

Mobile communication platforms from the point of view of marketing communication

Mgr. Richard Fedorko, PhD.
University of Prešov in Prešov
Faculty of Management
Department of marketing and international trade
Konštantínova 16, 080 01 Prešov, Slovakia
richard.fedorko@unipo.sk

Abstract: The aim of the article is to describe the current state of the issue of user preferences when using mobile platforms from the point of view of marketing communication. Apart from evaluating the issue the article also focuses on the theoretical basis of the issues of mobile marketing and Internet marketing. The article also focuses its attention on the market of mobile devices on a global scale, as well as the issue of the use of smartphones. Moreover, the article also describes the current state of the use of mobile devices to consume digital content on the Internet. It describes the current state of the issue on the global as well as domestic markets. Moreover, the aim of the article is to evaluate and demonstrate the possible future direction of the field of marketing.

Keywords: Internet Marketing, Mobile Marketing, Mobile Devices, Smartphone, Tablet

JEL Classification: M30; M31

Acknowledgement: This article is one of the partial outputs under the scientific research grant VEGA 1/0806/16 "Research on issues of consumer behaviour of a new generation of customers with emphasis on identifying preferences and usability of mobile platforms in the process of e-commerce of the subjects localized predominantly on the Central European Market".

1. Introduction

Marketing activities carried out on mobile communication platforms (smartphones and tablets) are referred to as mobile marketing. It should be emphasized that this is a rapidly changing and dynamic area which is largely influenced by the development of information and communication technologies in the online environment of the Internet. Mobile platforms are extremely popular worldwide, as documented by the time users spend using these devices. The current mobile marketing is no longer just about bulk text messages. The nature of these devices (Internet access) helps to maximize the use of their potential and opens the door to a wide range of marketing activities. Thanks to the continuous growth in popularity of mobile devices, mobile marketing can be perceived as one of the fastest growing areas with a completely new marketing approaches and addressing techniques.

2. Theoretical basis

Mobile marketing is a form of wireless communication via a medium (mobile phone, tablet, etc.). Mobile marketing distributes certain content and then provides direct responses within the context of inter-connected program (MMA 2009).

According to Schär et al. (2005) mobile marketing is a new form of marketing communication that uses mobile technology for the presentation of goods, services or ideas. It should be emphasized that mobile technologies mediate immediate interaction with target groups anywhere and anytime depending on the geographical location or situation, thus making it an effective marketing communication tool. The above described options define mobile marketing as an ideal means for building a true one-to-one relationship in order to fulfill individual customer requirements.

Michael and Salter (2006) state that mobile marketing can also be understood as a systematic planning, implementation and controlling of several business activities carried out in order to bring together buyers and sellers for the mutually advantageous exchange or transfer of products where the main point of contact with the consumer is their mobile device.

According to the agency EMIO (2011) mobile marketing is the newest area of marketing which had developed gradually along with the development of mobile network operators. Mobile marketing is linked with the vision of marketers who wanted to create a quick and direct communication channel with their target groups. On the basis of the research on mobile marketing it can be stated that this is a huge "virtual" market. Given the fact that this sector is characterized by continuous growth in popularity, mobile marketing can be described as one of the fastest growing and most targeted marketing forms.

Becker and Arnold (2010) came up with benefits that mobile marketing brings. These are the quick access to information, time-efficient solutions and personalization. The authors also state that the rapid pace of life consumes a lot of time and thus time-efficient services are more than welcome.

Becker and Arnold (2010) have a different idea. They define the concept of mobile marketing as a set of processes that enable organizations to communicate and collaborate with their audience in an interactive and relevant way via any mobile device.

We agree with Nondek and Řeňčová (2000) who state that the issue of mobile marketing is inextricably linked with the issue of Internet marketing. Its tools are adapted to be used for mobile marketing. In this context, Internet marketing can be defined as a new form of marketing, a process of satisfying human needs with information, services or goods via the Internet.

Leppäneniemi (2008) conducted a review of all previous research on mobile marketing issues, and formulated his own definition of mobile marketing. The author suggests that mobile marketing is the use of a mobile medium as a means of communication on the market.

Internet marketing, as a form of marketing communication, is according to Přikrylová - Jahodová (2010) based on the estimation of behavior and perceptions of the target group, where it on the basis of these facts tries to find the most efficient methods and ways to bring Internet users to the target website and convince them to buy a product/service or perform some other desired action. On the Internet communication is becoming more direct thanks to immediate user feedback.

It should be pointed out that Internet marketing is a distinctive part of e-business which represents a strategic process of creation, distribution, promotion and pricing of products offered on the Internet or via electronic tools or smart mobile devices - smartphones, tablets, etc. (Kurtz, 2011)

Sedláček (2006) states that in practice there exists also the concept of e-marketing, which is used as yet another synonym for Internet marketing (also includes mobile marketing). With regard to this broader conception it is possible to perceive e-marketing as the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies in order to achieve marketing objectives of a business entity.

E-marketing is not only the process of implementation of marketing activities in the Internet environment or other digital media. E-marketing is closely linked with knowledge of the target groups which then needs to be adjusted and turned into marketing activities in the Internet environment. The very essence of e-marketing is also based on improving and enhancing the effectiveness of advertising and marketing activities (Madleňák et al., 2007).

3. The current state of the problem

The importance of mobile communications platforms like smartphones and tablets is evidenced by several up-to-date statistics. One of them was carried out by Statista (2016a), which states that mobile internet usage has worked its way into the daily life of consumers, mainly due to the popularity of mobile technology and the rise of mobile devices. The number of mobile wireless subscriber connections in the U.S. reached an all-time high in 2015, when this figure stood at 377.9 million. That same year, there were around 109 mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in the United States. Projections for this industry are optimistic, as the number of mobile phone internet users in the U.S. is estimated to jump from 225 million in 2016 to 270.5 million by 2020. In line with these figures, the number of online users that access internet exclusively via mobile devices is also expected to increase in the coming years.

Yet another analysis pointing out the importance of the issue of mobile marketing is the analysis carried out by the company eMarketer (Statista, 2016b). The analysis focused its attention on the global proportion of users using their mobile phones to access the Internet. Based on the results it can be stated that in 2015 this figure amounted to 52.70 % (those who access the Internet on their phones). In its analysis the company eMarketer also provided a forecast for future development. For the period between 2016 and 2019 it predicts a growth of users using their mobile phones to access the Internet by 10.70 % to 63.40 %. The average annual growth in this case can be estimated at 4.74 %.

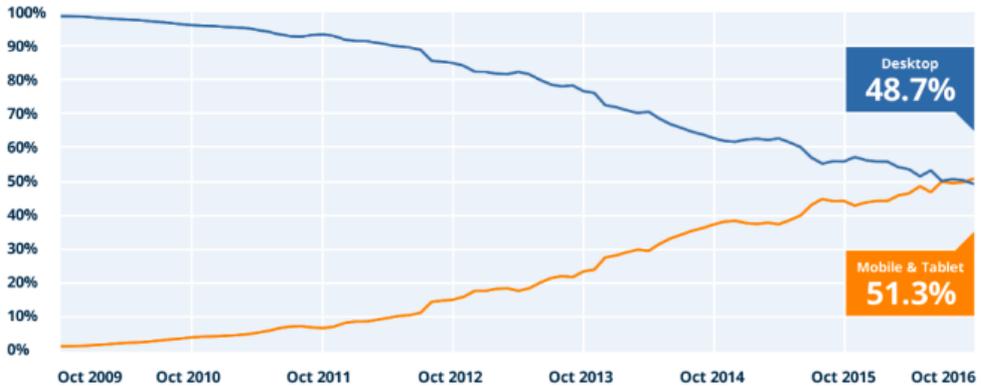


Figure 1. The use of selected platforms when accessing the Internet (worldwide)

The results of the analysis carried out in November 2016 by the company StatCounter (2016) aimed at tracking user preferences when using the Internet show interesting findings. As indicated in Figure 1, in October 2016 the global number of users using mobile communications platforms (phones and tablets) to access the Internet exceeded the number of users who use classic desktop computers including laptops to access the Internet. Specifically, the share of users accessing the Internet via mobile phones and tablets accounted to 51.30 %.



Figure 2. The use of selected platforms to access the Internet (Ireland)

When comparing the results with the results of other countries (2016) the US Internet users predominately use desktops and laptops (58.00 %). However, the trend is similar to what we have seen in the case of Ireland (57.60 % desktop, 42.40 % mobile & tablet; Fig. 2). On this basis, one can speculate what reasons led users in the second half of 2016 to access the Internet via desktop/ laptops instead of mobile devices. Developments in 2017 will be interesting to watch.

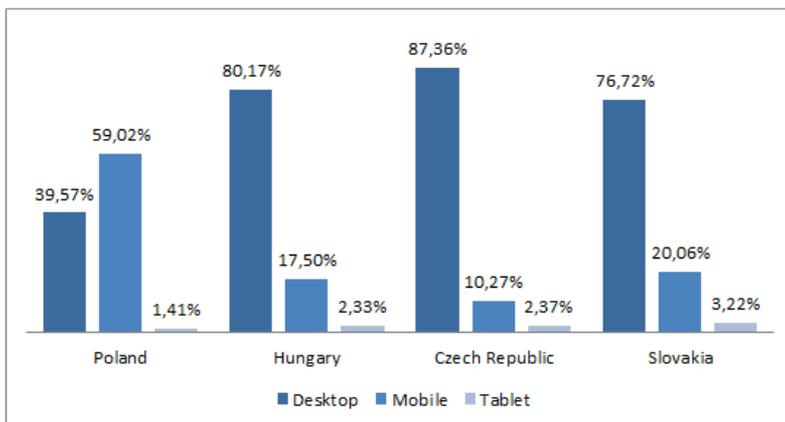


Figure 3. The use of selected platforms when accessing the Internet (V4)

A closer look at the local online market (StatCounter, 2016b), namely the V4 countries, show interesting differences in terms of user preferences (Fig. 4). Interestingly enough, Poland is the only country of V4 where the majority of users accesses the Internet via smartphones - 59.02 % of people. Except for Poland, other countries show comparable user preferences, although Hungary (17.50 %) and Slovakia (20.06 %) show a higher share of mobile phones usage. Tablets, as devices to access the Internet, are used only by a small portion of Internet users. The highest share in the use of tablets was recorded for Slovakia (3.22 %) and lowest, paradoxically, for Poland (1.41 %).

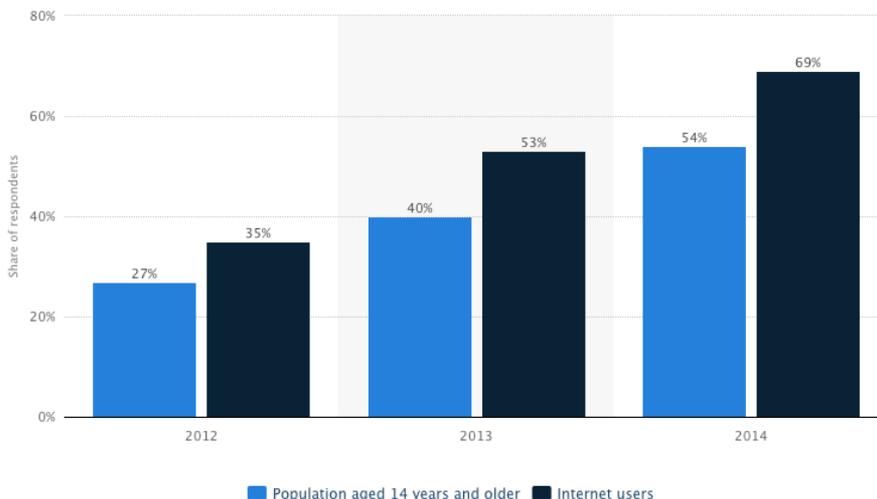


Figure 4. The use of selected platforms when accessing the Internet (V4)

Interesting findings on the growing importance of the issue from the perspective of users themselves are offered by the analysis carried out by Initiative D21 and TNS Infratest (Statista, 2016c). Apart from summarizing the findings for the years 2012 and 2014, the analysis also describes the development of the share of users who use mobile devices

© 2014 The Author(s). Published by eXclusive e-JOURNAL.

to access the Internet. The analysis focused on German Internet users. The analysis is based on a sample of over 2.000 respondents. Based on the outcome of the analysis it can be stated that 69.00 % of Internet users use a mobile device to access the Internet. For on-year comparison between 2012 and 2014, the proportion of Internet users using mobile devices to access the Internet has almost doubled. As can be seen from the Figure 5, similar findings can be identified even in the case of Internet users aged 14 and up.

Germany, as Europe's largest economy, is being dominated by users who access the Internet using traditional PCs and laptops. The share of PCs and laptops at the beginning of December 2016 amounted to 67.25 %. For on-year comparison between 2013 and 2016 it can be stated that the share of traditional PCs and laptops fell by 20.96 %.

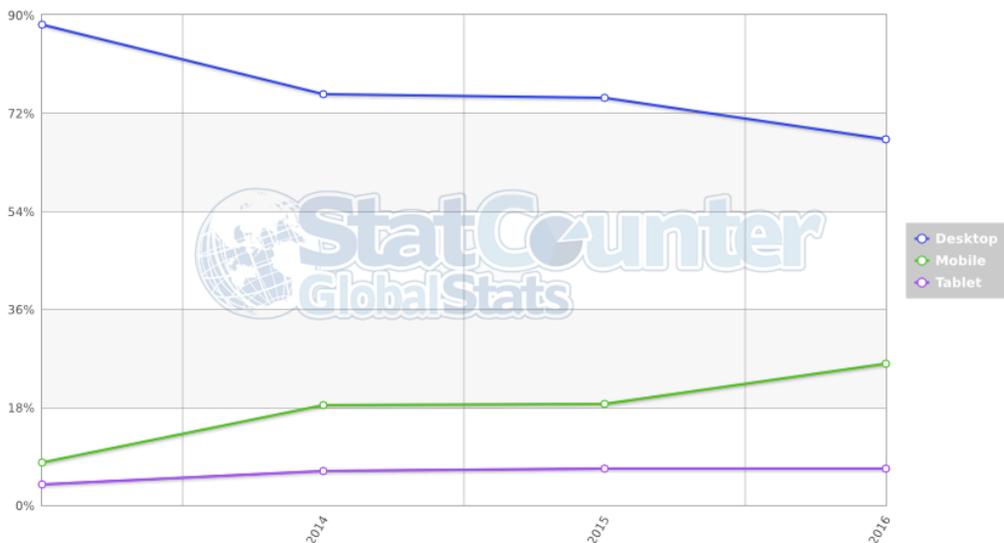


Figure 4. Share of Internet users in Germany from 2013 to 2016

On the other hand, in the case of mobile devices (StatCounter, 2016c) like smartphones and tablets, the proportion of users using these devices to access the Internet at the beginning of December 2016 amounted to 32.76 %. In the case of on-year comparison for the years 2013 and 2016 we can observe growth in the share of mobile devices by 20.95 %. As stated in Figure 6, the proportion of smartphones grew faster than it was in the case of tablets - 18.05 %. In general, we can expect a further increase in the share of mobile devices in general, however, smartphones will clearly dominate the group.

4. Conclusion

It is not necessary to emphasize that the current mobile communication platforms are changing the way we live and even the way we work. The sector can be characterized as constantly evolving and highly innovative, as reflected in the user preferences. This trend was also confirmed by the results of the above-mentioned analyzes carried out by the following companies: Statista (2016), eMarketer (Statista 2016b), Initiative D21 and TNS Infratest (Statista 2016c) as well as several analyses carried out by the company StatCounter (2016; 2016b) which focused on global as well as local markets. In terms of marketing, mobile phones (smartphones and tablets) are to be seen as an integral part of any marketing activities of every business entity which wants to stand out among its competition.

In terms of marketing I consider these above-described findings as significant. In my opinion they are really useful also for managers of large and small companies. The importance of mobile compatible websites grows hand in hand with user preferences, as evidenced by the Google search engine itself, which search algorithm prefers these mobile-optimized websites. From the perspective of future developments we can expect a continued growth in popularity of mobile communication platforms on the global level.

References

- Backer, M. and J. Arnold. 2010. *Mobile Marketing For Dummies*. Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley.
- Comscore. 2015. "The Global Mobile Report" Last modified November 22.
<http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Presentations-and-Whitepapers/2015/The-Global-Mobile-Report>
- Kurtz, D. L. 2011. *Contemporary Marketing*. Mason: South Western.
- Leppäniemi, M. 2008. *Mobile marketing communications in consumer markets*. Finland: Oulu.
- Madleňák, R. and A. Zboranová. 2007. "Formy a nástroje e-marketingu" Last modified November 22.
<http://fpedas.uniza.sk/dopravaaspoje/2007/1/madlenak.pdf>
- Metke, J. 2014. "Mobilný marketing" Last modified November 22. <http://www.msolutions.sk/inmarketing.htm>
- Michael, A. and B. Salter. 2006. *Mobile marketing*. New York: Routledge.
- Mma, 2009. "MMA Updates Definition of Mobile Marketing" Last modified November 22.
<http://www.mmaglobal.com/news/mma-updates-definition-mobile-marketing>
- Nondek, L. and L. Řeňčová. 2000. *Internet a jeho komerční využití*. Praha: Grada Publishing.
- Přikrylová, J. and H. Jahodová. 2010. *Moderní marketingová komunikace*. Praha: Computer Press.
- Sedláček, J. 2006. *E-komerce, internetový a mobil marketing od A do Z*. Praha: BEN - technická literatura.
- Sharl, A. et al. 2005. Diffusion and success factors of mobile marketing. In: *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*. Vol. 4, no. 2 (2005), s. 159-173.
- Statcounter. 2016a. "Mobile and tablet internet usage exceeds desktop for first time worldwide" Last modified November 22. <http://gs.statcounter.com/press>
- Statcounter. 2016b. "StatCounter Global Stats" Last modified November 22. <http://gs.statcounter.com/>
- Statcounter. 2016c. "StatCounter Global Stats – Germany" Last modified November 22. <http://gs.statcounter.com/>
- Statista. 2016a. "Mobile phone internet user penetration worldwide from 2014 to 2019" Last modified November 22.
<http://www.statista.com/statistics/284202/mobile-phone-internet-user-penetration-worldwide/>
- Statista. 2016b. "Statistics and facts on mobile internet usage in the United States" Last modified November 22.
<https://www.statista.com/topics/3124/mobile-internet-usage-in-the-united-states/>
- Statista. 2016c. "Share of mobile internet users in Germany from 2012 to 2014" Last modified November 22.
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/444321/mobile-internet-usage-in-germany/>