The Big Picture

The big story in technology adoption is growth in usage of smartphones. Even in the down economy, U.S. consumers continue to trade up from standard mobile phones to smartphones. The market share of devices such as iPhones and BlackBerrys increased to 23 percent by March 2010, up from 16 percent in June 2009. According to IMS Research, smartphone shipments grew 15 percent from 2008 to 2009 while handset shipments contracted by 7.9 percent.

Among young people, adoption of smartphones – especially those with touch-screen navigation – mirrors larger trends: 18- to 24-year-olds ranked third among users of smartphones, behind 35- to 44-year-olds and 25- to 34-year-olds, respectively, as of August 2009, according to data from comScore MobiLens. Nearly 8 percent of smartphone users are 13 to 17 years old.

In a study of 16- to 20-year-olds for the NAA Foundation, the New Media Innovation Lab at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University sought to determine how young people are using smartphones. Undertaken in fall 2009, the study surveyed 1,500 young people throughout the United States. The sample pool was half male/half female and reflected the nation’s ethnic, geographic and demographic makeup.

With more news and information consumption moving from laptops to handhelds, the New Media Innovation Lab sought to learn how this demographic uses these powerful pocket computers and to spot usage trends that might help NAA Foundation constituents.

The survey contained 26 questions. Discussion topics included: top uses of smartphones; where respondents go for information on their smartphones; types of applications (“apps”) and websites used most often on smartphones; and use of social networking sites. Few differences emerged when responses for the overall group were compared to responses by gender, age or ethnicity. However, responses were markedly different regarding use of newspaper websites and print newspapers (see page 4).
Summary of Findings

1 Youths Value Smartphones
Smartphones are important enough to these young people that they are willing to pay for them. More than 60 percent bought their phones and 58 percent pay the monthly bill themselves. Whether it is an indicator of status (the feeling that they have to have an iPhone because everyone else does) or just representative of the overall growth of smartphones in recent years is not clear from this survey. Underscoring the importance of smartphones to this demographic is that youths are willing to pay on average $300 for the most popular devices.

How long have you owned a smartphone?

- Less than 6 months: 43%
- 6 months to 1 year: 24%
- 1 to 2 years: 9%
- More than 2 years: 4%

2 It’s How They Connect
Smartphones are replacing televisions, desktop computers and other devices as the primary provider of information for the demographic. Sending and receiving text messages, making and receiving phone calls, taking pictures and listening to music topped the activities list of the demographic, followed by Web browsing, sending and receiving e-mails and playing games.

3 What They Seek
Seventy-two percent said they use smartphones to access social networks, 66 percent watch videos, 54 percent get news and 52 percent search for other types of information – most likely movies and showtimes, weather updates, information about the United States and the world, and reports on celebrities and entertainment.

Top Uses of Smartphones

- Send/receive text messages: 1,424
- Make/receive phone calls: 1,392
- Take pictures: 1,289
- Listen to music: 1,194
- Browse the Web: 1,172
- Send/receive e-mails: 1,170
- Play games: 1,132
- Use social networking sites: 1,081
- Watch videos: 988
- Get news: 807
- Download music: 802
- Map directions/Global Positioning System (GPS): 800
- Get other information: 778
- Get content you subscribe to (RSS feed): 336

TOTAL SAMPLE: 1,500 RESPONDENTS
Respondents were asked to check all that applied.
4 **Music and Videos**
In overall use, music headed the list nearly every time. Music websites are the number-one pick for finding information and music apps top the chart for favorite applications. Additionally, 66 percent watch videos on smartphones.

**Favorite Apps for Finding Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apps</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music apps</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaming apps</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie apps</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment apps</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo apps</td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking apps</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat/text/Instant Messaging apps</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather apps</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports apps</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS/mapping apps</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video apps</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General news apps</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL SAMPLE: 1,500 RESPONDENTS
Respondents were asked to select up to five.

**Favorite Websites for Finding Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Websites</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music websites</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie websites</td>
<td>634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment websites</td>
<td>607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking websites</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaming websites</td>
<td>527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General news websites</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports websites</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat/text/Instant Messaging websites</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo websites</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather websites</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video websites</td>
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<td>242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL SAMPLE: 1,500 RESPONDENTS
Respondents were asked to select up to five.

5 **Just Text Me**
This demographic prefers to receive information by text messaging. E-mail is not as important and trails listening to music as a smartphone use. While 95 percent of those surveyed said they use their phones for texting, only 22 percent said they use them to get content to which they subscribe via RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed.

6 **Importance of Social Networks**
Connection to social networks is ever important to this demographic, ranking behind listening to music, playing games, Web surfing and taking pictures. The most favored apps are those that connect to Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and, to a lesser extent, LiveJournal. The most frequent activities on social networks via their mobile phones are reading friends’ status updates, updating status or tweets, chatting, looking at photographs and writing on friends’ walls.
7 About Friends and Hanging Out

Ninety-four percent said they get information through social networking sites but describe that information as social in nature. They are finding things to do, places to go, movies and showtimes and to a lesser extent, information about their schools or where they live.

8 Keeping It Local

For those seeking information in general, the national/international and celebrities/entertainment categories ranked ahead of the school and town/city categories. However, when searching for information on social networking sites, school and town/city ranked ahead of national/international, celebrities/entertainment, sports and shopping. For local papers, a Facebook or MySpace page with status updates featuring local and school headlines or scores could work very well to reach this target audience.

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### Top Information Found Through Social Networking Sites

- Things to do: 766
- Places to go: 640
- Movies and show times: 567
- About my school: 530
- About my town/city: 485
- What’s going on in the U.S./around the world: 480
- Celebrities/entertainment: 408
- Concert/music: 407
- What’s happening in the economy: 315
- Sports scores/sports teams: 310
- Shopping: 292
- Weather updates: 273

TOTAL SAMPLE: 1,500 RESPONDENTS
Respondents were asked to select up to five.

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### Browsed or Visited Newspaper Website in Last 30 Days

- Caucasian: 57%
- Hispanic/Latino: 54%
- African-American: 64%
- Asian-American: 83%

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9 Viewing News

A larger percentage of younger smartphone users seem to connect to newspapers than what is shown in other surveys about youths and news readership in general.

According to the survey, 59 percent of males and 69 percent of females had browsed or visited a newspaper website in the previous 30 days. Asked what device they used, 49 percent of females said they had used just their smartphones compared to 27 percent of males.

When it comes to newspaper print editions, 72 percent of males said they had looked at a print paper within the last seven days, compared to 51 percent of females. More than half (57 percent) of both genders were more likely to look at their local papers rather than national publications. However, online national publications were preferred by females while males looked at local and national papers.

One caveat is that the survey was conducted in the aftermath of several high-profile news stories that attracted wall-to-wall media coverage – the death of pop superstar Michael Jackson, the swine flu pandemic (which particularly affects the demographic), the continuing economic crisis, the Tiger Woods affair and the “Balloon Boy” incident.
10 Popularity of Twitter

Forty-six percent said they use smartphones to access this social network, a higher percentage than is typical for Twitter use among this age group. The functionality of Twitter apps that smartphones provide likely plays a role here, as it is easier and more practical to tweet from a phone than a computer. Twitter is an easy way for newspapers to engage audiences and to offer a wide variety of information. This could easily be combined with the most popular kinds of information respondents seek through social networking sites (see page 4).

11 Apps Versus Browsers

An iPhone may have 200,000 apps and counting. More than 30,000 apps are available on Android phones. But only 13 percent of respondents said they prefer to receive content strictly through an app. Conversely, 75 percent said they prefer to get information through a Web browser or both.

Although Web browsers are preferred, respondents were quick to abandon sites not optimized for mobile. More than 30 percent said they would not be likely to return to a site without features tailored to a mobile experience, while 58 percent said they would not return to one that is difficult to navigate or view. Poor search options, pages that load slowly and poor video quality were also turnoffs.

Apps Used Most on Smartphones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>1,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat/Instant Messaging</td>
<td>1,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music streaming or downloads</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS/mapping</td>
<td>585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local event information</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alerts/information you subscribe to</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL SAMPLE: 1,500 RESPONDENTS
Respondents were asked to select up to five.
Recommendations

Embrace social media.

**WHAT:** Develop and maintain an active social media identity for your brand – or a more youth–oriented brand – on Facebook and Twitter. Use these sites to push out newspaper content and information to the younger audience. Again, all of the content should link back to the newspaper website for the full story and/or information.

**HOW TO DO IT:** Create a fan page on Facebook, which essentially will act as a landing page for your newspaper brand. Assign one or two people to tend to it daily. The New York Times fan page, for example, curates an eclectic mix of content, including features, top news stories and apps such as the weekly health quiz. Photos and videos are prominently displayed on the home page and in separate pages just for videos or just for photos. Fans also receive special offers, such as discounts on items purchased from The New York Times store.

The Arizona Republic’s azcentral.com fan page promotes various content based on days of the week. Deals occupy the top spot on Wednesday, for example. Separate pages exist for things to do, sports and photos.

NewsCloud, an app funded by a Knight News Challenge grant, partners with local news companies such as The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer to create a news community in Facebook around topics such as going out or volunteering. The news community is a fan page on steroids, with subsections, directories, discussion boards, question-and-answer, a user-powered calendar and targeted advertising.

Be active on Twitter. Beyond breaking news stories, Twitter is useful for bundling information based on subject through the use of the relatively new “lists” function. With that, news sites can feature lists of all the writers who cover prep sports or nightlife so younger Twitter users can follow those lists easily from their phones. Twitter personalities should engage with the audience; Anderson Cooper at CNN often acknowledges users’ comments about coverage.

Prioritize social media.

**WHAT:** Hire a social media editor. Find interns who get and like the medium, so they can update Facebook, MySpace and Twitter with interesting content that might appeal to the demographic.

**HOW TO DO IT:** The BBC, The Globe and Mail in Toronto, The New York Times and The Arizona Republic are among the news organizations with social media editors. The Washington Post and The New York Times also employ mobile editors or product designers who stay on top of the tools that can get content out to people on the latest devices, such as the iPad.

Tribune Co. and Gannett Co. have partnered on Metromix, a national network of local entertainment sites. A Metromix mobile app leads to restaurants, bars and clubs, music, movies and the day’s events based on geolocation. There’s also “The Buzz,” a feed of users’ interactions with the app, including reviews and uploaded photos.

Go mobile.

**WHAT:** Optimize or repurpose your newspaper’s website especially for mobile devices, so it downloads faster with easier navigation and better viewing on a small screen.

**HOW TO DO IT:** Any user can type in a URL from a mobile phone, but it does not mean the experience is a good one. Make sure your site can be viewed and navigated from a mobile device, including smartphones, tablets and netbooks.

Headline delivery and even location-based content, such as a going-out guide or news near you, can be done as a mobile web app or as a “native” app programmed specifically for iPhones or Androids. Native apps are especially useful when the user is tapping into the hardware of the phone, such as using the built-in camera, video or audio to interface with content.
Don’t stop at headline delivery, especially for younger audiences. Apps should encourage users to engage – for example, by posting reviews of venues, concerts, bars and restaurants. In addition, apps should enable users to check in with their social networks to see their friends’ recommendations on places to go or what to eat at certain places. In many markets, Yelp is the app of choice for finding restaurants or bars because newspapers have been slow to create their own apps, even though they have vast databases of venues and reviews on their websites.

Not all of the features have to be created from scratch. Just as developers used Google Maps to create various mash-ups, they can use Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) from platforms such as Layar and foursquare to build specialty content displays for mobile phones.

Layar employs augmented reality so users can point their smartphones at real-world places, such as restaurants, and see content superimposed on real-world items, such as reviews that pop up when a user is looking at a particular restaurant.

With foursquare, users check in and mark where they are, such as the local bistro or the neighborhood dog park. Friends can track each other and get recommendations: “Try the veggie burger at Shorty’s Bar and Grill.” Inventive content partners such as Bravo are teaming up with foursquare to give prizes to users who check in at locations tagged to the network’s shows.

Finally, develop ads to run along the bottom of apps that can take users to going-out guides or deals on entertainment.

Incorporate texting.

**WHAT:** Create a text alert system as an efficient way to send out information.

**HOW TO DO IT:** Text alerts can be reserved for emergencies such as road closures, child abductions and severe weather. Or, they can be daily alerts geared toward helping consumers find things to do, places to go and local deals on dining, shopping and events.

On a related note, craft Twitter alerts that might appeal to the demographic: high school and college sports scores and updates; weather alerts and school closures; traffic alerts and getting to/from campus.

Offer a seamless connection between social networks and news websites through the use of Facebook Connect or other Open ID platforms. With Facebook Connect, users can post comments on news sites and their Facebook pages. Comments are dispersed throughout their Facebook networks because they use their Facebook sign-on information to access the news sites. Open ID lets users register once and then access various sites using the same registration process.
Methodology

This report is based on a Peanut Labs survey of 1,500 randomly selected respondents from all 50 states.

Quotas were established to ensure representative balance with respect to gender, ethnicity and region. Online sampling was used from the Peanut Labs database of 3.7 million profiled respondents recruited from more than 100 social networks, online communities, applications and other websites. All respondents in the database chose to take online surveys with Peanut Labs in exchange for a virtual currency incentive relevant to their preferred social network, community or application. They also were profiled based on demographic information, including age, gender, ZIP code, ethnicity, etc.

Respondents were sent targeted invitations based on their Peanut Labs profile via the social network or online community on which they were registered with Peanut Labs. The invitations were sent as messages on the website in real time. If a respondent indicated interest in participating in a survey at that time, he or she was passed into the survey created by the New Media Innovation Lab and hosted using QuestionPro.

Before entering the survey, all respondents were sent through Peanut Labs’ digital fingerprint technology, Optimus. This ensured that no duplicate or known suspect respondents were allowed to enter the survey.

Visit [www.naafoundation.org/Research.aspx](http://www.naafoundation.org/Research.aspx) for more details on NAA Foundation research.