

*Sonia Park*

# Seamlessly Symphonic.

How Apple's wireless earbud  
started a global trend.



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The younger generation's most desired piece of technology would undoubtedly be a pair of AirPods, and that's assuming they don't already have one. Wireless bluetooth earphones have existed before, but none embued with Apple's 'magic' seamless design. AirPods have become the world's must-have tech gadget, but how was it able to create such a widespread trend?

To understand why AirPods are so widely sought out, we must first understand the technical components of the product, how it works and why that sells. The main piece of technology is the W1 or H1 (depending on the model), which is a wireless chip which allows for crisp bluetooth connections between Apple devices. This feature is especially convenient for Apple users as the earphones have all-round capabilities with their various devices. This chip also acts to maintain battery life and works alongside the built-in voice accelerometer to minimise white noise, producing a crisp voice to the recipient.

The automation of sensor detection is a feature which is unique to AirPods, including optical sensors and motion accelerometers. Once the pods are placed in your ears, it triggers the optical sensors which connect the device immediately with your active Apple product. This method of detection is also used to sense when the pods are out of your ears, automatically pausing any audio being played. The motion accelerometers are activated by lightly tapping the external shell, with different taps triggering different functions. This minimises the need to interact directly to the device and adds to the appeal of the device's convenience.

Part of what makes Apple's designs appealing is their consideration of the interconnection between products, leading to a balanced user experience. Apple has a knack for using their technology to create a magical user experience, like an orchestra of devices that seamlessly connect into a whole.

The functions of the AirPods themselves are no doubt designed for an optimal user experience, which appeal to a majority of Apple users or bluetooth users alike. However, there is a larger aspect to the popularity of the AirPods than its user experience: the influence of influencers.

This is the peak of the information era where everything is uploaded to the cloud in almost real time. Social media platforms of celebrities or people with a significant following commonly contain product recommendations of some sort. 81% of consumers tend to find and seek out recommendations on social media before making the decision to purchase an item. Though influencers may not directly sponsored by Apple, the appearance of a product creates dialogue about the product which is what is called the 'electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)'. Because we see someone admirable of an influencer status using a certain product, consumers are more inclined to create biased opinions towards the product.

eWOM as marketing works because of the impact that personal product reviews have on consumer behaviour. This has resulted in AirPod revenue to be a giant 13.5 billion USD as of 2020, more than Spotify and Twitter combined, keeping in mind that AirPods are only a fraction of Apple's assets.

Apple alone has an incredible influence in the tech industry with their innovative design, but it is their interconnection between products that creates such a comfortable user experience. The AirPods are just one of many accessories, yet its popularity was able to skyrocket due to its significant changes from previous bluetooth devices and the power of eWOM. With this in mind, the future of wireless products and possible interconnectivity is an exciting prospect as technology is beginning to become seamless with our everyday.



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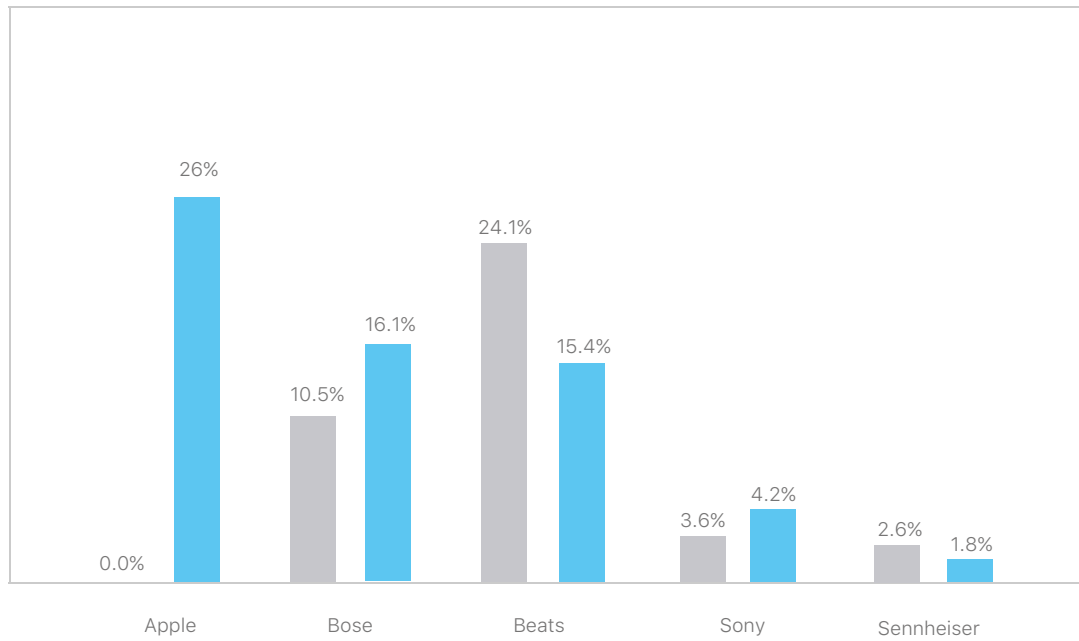
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### Apple's Wireless Headphone Revenue

■ Before AirPods launch (Jan 1, 2015 - Dec 12, 2016)  
■ After AirPods launch (Dec 13, 2016 - 31 Dec, 2018)



### AirPods Revenue vs. Top Tech Companies 2020

