

Press release

Contact: Isabel Box
Title: Marketing & Communications Manager
Tel: + 32 2 302 25 51
Mobile: + 32 485 31 79 63
E-mail: ibox@deloitte.com

Deloitte Global Mobile Consumer Survey **Belgians look at their smartphone 34 times a day**

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Belgians are addicted to their smartphones according to 'State of the smart', the Belgian edition of Deloitte's Global Mobile Consumer Survey, a multi-country study of mobile phone users around the world. On average, Belgians look at their smartphone 34 times a day and 33 per cent admit to checking their phones when spending time with friends. Social media dominates our mobile device usage across all generations.

The smartphone is even more popular with the younger generation. Students look at their phone 70 times a day and one out of four check social media in the middle of the night. For daily communications, they choose to send an SMS (71 per cent) or use social media (78 per cent) over calling.

Vincent Fosty, Deloitte Belgium Technology, Media & Telecommunications Leader: *"A decade after the launch of the smartphone, it is clear to see that Belgians cannot live without their phones. The smartphone has reached 80 per cent market penetration, compared to 81 per cent for the laptop. Belgians still use their phones to make calls, but other channels are gaining in popularity. We also use our phones to research products or services and pay for products online. For the first time, using mobile banking for transactions and checking bank balances has become the preference for some age groups."*

New models do not drive sales

While smartphone penetration is plateauing, sales are not expected to decrease as one out of three (27 per cent) Belgians is likely to buy a mobile phone within the next year. The most common reasons to replace a phone are malfunctioning or broken hardware (59 per cent), broken screens (49 per cent) and smartphone reaction time (36 per cent).

Surprisingly, 72 per cent of the survey respondents declared that the release of a new model does not prompt them to change phones. For three out of four respondents, the willingness to change phone brands is also not a reason to buy a new smartphone. Brand loyalty is high in Belgium, as more than half of Samsung, iPhone and Sony owners stated that their previous smartphone was from the same brand.

Brick and mortar prevails

E-commerce sales are growing rapidly in Belgium, but the smartphone market is not following the trend. Only 19 per cent of respondents purchased their phone online. 67 per cent got theirs in a shop, while 14 per cent received their phone from family or friends, from an employer or leasing. Our survey shows that consumers like to go to a shop and see, touch and play with devices, often to convince themselves that they are making the right decision, even if they make the purchase online.

The most popular shops to acquire phones are electronics retailers (33 per cent) and mobile phone shops (26 per cent). Only 23 per cent of offline smartphone purchases happened in a mobile operator's store, down from 33 per cent last year. Nevertheless, slightly over half of Belgian adults visited an operator's store in the last 12 months for issues or questions.

Old phones get a new life

Nearly half of the respondents (43 per cent) kept their old phone as a spare. However, 30 per cent of used smartphones were given to a family member or friend (19 per cent) or sold or traded (11 per cent), compared to only 25 per cent last year. Other phones, accounting for approximately 27 per cent of used phones, were mostly thrown away, recycled in another way, stolen, or lost.

The future of smart

The best-known and most used machine learning-based feature is predictive text, but less than half of respondents are aware it exists and only one in three believe they use it. While route suggestion ranks second, just over one in three know of the feature and only 22 per cent use it. Automated news or information updates is third best-known with 29 per cent aware of the feature and 16 per cent using it.

Today, 33 per cent of smartphones have a fingerprint reader, compared to only 19 per cent last year. 67 per cent of smartphone owners that have a fingerprint reader, or 22 per cent of the smartphone population in Belgium, use this technology.

Machine learning, assistant apps, fingerprint readers and facial recognition are great examples of the potential for smartphones to become truly smart devices.

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About the survey

'State of the smart' is the Belgian edition of Deloitte's Global Mobile Consumer Survey, a multi-country study of mobile phone users around the world. The 2017 study comprises approximately 53,000 respondents across 33 countries and six continents.

Data cited in this report are based on a nationally representative sample of 2,002 Belgian consumers aged 18-75. The sample follows a country specific quota on age, gender, region and socio-economic status. Fieldwork took place during May to June 2017 and was carried out online by Ipsos MORI, an independent research firm, based on a question set provided by Deloitte.

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