For smartphone users: location, location, location

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A woman uses her smartphone while crossing street in Washington, DC, on May 9. More smartphones means more Americans are using the devices to get location information or to share their whereabouts with friends, a study showed Friday.

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A Pew Internet & American Life Project report found 74 percent of US smartphone owners use the device to get real-time location-based information, and 18 percent use a geosocial service to "check in" or share their location.

Over the past year, smartphone ownership among US adults has risen

from 35 percent to 46 percent, the study noted.

This means that the overall proportion of US adults who get location-based information has almost doubled over that time period, from 23 percent in May 2011 to 41 percent in February 2012.

The percentage of US adults using geosocial services like Foursquare has likewise risen from four percent in 2011 to 10 percent in 2012.

"We've watched mobile phones become increasingly entwined in people's everyday activities, and location-based services are an important part of that," report author Kathryn Zickuhr said.

"Smartphones' geolocation abilities are clearly popular with their users, who can get the information they want exactly when and where they want it."

The jump in location services has also raised privacy issues and has prompted lawmakers to consider efforts to protect the privacy of people whose location can be tracked.

The Pew report surveyed more than 2,000 adults in 2011 and again in 2012 and is believed to have a margin of error of 2.3 percentage points.

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