

What's fuelling our addiction to the smartphone?

By [Dean Prinsloo](#)

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Last year was a turning point in the mobile industry in South Africa as the smartphone emerged as the most popular communication device for consumers, leaving the feature phone behind, according to the Deloitte Global Mobile Consumer Survey 2017.



Source: [pixabay.com](#)

South Africans are now among the top users of smartphones globally and are using them for applications (apps), such as instant messaging, social media and to communicate in methods other than traditional voice calls.

Statistics indicate that smartphones are being used for multi-tasking and multi-screening, and we've quickly reached the point where some of us are starting to question if our love for these devices has turned into an addiction.

While we investigate the ubiquity of mobile phones, we should also be aware of the fact that in many instances they have become a must-have business tool. Manufacturers, such as LG, are constantly researching and developing mobile phones to adapt to consumer needs because there is a deep understanding that while some might question whether we're spending too much time on mobile phones, there are many others who simply cannot do without them.

Consumers and data

The Internet of Things (IoT) revolution is starting to gain momentum in South Africa and as networks increase their data capacity, we will start to see an increased appetite for smartphone apps. As machine learning becomes more commonplace, we expect that smartphones will be central to how consumers interact with smart appliances.



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The Deloitte survey revealed that a significant majority of consumers (73%) use Wi-Fi at home, work, or at a place of study, compared to 45% for mobile networks. The usage of Wi-Fi in public areas (35% of consumers) and while commuting (14% of consumers) is significantly lower.

Data-hungry consumers perceive Wi-Fi as a competitive alternative to mobile data networks with regards to speed and given the difference in pricing, consumers are likely to use Wi-Fi for data-intensive apps such as streaming and on-demand video.

South African consumers' preference for access through Wi-Fi aligns with global trends as a Cisco forecast indicates that Wi-Fi will carry 49% of global IP traffic by 2021 and mobile, only 17%.

The need for more data has also resulted in the need for increased on-board memory capacity and memory cards. LG has always been a leader in supplying impressive built-in storage capacity on their mobile phones. The LG G7 ThinQ, for example, has 4/6GB of RAM, 64/128GB of on-board storage space and microSD expansion up to 512GB.

Smartphone usage

Smartphones have become integrated into every facet of our lives, prompting the development of faster data networks, more intuitive handsets and smarter apps. South African mobile phone users prefer to communicate via instant messaging (82%) and social networks (74%) than through text messaging and voice calls.

The popularity of Over-The-Top apps will continue to force a shift in operator revenues from traditional voice and SMSes to data revenues. Email apps also continue to be a popular medium for personal and business communication.

Mobile consumers are also using their smartphones for more video calling and Cisco predicts that global IP video traffic will account for 82% of all consumer internet traffic by 2021.



E-commerce and millennials

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If we look at usage according to age groups, 25-45 year-olds prefer to spend more time on short videos and news stories while 16-24 year-olds are more likely to spend their time streaming music and TV series, and are least likely to read the

news.

While Google and Facebook are still the dominant platforms for short video content, platforms developed by telecoms companies, such as Kwese by Econet and Black by Cell C, are beginning to gain traction by focusing on sport, local productions and user-generated content.

In terms of app usage, the most popular use for 16-24 year-olds is to play music while consumers aged 25-34 and 35-45 mostly use navigation, and traffic update apps.

Given the overwhelming reliance on apps and the speed at which they work, LG ensures mobile phone processors are up to the task of handling multiple apps at the same time. The LG G7 ThinQ has an Octa-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 845 processor to keep up with the most prolific of multi-taskers who have several apps open at the same time.

Integral part of our lives

More than one-third of consumers worldwide said they check their phone within five minutes of waking up in the morning and 20% of them check their phone more than 50 times a day.

While there's no doubt that mobile phones have become an integral part of our lives, individuals and families are concerned about how to manage usage as 47% of respondents believe their partners use their phones too much, and 27% of parents believe their children use their phones excessively. 69% of consumers use their phones while watching TV, 41% indicated they use their phones while talking to friends and family, and 15% admitted to using their phones while driving.



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The rise of smartphones continues unabated and South Africa now finds itself among the leading global adopters. The Netherlands, Norway, Ireland and Luxembourg are on the short list of countries which have surpassed the 90% threshold, and South Africa has joined them as 93% of the population has ready access to smartphones.

As smartphone penetration reaches never-before-seen levels, manufacturers such as LG will continue to develop innovative features and products to guarantee that smartphones evolve as quickly as consumers, and that users are always at the heart of technological advancements.

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