

## Me, My Mobile and I

### *Study of 1,400 Users Reveals People Born Into M-Generation Treat Mobiles as Life-Support Devices*

A new study launched today by the Teleconomy Group has revealed that UK society has given birth to the 'M-Ager' - individuals born into a generation of mobile users that are so emotionally attached to their phone they don't see how they could live without it.

The study - entitled *Me, My Mobile and I* - is an annual research project looking at behavioural trends in mobile usage. Now in its fourth year, the survey conducted over 1,400 qualitative and quantitative interviews focusing on the UK public's attitudes towards their mobile.

'M-Agers', classified as children aged between 10 and 14, were born into a time where mobile phone use was commonplace and have subsequently developed a significant emotional attachment to their phone using it for much more than just communication. The study revealed that M-Ager's natural curiosity, impatience and inherent trust of technology means they try all the functions on their phone and as a result learn to use the technology far more quickly than an adult might.

"The emergence of the 'M-Ager' is a significant development amongst the mobile public in the UK," said Professor Michael K Hulme, chairman of the Teleconomy Group. "These are a group of people who have never known life without a mobile phone and therefore can't imagine functioning without it. The 'M-Ager' phenomenon, and their dependence on this technology, is only set to increase as children begin to grow up with increasingly sophisticated mobile devices over the coming years."

The research went on to reveal:

- **Users 'can't live' without their mobile:** 26% of respondents stated they couldn't live without their mobile demonstrating the huge part the mobile plays in our everyday life
  - **Denial amongst UK mobile users:** 18% of UK mobile users refuse to admit the importance of the mobile in their life, but are incapable of functioning without it
  - **Mobiles 'author' our lives:** Mobile phones are becoming vitally important in managing the huge volume of information we receive on a daily basis and begin to replace address books, diaries, watches, alarm clocks and even land-line telephones amongst the mobile public
  - **Businesses missing opportunities:** Businesses are missing great opportunities to market products and services to users via their mobile in 'interspace' - the time and space between events and arrangements
  - **Mobiles used as 'virtual' transport:** Whilst children use mobiles to play games and transport themselves to a 'virtual playground', adults use the mobile as a 'virtual friend' to interact with whilst there's a gap in their life
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Previous research studies revealed three basic adult typologies that mobile users adhered to however the 2004 survey has identified the emergence of a new breed of mobile user - the Denier.

The new 'Denier' group believe themselves to be unattached to their mobile seeing it as useful with some respondents stating they only switch it on when necessary. Despite their apparent lack of emotional attachment towards their mobile, Deniers demonstrate a great fear of losing it suggesting the device means more to them than they're willing to concede. 18% of the sample claimed they were not attached to their mobile but displayed characteristics of not being able to live without it.

"The emergence of the Denier group is fascinating as this is a set of people who are unwilling to admit how important their mobile is to running their life," said Hulme. "This group underestimates their usage opting for packages that are too small and drastically exceed their free minutes and text allowance every month. Although they'd be reluctant to own up to the fact, deniers would find it difficult to function without their mobile."

### **Interspace is the New Real Estate**

"Interspace has become critical in controlling other parts of our life and our use of the mobile phone during this time means we can be far more fluid in making arrangements," commented Hulme. "We use this time to constructively send messages or make calls that help organise ourselves both in and out of work. Our mobile controls this interspace and subsequently plays an essential role in our everyday being."

"Businesses are at present missing a very significant commercial opportunity to market products or services to individuals on their mobile during this time," concluded Hulme. "Mobile users are used to making decisions on the move - if businesses can conquer this transitional space then they could begin to see substantial financial rewards. Interspace does appear to present us with real-estate waiting for commercial population."

### **Other key findings included**

- **Multi-media messaging:** MMS has yet to explode with owners of camera phones using them as portable photo albums instead of for messaging purposes
- **Texting:**
  - SMS is the preferred method of communication and is perceived as quicker and cheaper than voice calls
  - Use of SMS is subjective with respondents feeling unable to text for business purposes, and children feeling embarrassed if they're texted by their parent"
- **Video calling:** Present users of video calling see the value but want coverage and quality to improve

## **About Teleonomy**

Teleonomy is a research based consultancy specialising in understanding consumer and organisational behaviours and how relationships are built and sustained.

For 21 years Teleonomy has worked with a wide range of national and international clients to deepen their understanding of their customers.

Teleonomy has researched the emergence of call centres, IVR and voice recognition systems, online servicing and the ever growing reliance on mobile communications, 3G and digital TV. From an international perspective it has researched and commented on the centralisation and mechanisation of customer service, national outsourcing and more recently Business Process outsourcing on a global basis.

Teleonomy's work with individual clients focuses on their business needs today, but with a future orientation, providing insight into consumer behaviour trends and company specific issues such as what is the experience, what do people expect and what is the current perception.

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