

Young Men Lead Location-Based Service Adoption

Contributed by eMarketer
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Privacy concerns less of a problem for males

Location-based services offer marketers enticing opportunities to connect with their targets in more relevant and meaningful ways, but uptake has been cautious.

Usage surged last year—according to SNL Kagan, the number of US users nearly tripled in 2010—but just 4% of online Americans participate in location-sharing services, found the Pew Internet & American Life Project in November.

A December 2010 Microsoft survey conducted by Cross-Tab Marketing Services in Canada, Germany, Japan, the UK and US found that overall, about six in 10 internet users were aware of location-based services and just over half had used them.

Most common were map and weather applications—just 18% had used a service to share their location with others.

Usage varied widely with demographics. Unsurprisingly for a relatively new trend, younger respondents were more likely to be aware of and familiar with location-based services, and were also most likely to use the services themselves.

Within the 18 to 34 group, men were also more informed about and active with location-based services than women.

One major source for the differences in use between the genders is privacy concerns. Most respondents—including men and women of all ages—were worried about a variety of privacy issues, including identity theft, accidental location-sharing when they did not mean to opt in, other security problems, stalking and harassment.

But across the board, women were significantly more worried than men. Fully 77% of female respondents were concerned about stalking, for example, compared with 60% of men. Webroot reported similar findings in summer 2010.

Marketers and developers will have to put transparency and control in the hands of users and help to educate them about how to stay safe with location-based services to win their trust and encourage greater uptake.

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