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## **The Demographics of Mobile News Habits**

Men, College Grads and the Young are more Engaged

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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## Overview

In the growing realm of mobile news, men and the more highly educated emerge as more engaged news consumers, according to a new study by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, in collaboration with The Economist Group. These findings parallel, for the most part, demographic patterns of general news consumption.

But there are some important areas of difference between mobile and general news habits—particularly among young people. While they are much [lighter news consumers](#) generally and have largely abandoned the print news product, young people get news on mobile devices to similar degrees as older users. And, when getting news through apps, young people say they prefer a print-like experience over one with high-tech or multi-media features.

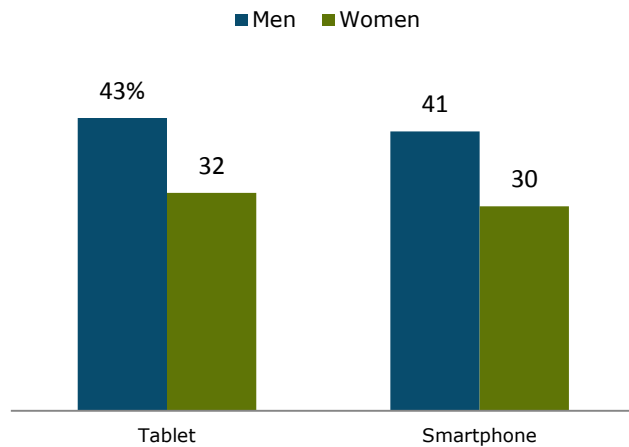
These are key findings of an analysis of mobile news habits across a variety of demographic groups. This report builds off an earlier PEJ and The Economist Group report, [The Future of Mobile News](#), which found that half of U.S. adults now own mobile devices and a majority use them for news. Both reports are based on a survey of 9,513 U.S. adults conducted from June-August 2012 (including 4,638 mobile device owners). Men, especially young men, are heavier mobile news consumers than women. More than 40% of men get news daily on either their smartphone and/or tablet, compared with roughly 30% of women. On the tablet specifically, men check in for news more frequently and are more apt to read in-depth news articles and to watch news videos. Women, on the other hand, are more likely than men to use social networks as a way to get news.

Level of education is also tied to mobile news choices. The college-educated get news through mobile apps to a greater degree than those with less education (app use overall is tied to greater news engagement). College graduates are also heavy readers of in-depth articles on tablets. But the less well educated more often report that reading the news on tablets is adding to their overall news consumption rather than just replacing news they once got in other ways (49% versus 36% for college graduates).

One area where younger users distinguish themselves involves advertising in the tablet news space: 18- to 29-year-old tablet news users touch or click on ads when getting news to a far greater degree than older generations: Fully 25%, versus 12% of 30- to 49-year-old tablet news users and 7% of 50- to 64-

### Men More Likely To Get News on Tablets

Percent of tablet news users



*N=2,013 tablet owners N=3,947 smartphone owners.*  
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year-old users. On the flip side, though, mobile news users 50 and over are more likely to have paid for some kind of news subscription.

These data also examine which demographic groups tend to engage in other kinds of activities on their mobile devices. On both devices, for example, lower income households tend to watch more videos while women stand out as being more engaged in social media activities. And on smartphones, young people emerge as heavier readers of books and magazines.

Together, these data provide a window into emerging differences in how people use mobile devices for news and where news ranks among their other mobile activities. Understanding these differences is important for news organizations and others in the mobile realm as they carve new pathways for content – and for revenue to support it.

## New Consumption on Mobile Devices

Overall, news consumption ranks high on mobile devices. Over a third report getting news daily on the tablet and the smartphone, putting it on par with other activities such as email and playing games on tablets and behind only email on smartphones. The popularity of news remains strong across all demographic groups studied, but is especially prevalent among men and the college educated. On the smartphone, differences also emerge in age and income.

Fully 43% of male tablet owners consume news daily on their device versus 32% of female tablet owners. The gap is nearly identical on smartphones (41% compared with 30% among women).

### Daily News Use on Tablets and Smartphones For Select Demographics

*Percent of owners who get news on each device....*

<b>Get News Daily</b>	<b>Tablet</b>	<b>Smartphone</b>
<i>Gender</i>		
Men	43%	41%
Women	32	30
<i>Education</i>		
<College education	35	31
College education+	41	44
<i>Income</i>		
<30,000	35	30
\$30,000- 74,999	35	37
\$75,000 or more	39	37
<i>Age</i>		
18-29 years	33	37
30-49 years	38	40
50-64 years	43	31
65+	32	25

*N=2,013 tablet owners N=3,947 smartphone owners*

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Educational differences in mobile news use are similar to the differences seen in gender, with greater disparity on the smartphone. A little over four-in-ten college educated owners get news on the tablet

(41%) and the smartphone (44%). But among those with less than a college education daily news consumption falls to 35% on the tablet and 31% on the smartphone. Daily news consumption on the smartphone is also more prevalent among those with household incomes of more than \$30,000.

Age, on the other hand, seems to be less of an indicator of mobile news consumption. This is particularly true on the tablet, where daily rates are similar across all four age groups studied (50- to 64-year-olds are a bit more likely than the youngest and oldest groups to get news). On the smartphone, owners under 50 get news at higher rates than those over 50.

### In-Depth News Habits

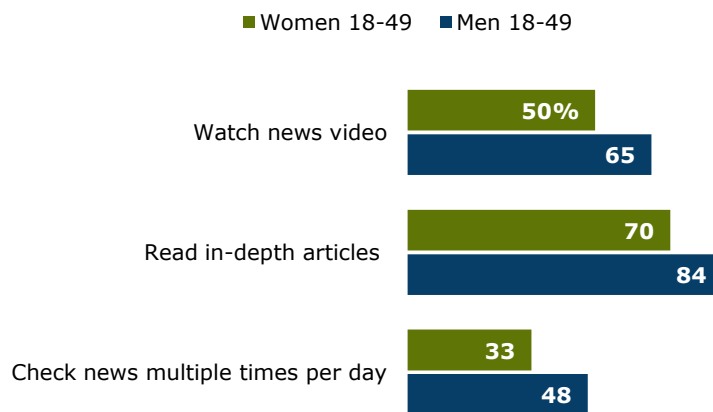
The survey delved deeper into more specific news habits on mobile devices. A majority of consumers across the various demographic groups check news headlines regularly on their devices, but other consumption habits vary. Age, often in combination with gender, plays a substantial role. But in many cases 30- to 49-year-olds are in sync with those under 30. The split, then, appears between those under 50 and those 50 and older.

On the tablet, male news users under 50 are more likely than female news users under 50 (and both genders over 50) to check news more than once a day. Nearly half of male tablet news users under 50 (48%) get news on their tablet multiple times during the day versus just 33% of women under 50 and 31% of men and women 50 and over.

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### Younger Men Are More Active News Consumers on the Tablet

*Percent of tablet news users who ...*



*N=810.*

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Male news users under 50 are more avid readers of in-depth news articles on the tablet. Fully 84% do so at least sometimes, versus 70% of women under 50 and 65% of both genders over 50. In-depth news reading on the tablet is also more prevalent among those who have graduated from college compared with those who have not, 82% versus 66%.

One area where women under 50 stand out is in incidental reading. While they are less likely than men of this age group to read in-depth articles on the tablet, women under 50 who do read longer articles are more likely than men of this age group to come across and read in-depth articles they were not originally looking for (82% versus 66%).

On the smartphone, age also emerges as an indicator of in-depth reading habits, but gender does not. Women under 50 are as likely as men of that age group to read in-depth articles on the phone. (Again, perhaps a sign of the comfort level younger users have with smaller screen reading.)

Another type of news consumption made more available through apps and other mobile technology is the reading of back issues of magazines. On the tablet, this practice is more popular among younger news users. Nearly a third, 32%, of those under 50 sometimes read articles from previous issues of magazines compared with just 20% of those who are 50 or older.

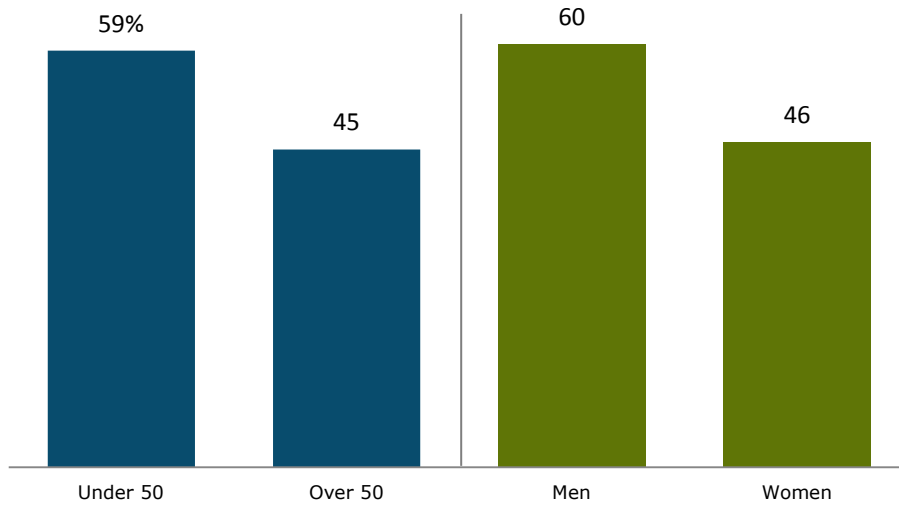
### **Video and Social News Habits**

Technical advances in the last year have also enabled more watching of news—rather than just reading—on mobile devices. Again, on both smartphones and tablets those under 50 show a greater tendency to watch news videos—and on the tablet men do so more so than women.

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### Younger Generations and Men Watch More News Videos on the Tablet

*Percent of tablet news users*



*N=810.*  
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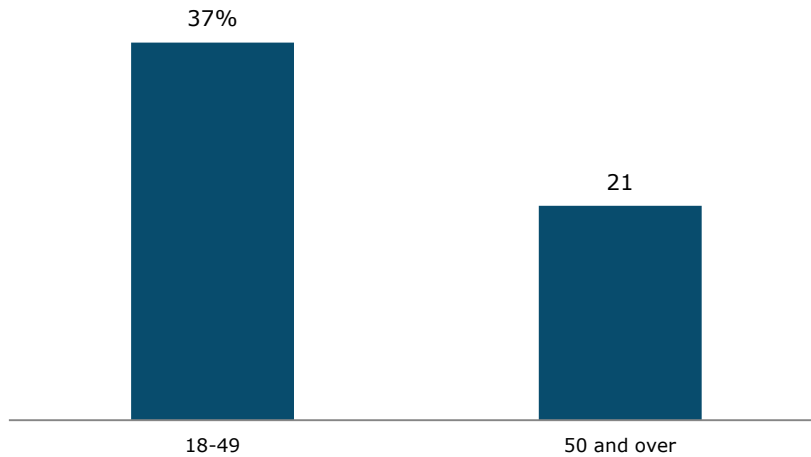
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Sharing news through email and social networks is also more prevalent among those under 50 on both the tablet (37% versus 21% of those over 50) and smartphone (37% versus 28%). On the tablet, those in homes earning less than \$30,000 also stand out as more likely than higher income brackets to share news through email or social networks and to post comments.

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### Younger Generations Share More News

*Percentage of tablet news users who share news through email or social networking sites*



*N=810.*  
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## App vs. Browser Use

Another finding in the main report was that the browser remains more popular than apps for getting mobile news, and its popularity has risen over the last year. Roughly 60% of tablet news users and smartphone news users mostly use the browser for news while about a quarter mostly use apps (the rest use a mix). But, the survey also found that app users tend to be more active mobile news consumers, carrying special appeal for news organizations.

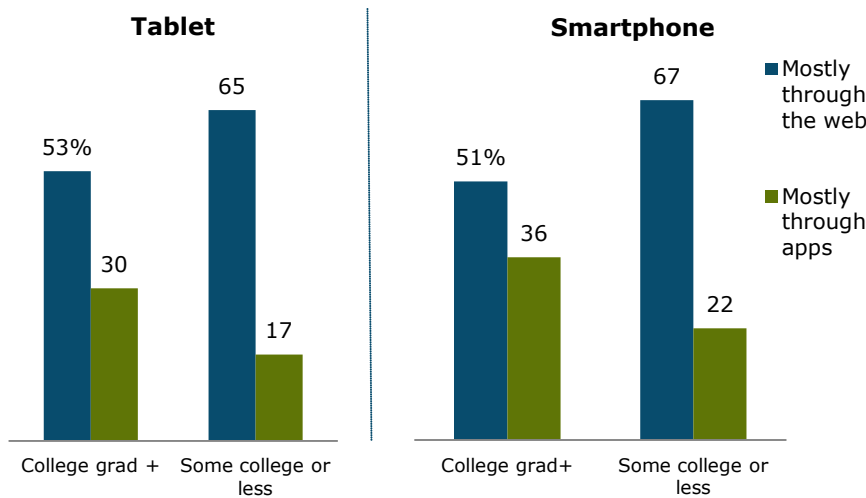
The question, then, is whether certain demographic groups have a greater affinity toward apps than others. Education, according to the data, is the biggest factor. College educated mobile news users are more likely than those the less educated to mostly use apps for news. This is true on both the tablet (30% of college educated mainly use apps for news compared with 17% of the less educated) and on the smartphone (36% versus 22%).

Age also seems to influence the app versus browser choice, but only on the phone. There, news users 50 and older are more likely to access their news through apps, 35% versus 26% for those under 50.

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### Education Appears Connected to Browser vs. App Preference on Tablets...

*Percent of tablet and smartphone users who get news through a browser or app by education level*



*N=810 tablet owners N=579 smartphone owners.*  
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## The Reading Experience

One divide in tablet use occurs between those who prefer more of a print-like experience (often those who began as consumers of the legacy product) and those who lean toward having higher-tech features. Overall, according to the survey, mobile news consumers tilt toward preferring a print-like experience

but not by much (58% prefer a print experience versus 41% higher tech). And that preference toward print tends to hold up across age, gender and other groups. In fact, those under 40 prefer the print-like experience to the same degree as those 40 and over.<sup>1</sup>

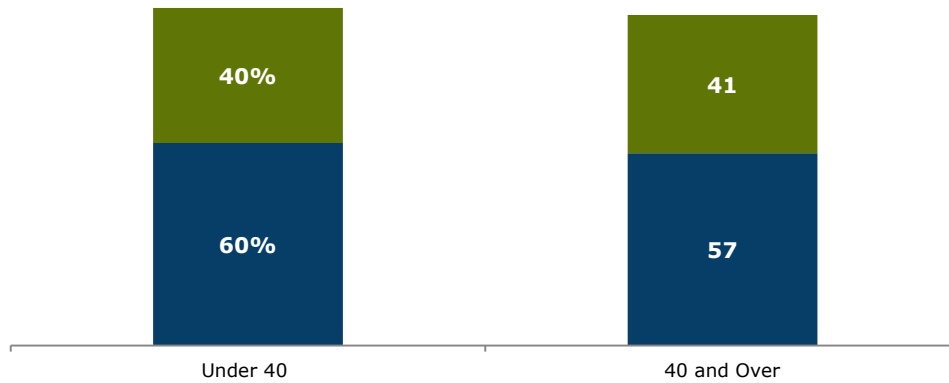
The challenge for news organizations has been to meet the demands of both of these groups in the content and apps they develop.

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### Younger Generations Still Want A 'Print-Like' Experience on Tablets

*Percent of tablet news users with apps who prefer....*

- A traditional 'print-like' reading experience
- Interactive components with audio, video or other graphical features



*N=606.*  
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The survey also asked whether the tablet is mostly replacing news that consumers would have gotten elsewhere or is adding to the overall amount of news consumed. Again, one might expect the younger generation, whose news habits are still developing, to be adding to its news consumption more so than older generations. Actually, the reverse is true. Fully 61% of those 65 and older say the news they get on their tablet is adding to their news consumption compared with less than 45% for all other age groups.

Education levels reveal even larger differences: 49% of tablet news users with less than a college education say the tablet is adding to their overall news consumption versus 36% of those with a college education or more.

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<sup>1</sup> For this measurement, respondents were grouped as under 40 and 40 and over because the cases for a four-way age break were too small to meet statistical significance.



## Mobile Revenue Opportunities

One of the biggest questions surrounding mobile technology—especially tablets—is whether it will open up new revenue opportunities to support the news gathering and reporting in ways that did not occur in on desktops and laptops. One rationale is that the pleasure and convenience of reading on a mobile device might induce people to pay for that content. And ads in this space, with higher resolution and potential for greater interactivity, might be received differently than on the desktop.

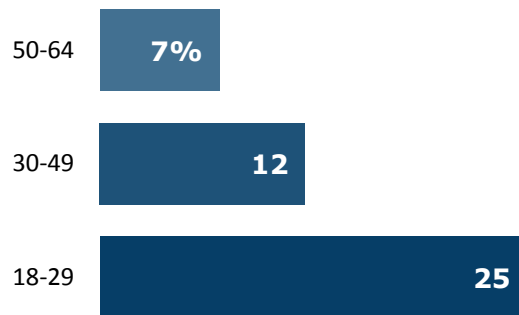
The October report revealed that the broadening of the tablet universe has not made people more likely to pay for content. But there did seem to be more response to advertising in this news space than in the desktop realm. While still limited, 49% of tablet news users say they notice ads at least sometimes when getting news, and 14% at least sometimes touch or click on those ads. That raises the question then of whether certain demographic groups are more likely to respond than others.

PEJ’s deeper analysis shows that while there is very little gender or age difference in noticing ads on either device, there is a difference in how people respond to ads in the tablet news space. Among all weekly tablet news users, 18- to 29-year-olds are more likely than other age groups to at least sometimes touch or click on ads. A quarter or 18- to 29-year-old tablet news users touch ads (25%) versus 12% of 30- to 49-year-old news users and 7% of those 65 and older.

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### Younger Users More Likely to Touch Ads on Tablets

*Percent of tablet news users who at least sometimes touch ads*



*N=810.*

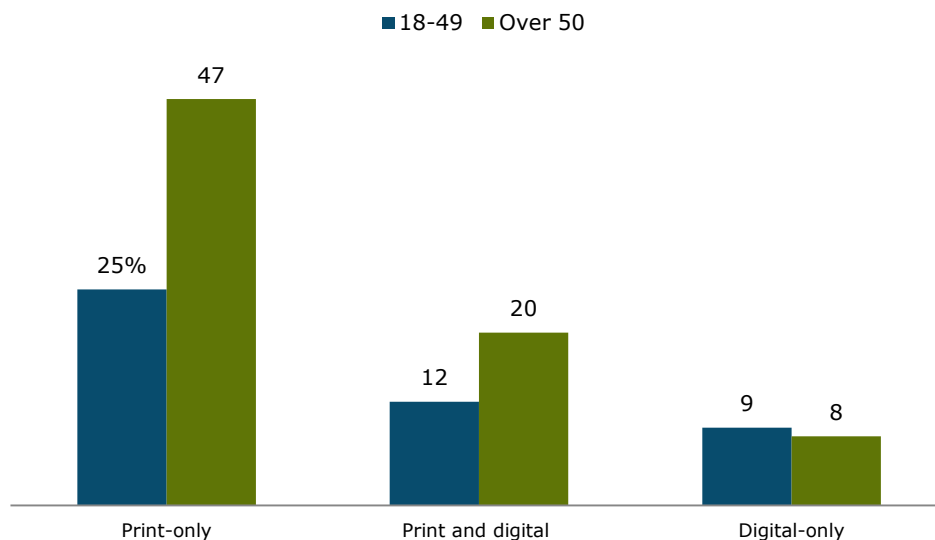
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There is a different demographic breakdown on the smartphone. There, the groups more likely to tap on ads are blacks and Hispanics. While blacks, whites and Hispanics all notice ads to similar degrees when getting news on their phone, blacks and Hispanics are both more than twice as likely as whites to at least sometimes touch or click on ads on their smartphone (23% of non-Hispanic blacks and 22% of Hispanics), compared with only 7% for non-Hispanic whites.

## Older Users More Likely to Have Print-Only Subscriptions

Percent of mobile news users



N=1,595.

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Another area of revenue potential is subscription fees. With roughly 300 newspapers now charging some kind of fee for digital content, the industry is clearly moving in this direction.

Our survey found that even among mobile news users, print-only subscriptions outweigh digital. But, 19% of these mobile news users have paid for some form of digital subscription – 14% bundled with print and 9% digital only.

Here, according to this analysis, older users stand out. Mobile news consumers over the age of 50 are more likely than those under 50 to have a print-only subscription (47% versus 25%) or to have a combined print and digital subscription (20% versus 12%). Digital-only subscriptions are equally rare among both age groups (8% of those over 50 and 9% of those under).

One group that stood out for being more inclined to spend money via their tablet was those who have a mobile data plan and therefore have paid to have access the internet anytime and anywhere. They account for only about a quarter of all tablet owners (26%) but are more likely to have every kind of subscription – print-only, bundled and digital only. But according to this data, the young – active in so many other ways – are the least likely age group to have a data plan. Just 14% of tablet news users under 30 have data plans, compared with at least twice that for other age groups.

### Other Mobile Activities

Just as the range of mobile devices has multiplied, so too have the activities they can be used for. While men stand out for greater news consumption, women use mobile devices more for social networking on

a daily basis. This stands out most on the smartphone. There, 53% of women use social networks daily compared with 39% of men. On tablets, the gap is 37% versus 31% for men.

And on the smartphone in particular, younger age groups display a greater comfort level with small-screen reading. The 18- to 29-year-old owners are twice as likely as other age groups to read books on a daily basis. Additional data from the Pew Internet & American Life Project support this finding. Its [December 2011 survey](#) found three times as many 18- to 29-year-olds reading books daily on their smartphones: 12% versus 4% of 30-49 year olds and 1% of those 50 and older. Magazine reading (at a weekly rather than daily rate) is also more common among younger ages on the smartphone, though there, the division is between those under 50 and those 50 and over.

The age differences in book and magazine reading are not significant on the tablet (though slightly higher percentages of 18- to 29-year-olds report doing this reading). Instead, it is household income that seems to be a key factor. Tablet owners with household incomes less than \$30,000 have higher levels of daily book reading on the tablet than do those in higher income households (27% among those with household incomes under \$30,000 versus about 17% for higher income households).

## Daily Tablet Activities For Select Demographics

Percent of tablet owners who use a tablet to....

<b>Do Social Networking</b>	
<i>Gender</i>	
Men	31%
Women	37
<b>Watch Video</b>	
<i>Age</i>	
18-49 years	15
50+	6
<i>Income</i>	
Combined <\$75,000*	16
<\$30,000	22
\$30,000-74,999	14
\$75,000 or more	9
<b>Play Games</b>	
<i>Education</i>	
<College education	37
College education	30
<i>Income</i>	
<\$30,000	40
\$30,000-74,999	39
\$75,000 or more	31
<b>Read Books</b>	
<i>Age</i>	
18-29 years	24
30-49	17
50-64	17
65+	16
<i>Income</i>	
<\$30,000	27
\$30,000-74,999	17
\$75,000 or more	18
<b>Read Magazines</b>	
<i>Age</i>	
18-29 years	10
30-49	6
50-64	6
65+	2

*N=2,013*

\*For video watching, the small cell size makes an <\$75,000 / \$75+ comparison more appropriate statistically.

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Household income also seems tied to video watching on mobile devices. On both the smartphone and tablet, owners in households earning less than \$75,000 are more likely than higher income owners to watch videos daily: 16% on the tablet versus 9% among those earning \$75,000 or more. On the smartphone, the gap is 10% versus 6% for incomes of \$75,000 or more. Owners with lower household

incomes, then, do both more book reading and video watching on their devices.

## Daily Smartphone Activities for Select Demographics

Percent of smartphone owners who use a smartphone to...

<b>Do Social Networking</b>	
<i>Gender</i>	
Men	39%
Women	53
<i>Age</i>	
18-29 years	61
30-49	49
50-64	29
65+	14
<b>Watch Video</b>	
<i>Income</i>	
Combined <75,000*	10
<\$30,000	12
\$30,000-74,999	8
\$75,000 or more	6
<b>Play Games</b>	
<i>Education</i>	
<College education	33
College education	29
<i>Age</i>	
18-29 years	37
30-49	33
50-64	24
65+	16
<b>Read Books</b>	
<i>Age</i>	
18-29 years	10
30-49	6
50-64	5
65+	2

*N=3,947*

\*For video watching, the small cell size makes an <\$75,000 / \$75+ comparison more appropriate statistically.

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## iPad vs. Android

Another major shift in the mobile market over the last year has been the shrinking of Apple’s dominance, particularly in the tablet realm. In the late summer of 2011 Apple commanded as much as [81% of the tablet space](#), according to our data. A little over a year later, [that has fallen to about half](#), as a wider range of Android devices have entered the market. Our survey data also revealed though that iPad owners are more engaged mobile news users, including being more engaged with news.

### Activities Vary on iPads and Android Tablets

Percent of tablet owners who use a tablet to ...

Tablet Use	iPad	Android
Use several times a day	54%	33%
Get news daily	48	35
Use social networks daily	38	28
Send/receive email daily	56	34

N=2,013

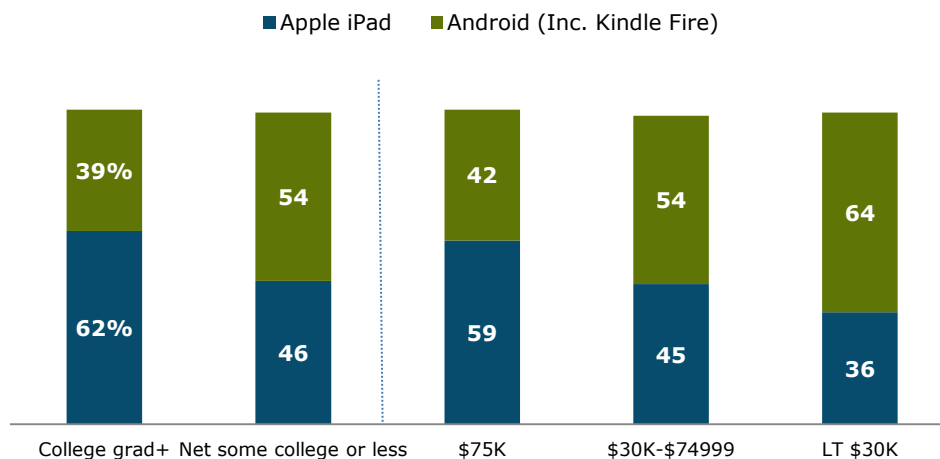
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With the release this fall of Apple’s iPad Mini and Google’s Nexus 7, the competition is only likely to become more intense. What do the demographics tell us about those who are likely to buy one device over another?

Here, the biggest differences come in education and income, with the college educated and those with a higher household income more apt to have iPads.

### College Graduates, the More Affluent are More Likely to Own

Percent of tablet ownership by education level and income



N=1,069.

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Some difference also emerges across age groups. Those 65 and older are more likely to have iPad while other age groups are split about equally between iPad and Android. Fully two-thirds of tablet users 65 and older own an iPad (67%) compared with 47% of 18-29 year olds, 52% of 30-49 year olds and 51% of those 50-64 years old. There is very little difference, though, in the buying tendencies of men and women.

## Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on a survey conducted June 29-August 8, 2012 among a sample of 9,513 adults, 18 years of age or older. The survey was conducted by GfK Knowledge Networks (KN) among a random sample of households in their nationally representative online research panel. KN panel members are recruited through probability sampling methods and include both those with internet access and those without (KN provides internet access for those who do not have it and, if needed, a device to access the internet when they join the panel). A combination of random digit dialing (RDD) and address-based sampling (ABS) methodologies have been used to recruit panel members (in 2009 KN switched their sampling methodology for recruiting panel members from RDD to ABS). The panel includes households with landlines and cell phones, including those only with cell phones, and those without a phone. Both the RDD and ABS samples were provided by Marketing Systems Groups (MSG). KN continually recruits new panel members throughout the year to offset panel attrition as people leave the panel. The survey was conducted in English.

Respondents were selected randomly from eligible adult household members of the panel. A total of 9,513 adults responded to the initial screener questions to determine whether they owned a smartphone or tablet computer; the 4,875 who did not own either device were terminated and did not receive any additional questions. To reach target sample sizes, sample selection procedures were used to terminate certain respondents. Of the 2,013 adults who own and use a tablet computer and the 3,947 adults who own a smartphone, 45% of smartphone owners (including those who also own a tablet) were randomly selected to continue with the survey (while the other 55% were terminated) after answering questions about how often they did certain activities on their tablet (Q.14) and/or smartphone (Q.54), including get news on their devices; the order of the tablet and smartphone series was randomized for those with both devices. All of those who got news on their mobile device weekly or more continued with the remainder of the interview while 33% of those who did not consume news on their device weekly continued (and 67% were terminated). This resulted in a sample of 810 tablet news users and 1,075 smartphone news users who received the full survey, including the detailed questions about news consumption on their mobile devices and other platforms. The survey was fielded in two parts. The first phase was conducted from June 28-July 17, 2012 with 2,051 adults interviewed. After analysis of the preliminary data and a few telephone follow-up interviews were conducted, a few small changes were made to the questionnaire (and are noted in the topline), and the second phase was conducted August 1-8, 2012 with 7,462 adults interviewed. All sampled members received an initial email to notify them of the survey and provide a link to the survey questionnaire. Additional follow-up reminders were sent to those who had not yet responded as needed.

The final sample of 9,513 adults was weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, region to parameters from the June 2012 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). In addition, the sample is weighted to match household income to a parameter from the March 2011 CPS survey and to match current patterns of internet access from the October 2010 CPS survey. This weight is multiplied by an initial sampling or base weight that corrects for differences in the probability of selection of various segments of KN's sample and by a panel weight that adjusts for any



biases due to nonresponse and noncoverage at the panel recruitment stage (using all of the parameters described above as well as home ownership status and metropolitan area from the June 2012 CPS). Details about the KN panel-level weights can be found at <http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/knpanel/KNPanel-Design-Summary.html>.

Because of the differential selection procedures employed in the survey, an additional weighting step was taken to correct for any potential bias introduced by these selection procedures (even though random selection procedures were employed). This step weighted the sample of 1,928 mobile device owners selected for the complete survey to match the characteristics of the full sample of 4,638 device owners screened. The sample was weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, region, metropolitan area, household income, internet access and news consumption among tablet-only owners, smartphone-only owners and those that own both devices to targets derived from the weighted sample of all device owners screened.

Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting at each of these stages. The margin of sampling error at the 95% confidence level is plus or minus 3.4 percentage points for results based on tablet users (n=2,013) and 5.4 percentage points for tablet news users (n=810). The margin of sampling error is 2.4 percentage points for smartphone owners (n=3,947) and 4.7 for smartphone news users (n=1,075). Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.