

The Fickle Nature Of The Mobile Canadian Teen

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Recent Ipsos Mobil-ology Study Shows Canadian Teenagers More Eager to Change, Adapt than Adult Counterparts

When it comes to their relationship with Smartphones, Teens have a shorter honeymoon phase than Adults do.

The spring 2012 wave of Ipsos Reid's Mobil-ology, a study of the mobile market in Canada, shows that while Teenagers have handsets that are typically newer than Adults (10 months old vs. 13 months old among Adult Canadians), they are more inclined to express a desire to switch their brand of device within the next 6 months (16% vs. 12% top-3-box on a 7-point likelihood scale – though minimal in appearance, this is a significant difference).

“Teens are simply more fickle. They have more of a ‘love-em-and-leave-em’ attitude when it comes to their Smartphones, craving the freshest trend and the latest brand,” says Mary Beth Barbour, Senior Vice President with Ipsos Reid. “Even if their device is newer, they are still more inclined to want to switch or upgrade than their Adult contemporaries.”

The Mobil-ology study shows that this experimental nature extends beyond just the brand of handsets.

Use of Apps among Adult and Teen users is equally common, with approximately four-in-five (77% of Adults and 79% of Teens) stating that they have downloaded and used an App on their device. But the two groups differ when it comes to the frequency at which they download new and delete previously downloaded Apps. Notable declines in these behaviours were noted among Adult Smartphone users, however, over the same six month period, the same was not evident among Teens.

Barbour adds,

“Teens use of iPhones and devices operating on the Android operating system has increased over the previous six months, and both of these have a reputation for offering a richer and wider selection of Apps relative to BlackBerry devices. This may be a factor contributing to high and stable frequencies of these behaviours among Teens. However, at the same time, Teens may simply be more inquisitive and exploratory by nature.”

“It is also interesting to note that while Canadian Teens report a preference for accessing content on their devices via App rather than the web (41% vs. 25%), this bias towards Apps is even more exaggerated among Adults (47% vs. 19%),” adds Barbour. “As a result, it is particularly important for marketing campaigns targeting mobile Teens to be aware of all access points.”

These findings are based on two waves of research (the first in February 2011 and the second in March/April 2012). Each of these studies were conducted among approximately n=2,000 Adult residents of Canada via the Ipsos Opinions Online Panel, one of Ipsos Reid's national online panels.

The results are based on a sample where weighting was employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual online Canadian population according to Census data. A survey with an unweighted probability for the base sizes mentioned above and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-2% percentage points. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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