

A woman with long brown hair and bangs, wearing a blue and black striped sweater, is sitting on a red tufted sofa and using a white tablet. The background is a bright, out-of-focus interior space with a white door and a window with a patterned curtain.

Keep Taking the Tablets...

The rise of multi-screening and its
impact on television viewing

Bite Sized Thought Piece

2012

A quick look around when you're waiting for a train or a bus or sitting in a cafe or bar and it seems that everyone is glued to their phone or tablet. Whether they're swiping, pinching and zooming, IM'ing, liking, tweeting or @ing, sometimes it feels like our lives are being ruled by our new mobile devices.

Although these devices are not by any means universal, ownership is rising quickly. Nearly half of us now have a smartphone (up from around 22% in November 2010) and over one in ten of us have a tablet (Ipsos MediaCT Technology Tracker, Q3 2012).

Indeed, the rise of tablets is also gathering momentum. Since the final quarter of 2011, our Tech Tracker has reported that the proportion of those owning a tablet has doubled, a trend that may be set to accelerate with the newly announced launch of Apple's iPad Mini.

And all of this is set to explode in the next few years. Three quarters of those aged under 35 already own a smartphone and 40% of the same age group use these phones to access social networking sites. Younger age groups are adopting new mobile technologies at a voracious rate and using them to connect to the world around them.



49%

OF THE POPULATION
HAVE A SMARTPHONE



11%

OF THE
POPULATION
HAVE A TABLET



83%

OF ALL ADULTS CAN NOW
ACCESS THE INTERNET



44%

ACCESS THE INTERNET
VIA MOBILES



MESSAGING, NETWORKING, EMAILING OR WATCHING??

So what are we doing when we're glued to our phones? The most popular smartphone activities are reading and sending emails, downloading free apps, visiting social networking sites, browsing websites, watching video and instant messaging. There are some expected differences by platform, with iPhones and Android more popular for app usage and Blackberry for instant messaging, but key use across all platforms centres around connecting to others, playing games and entertainment.

Usage of tablets follows a similar pattern to smartphones, although we do see more media consumption, in the form of watching online video, listening to music and reading newspapers.

There are also some interesting differences between claimed connectivity via phones and tablets. The split between accessing the internet via Wi-Fi or 3G is roughly equal on smartphones but the use of Wi-Fi is much more prevalent on tablets, with nearly three quarters claiming that this is the main way they access the internet, perhaps reflecting the more 'at home' nature of tablets.

MULTI-SCREENING

So our use of mobile devices for entertainment and connecting is increasing and it seems that every television programme has a hashtag associated with it. We're encouraged to tweet our opinions on our favourite programmes or join others in talking about these same programmes on different apps or websites. Indeed, SecondSync estimated that mainstream TV channels in the UK pull in an average of 750,000 tweets per day, with the most popular programmes being those aimed at younger age groups such as the X Factor, TOWIE and Big Brother.

But how common is 'social TV'? TouchPoints4 data shows us that, in the second half of 2011, 23% of us claimed to be second screening (via laptop, tablet or phone) daily, 45% weekly and 57% had ever done it. Therefore, of the 28 million people that have ever used a laptop/mobile or tablet to access the internet when they're watching TV, 22 million go on to do this weekly and over 11 million do it daily. It would seem that the social TV bug is therefore very contagious and can also be highly addictive.

Using a second screen while watching TV



DAILY
11 million



HAD EVER DONE IT



WEEKLY
22 million

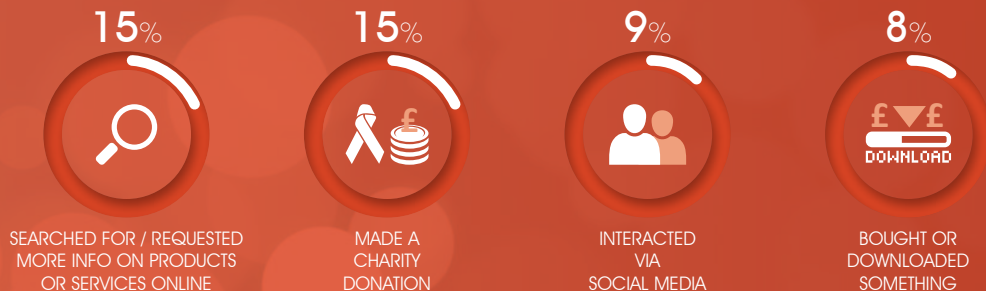


A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN?

Given the huge audience that is multi-screening on a regular basis, it's important to understand what people are doing when they're using their second screen and watching TV. We've seen that there are hundreds of thousands of tweets every day about television programmes, but is this all people are doing when they have a second screen and are in front of the television?

Together with Thinkbox in 2012, we asked 1,000 people about the things they do when they're watching television ads and found that 15% of people had searched for or requested

more information on products or services online; 15% had made a charity donation; 9% interacted via social media and 8% had bought or downloaded something. Although these proportions sound low, if you factor them up to the population, this would equate to somewhere between three and four million people making a purchase immediately after they had watched a television advert and a similar proportion interacting on social media after watching a programme.





TIME FOR CHANGE...

The way we watch television is clearly changing, offering huge challenges and huge opportunities for content providers and advertisers alike. For example, it is important to ensure that content is optimised for mobile and tablet platforms, that brand messages are consistent across platforms and that audio and visual signposts in ads and programmes are reconsidered

– people aren't always watching the TV screen but they will always have one ear on it. Purchase funnels from television ads to online purchase also need to be reconsidered – with an audience that has direct access to your online store, the size of the prize is likely to be vast but only if the process is simple and seamless.

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Ipsos MediaCT - Winner - 2011 MRS Awards: "Best Innovation"

