

The Mobile Promise

“For IDG 2011 has been a breakout year in mobile. We have learnt a lot about how our readers engage with their mobile devices and we have helped make our customers more successful.”

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Put aside all the fear regarding euro zone financial crisis, Greek defaults or on the other end of the hyperbole scale the frenzied excitement at any leak of Facebook or Twitter growth rates and valuations. Somewhere in the middle of the two extremes is a trend that has been well reported, sometimes with over enthusiastic excitement and sometimes with curmudgeons sense of cynicism... the long awaited delivery of the mobile promised land!

2011 would be the year of the tablet said Apple’s Steve Jobs. In that regard he is undoubtedly right, but only half right... it’s also the year mobile finally breaks out from all the false promises and actually exceeds expectations.

IDG Global Solutions recently released the results of their biggest global mobile survey yet, 13,600 respondents across 16 countries looking at the adoption of smartphones, tablets, consumption trends and preferred brands among other things. There are some really interesting findings :

- More than two thirds of respondents use a smartphone for personal or business use.
- 70% browse the internet regularly and use mobile applications, with almost two thirds
- 27% already own a tablet with 67% planning to buy one in the next 12 months, of which 80% will buy an Apple iPad!
- 67% of tablet owners share the device with colleagues and family, extending the tablet experience and reach beyond the 27% ownership figure.
- Not surprisingly Apple is either #1 or #2 in all markets from a handset point of view.

Perhaps what surprised us most is the consumption data from B2B users in relation to their B2C peers. B2B users are making more calls, more text messaging, browse the internet more, more mobile email and download more apps than their B2C peers.

'In the high tech category where average sales times are 18 months, mobile offers an opportunity to reach your reader/target audience wherever they and however they want to consume content.'

The mobile opportunity is here for us all and no question that includes B2B. In a frenzied world of activity and information overload, one device stays with you always and mixes personal and professional activities seamlessly. In the high tech category where average sales times are 18 months, mobile offers an opportunity to reach your reader/target audience wherever they and however they want to consume content. Why should we assume that an IT Director will wait to preview a whitepaper or watch a mobile case study until they get back to the office? That just makes no sense. Far more likely is via their social graph and mobile widgets they will see that a fellow IT Director just commented on a great piece of content that is relevant to them and will open that link in their mobile browser, consume the content and possibly comment themselves.

In an era of real time marketing, mobile is the enabler. The challenge will be for publishers and marketers alike, do we make the same mistakes we made in online, put up static versions of publications or brochures online and call that a website! We are in the very early stages of mobile, social and location based integration, the smart publishers and marketers will create content and experiences specifically for the mobile platform, not just adapt existing websites.

Some useful numbers to get you thinking :

- 2 Billion people access the internet, 50% of them via a mobile device
- IDC forecasts 472 Million smartphones will ship this year. That is more smartphones shipped than PCs... yes you read that correctly!
- By 2015 IDC is forecasting 982M smartphones shipped
- 37% of mobile users remember seeing a mobile specific ad
- 81.3M tablets will ship in 2012..dominated by the ipad
- Forecasts for the mobile ad market range from \$8.7Bn to \$20.6Bn by 2015
- 29.2% increase in monthly time spent on a mobile device

On some level these are all rather dizzying statistics and for those of us who have been around the block a little bit, well it kind of feels like 1999 and the young guns of the web and the analysts telling us that the internet is set for explosive growth, and the world weary business executives looking at the financials and pointing out yes yes all very exciting but we have a real business and real numbers over here in print to worry about! To that I would say well we know how that turned out and look around you on a plane, the train and even the beach... people are connected constantly, with each other and with work. Our behaviors are changing with regular 'check-ins' on Foursquare and real time sharing via Twitter and Facebook.

'Mobile is different than online and offers us so much more potential... so let's treat it differently.'

For marketers this represents an enormous opportunity to have a very deep and personal relationship with your customer 24 hours a day. But to do so we need to embrace the platform and not just replicate our digital communications. Mobile is different than online and offers us so much more potential... so let's treat it differently.

For IDG 2011 has been a breakout year in mobile, we have developed and implemented mobile campaigns for clients across the world with fantastic success. We have learnt a lot about how our readers engage with their mobile devices and we have helped make our customers more successful. That's why we formally launched Mobile@IDG two weeks ago... it's a public statement from us that we are committed to the future of media and marketing.

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