

Majority of college students own smartphones, but dislike those ads

February 27 2013, by Marc Ransford

College students have been ditching their cell phones for smart phones in droves the last three years, but they're growing annoyed with advertisements from marketers on their mobile devices, says new research from Ball State University.

An annual survey of college students at Ball State finds that smartphone and feature phone usage has flip-flopped since 2009. In a recent survey, 73 percent of students reported using a smartphone as compared to 27 percent in 2009.

"The complete reversal of [mobile](#) device usage reflects the explosive growth of Internet-accessible, computer-like smartphones away from text and talk feature phones," said Michael Hanley, an advertising professor and director of Ball State's Institute for [Mobile Media](#) Research. He has conducted surveys on the use of [mobile devices](#) by students since 2004.

"For many college students, their lives revolve around their smartphones," he said. "Not only is it a phone, but they use it to email, send text, download and listen to music and access social media sites."

He also pointed out that smartphone penetration for all U.S. adults at the end of 2012 was 54 percent.

Not everything is rosy with the smartphone trend, though. College smartphone owners are growing more annoyed at [mobile advertising](#)

with 83 percent saying they are displeased by marketing, up from 68 percent in 2012. Nearly half of smartphone users say they are less likely to purchase from a business after receiving an ad.

"This trend in mobile ad avoidance has accelerated since 2009 and is reflected in many areas of the 2013 survey findings," Hanley said.

"Consider that 83 percent of smartphone users who received ads are 'very concerned' or 'concerned' about how a business got their phone number, up from 52 percent in 2009."

He also found that about 58 percent of college-age smartphone and feature [phone users](#) are not interested in receiving coupons or discounts on their phones, up from 24 percent for smartphones and 40 percent for feature phones in 2009. And, nearly 50 percent said they wouldn't accept ads today even if they were paid, compared to 27 percent in 2009.

While college students are ramping up their use of mobile technologies, they aren't cutting the cord to home just yet: parents pay the bill for 68 percent of smartphone users and 70 percent of feature phones users.

Hanley also found:

- Downloading music, apps, videos and books have shown the largest growth since 2009 for [smartphone](#) owners.
- Students with smartphones report buying products (49 percent) and accessing websites for entertainment or concert information (52 percent), movie listings (52 percent), news (61 percent) and weather (87 percent).
- Accessing search engines from smartphones has nearly tripled since 2009, with 57 percent searching at least once or multiple times a day in 2013.
- Making calls on smartphones has fallen by one-third since 2009,

as just 51 percent of students today report making one or more calls per day as compared to 89 percent in 2009.

The study also discovered that more students are using tablets, but future growth is in question. About 30 percent of students report owning a tablet, with the iPad (17 percent) being most popular followed by a Galaxy (2 percent).

"Only 2 percent say they plan to buy a tablet in 2013," Hanley said. "However, many [college students](#) have a laptop often purchased by their parents. They may be waiting on their parents to buy a tablet for them for their birthdays, Christmas or graduation presents."

Provided by Ball State University

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