

GOIN' MOBILE

THE IMPACT OF SMARTPHONES ON AMERICAN LIFE

Presented by Arbitron Inc. and Jacobs Media



Overview

Mobile has emerged as the new mass distribution medium, with more than four billion mobile devices worldwide—topping televisions, radios, and personal computers.

This study is a result of Arbitron's interest in assessing how consumers perceive and use smartphones and attendant technologies.

Goin' Mobile – Study Goals

From February through May 2010, Jacobs Media, in conjunction with Arbitron, designed and executed an ethnographic study to better understand how Americans use and are engaged with their mobile devices. Our approach was to draw a picture of how a smartphone fits into all aspects of daily life – in the car, at work, at play and in social settings.

Research questions covered three key areas:

1. How have smartphones impacted the lives of Americans and the ways in which they communicate and access entertainment and information? How has smartphone ownership impacted their use of other devices and media?
2. What are the key functions of mobile devices today, and in the future?
3. How have “smart” mobile phones changed media consumption? Are consumers using various entertainment outlets more since owning a smartphone?

Goin' Mobile – Overview of Study Design¹

Jacobs Media conducted 18 visits with smartphone users in four cities that were chosen for their diversity: Cleveland, Dallas, Baltimore and Los Angeles. The sample comprised 18- to 49-year-olds, with a balanced distribution across that demographic window. Respondents were regular users of smartphones but not “bleeding edge” users.

Researchers/observers spent hours discreetly videotaping respondents as they went through their daily routines, which often included driving, shopping, gardening, studying, going to bars and restaurants, working, interacting with family and friends and working around the house.

¹ See Appendix for details

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Goin' Mobile – Observations and Conclusions

- **The smartphone has blossomed into a piece of technology that transcends definition.** Despite their origins as “phones,” smartphones have become an essential piece of technology for a growing number of consumers.
- **Smartphones have permeated all aspects of American life.** They have a significant impact on productivity, personal and professional accessibility and human engagement and interactivity. Smartphones are redefining careers, the family unit and social intercourse.
- **There were very few differences in the overall use of and attitude toward smartphones based on age, gender, geography or ethnicity.** The key distinctions appear to be based more on 1) the type of device owned and 2) the specific job or lifestyle of the respondent.
- **There do appear to be clear differences in the impact and use of a smartphone based on the type of phone that’s used.** BlackBerry® owners tended to concentrate their usage on talking, texting and e-mailing. On the other hand, iPhone® and Android™ owners treated their smartphones in a customized, chameleon-like way. They were more able to configure these devices by accessing apps that fit their needs and desires, whether for social, business, personal or recreational needs.
- **Smartphones have moved from the “next big thing” to the “most essential thing.”** While typically regarded as “cool” or “fun,” these devices have become a part of most consumers’ personal communications equipment, and their utility and features are assumed. Most consumers believe that smartphones have nearly unlimited uses.
- **Smartphones are rewriting the rules of social interplay, often breaking down barriers of what is considered to be acceptable public behavior.** There are numerous complaints about rude drivers using mobile devices, as well as disdain for people sharing their most intimate details while talking on the phone in public. A devout church-goer felt compelled to text message while in church and even rationalized doing so in her interview. A student used her smartphone while in class and devised various ways of hiding its use. Whether it is acceptable to use these devices in certain situations or not, respondents often find ways to conceal or justify their use. While several respondents acknowledged that using mobile devices in certain situations is “wrong,” the need to be in touch can overwhelm these social norms.
- **Apps are a key to the popularity and ubiquity of smartphones.** We observed respondents who used apps to manage dietary needs or financial affairs and entertain their children while in the car or while the child was undergoing medical treatment.
- **Smartphones have become completely invasive in the lives of most respondents.** It is the one piece of technology that is with them during nearly all of their waking hours and is always “on.”

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Goin' Mobile – Observations and Conclusions (cont.)

- **Constant accessibility translates to greater efficiency and more comfort, but also increased stress.** Many reported that having a smartphone for business has made them more productive because they could now multitask with ease. On the other hand, this study contains stories about how clients and bosses now expect a greater degree of responsiveness in the form of returned e-mail and/or text messages (something that we found to now be acceptable in business) on an immediate basis.
- **Smartphone apps have been a “game changer” in the workplace.** Many respondents share a strong conviction that these devices enhance their productivity and the quality of their business endeavors.
- **Smartphone use while driving is universally thought to be dangerous, yet the activity continues.** There is an obvious disconnect between rational thought (“I know I shouldn’t text while driving”), local laws (“I can get a ticket and a fine”) and the emotional, even addictive, need to stay connected. The lure of accessibility, speed and constant connectivity is simply too powerful for many, so they continue to engage in this activity despite the consequences.
- **Smartphones may be altering the use of other devices.** Most respondents increasingly use their smartphones for an increased array of functions and, as a result, there appears to be a drop-off in the use of other devices. Laptop and desktop computers, GPS units, cameras and camcorders and car radios seem to be used less frequently among smartphone owners.
- **Smartphones make it easier to use social media tools like Facebook® and Twitter.** While most respondents were utilizing these networking sites before owning a smartphone, their activity has accelerated with the ability to post, update and tweet while on the go.
- **Smartphone media usage is increasing, but is still in the formative stages for many respondents.** The entertainment application that was most ubiquitous was Internet radio station Pandora®. While many utilized this service on their desktops and laptops, the ability to access Pandora on their smartphone was a game-changer. Along with the Facebook application, Pandora was the most frequently used application.
- **The smartphone is the ultimate time-filler and time-killer.** While in line at the grocery store, waiting in a doctor’s office, eating, waiting at a stop light, needing a break from work and even while spending time in a restroom, the smartphone has emerged as the “go to” device.
- **Finally, smartphones are addictive.** While most admit it, there is a strong sense throughout these interviews that smartphones aren’t just about utility and recreation. There was often a compulsive quality about their omnipresence that many respondents were aware of.

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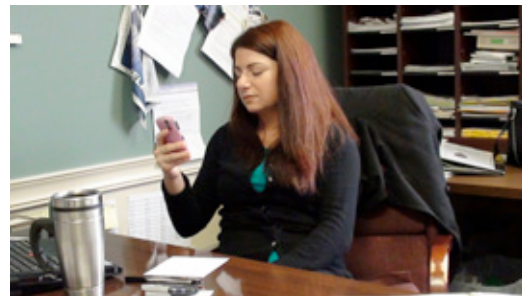
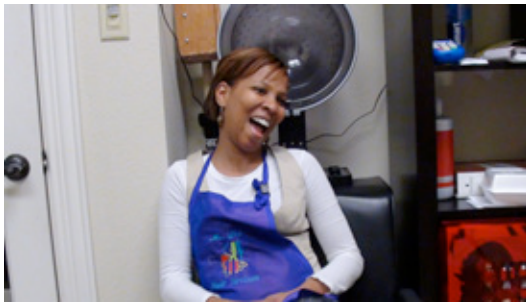
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Goin' Mobile – Final Thoughts

Moving forward, expected improvements in technical connectivity, data storage and capacity and application development will accelerate everything we observed in this study.

We expect that consumers will become more addicted to their smartphones and, as prices for handsets and data plans moderate and access to more consumers improves, larger and larger segments of the population will experience what we observed in *Goin' Mobile*.



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Appendix:

Goin' Mobile Methodology

Jacobs Media conducted 18 videotaped visits to directly observe how people used their smart phones. The visits were conducted in four cities that were chosen for their diversity: Cleveland, Dallas, Baltimore and Los Angeles. The sample comprised 18- to 49-year-olds, with a balanced distribution across that demographic window.

Respondents were required to fit the following requirements:

- Own a smartphone mobile device for a minimum of six months.
- Live independently from parents.
- Carry their smartphone for a minimum of eight hours in an average day.
- Frequently use a minimum of five out of 11 functions on their smartphones. These included e-mail, text messaging, downloading apps, Web browsing, using GPS or Google Maps, taking and sharing photos, checking basic information (weather, sports scores, movie times, etc.), connecting to social networks or using the calendar or address book.

To ensure that respondents were not “bleeding edge” users of smartphones and technology, they were asked to select among a series of self-descriptive phrases to determine their status. We chose to not include those who deliberately stay far “ahead of the curve” because they are much less likely to be representative of the population at large.

Overall visits ranged from four to nine hours. Some began at the respondent’s home, while others started at work or in other settings.

After the observational phase, each respondent participated in a 90- to 120-minute interview. Using a pre-designed discussion guide, the respondent answered a variety of questions about their use of and attitudes toward smartphones. In addition, utilizing notes taken during the observational phase, each respondent was asked specific questions about their behavior observed earlier in the day.

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