

# Americans slow to pay for local mobile apps

March 14 2011, by Chris Lefkow

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Nearly half of Americans are using their cellphones and tablet computers to get local news and information but just one percent are paying for applications to do so, according to a new report.

Forty-seven percent of Americans use cellphones or tablet computers like Apple's iPad to get information on local weather, restaurant listings, local news and sports scores and traffic conditions, the report said.

But only 13 percent of mobile device owners are using applications, or apps, to tap into local information, the report found, and just 10 percent of that group pays for an app -- amounting to just one percent of the total US adult population.

The findings are from a survey of 2,251 adults conducted in January for the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, the Pew Internet & American Life Project and the Knight Foundation and released on Monday.

They suggest that newspapers hoping to make up for falling print advertising revenue and eroding circulation with local mobile offerings may have some time to wait.

"Many news organizations are looking to mobile platforms, in particular mobile apps, to provide new ways to generate subscriber and advertising revenues in local markets," said Lee Rainie, director of the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project.

"The survey suggests there is a long way to go before that happens."

Tom Rosenstiel, director of the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, said "tablet penetration is growing so rapidly -- as quickly as any device we have seen to date.

"It will be fascinating to see whether that changes whether people will pay for content online, but for now it hasn't happened," Rosenstiel said.

Overall, 36 percent of adults pay for some form of local news, the report said, with the vast majority being local print newspaper subscriptions.

Apple reported selling 15 million iPads last year and dozens of other companies are developing their own devices in a bid to grab a share of the fast-growing tablet market.

Eighty-four percent of American adults currently own a cellphone while seven percent own a [tablet computer](#), according to the report.

Apple offers more than 350,000 paid or free applications for the iPhone through its [App](#) Store and more than 65,000 for the iPad.

According to the report, 42 percent of [cellphone](#) or tablet computer owners use the device to check [local weather](#) reports online and 37 percent use their [mobile devices](#) to find local restaurants or other businesses.

Thirty percent get information or news about their local community, 24 percent check local sports scores and 22 percent use the devices to get information about local traffic conditions or public transportation.

Nineteen percent turn to their mobile devices to get or use coupons or discounts from local stores and 15 percent get news alerts about their

community sent via text or email.

Twenty-three percent of those surveyed said they would pay \$5 a month to get full access to local newspaper content online and 18 percent said they would pay \$10 per month.

Around 75 percent said they would not pay anything.

Currently, only five percent of adults pay for online local news content, according to the report.

The survey was conducted January 12-25 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.3 percentage points.

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