# Generations Divide Over Mobile Devices

Contributed by eMarketer
Wednesday, 31 August 2011

Boomers, Gen X and millennials display differing mobile device preferences

eMarketer estimates that more than 91 million US consumers will use the internet through a mobile device at least monthly by the end of this year, up from 77.8 million in 2010.

While US consumers as a whole may be increasing their mobile internet activities, the devices with which they prefer to do so tend to vary by generation.

According to a study by Affinity Research, generations are dividing in terms of mobile device preferences, with older consumers favoring tablets and ereaders and younger users adopting smartphones at rapid rates.

Although Affinity estimates that Generation X is 16% more likely than the average consumer to own a tablet, a study by GfK MRI indicates that when adding ereaders into the mix, the rate might be even higher. GfK MRI indicates that a Gen Xer is 25% more likely than the average US adult to own a tablet or ereader.

Income may play a large part in this age groupâ€™s strong adoption of tablet computers. Wealthier Gen X consumers are more likely to own the â€œlatest and greatestâ€• gadgetsâ€”according to Affinity, Gen Xers with household incomes of more tha $100,000 are 63% more likely to own a tablet PC than other Gen Xers.

Tablet adoption also skews toward Gen X males.

Both GfK MRI and Affinity reference the strong inclination among boomers to own ereader devices. According to GfK MRI, baby boomers own more Kindles than both millennials and Gen Xers. And Affinity Research states that boomers are 19% more likely than the average consumer to have an ereader.

Strong growth of ereader ownership among the boomer demographic may be due in part to the intuitive and uncomplicated nature of ereader platforms. Device ownership skews slightly toward female consumers.

While millennials are less likely than both Gen X and boomers to own either an ereader or a tablet, the younger demographic surpasses both age groups in terms of smartphone adoption.

Labeled as â€œdigital nativesâ€• in the technology and mobile device market, millennials are 28% more likely than the average consumer to own a smartphone; 46.5 million millennials already have one.

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, millennials and the younger end of Gen X own more smartphones than those older than age 35. Additionally, Affinity reports that more than 24 million millennials plan to purchase a smartphone in the next six months.

eMarketer estimates US advertisers will spend $1.1 billion on mobile this year.

By taking demographics and usage preferences into account, mobile marketers can ensure their dollars are wisely spent.

10 August 2011