



Millennials' mobile tech savvy leaves boomers behind

Gap in technology use even exists between Gen Z and Gen Y, survey indicates

By Emily Chung, [CBC News](#)

Date: December 03, 2013

Eighty per cent of millennials own a smartphone, compared to just half of boomers and 36 per cent of Canadian adults overall, according to new research.

Canadian adults aged 33 and under are twice as likely to own a smartphone as older individuals with higher average incomes, and are far more likely to use their phones for email and social networking, a new survey indicates.

The Media Technology Monitor, a research service within CBC, released reports Tuesday on technology adoption and use among anglophone millennials (the 18-to-33 age group) and boomers (47 to 67) that show stark differences between the generations.

Eighty per cent of millennials own a smartphone, compared to just half of boomers and 36 per cent of Canadian adults overall. But the differences go beyond ownership.

'Here, the boomers reflect the market, but they're not the ones driving it.'- *Jeff Baker, Media Technology Monitor*

"For boomers, they are spending money on the technology, but they're not using it quite as much," said Jeff Baker, who wrote the boomers report.

"They own smartphones, but they don't make use of all the functions."

He added that while boomers typically drive the market, "Here, the boomers reflect the market, but they're not the ones driving it."

Mobile majority

Meanwhile, a majority of millennials already use their smartphones for email (6 in 10, compared to 3 in 10 older Canadians) and social networking (3 in 5, compared to 1 in 5 older Canadians). They are also more than twice as likely to watch TV on their smartphone than older Canadians. Source: MTM/CBC

Jenny Meadows, who wrote the millennials report, suggested there are a few reasons this generation makes greater use of mobile technology — they grew up with it, they are comfortable with multitasking, and their lifestyles give them more time to use their devices. For example, they are far more likely to use public transit than older Canadians, who drive more.

Meadows said that interestingly, there isn't just a gap in behaviour between millennials and older adults, but among millennials younger than 24 (Generation Z) and older millennials (Generation Y).

"We found it really striking," she said. "Gen Z, they did everything more. They watched more online TV, they have more smartphones, they're multitaskers."

The survey found those in Gen Z spent an average of 9.7 hours watching online video each week, compared to 6.6 hours for Gen Y and 2.3 per cent for older adults.

38% of Gen Z subscribe to Netflix

In the month before the survey:

- 52 per cent of Gen Z and 39 per cent of Gen Y respondents, and 18 per cent of older adults watched an entire TV program online.
- 60 per cent of Gen Z, 46 per cent of Gen Y and 24 per cent of older adults had watched TV on a computer.
- 22 per cent of Gen Z, 13 per cent of Gen Y and four per cent of older adults watched TV on a smartphone.
- 38 per cent of Gen Z, 29 per cent of Gen Y and 19 per cent of older adults were subscribed to Netflix.

Meanwhile, Baker said, boomers are still big consumers of traditional TV and radio, and often seek out traditional broadcasters, even when consuming TV and audio online.

Meadows said she thinks that in the future, boomers will "likely go more towards online."

Meanwhile, she said, millennials will drive the development of on-demand media.

"They want things instantaneously," she said. "They want to be able to consume where they want, when they want."

The results of the surveys were based on phone calls in fall 2012 and spring 2013 of 6,014 respondents 18 and older. The margin of error for statistics involving all boomers is plus or minus 1.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The margin of error for statistics involving millennials as a group is plus or minus 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, and the margin of error is higher when broken down between Gen Z and Gen Y.