



Parents And Kids Grapple With Wireless Etiquette As Cell Calls And Texting Become Permanent Fixtures At Holiday Gatherings

T-Mobile Survey Shows 67 Percent Find Mobile Phone Use At Holiday Gatherings Now Acceptable; 35 Percent Of Young Adults Admit To Texting Under The Table During Holiday Dinners

Seattle, WA, November 21, 2006 – A new T-Mobile survey on mobile communications during the holiday season shows that active use of cell phones, instant messaging and texting devices is creating new family dynamics at holiday dinners and family gatherings.

In the survey:

- Seventy percent of young adults (ages 18–22) and 56 percent of parents surveyed say they've made or answered wireless calls during a holiday gathering.
- Thirty-five percent of young adults say they've read or sent an e-mail or text message under the dinner table during a holiday family gathering.
- In addition, 67 percent of parents and young adults now agree that it is okay to use their mobile phone during holiday gatherings. Moreover, 73 percent of people surveyed agree the mobile phone can improve the holidays by keeping people in touch with those not there in person.

"We're seeing that new habits — namely mobile communications — are impacting age-old traditions," says Dr. Tracy Wellens, vice president of Consumer Insights, T-Mobile USA. "Wireless communication makes it possible to include more people than ever before at family gatherings. Loved ones who can't be there in person still can experience these special times remotely through a steady stream of mobile calls, picture and text messages."

"Being together for the holidays remains important to parents and kids alike, but access to wireless devices creates an interesting balancing act for families," Wellens says. "For example, while parents want to support their kids staying connected with friends who can't join them at holiday events, ensuring their kids are 'fully present' at these special gatherings often requires setting ground rules in advance."

Many young people also are sensitive to the importance of fully engaging with friends and family during holiday gatherings. In the survey, although young adults are clearly more active users of cell phones and texting devices than their parents during the holiday season, some admit to feeling concerned about using their device during these special gatherings. For example, of those young adults who thought it was not okay to use a mobile phone during a holiday gathering, 35 percent of them cite the need to be focused on spending time with family.

"There's a sense of guilt among some young people about using their cell phone or texting device during the holidays," Wellens says. "This leads to them concealing the activity or disappearing altogether during special holiday get-togethers. Yet, these young people have the same motivations as their parents — they want to stay connected with people who matter — particularly during meaningful times of the year. For that reason, it's important for parents and their children to work together to figure out how to incorporate mobile communications into holiday celebrations so that everyone feels a part of the fun."



On-the-Go Holidays

Also notable in the survey is that mobile communications is now seen as one of the leading ways people stay connected with those who are important to them during the holiday season.

In the survey:

- When asked about keeping in touch with family during the holidays, 65 percent of all people surveyed say they use mobile phones while only 47 percent cite using traditional mail (such as holiday cards).
- When it comes to communicating with friends, young adults are much more likely to use a mobile phone (84 percent) versus other forms of communication such as traditional mail or holiday cards (23 percent).
- Thirty-two percent of parents and young adults surveyed use instant messages to stay connected with friends during the holidays. Twenty-three percent use text messages, and 22 percent use social networking sites.

Holiday Cell Phone Etiquette Tips

To successfully manage the balance between engaging with friends and family at holiday gatherings and maintaining connections with others who can't be there, Laurie Puhn, relationship and communication expert and author of "Instant Persuasion: How to Change Your Words to Change Your Life," suggests the following do's and don'ts:

1. **Don't** isolate yourself at a holiday gathering to make private calls or text message under the table. **Do** include other people at the gathering by putting your cell phone on speaker to call your favorite faraway relatives or friends so everyone can share in the moment.
2. **Don't** give in to the pressure to answer your cell phone every time it rings. **Do** allow your voicemail to be your "personal secretary" and take the message for you.
3. **Don't** assume parents or grandparents aren't interested in staying connected with people by wireless phone or text messaging. **Do** take the time to show others how to use the latest innovations on wireless phones and devices.
4. **Don't** be a "conversation paratrooper" and suddenly bail out of a holiday chat just because a text message or mobile call has come in. **Do** make a positive impression by alerting your conversation partner in advance that you are expecting an important call or message and will need to excuse yourself when it happens.
5. **Don't** assume kids are wasting time by chatting or texting via their mobile device. **Do** show an active interest in the friends your kids are connecting with. Better still, encourage your kids to invite these friends over in person for the next holiday gathering.

The T-Mobile survey was conducted in September 2006, fielded responses from more than 1,000 mobile communications users and has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.6 percent.

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