UK Mobile Usage Study 2015

A study by 34SP.com
About 34SP.com

34SP.com is a top 20 hosting company offering professional website hosting services for cost conscious web developers, online businesses, and designers. The 34SP.com team of technical experts offers industry leading support and service coupled with a money back guarantee to ensure client satisfaction. Web hosting services offered include website hosting, WordPress hosting, and VPS servers. The company is headquartered in central Manchester, England.
Daniel Foster
Technical director at 34SP.com

Mobile phones are now ubiquitous, and the growing use of these devices is affecting all aspects of our everyday lives. The use of Smartphones rose from 39% in 2012 to 66% in 2015, according to Ofcom. And while lots of research has been done into the commercial and practical aspects of mobile use, very little has been done when it comes to its social effects.

Our research surveyed 1,000 people about their mobile habits and how they use the channel in their personal lives. This allowed us to tap into the various uses of mobile today and how it affects everything from relationships, to friendships, to social interaction.

We found out that we’re using our phones for much more than to simply get connected these days, and if working with technology on a daily basis has taught us anything, it is that the uses of mobile are only set to expand further in years to come. We hope you find our results interesting!
“Every once in a while a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything.”

Steve Jobs introducing the first ever iPhone at a conference in January 2007.

Smartphone usage has rocketed over the last few years. Our reliance on the internet and technology has been widely documented as of late, with Ofcom reporting in August 2015 that Smartphones have overtaken laptops for the first time as the most popular device for accessing the internet. Ofcom’s research revealed that the devices are now responsible for a third of internet access, up from 23% in 2014. Laptops dropped from 40% of online connections in 2014, to 30% in 2015. The findings were cited as a 'landmark shift'.

Our results paint an almost identical picture, with 30% of respondents saying their mobile phone is the main device they use to access the internet. With Smartphones now providing instant access to the World Wide Web at the click of a button, we predict this number will be closer to 50% by 2016.

1 in 4 of those we surveyed said their mobile is the main device they use to read the news, while 25% said they use their mobile phone to complete a number of everyday tasks, including grocery shopping, bank transactions, and booking holidays and restaurants.
Third of Brits admit they 'couldn’t live without' their mobile phone

So it’s clear we’re pretty reliant on our mobile phones – but just how much so? We wanted to look at how the growing use of mobile is affecting our social habits, and whether it’s making us more sociable, or less?

A third (32%) of respondents in our survey stated they ‘couldn’t live without’ their mobile phone. A further 36% said they were ‘addicted’ to checking their mobile phones, or know someone who is.

In addition, 22% of our respondents admitted to owning more than one mobile device.
A nation of addicts?

34% of people said they used their phone everyday on holiday, while a sizable 24% of respondents admitted they would go out of their way to find Wi-Fi in a public place (hotel, hostel, restaurant, café etc.)

Their mobile phone is the first thing they check in the morning for 50% of respondents, while 43% said it is the last thing they check before bed at night.

Scientists have long campaigned to ban Smartphones and other forms of technology from the bedroom, after finding they can have adverse effects on sleeping patterns, and health and wellbeing. Studies from health experts this year showed that using a mobile phone before bed nearly doubles the risk of having a poor sleep.
Are mobiles ruining the art of conversation?

The next part of our survey looked at how mobile phones are affecting our friendships and social skills, with 33% of Brits admitting that their Smartphone makes them a less sociable person. 40% even said they have used their mobile phone to avoid conversing.

57% often use their mobile while socialising with friends, while 59% use mobile phones while socialising with family. 1 in 5 say they have argued with friends for being distracted by their mobile phone. A further 20% regularly use their phone during a meal.
Some of the main findings from our research centred on what effects mobile use is having on our intimate relationships. Sadly, arguing with a partner or spouse over it was a common occurrence, with 1 in 4 respondents admitting to having argued with partner over checking their phone. What’s more, 20% admitted their partner had checked their phone during an important conversation.

A further 20% have ended a relationship via mobile or would find it acceptable to.

And the story doesn’t change much when we’re on holiday. 18% used their phone everyday on a romantic getaway, while 7% used their phone everyday on honeymoon.

70 respondents would even find it acceptable to propose to their partner via mobile phone.
Not such an 'appy ending?

While the main aim of our research was to explore the social aspects of mobile use, we also wanted to quiz consumers on what they thought about applications. In 2013, technology analysts at Compuware found that mobile apps are still the preferred means of connecting for most users over mobile websites, with 85% choosing the former over the latter. The study also showed that anywhere from 80 to 90% of all downloaded apps are used once and then eventually deleted by users. With app users now more savvy than ever, they’re not afraid to delete an app and move on if it doesn’t work flawlessly.

So how do our applications fare up in all of this? And have they improved since Compuware’s 2013 report? The last thing we asked our respondents was a couple of questions on their relationships with applications. We found that 20% of people regularly delete apps within just three months of downloading them, while 39% often delete apps because they’ve been ‘useless’.

While there may have been a slight improvement over the last couple of years, there’s evidently still some work to be done in this space. When businesses are spending a lot of resource on developing a single application, it’s vital that they impress first time, every time.
Conclusion

This report sought out to understand a little bit more about the way we interact with our mobile devices, and others around us while using them. I’m sure it has uncovered a number of home truths around how we use Smartphones and how, in some cases, they’re affecting our relationships.

The growing use of mobile devices isn’t necessarily a bad thing - clearly it has given us better connections than ever before, and penetrated every aspect of our everyday lives, personally and professionally. As the fastest-selling gadgets in history, mobiles are now much more than a convenient way for us to connect online; they’re ubiquitous, transformative, and addictive.

* Data was collected from a random selection of 1,000 aged 18 – 65 year old male and females in August 2015.
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