

# Study reveals Aussies' social obsession with mobile phones

February 1 2007

---

The average Australian spends one hour on his or her mobile phone every day, according to the preliminary results of a national survey released by the Queensland University of Technology.

The study by QUT consumer behaviour expert Diana James is the the country's first survey on its mobile phone obsession and has found one in five Australians are potentially addicted to their mobiles.

More than 2500 phone owners completed Ms James' online survey, which focused on the psychological, financial and social impact of Australian's skyrocketing use of mobile phones.

She found 22% of these people considered themselves to be heavy or very heavy users and 8% had experienced monthly bills that were over \$500.

Ms James' preliminary findings also show that texting now dominates Australians' use of mobile phones.

"People who did the survey used SMS almost three times as much as voice communication," she said.

"The average respondent made 3.5 voice calls each day but sent nine text messages. They spent one hour on the phone every day on average, which included 35 minutes of texting."

And Ms James said mobiles had become a social tool, rather than a business tool.

"The people surveyed said most of their phone time was spent contacting close friends (28%) and partners (28%), or family (26%), with just 11% of phone time relating to business," she said.

Ms James said Australia had one of the highest mobile phone penetration rates in the world and it was important to find ways to measure mobile phone addiction.

"The survey results show that the majority of people are responsible with their phone, just like the majority who drive cars are responsible," she said.

"But there's a significant element who have severe problems with their phones and that's expressed in their psychological relationship with their phone and their financial relationship."

Ms James said 2500 people aged 16 to 84 had logged on to do the survey from every state and territory in Australia, with 64% being women and 50% aged 25 and under.

"My research is focusing on whether or not people are consuming mobile technology in a healthy manner," she said.

"It's not just a phone anymore, it's more like a mobile computer and entertainment unit.

"The paradox of the phone is that it gives independence but it also creates dependence."

Ms James said addiction danger signs included running up huge bills and

having irrational reactions to being without a phone if you forgot or lost your mobile.

"As ownership rates have increased, they've become a huge part of people's social lives ... without their phone, people feel like they are out of the loop," she said.

Ms James' survey showed the average monthly phone bill was \$65. About 8% of respondents said they had been billed more than \$500 for a month, with the biggest bill reported as \$5200.

"Given that half the people surveyed were 25 or younger and on fairly low incomes, the amount they are spending is quite significant," she said.

Source: Queensland University of Technology

Citation: Study reveals Aussies' social obsession with mobile phones (2007, February 1) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2007-02-reveals-aussies-social-obsession-mobile.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.