

Wrong Type: Urban Malaysians Prefer Keypad

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Despite the influx of touch screen mobile phone products urban Malaysians prefer using the traditional keypad according to a recent survey done by Synovate.

In response to the survey, Universal McCann CEO Prashant Kumar said the irony of the mobile industry today is people who do not have the time or propensity to enjoy the rich functionalities of "hi-experience phones or connections" can afford it.

"Youth that have max time and propensity for this often can't. Having said that as penetration goes up and prices go down, a tipping point will be reached, where these numbers can go up significantly," he said.

The result is part of a bigger survey on urban Malaysians and mobile phones which also found the most popular leisure activities were taking pictures (61%), playing games (43%), downloading or listening to music (38%) and watching video clips (22%).

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"Watching TV (7%), sending emails (12%), social networking (13%) and surfing the net (15%) seem to be the least popular activities among urban Malaysian mobile phone owners," Steve Murphy, managing director of Synovate Malaysia, said.

"In all likelihood, the demand and desire for such activities will grow as mobile phone operators in the country continue to expand their service offerings," he said.

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The survey also found a strong attachment of urban Malaysians to their mobile phones with 66% admitting that they never leave home without it while 62% said that they sleep with their mobile phones close by. Â

Kumar said this leaves a potentially immense opportunity for media agencies to capitalise on but critical mass of rich mobile usage is needed first as well as an open mindset and a lot of hard work for it to bring business value to mainstream majority of advertisers.

"On one side, the mobile is with us 1440 minutes per day, out of which we use for 30-60 minutes. That's 95 percent available opportunity conceptually," he said.

"The medium doesn't just know who we are, but also where we are, which is slated to bring the next revolution in mobile space - location aware services. Applications and mobile utilities are already a huge wave globally."

Synovate surveyed over 8,000 urban respondents from Malaysia, Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, the UK and the US as part of a global "mobile phones" survey. Â

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