

## Are you part of the digital revolution?

Written by Cheryl Pearson-McNeil  
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You know this already, but I'm going to share it with you anyway – there's a digital revolution going on! Now when I say "revolution" I'm not talking about the overthrowing the government kind – but I am talking about a "sudden, complete or marked change in something." And if you personally haven't experienced this through digital technology in the last few years, I'd like to know where you've been living. I'm not going to say it's someplace cliché-ish like under a rock – but I'm going to guess it's some place pretty darn close, because even my 71-year old mom has gotten with the program. She does everything from filing taxes online to scolding us kids via a Facebook post. So yes, that's revolutionary in my mind. But even I didn't realize how pervasively digital technology has shaken things up until I saw Nielsen's recently released U.S. Digital Consumer Report. And my, my, my. What a difference a decade makes. • 274 million Americans had Internet access as of the last quarter of 2011, which is more than double the 122.2 million of us with Internet access in 2000.

- The DVD took over as the predominant home video format in 2002, making our VCRs almost obsolete – (I still keep a VCR/television combo in the house in case I ever want to watch the appearance I made on Oprah in the 80's! Wouldn't you?)
- When it comes to watching video, including TV shows and movies, 165.9 million Americans currently watch on a computer.
- Remember "Member Community Sites?" Me either. But , back in 2005, we spent 6.6 billion minutes on them. Fast forward to today and they're known as Social Networks and blogs, and as of the last quarter of 2011 we spent 81 billion minutes on them, more than 12 times that 2005 figure.

Do you remember when you had to visit "computer labs" to access data from a computer? And when cellular phones were as big as bricks? All that has clearly changed: now the "mini-me" version of a computer , aka, the smartphone, allows us to text, instant message, visit social media sites, watch video content, web browse, shop, email or actually talk to each other, any place, any time. And mobile phones are so small we keep them in our purses or back pockets and often accidentally "butt call" people. (One of these days that's going to get somebody into serious trouble...) But let's look at some of the other changes:

- In 2006, 3.2% of mobile subscribers owned a smartphone. By the last quarter of 2011, that number had skyrocketed to 44%.
- Smartphone owners are evenly 50-50 male/female; 61% white, 12% African-American. Most owners (39%) skew younger, 18-34; followed by those age 35-49 (30%), 50-64 (20%) and 65+ (6%)
- Though 12% of all Americans are smartphone owners, 48% of all African-Americans own a smartphone.
- 44% of all new mobile phones purchased by Blacks are smartphones.
- 64% of mobile phone time is spent on applications (Apps); and there are Apps for virtually everything. (FYI, data shows that APP use among adults peaks at 5 pm, which means we don't let playing with APPS interfere with our work day, right? Wink, wink.)

Even though we can watch video on the Internet or on our phones, television (albeit high-tech) still rules:

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- 76.6 million TV homes are high definition capable (67%)
- 58.6 million TV homes have digital cable (51%)
- 47.4 million TV homes have a DVR (41%)
- 35.9 million TV homes have 4 or more TV sets (31%)

While talking about TV, I can't forget the ubiquitous tablets and e-readers that have flooded the market since the introduction of the Amazon's Kindle in 2007 and Apple's iPad in 2010. Tablets, by the way, are the only category dominated by men (53% to 47%). They are also popular for multi-tasking purposes, while watching TV.

- 57% check email during the program; 59% wait until the commercial.
- 44% surf the net during both.
- 44% visit social networking sites during both.

If you know someone who still needs to get with the program and join this digital revolution, please implore them to do so. With a buying power of almost \$1 trillion, we need marketers to understand like never before that we are front and present and highly accounted for when it comes to technology. I know You Matter. They need to know it too.

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