

# Research proposal on the implications of social networking to the smartphone indu...

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Internet has become omnipresent in the past decade. The Social Media Report for 2011 says that the people's internet access is not about to decline. In fact, the data gathered shows that US citizens spend about 21% of their time online with PCs as the device used but, declining 4% every year while the use of mobile devices for accessing the internet continuously increases. Further, they also report that people between the age 18-24 spend most of their time on social networking sites, while people between the ages 25-34 have the most number of people accessing the internet using mobile devices. (Jaume, 2012)

The mobile industry is likewise continually growing. In fact, data shows that mobile internet usage in July 2012 increased by 82% and mobile app usage on the same year increased by 85%. Among the mobile app users, 76% of the times they are using mobile social applications. Although, PCs are still the most used devices to access social apps, there is a significant increase (26%) on the number of users accessing social media apps in mobile devices specially smartphones. Moreover, the 2011 Social Media Report also reports that social networking activities dominate the internet access using mobile devices as 30% of the time spent online of mobile users are used for social networking activities while only 20% of PC users spend their time on social networks. Of the 30% of the time used for social networking, 17% is used on Facebook. Likewise, the number of females and the amount of time spent on social networking sites is more compared to the male counterparts.

Additional data shows that the use of social networking is not limited at home and in the offices but people use social networking anywhere they go. Some say they cannot live a day without opening their social networking

accounts. (Jaume, 2012)

Go-gulf. com on the other hand reports that 80% of the world's population or about 5 billion people have mobile and out of this number 1. 08 billion are using smartphones. Among there 1. 08 users, 89% says they used their phone throughout the day and that 59% of the the time, they use it to access social networking sites. (2013)

In a study conducted by Ryan Kim on the impact of mobile devices with regards to wifi-usage, he found out that the mobile devices which are wifi capable have overtaken the computers with regards to the number of users. This is a sign, according to him, that more and more people are using their wireless enabled mobile devices in access the internet rather than their PCs. (Kim, 2011) Instead of people opening their laptops when they want internet access, people are reaching for the tablets or smartphones. Part of the study showed that the abrupt increase in the wifi usage is congruent to the increase in the number of smartphone and other wifi enabled devices. One reason he thinks why more and more people their mobile devices instead of their laptops when accessing the internet is because of its practicality and enjoy ability. Since most of the mobile devices especially smartphone are capable of voice communication and text messaging, people tend to use these because it can satisfy their browsing needs especially social media, voice communication needs and is very handy unlike laptops which can be bulky sometimes. Another possible reason for the increase in the number of users is the increase in public Wifi spots. Naturally, users prefer to bring along with them smaller devices when accessing wifi connectivity in public places rather than bring along their laptop devices. In a data collected by the

Merkai corporation, although the number of computers being connected to Wifi networks continuously increases, the pace of mobile devices being connected is much higher compared to the computers.

The wireless phones are continuously being integrated in the lives of the consumers while the smartphones have been the center for social media in the past years. Consumers preference of a mobile device lies on its capability or the number of mobile social networking applications the smartphone is capable of supporting. The most sought out social media applications based on J. D. Power and Associated in their 2012 Wireless SmartPhone Customer Survey are Facebook and Twitter. This just means that if a smartphone does not have the capability to connect over a wireless network, then that specific model will not appease the costumers. In addition, even if the smartphone is has the ability to have wireless access but it is not capable of installing a Facebook or Twitter app then it is possible that other phones that are capable of these apps would be preferred. (2012) Accessibility to social networks have been one of the driving factors on the design of smartphones. Smartphone manufacturers are putting efforts to create smartphones that are user friendly but are affordable. The study by the J. D. Power and Associated used five factors to survey for the satisfaction level of users in their smartphones. These are on physical design, the features of the phone, physical design, features and the phone's ease of operation. Although, Apple's Iphone has been the consistent topnother in terms of customer satisfaction for the past 5 years, runners up are not consistent. This just means that there is really a tight competition among the smartphone manufacturers. Other factors the customers looked at in

purchasing their phones is of course the price. This is evident with the decrease in market share of Apple's Iphone compared to Samsungs smartphones in 2012. In 2011, Apple had a market share of 19. 1% while Samsung had 18. 7%, however, in 2012 Samsung's market share increased dramatically to a whopping 30. 8% while Apple had 19.%. Analysts attributed this increase mainly on the price of the product. Apple products are known to be expensive, while Samsung provided a wide variety of choices that can be afforded by those who are tight in their budget while experiencing the same features as that of the other high end or Apple's products. (Honen, 2013)

In addition, several new smartphone players have emerged lately or have added smartphone manufacturing in their business paradigms. In 2012, it is reported that the smartphone global market increased by 44% over the previous year. (Honen, 2013) Of course it has been like a standard that all of these new smartphones are wifi capable.

The increasing data on the increase on the smartphone usage and social networking access is directly proportional to the increase on households and institutions who have access to wifi. In a study conducted by Strategy Analytics in 2012, the wifi penetrations stands at 500 million households and is expected to increase at around 800 million (42% increase) in 2016. Likewise, the study predicts that cellphone towers with 3G and WiFi capabilities will increase from 2. 5 million in 2012 to 5 million in 2016. (Lardinois, 2012) Likewise, WiFi subscription is expected to become cheaper. In fact, network providers are already offering free wifi and social networking access to the smartphones.

Based on the data presented in the numerous studies cited above, the social

networks have direct impact to the existence of smartphones and an indirect impact to the increase of Wifi access users. Social networks have been the driving force in defining the features of smartphones, while smartphones have played a major part in the increasing accessibility to Wireless Networks. Likewise, social networks have also a big influence with regard to the pricing of smartphones and wifi access.

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