

Smart phones not replacing other media for news access -- at least yet: study

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In a first-of-its-kind study, researchers found that mobile media technologies such as smart phones aren't taking people away from relying on traditional media sources such as newspapers or television.

Instead, mobile media are filling the spaces in people's daily routine in which other media sources are either unavailable or inconvenient to use.

That suggests mobile media use is taking a different path to popularity than did technologies like television, said John Dimmick, lead author of the study and professor of communication at Ohio State University.

"Typically, what happens with new media is that they compete with and displace older media to a certain extent, like television did with radio," Dimmick said.

"But at least early in its development, mobile media isn't taking us away from older media – it has its own separate niche."

Dimmick conducted the study with Gregory Hoplamazian, a graduate student at Ohio State, and John Christian Feaster of Rowan University in New Jersey. The results appear in the current issue of the journal *New Media & Society*.

Dimmick noted that the data in this study was collected in 2007, the year that the first Apple iPhone was released. The success of the iPhone may mean that mobile media has started to make inroads into the use of other

media technologies, Dimmick said, but we won't know for sure until new studies are completed.

This study involved 166 participants who agreed to keep a time-space diary of their media use over the course of a day. During the day assigned to them, they recorded where and when they accessed a variety of media technologies, including mobile media technologies such as [smart phones](#), as well as television, [newspaper](#), desktop and laptop computers, radio and others.

The participants recorded whenever they accessed news, sports or weather content, on any technology at any place and time.

All of the participants, who were ages 19 to 68, were selected by a survey firm on behalf of the researchers. The researchers specifically excluded full-time students to ensure that all participants had a daily routine, Dimmick said. This was necessary so the researchers could learn how mobile media are used to access news by people with time and space constraints, such as full-time jobs.

Using the data from the diaries, the researchers analyzed when and where participants were most likely to use different technologies to access news content.

The participants recorded a total of 1,843 media sessions – a period of time when they used a single medium to access news, sports or weather content.

Overall, mobile media was still a relatively minor player in the way people accessed news – it accounted for only about 7 percent of all media sessions, Dimmick said.

Computers were the most popular method for accessing news, with

about 24 percent of all media sessions occurring on desktops and 15 percent occurring on laptops. Television accounted for about 29 percent of all media sessions. Newspapers and radio each accounted for about 9 percent of sessions.

But each form of technology had its own niche where it was particularly popular, the results showed.

For example, mobile media technologies were clearly the preferred method of accessing news during the workday when people were on the move.

But television remained king for news access at home during the evening and night. The clearest niche for newspapers appeared to be at home during the morning. Computers, both desktop and laptop, were most often used to access news at work. Participants most often used radio in their cars during the morning and evening commutes.

"The legacy media including newspapers, radio and [television](#) are still popular at the times and places where they have always been popular," Dimmick said.

"Mobile media is filling in the spaces and times where people are on the move, away from their offices and homes, such as when they are in the line at the supermarket or eating lunch at a restaurant."

Provided by The Ohio State University

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