

Latest Wave of Ipsos Study Reveals Mobile Device Brands Canadian Consumers are Considering in 2012

BlackBerry, Apple and Kobo Vie for their Share of the Pie in Canada's Hot Mobile Device Market



Ipsos Reid

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Toronto, ON – Canadians love their Smartphone, Tablet and eReader devices! The January 2012 wave of Ipsos Reid's Mobil-ology, a study of the mobile market in Canada, showed strong and steady growth in all three markets. In the six month period between August 2011 and January 2012, Smartphone ownership grew by 13%, Tablets by 66%, and eReaders by 43%. In absolute terms, market penetration of Smartphones grew from 24% of Canadians stating they owned one in August 2011 to 34% in January 2012. For Tablets, 3% of Canadians said they owned such a device in August 2011 and 10% said they owned one in January 2012. In the eReader segment, 4% of Canadians said they owned one in August 2011 with 10% making that claim five months later.

But looking to the future of the mobile sector, which brands are Canadians considering when it comes down to the purchase decision? The most recent wave of Mobil-ology shows that some brands are gaining momentum at a faster pace than their competitors. "Clear shifts in brand preference appear when we look at the brands of devices consumers are currently using," says Mary Beth Barbour, Senior Vice President with Ipsos Reid, "And looking forward, it appears that the brand race will continue to heat up."

For Smartphone users, RIM's BlackBerry and Apple remain the leading brands. However, much has changed in the 12 months between the January 2011 wave and the January 2012 wave of the study. BlackBerry's market penetration shrank from 41% to

33%, while Apple grew from 23% to 28%, and brands using the Android platform grew from approximately 26% to 31%.

“Based on the brands under consideration by those in the market to buy or replace their Smartphone in the next year, we anticipate that these shifts in brand penetration will continue,” adds Barbour. “Intentions to acquire a BlackBerry have declined by nearly one-third when compared to this time last year. Interest in Apple continues on a slight incline, while Android handsets are poised to pick up the lions-share of RIM’s losses, thanks in no small part to Samsung for which purchase intent has increased by 50% over the past 12 month period.”

In January 2011, 58% of respondents intended to purchase a BlackBerry. That number fell to 40% a year later. In the same time frame, 21% of respondents expressed intentions to buy a Samsun Smartphone product, with that share rising to 32% in January 2012.

On the Tablet side of the equation, the category was virtually owned by Apple and its iPad one year ago, claiming 78% of the market in January 2011. Speeding forward to 2012 and the entrance of new competitors such as the Samsung Galaxy and BlackBerry PlayBook, Apple has seen its share slip to 47%.

“Following a disappointing entry to the market, RIM continues to attempt to gain traction in the market with its PlayBook, but Canadians remain wary and consideration of this brand for future Tablet purchasers holds steady at 22% - up one point from 2011,” adds Barbour. “Samsung, however, has potential for a breakaway. Though current penetration is modest at 8%, consideration of this brand by those looking to buy or replace their Tablet in the next year has increased by 81%, standing at only 14% in January 2011 rising to 26% in January 2012.”

The study also reveals that as eReaders grow in popularity, the brand landscape is showing a runaway brand winner: the Kobo. Twelve months earlier, the Sony eReader, the Kobo, and Amazon's Kindle were virtually tied for market penetration at 28%, 27% and 25% respectively. The January 2012 wave of the Mobil-ology Study shows the Kobo far out in front with 46% penetration and the Kindle slipping one point to 24%. The big shift comes at the expense of Sony's eReader, which saw market penetration drop from a category leading penetration in January 2011 to a distant third at 18% in January 2012.

Looking at the brands of eReaders under consideration by those in the market, it appears that more losses are in store for Sony as consideration of this brand has dropped by 31% over the past 12 months. Intention to buy a Sony eReader fell from a high of 45% last year to 31% in January 2011, with Kobo picking up much of the difference. "What is more interesting is that with 53% of respondents intending to buy a Kindle, the Amazon product is more likely than Kobo to be a part of the consideration set of prospective buyers than the Kobo, now at 42%," adds Barbour. "Though intentions do not necessarily translate into sales, the January 2012 wave of Mobil-ology shows that a battle of the brands may be in the works if Amazon is able to improve conversion."

These findings are based on three waves of research (the first in January 2011, the second in August 2011, and the third in January 2012). Each of these studies were conducted among approximately n=46,000 adult residents of Canada via the Ipsos Opinions Online Panel, one of Ipsos Reid's national online panels. 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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