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Toronto, ON – The mobile world is here and more and more Canadians are latching on to Smartphone, Tablet and/or eReader devices. While some questioned the sales potential of Tablets when first introduced, they now appear to be set to make their mark on the Canadian mobile landscape. According to the most recent wave of Ipsos Reid's Mobil-ology Study of Smartphone, Tablet & eReader users in Canada, Tablet ownership doubled between January and August of 2011.

Although Tablet ownership is still somewhat of a niche and emerging market, the August wave of the Ipsos study revealed the growth rate for Tablets has outpaced the growth rate for Smartphones by three-to-one. While Tablet ownership between January and August of 2011 doubled, Smartphone ownership only increased by 30% (while not as strong as Tablets, eReaders grew by 75% over the same period).

"With Tablet growth rates now leading those of Smartphones, the sales potential of the Tablet in Canada is set to take off," says Mary Beth Barbour, Senior Vice President of Ipsos Reid. "In absolute terms, Tablet ownership across Canada is still relatively small, but when you consider that the number of Tablets in Canada has doubled in an eight month period, the indicators suggest that interest and potential for such devices will only increase. Based upon results from the Mobil-ology study we know that the Tablet fulfills an entertainment need, and in many cases is replacing some laptop use. We expect Tablets to be among the hottest items for the upcoming holiday season."

Overall, 6% of online adult Canadians now own a Tablet according to the August wave of Mobil-ology. While that appears to be a relatively small number, when compared to the 3% of Canadians who claimed to own such a device in January, the story of the Tablet instantly becomes one of rapid growth. Mary Beth goes on to say, "there are some interesting demographic skews that contribute to the Tablet story in Canada. Whereas early adoption was concentrated among those aged 35+, we are now seeing increased adoption by those 18-34 (up by 106% since January 2011). This may be due in part to the recent introduction of more competitively priced devices allowing younger Canadians, with presumably less disposable income to enter the market. As prices continue to drop and devices become more affordable, we are likely to see continued elevated growth among 18 to 34 years olds".

The same study revealed that Smartphone penetration across Canada reached 30% in August, up from 23% in January. While still achieving growth, the growth potential for Smartphone ownership appears to be leveling off slightly. "No doubt, Canadians are still very interested in Smartphone devices, and we anticipate these will eventually be in the hands of most adult Canadians and, to a slightly lesser degree tweens and teens, but the growth curve is more likely to be flatter in the coming years as adoption begins to slow from this point of 30% penetration", Barbour continues. "Of course, it is important to consider that to some extent Smartphone adoption may be slowed slightly in this country relative to the rapid advancement of the market because of Canada's unique mobile landscape, where most of us are locked into long-term contracts. The desire to upgrade to a Smartphone may be there, but the opportunity to do so may be contractually limited (unless the customer is of course willing to pay a penalty). This may also present a unique opportunity for Tablet marketers to snag sales from Canadians interested in a more sophisticated mobile device, but who are not in a position yet to upgrade their Feature Phone to a Smartphone until their contract has expired."

These findings are based on two studies (one in January 2011, the second in August 2011). Both studies were conducted among adult residents of Canada via the Ipsos Opinions Online Panel, one of Ipsos Reid's national online panels. The initial online survey had a sample size of n=50,000, the second a sample size of n=46,000. 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 +/-0.5% percentage points. In other words, had the entire population of Canadian adults been surveyed, results are accurate 19 times out of 20. 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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