Mobile Phones & Youth:  
A look at the U.S. Student Market

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Note: The views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ITU or its membership. Lara Srivastava can be contacted at lara.srivastava@itu.int
An overview of the study

- Lens on the youth market
- Characteristics & trends
- Functionality/International Perspectives
- Observable Phenomena
- The Survey
Why look at the youth market?
Many reasons…

• Early adopters
  – Wireless overtakes landline (as preference!): 2/3 of young Americans would take mobile over landline, given the choice
  – Teenagers among main drivers for 3G services
• Extremely technology savvy
• Fashion conscious
  – Accessories, ringtones, etc.
An important evolution is taking place

- Rising concern for social and behavioral aspects of mobile technology
  - Most discernible for young people who are growing up with these devices
- Dependence on technology is evolving
  - Instant messaging as vital medium for social networks
- Emerging new forms of measurement and surveying
- Youth perspective on mobile technology is transcending its functionality
Youth market characteristics
Behind the upward trends…

• 2 out of 3 have own TV in their room
• 1 in 8 has a DVD player in their room
• More than 2/3 have a PC, almost all have internet access
  – Most surf at least once a week
  – 1/3 go online 2 or 3 times a week
  – 22% are online every day
• More than 2 million American children ages 6 to 17 have their own personal Web sites
Youth comprised a multi-billion dollar market for mobile by the end of 2003

- There are well over 103 million mobile users aged 5 to 24 in the top 10 mobile markets
  - This number expected to hit 152 million in 2004
- Non-college attending youths in the US were estimated in a 2000 study to be the largest segment of the youth market in coming years
Functionality & International Perspectives
How are mobile phones changing kids’ lives?

• Increased Independence and circumvention of parental control
  – Countered by location tracking technology
• Text messaging – the “note-passing of the new Millennium”
• Phones with cameras – ‘shutterbugs’
International perspectives

- **Japan/Korea**
  - Special homage as leaders in youth market

- **China**
  - Nearly 60% of subscribers between 20 and 30 years of age

- **Australia**
  - Up to a quarter of mobile users are children

- **UK**
  - Primary schoolchildren fastest growing market for mobile phones, 1 in 9 kids has one

- **Italy**
  - 56% of kids between 9-10 yrs of age have mobile phones
2004 ITU Survey in U.S. schools
Study of mobile technology and youth

• Explores the relationships between
  – Gender
  – Age
  – Behavioral trends
  – Usage patterns
• The sample of survey respondents consisted of 189 teenagers and young adults across a spectrum of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds in the area of Boston, Massachusetts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Bracket</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<td>21-23</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-26</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>27-29</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-32</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33+</td>
<td>2%</td>
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A few statistically significant associations emerged...

• Initial Age of usage
  – Based on a logistic regression analysis, the probability of owning a mobile phone tends toward 100 percent when the age of initial use is between 11 and 15 years of age.
  – Those who adopt mobile technology at a young age are highly likely to continue doing so; there is continuity in adoption.
Mobile phone ownership

• 87% of those surveyed had mobile phones
  – 89 percent of females
  – 83 percent of males
• 60% of those with mobile phones said they could live without it

(\textit{the difference between the gender percentages is insignificant})
Few significant gender differences: 1) Calling Home

- Most teens spend a quarter of their time on their mobile phone calling home.
- Females call home to their families more than males.

![Chart showing how much of usage is directed toward family calls only for males and females.]

- How much of your usage is directed toward family calls only?
  - Male:
    - 0%: 5
    - 25%: 10
    - 50%: 15
    - 75%: 20
    - 100%: 25
  - Female:
    - 0%: 10
    - 25%: 20
    - 50%: 30
    - 75%: 40
    - 100%: 50
2) Using up calling minutes

- Most do not use up all calling minutes on plan
- Females tend to use up their minutes more often

Do you typically use up all your calling minutes?

- No
- Yes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>60%</td>
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3) Privacy concerns

- Americans are known to be more liberal about privacy than others
- Majority indicated they would not give up mobile phones over privacy
- Females less likely than males to do so

Would privacy issues ever be a reason for giving up your mobile phone?

- No
- Yes

Percent

Male
Female
Few significant age differences
1) Cell phone functionality

- Most people use their phones to play games
- Those in the 15-17 yr old & the 18-20 yr old age brackets have significant association with sending pictures /playing games
- Interesting: Gaming is most popular!
2) Mobile phones in public spaces

• Across the board, 2 most popular places – at store and on public transport
What's the best part of having a mobile phone?

- It's stylish/cool
- It makes my life easier
- Everyone has one
- I feel safer
- Communicating with friends

Percent

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's stylish/cool</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It makes my life easier</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone has one</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safer</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with friends</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
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Areas with of interest (but little significant gender/age difference)

Do you ever talk on your mobile phone while you drive?

- **No, never**
- **Sometimes**
- **Yes, often**

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
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Do you believe there are any negative medical side effects of mobile phone usage?

- **No**
- **Yes**

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Areas with of interest (but little significant gender/age difference)

How often do you place your phone on "silent" or "vibrate" mode to avoid loud ringing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
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<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, never</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, always</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Is your cell phone always on?

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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>40%</td>
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</table>
Areas with of interest (but little significant gender/age difference)

Are you aware that certain companies have information about the location of your cell phone?

Do you always answer your cell phone when it rings?
tks!

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