

Most TV, Tablet Interactions Involve Another Screen

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Simultaneous device usage high among owners of multiple screens

With a sizeable portion of the US population now in possession of multiple media devices, including TVs, computers, smartphones and tablets, maintaining a multiscreen presence is a mandate for marketers.

But establishing a multiplatform presence extends beyond the obvious need to reach consumers across individual devices. Second quarter findings from Google and brand consultancy Sterling Brands showcased the opportunity to connect with consumers simultaneously on multiple devices.

In fact, more than half of all media interactions involving one screen coincided with the use of another. Devices most often used for entertainment—TVs and tablets—saw the greatest simultaneous usage: 77% of all TV interactions among US connected device users—defined as consumers owning a smartphone, PC and TV—occurred alongside another device, as did three-quarters of all tablet interactions.

Simultaneous usage was more task-based than entertainment-focused. Emailing, internet browsing and social networking were the most common multiscreen activities, a good sign for the many TV marketers whose calls to action point consumers toward browsing and social networking sites, capitalizing on common user behaviors.

Apart from simultaneous usage, the study also looked at sequential usage—the transitioning from one device to another. The vast majority (90%) of respondents used a combination of screens over time to accomplish tasks such as emailing, researching or shopping, with 98% of transitions from one device to another occurring in the same day.

This points to multidevice usage having a significant role in the typical purchase process, something neither brand nor direct-response marketers can ignore.

Among US connected device users who moved from one device to another, they most often did so to browse the internet (81%), social network (72%) or shop online (67%). How a consumer began the online shopping process, however, depended on the device used. PC and laptop users more often typed the URL directly into a browser than smartphone users (50% vs. 36%). Smartphone users were more inclined to begin their shopping session on a search engine (30% vs. 24%) or a social networking site (25% vs. 16%).

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