Consumers Spend More Time With Mobile As Online Growth Slows

Contributed by eMarketer
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Ad dollars slow to catch up

The shift to mobile is on. According to eMarketer estimates, time spent using mobile devices for activities such as internet and app use, gaming, music and others has more than doubled in the past two years.
This year, the amount of time US consumers spent using mobile devicesâ€”excluding talk timeâ€”will grow 51.9% to an average 82 minutes per day, up from just 34 minutes in 2010, eMarketer estimates.

Mobile growth comes as time spent online, which includes desktop and laptop computers and other nonmobile connected devices such as internet-connected TVs, will continue rising but at a slowed pace from previous years.

This year, eMarketer estimates time spent online will grow just 3.6% to an average 173 minutes per day, compared to 7.7% growth in 2011 to 167 minutes per day.

Since online already accounts for an average of nearly 3 hours of time spent with media each day, double-digit growth rates are unlikely even as consumers continue to do more activities and spend more time with their desktop and laptop computers.

Mobile, by contrast, is growing quickly from a small baseâ€”and growth in time spent is also being boosted by fast uptake of smartphones and tablets, which have still penetrated only a minority of all consumers.

As more US consumers continue to acquire these devices, and current owners shift more of their digital activities to mobile and portable devices, mobile is grabbing an ever-greater share of time with all mediaâ€”potentially at the expense of faster online growth.

This shift has been problematic for some advertising publishers who have not necessarily seen ad dollars follow suit. Even on the desktop web, the share of ad dollars is still playing catch-up to the share of time spent with the mediumâ€”and that game is even further behind on mobile, which will see just 1.6% of US ad spending this year even as adults spend an average of 11.7% of their media time with their phones and tablets.

While mobile advertising is expected to grow rapidly in the next few yearsâ€”eMarketer estimates that overall US mobile advertising spending will reach $2.61 billion this year before rising to nearly $12 billion in 2016â€”there are some significant barriers that both marketers and ad publishers will have to overcome before mobile ad spending will achieve parity with the share of time spent by consumers on mobile devices.

eMarketer bases its estimates of time spent with media on an analysis of estimates from other research firms, consumer media consumption and device adoption trends.

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