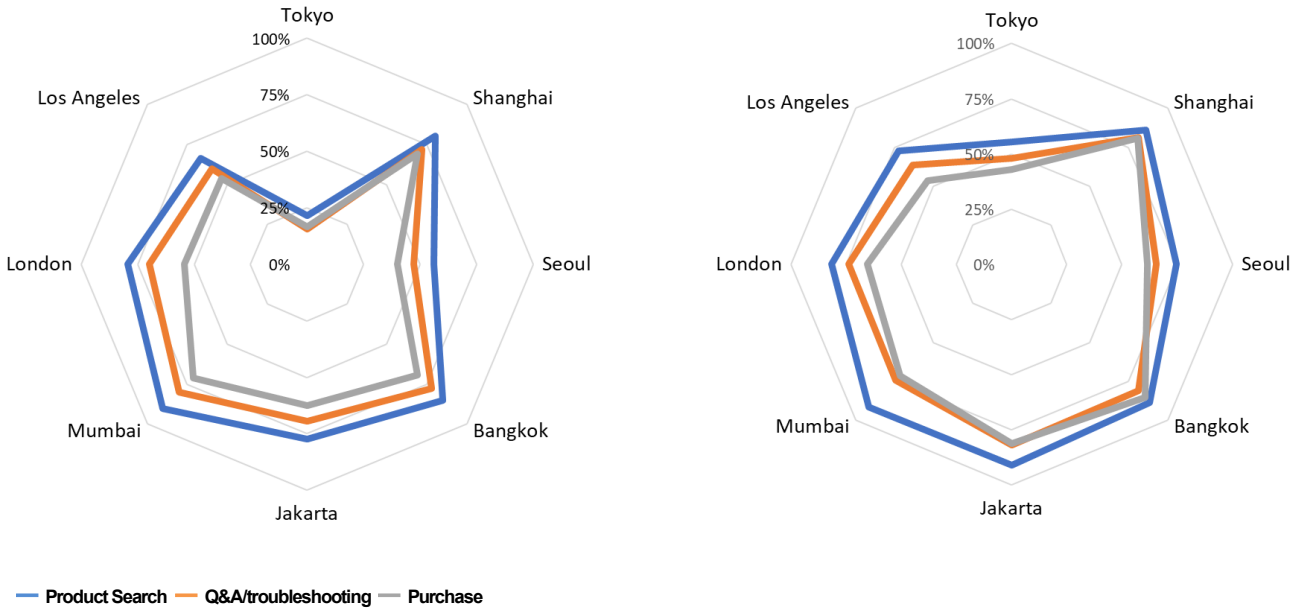
1. AI Shopping Usage: Over 80% use AI search in Mumbai, Bangkok & Shanghai — strong intention to use across all cities

●When asked about their use of generative AI search services (ChatGPT, Perplexity, DeepSeek, etc.) across shopping stages—product discovery, Q&A/troubleshooting, and purchase—all cities showed the highest usage in “product discovery.” In Mumbai, Bangkok, and Shanghai, usage reached 70–90% across all stages, while Tokyo remained low at around 20% even for product searches.

●Future intention to use AI (those who “have used and want to continue using” + “have not used but want to try”) exceeded

current usage in all cities.In Mumbai, Bangkok, and Shanghai, over 80% expressed willingness to use generative AI search services at every stage. Even in Tokyo, nearly half showed positive interest.

Chart 1. Usage of Generative AI Search Services (e.g., ChatGPT, Perplexity, DeepSeek) for AI Shopping: Current Usage (Left) and Future Intent to Use (Right) (%)

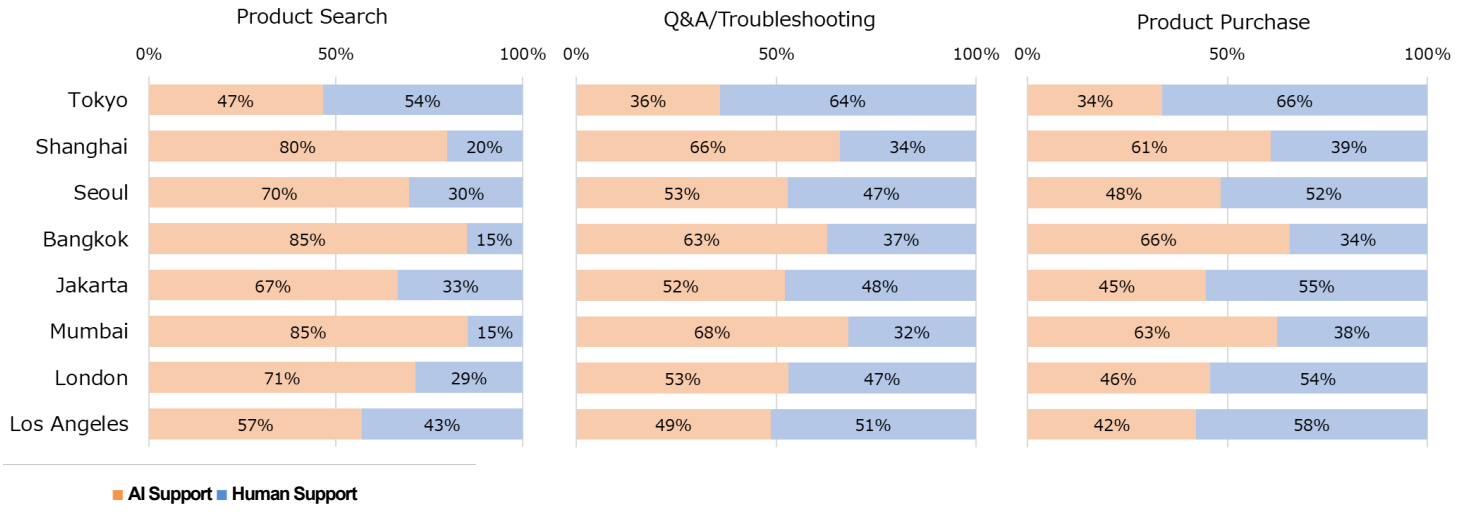


2. Consumers prefer AI for searching, but still value human help for troubleshooting and purchases

●Regarding preferences between “AI assistance” and “human assistance,” AI overwhelmingly dominated the product discovery stage in every city except Tokyo. For troubleshooting and purchasing, demand for human support remained strong, resulting in a more balanced preference between AI and humans.

●Cities with higher AI usage—Mumbai, Bangkok, and Shanghai—also showed stronger preference for AI across all stages. For product discovery, AI preference reached 85% in Mumbai and Bangkok, and 80% in Shanghai, while Tokyo remained at 47%.

Chart 2. Preference for Customer Assistance in the Online Shopping Process (AI Support vs. Human Support Ratio) (%)



3. Social commerce usage continues to grow in all cities

●Over the past year, more than half of consumers in all cities except Tokyo used social commerce. Usage reached 95% in Bangkok, 93% in Shanghai, and 90% in Jakarta. Social commerce usage increased year-over-year in all cities, including London and Los Angeles. Tokyo remains low at 24%.

Chart 3. Percentage of Social Commerce Users (2025–2026 Comparison) (%)

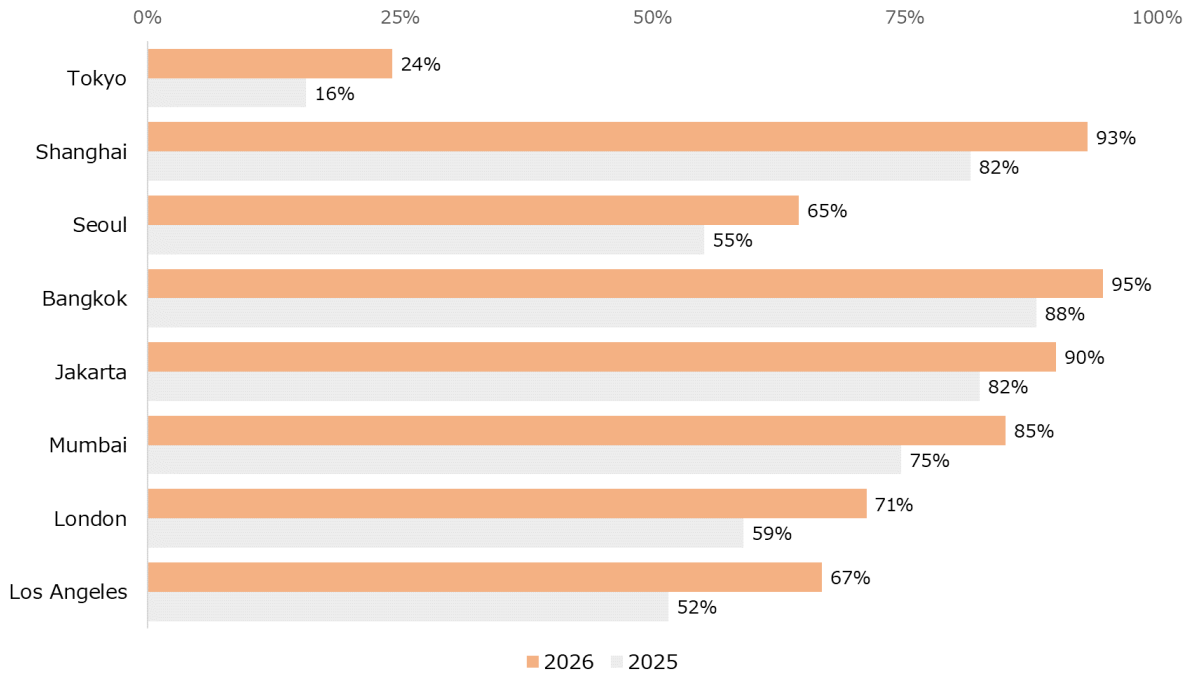


Chart 4. Main Platforms Used for Social Commerce Purchases (%)

	Tokyo	Shanghai	Seoul	Bangkok	Jakarta	Mumbai	London	Los Angeles
Facebook	18	10	12	54	33	55	40	43
Instagram	49	7	61	28	37	86	40	59
YouTube	51	15	61	33	14	65	23	46
X	33	12	13	16	6	25	14	19
TikTok/Douyin	14	86	14	82	78	6	61	67
SnapChat	4	4	5	6	1	24	14	17
Messaging Apps (LINE, WhatsApp, WeChat、Kakao, etc)	6	46	22	26	13	35	15	13
Redbook	0	47	3	1	0	6	2	1

Masayuki Hagiwara, Analyst, Global Business Division at transcosmos inc., commented:
“The survey indicates that generative AI is significantly transforming online shopping behavior. AI is becoming the new gateway for product discovery, especially in Asian cities, where AI search and social media–driven purchasing behavior are rapidly expanding. Meanwhile, consumers still rely on human support for troubleshooting and final purchase decisions, showing a distinct division of roles between AI and humans. Additionally, platforms like TikTok are evolving from information sources to full-fledged shopping channels, diversifying entry points to e-commerce. In the future, the key to competitive advantage in e-commerce will lie in how companies integrate AI search, social commerce, and human support.”

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About transcosmos inc.
transcosmos launched its operations in 1966. Since then, we have combined superior “people” with up-to-date “technology” to enhance the competitive strength of our clients by providing them with superior and valuable services. transcosmos currently offers services that support clients’ business processes focusing on both sales expansion and cost optimization through our 186 bases across 36 countries/regions with a focus on Asia, while continuously pursuing Operational Excellence. Furthermore, following the expansion of e-commerce market on the global scale, transcosmos provides a comprehensive One-Stop Global E-Commerce Services to deliver our clients' excellent products and services to consumers in 46 countries/regions around the globe. transcosmos aims to be the “Global Digital Transformation Partner” of our clients, supporting the clients’ transformation by leveraging digital technology, responding to the ever-changing business environment. Visit us here https://www.trans-cosmos.co.jp/english/

Contact for Media Inquiries

transcosmos inc. Public Relations & Advertising Department
Email: pressroom@trans-cosmos.co.jp