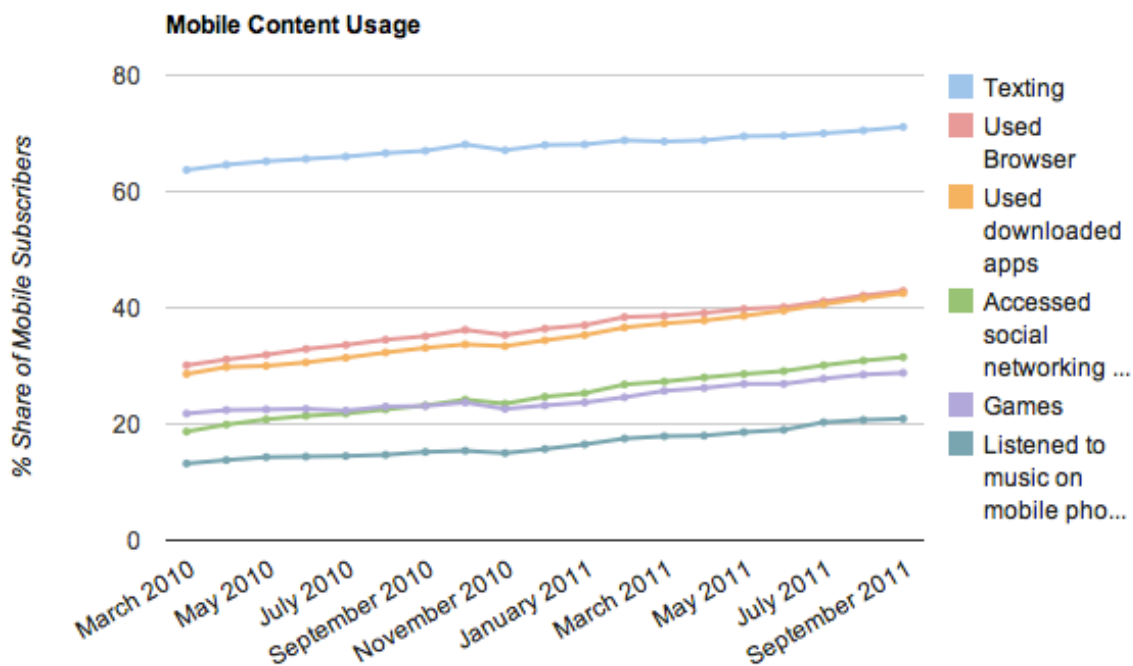


The Importance of a Multi-Channel Mobile Marketing Strategy

Introduction

As mobile technologies evolve, consumers are interacting with digital content through new and varied means. With smartphone adoption rates constantly growing, all mobile content activities are on the rise. Marketers simply cannot afford to ignore the proliferation of marketing channels arising from the mobile disruption.



Source: comScore MobiLens

Thankfully, digital marketing expertise translates nicely to mobile strategies. Utilizing the concepts of holistic online marketing, brands can leverage the new mobile channels to their advantage with quick adoption.

Mobile Advertising

Mobile advertising is one of the easiest mobile strategies to implement for digital marketers due to the sheer familiarity of the medium. From pay-per-click search advertising to display ads to

pre-roll videos, the usual suspects of online advertising are found here. Existing creative can often be repurposed, making implementation that much easier.

Mobile advertising isn't limited to mobile browsers. It also includes in-app advertising. Multiple new ad networks have popped up solely to facilitate this purpose. Marketers are experiencing mixed results with in-app advertising and advise starting this strategy with small budgets.

Like any successful digital advertising campaign, testing is key to maximizing a marketing budget. Elements to test include:

- Ad copy
- Design
- Click-through rates
- Landing pages
- Media placement
- Ad networks

Mobile Site Optimization

Almost half of mobile consumers are browsing the web on their phones. While mobile browsers have come a long way in recent years, marketers will want to conduct due diligence with the nuances generated by viewing websites on small screens.

Some sites choose to integrate mobile site optimization with the full desktop versions of their website. This works best for sites with minimalist designs that load quickly when viewed using slow data networks.

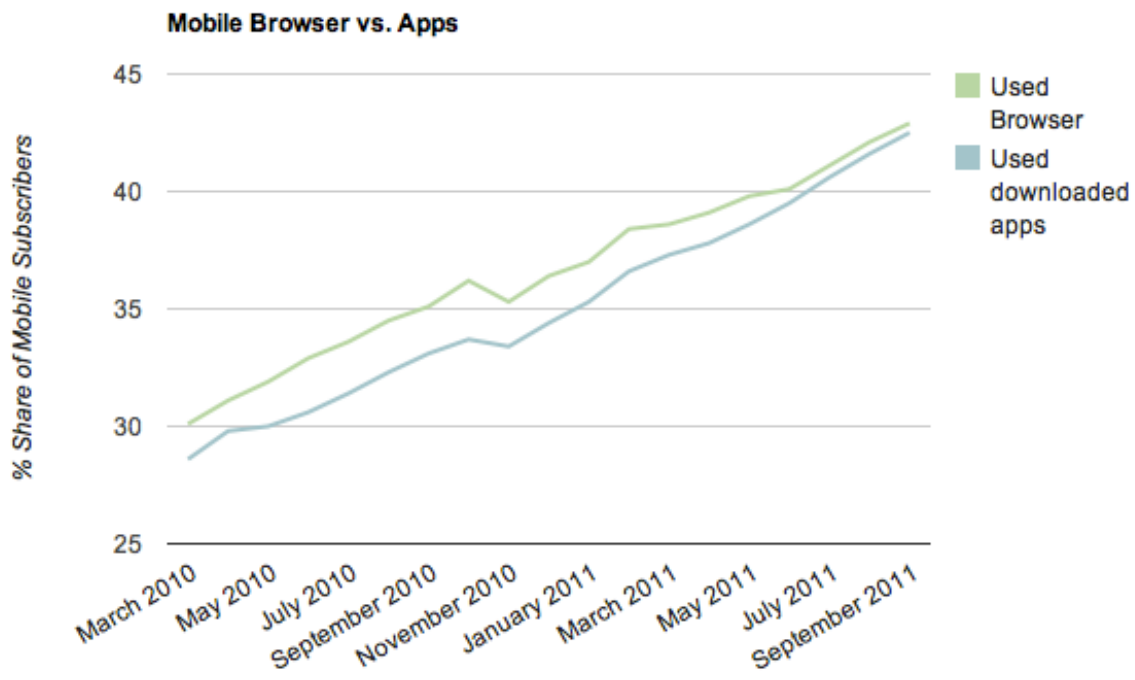
For others, a mobile-specific site is necessary. These often reside on a subdomain such as m.yoursite.com or a directory such as yoursite.com/m.

Web development teams can include site code which detects whether a user is browsing via a mobile device and redirect the user to the mobile site. Many mobile sites also offer users the option of selecting the full desktop version to browse, should they choose to do so.

If a mobile-specific site is utilized, they should avoid incorporating content with Adobe Flash. Apple iPhones do not support Flash and they make up over a quarter of smartphone subscribers.

App Development

Many digital marketing teams are debating the question, "Should we create a mobile website or an app?" The answer for many is both. Currently, apps and mobile sites both reach roughly 42% of mobile users:



Source: comScore MobiLens

Apps reach users through entirely different mediums than do mobile browsers. Users may discover apps through app stores, word of mouth, a blogger's Top 10 Apps list, or an app search engine such as Chomp.

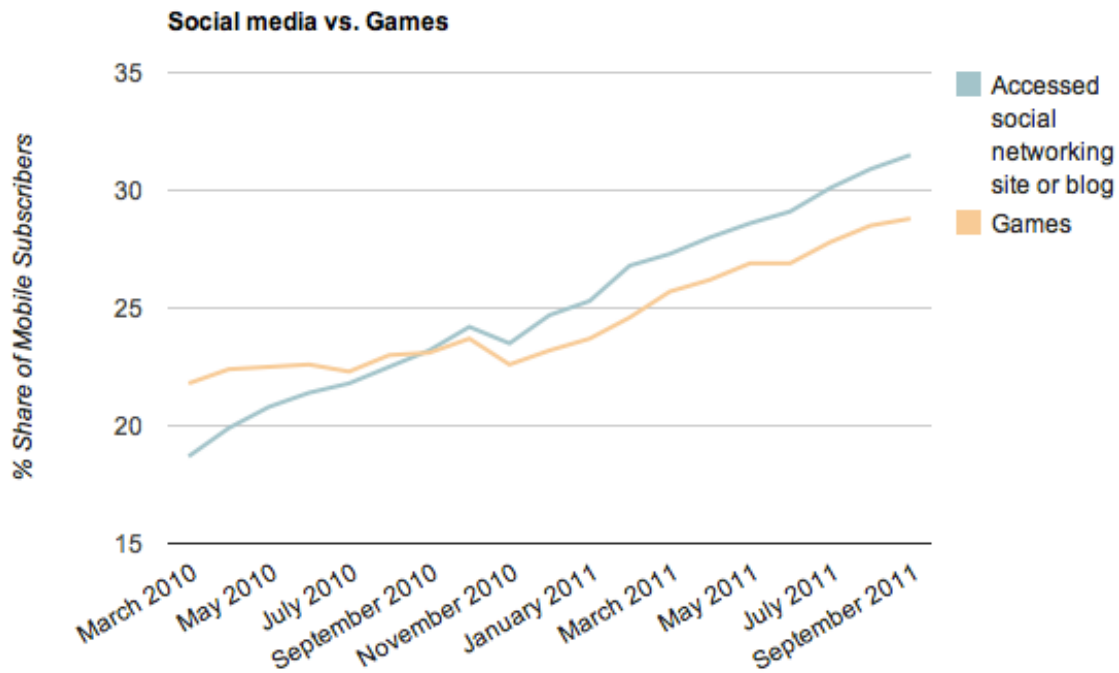
A portion of the mobile audience will prefer downloadable apps to viewing a mobile site. Thus, providing an app to reach these customers may prove invaluable.

Apps can also provide information when the user does not have access to a strong internet connection. While content and product databases are too bulky to bundle with apps, basic contact information such as a customer service and sales phone numbers allow quick access anytime.

Social Media Integration

In August 2011 alone, over 72 million Americans accessed social networking sites or blogs via a mobile device, according to comScore. Access on a mobile browser grew by 24% over the past year, while access via an app grew by a whopping 126%.

In September 2010, accessing social networks and blogs on a mobile device surpassed mobile games. Considering the popularity of mobile games such as Angry Birds and Words with Friends, this is a significant development.



Source: comScore MobiLens

Marketing-based social activities on a mobile device included:

- 53.2% followed a posted link to a website
- 52.9% read a post from an organization/brand/event
- 34.8% posted a link to a website
- 33.3% received a coupon/offer/deal
- 27.7% clicked on an advertisement

The mobile disruption means social media marketers need to think outside of the desktop when planning social media campaigns:

- Incorporate social media updates into mobile site optimization and app development.
- Remember the mobile user. Will it be easy to participate while a customer is “on the go?”
- Optimize blogs for the mobile browser or provide a separate mobile blog for easy viewing.
- Enable quick and easy sharing via mobile devices. Bonus points for sharing methods that utilize just 1-2 clicks.

Text Message Marketing

Also known as SMS Marketing, this strategy involves sending text messages to your target audience. Text messaging is offered on both feature phones and smartphones, and texting is a far more popular task than any other mobile content activity.

Various types of messages can be sent through text messaging:

- Discounts and coupons
- Exclusive sales and deals
- Service and product upselling
- Event reminders
- Nonprofit fundraising

In many ways, texting is similar to email marketing and the two marketing mediums share many of the same best practices:

Encourage a call to action. Not should text messages have a clear purpose, but customer action allows marketers to measure the effectiveness of an SMS campaign.

Don't spam. Allow customers to opt-in and out of text messaging lists and only send messages they have signed up for.

Stick to the company "voice." If a brand uses more formal language, this is not the time to start saying "OMG."

Be consistent. If messages are sent once a week or once a month, stick to the time frame. Have a plan and establish consistency, which in return builds trust and loyalty.

Don't overdo it. Unlike email, which is free, consumers pay for text messaging. Respect their costs and keep messages relevant and to a minimum.

Conclusion

The mobile disruption doesn't have to leave marketers feeling like they've entered a brave new world. Rapid development and adoption of emerging technologies are to be seen as opportunity to reach target audiences anew. With careful planning and reliance on existing digital marketing skills, mobile channels can be incorporated with relative ease and efficiency.

Sources

Social Networking On-The-Go: U.S. Mobile Social Media Audience Grows 37 Percent in the Past Year, comScore, October 20, 2011

U.S. Mobile Subscriber Market Share Reports, comScore, March 2010 - September 2011