

**Mobile Communication Uses in Television Narratives:  
An Exploration of Apparatchek Theory**

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*Mobile phone communication technology has had a powerful impact on consumers' lives. The International Telecommunication Union predicts that the number of mobile phone subscribers will reach four billion by the end of 2008. As such, mobile phone technology has brought instant communication to the fingertips of over 60 percent of the world's population. With the rapid diffusion of mobile technology, people have an opportunity to interpersonally interact with others without the time and space limitation of traditional mediated communication channels across cultures.*

*However, culture and society does not necessarily play a large role in shaping interactants uses of mobile phones. People across cultures, gender and socioeconomic status tend to use mobile technology in similar patterns. Katz and Aakhus' theory of apparatusgeist provide insight to the relationship between the mobile phone and its user; it argues that the popularity and use of mobile phone technology is dependent on the relationship among users and a common understanding of how they value the mobile phone. Examples of cultures that vary greatly in established norms and traditions still tend to share a common understanding of mobile phone uses. It is commonplace to witness mobile phone users that parade blinking blue-tooth earpieces, wear handsets visibly attached to belts and expose decorative handset covers across cultures. While mobile phone usage promotes conformity and unity in the real world, its application in television has not been explored.*

*This study examines the way in which mobile technology has been integrated and represented in primetime television storylines. This shift in the ease in which television characters' are able to communicate with each other has been both embraced and ignored by television writers. While at one time, primetime television storylines may have seemed hegemonic in nature, this study argues that the character of the mobile phone has changed the way these storylines have been able to play out. While previous archetype characters were forced to rely on their own resources to escape difficult situations; these days, this type of problem could easily be solved through the use of mobile technology. While some programs, such as the Fox Television series 24, have used the mobile phone as a central character, other programs, such as HBO's*

*Curb Your Enthusiasm, has ignored its existence almost entirely. This study will utilize Moscovici's social representation theory to explore the mobile phone as a television character. Through textual analysis, it examines how mobile technology use is represented in primetime television. It also explores the way mobile communication has become a source of betrayal, bullying, and at times, a lifeline for characters.*

A weekend getaway quickly became interesting when Jerry Seinfeld attempted to follow his best friend George Costanza. To George, it wasn't just about getting there; it was about making good time. He takes pride in how fast he can make it from point A to point B, regardless of who's following him. Jerry loses sight of George's car and becomes stranded. A new *Seinfeld* comedy is born. The 'show about nothing' relies on these everyday quirks of everyday people in order to develop funny storylines. But what if Jerry hadn't lost sight of his stocky bald friend? What if instead, Jerry picked up his mobile phone and told George to slow down? What if he called and asked for directions? Or better yet, what if he had simply used his mobile phone's GPS navigation? If the characters had access to today's mobile phone technology, this weekend disaster could have been easily been avoided, and this funny episode would have never been created. With mobile phone technology, *Seinfeld* truly would have been a 'show about nothing'.

With over 260 million mobile phone users in America, today's television audience expects characters to use mobile phones in their daily lives (CTIA, 2008). No longer can characters be stranded on the archetypical dark, windy road without the audience asking, "Why don't they just use their cell phone?" Audiences hold expectations regarding their lives and the lives that they see played out onscreen. Apparageist Theory suggests people adopt and use mobile phone technology based on perceived social roles, status and values (see Campbell, 2007; Wei & Lo, 2006; Katz & Aakhus, 2002; Torgersen, 2004). Television provides a window into that current mainstream culture (see Bryant & Zillmann, 2002). However, no studies have

considered the representation of mobile phones by television characters. The purpose of this study is to conduct a content analysis to advance knowledge about television's role in portraying mobile phone communication. This is important because these representations are telling pieces of mobile phone adoption, use and representation in today's culture.

### ***Mobile communication and individual affordances***

Mobile phones allow people to connect interpersonally without being physically together. It is commonplace to witness people communicate on mobile phones in a variety of contexts. People converse on their mobile phones while they shop at the grocery store or drive a car; they talk whether they are at work or at home. Mobile phone communication has experienced an unprecedented growth over the last decade. The International Telecommunication Union predicts that the number of mobile phone subscribers will reach four billion, or 60 percent of the world's population, by the end of 2008 (UN News Centre, 2008). With the rapid diffusion of mobile technology, there have been great advancements in developing new mobile phone technologies. Third generation (3G) mobile phones feature an incredible convergence of technology by combining video, voice and high-speed data transfers. As such, 3G mobile phone users are able to download and exchange large amounts of data, access the internet with broadband speed or even use their telephone to watch TV (see Ankeny, 2008; Reardon, 2008; "3G," 2006). The mobile phone has not only become a source of entertainment, its omnipresence has shaped user's and non-user's expectation of both the cultural and technological affordances perpetuated by mobile phone communication.

People tend to standardize the use of Personal Communication Technologies (PCT) regardless of unique cultural or individual characteristics (Katz and Aakhus, 2002). For example, mobile phone research has identified social and symbolic qualities that users share (see Campbell, 2007; Wei & Lo, 2006; Turner, Love & Howell, 2007), universal predictors of mobile phone adoption (see Haddon, 2004; Ling, 2004), as well as parallel norms and values regarding the

frequency of mobile phone communication (see Horrigan, 2008; Torgersen, 2004). These findings are examples of the manifest and latent reasoning that supports the premise and drive toward the concept of perpetual contact and the theory of Apparatgeist (Katz & Aakhus, 2002, p. 310).

### ***Theory of Apparatgeist***

In their book, *Perpetual Contact: Mobile Communication, private talk, public performance*, James Katz and Mark Aakhus advanced the theory of “Apparatgeist” to describe the synergy between machine “apparatus” and the mind “geist” (2002). The neologism, used to explain personal communication technology, suggests that the spirit of the machine “influences both the designs of the technology as well as the initial and subsequent significance accorded by users, non-users, and anti-users” (Katz & Aakhus, 2002, p. 305). Apparatgeist is perpetually strengthened when people incorporate the mobile phone into their lives. The synergy between user and the technology is strengthened, and conformity and unity is shaped as the culture of mobile phones is intensified. As witnessed in societies with a large penetration of mobile phones, the mobile phone communication dictates values and rituals. According to Katz and Aakhus, “despite the great variations in cultures – from teen dating to family arrangements and from economic based to social hierarchies – the use and folk understanding of the mobile phone seem to be pressing toward conformity and uniformity” (2002, pp. 313-314). An example of this is with countries such as Norway and Japan that are culturally different, yet teen’s mobile telephone practices such as hypercoordination and softening of schedules are found in both countries (Ito, 2005).

To empirically test and predict people’s mobile phone communication, Katz and Aakhus have identified an evolution of individual decision-making that either promote or dissuade individual’s assessment of personal communication technology (Campbell, 2008; Katz & Aakhus, 2002). Avoidance motives that act as disincentives to Apparatgeist include perceived

anti-symbolic values and a desire not to complicate individual's environment. Attitudes and perception of mobile phone use in public settings vary among cultural groups as norms and values provide a map of what is not acceptable. For example, students and faculty share negative attitudes of mobile phone use in classrooms (Campbell, 2006), and while Israeli's talk on their phones in movie theaters (Schejter & Cohen, 2002), Japanese users consider a mobile phone ringing a violation of public space (Ito, 2005). On the other hand, incentives to Apparateist include positive media exposure, perceived social role, cultural ideals as well as pro symbolic value. For example, mobile phones have become a display statement about a person's societal status. When teenagers were asked, in a national study, to rank items they believed project social status, they ranked clothes as number one, mobile phones second, followed by jewelry and watches, and lastly, shoes (Harris Interactive, 2008). Indeed, almost 50 percent of college students believe that mobile phones should look "cool" — a sentiment shared by most experienced mobile phone users (Katz and Sugiyama, 2005). Mobile phone's symbolic values and added features create a positive relationship and feedback loop between user and the device thus strengthening Apparateist. However, mobile phone research has yet to examine television's role in representing the cultural ideal's of the mobile phone as theorized in Apparateist.

### *Television as a Cultural Lens*

"Television is the source of the most broadly shared images and messages in history. It is the mainstream of the common symbolic environment into which our children are born and in which we all live out our lives" (Bryant & Zillmann, 2002, p. 43). As such, it provides a lens into the cultural ideals of today's society (see Bryant & Zillmann, 2002; Fiske, 1987). People turn to television to learn about important issues, fashion and lifestyles of a given period.

Though we live in a world infiltrated by many types of media, few would argue the dominating command that television holds over our culture. "Television time so far exceeds time devoted to most other media" (Roberts & Foehr, 2008, p. 29). The average home in the United

States uses their television for about seven hours a day (Roberts & Foehr, 2008). It is easily accessed by people of all ages and demographics. In 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that U.S. households averaged 2.6 TV sets apiece (2009). Not only does television rank as the most widely utilized media, it also proves unique in its application.

Television content is a reflection of the dominating lifestyle of the society in which it is produced, thus highlighting cultural ideals. “Television’s central role in our society makes it the primary channel of the mainstream in our culture” (Bryant & Zillmann, 2002, 51). Viewers prefer to watch characters which “embody the dominant ideology” of their own environment (Fiske, 1987, p. 9). Audiences expect to see elements of their own lives portrayed in the lives of television characters that they are watching. This is why dominant ideology translates into numerous programming that center around the lives of the middle class characters (Fiske, 1987, p. 23). For example, working-class families, such as *I Love Lucy*, *Married With Children*, and *The Simpsons*, are so appealing to viewers (see Butsch, 2008; Mitroff & Stephenson, 2007). Television tends to reflect societal norms and expectations on everyday life.

Just as it was natural for Paul Bunyan to swing an axe to cut down trees while lumberjacking, one would expect a television character in today’s era to utilize their mobile phone to get in touch with someone on the go. Television’s narratives need to be plausible for today’s viewers and the realities in which they live. People utilize technology to make their lives easier and expect the behavior mirrored in the storytelling of their culture.

Television is “an exercise in norm setting and social typing” (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, & Morgan, 1980, p. 708). Thus, behaviors seen on television may alter the way in which viewers interpret their own lived reality. For example, if a well-liked protagonist of a television series uses the latest 3G mobile phone features, viewers may be inspired to adopt and use the technology accordingly. This study takes note of the type of mobile technology portrayed on television and how that technology is being used.

Current mobile phone literature suggests that users interact with the mobile phone for a variety of reasons as they coordinate daily activities, interpersonally connect with others, manage their identity through hypercoordination or simply display their phone as a fashion statement (see Leung & Wei, 2000; Ling, 2004; Ling & Haddon, 2003; Katz, 2006). Because of the convergent quality of 3G, mobile phone users can communicate through advanced features such as Facebook's social networking site, instant- and asynchronous messaging. Mobile phone research also identifies unique uses or similarities dependent on interactants' gender and age. For example, age can be a predictor of why interactants adopt the technology (Ling, 2004), while gender can determine the frequency or competency of mobile communication (Bakke, 2009; Horrigan, 2008).

Considering existing literature on mobile phone use and television's role in reflecting cultural values and behaviors, the following research questions are advanced to guide this study:

RQ1 How are television characters using mobile phones?

RQ2 What features of mobile phone technology are television characters using?

RQ3: Are there differences in mobile phone use between teen and adult television programming?

## **Methods**

### ***Sample***

A content analysis was conducted on eight episodes from four different prime-time television series during the November 2008 sweeps period. This is when programs put forth their best content in an effort to gain viewership because it is the time during which the Nielson Media Research Company determines ratings of particular programs in order to establish advertising prices for local television stations.

The samples drawn from *One Tree Hill* and *Gossip Girl* represents two network television programs that target a teen audience, while *Desperate Housewives* and *Brothers and*



*Sisters* represents two network television programs that target an adult audience. The series are modern television dramas; audiences are to believe that the fictional characters live in present day America.

*Gossip Girl* was in its second season of production and was the top-rated show among teens 12-17, averaging a 2.5 rating during this time period (Fitzgerald, 2008). It is about a group of popular, fast-living Manhattan teens whose social life is chronicled by an anonymous blogger (Savage, 2007). *One Tree Hill* is an older drama that follows the lives of five teenage friends in a small North Carolina town (Schwahn, 2004). It is currently in its sixth season of production, and airs just after *Gossip Girl*'s timeslot on the CW television network.

In 2008, *Desperate Housewives* was in its fifth season of production and held the highest adult age 18-49 ratings during its Sunday premiere (Bierly, 2008). Sunday evening is the most popular night in television for adult audiences. The storyline centers on the lives of five female friends, living in a suburban neighborhood (ABC, 2009). Sharing the same timeslot, ABC's other hit, *Brothers and Sisters*, was in its third season of production. It premiered with 12.3 million viewers (Bierly, 2008). This drama chronicles the daily lives of wealthy adult siblings living in Los Angeles (ABC, 2009).

### ***Instrument***

To code for television character's mobile phone use, a six-category coding and classification instrument was developed. The classification system was tested through an initial test of four episodes. Researchers refined codes after the initial analysis and the coding units were designed to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive (see Babbie, 2007; Reinard, 2008). The final coding instrument was composed of 30 coding units in six categories: mobile phone use, reference, gender, age, feature selection and medium. Each coding unit is drawn from current mobile phone literature and can be considered a manifest content analysis (see Babbie, 2007). There was a 10% overlap of the samples in the content analysis to establish inter-coder reliability.

Each coding unit is operationalized according to the following description. The first category, mobile phone use, contains seven coding units: 1) *display*, a television character would display the phone, Bluetooth headset or letting the phone ring with a custom ringtone *without* using any of its features (e.g., a character would visibly carry the mobile phone in a belt attachment); 2) *Safety*, a character used the mobile phone to either convey or receive communication regarding safety through any of the phone's feature (e.g., a character is locked in a room and calls for assistance); 3) *microcoordination*, a character used any of the phone's features for the sole purpose of organizing activities, manage schedules or give instructions detailing actions (e.g., a character sends a text message to a friend with the timing of a surprise party); 4) *hypercoordination*, a character maintained several communicative activities while using any mobile phone feature (e.g., a character is having a face-to-face (FtF) conversation with another character and the phone rings thus having to maintain a FtF and mobile phone conversation simultaneously); 5) *adverse use*, a character used the mobile phone to communicate negative or harmful messages through any mobile phone feature (e.g., a character participate in bullying by spreading derogatory photos with the mobile phone) ; 6) *avoidance use*, a character deliberately avoided using the mobile phone (e.g., a character intentionally ignores a call from a friend); 7) *interpersonal use*, two characters, that share a personal relationship, have a

conversation that does not involve organizing activities with any mobile phone feature (e.g., two colleagues have a conversation about events at work).

The second category, reference, contained two coding units: 1) *visual*, the phone is visually observed in the scene by the researcher; 2) *verbal*, the character verbally refers to either “cell phone,” “mobile phone” or a mobile phone feature, such as text messaging, in a sentence (e.g., if a character states “He called me earlier on my cell phone”).

The third category, gender, included two coding units: 1) *male*, and 2) *female*, the category was operationalized as the gender role the character portrays in the television series.

The fourth category, age, contained five coding units: 1) *12 and younger*, 2) *13-22*, 3) *23-39*, 4) *40-59*, 5) *60 and older*. The coding units are designed to represent life stages of the characters and are representative of the role the character portrays in the television series.

The fifth category, feature selection, contained nine coding units: 1) *voice*, the character used the voice function of the mobile phone, including cordless or Bluetooth headsets that may be attached to the phone. Researchers verified that character used a non-analog phone device in order to code this unit (e.g., when a character is visibly wearing and talking into a headset while driving a vehicle); 2) *text messaging*, the character used asynchronous messaging to communicate with other characters (e.g., text messaging, mobile e-mail or mobile instant text messaging); 3) *picture*, the character used the phone to take a picture or viewed a previously stored picture (e.g., a character use a mobile phone to take a picture in a scene); 4) *picture messaging*, a character took a picture, or used a previously stored picture, and sent it as a text message with the mobile phone; 5) *picture messaging and internet*, a character transfer images through the mobile phone via Internet services such as Facebook mobile; 6) *Social networking*, the character used the mobile phone to access online social networking sites (e.g., MySpace, Facebook and Twitter); 7) *Internet access*, the character used the mobile phone’s web browser to access the internet (e.g., mobile phone applications such as Mapquest, Google search); 8) *voice mail*, the character retrieved or left a voicemail on a mobile phone, it was only recorded if researchers verified that

the voicemail was mobile phone related; 9) *music function*, the character accessed or listened to music from the mobile phone, it must clearly be a mobile phone and not simply a mobile music device.

The sixth category, medium, contained three coding units: 1) *mobile phone*, the character used what was visually recognized as a regular phone (e.g., flip phones, slider phones); 2) *smart phones*, phones with full size keyboards or full size touch screens.

This study examines descriptive statistics to answer the three research questions. According to Reinard (2008), content analysis in communication research is most often analyzed “by reporting simple descriptive statistics” (p. 318).

## Results

The first research question asked how television characters used mobile phones for communication. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the occurrence of mobile phone use in relation to frequency, age and gender. The results are listed in Table 1 and indicate that characters on television represent a variety of mobile phone use. 374 instances of mobile phone use were recoded. Interpersonal (24%), microcoordination (20%), adverse use (18%) and display (17%) constituted more than two-thirds of all mobile phone communication. Nine percent of mobile phone use was hypercoordination while safety (6%), avoidance (4%) and anti-use (1%) amount to a smaller portion of the findings. Characters of different age groups tended to use mobile phone technology differently. Teens represented the majority of mobile phone use ( $n = 238$ , 64%), and teens also tended to use the phone for adverse uses (25%), interpersonal (19%), display (17%), microcoordination (16%) and hypercoordination (10%). The 40-59 age group ( $n = 84$ , 23%) represented the second largest group of mobile phone use, the characters in this group tend to use the mobile phone for interpersonal (33%), microcoordination (29%) and display (12%). The 23-39 age group had 32 instances of mobile phone use, mostly interpersonal (31%), microcoordination (25%) and safety (25%). The 60 and above age group had fourteen instances of mobile phone use, predominantly for interpersonal (36%) and display purposes (43%). There were only three entries for the 12 and younger age group, two used the mobile phone for interpersonal communication while one character used the phone for display purpose. There were also differences in mobile phone use depending on the characters gender. Female characters ( $n = 257$ , 66%) used the mobile phone more than male characters ( $n = 138$ , 35%). Mobile phone uses also varied dependent on the character's gender. For example, female characters used the phone for adverse uses (24%), interpersonal (23%), microcoordination (18%), display (16%) and hypercoordination (11%). On the other hand, male characters ( $n = 126$ , 34%) used the phone for interpersonal (28%), microcoordination (23%), display (18%) and safety uses (10%).

The second research question asked what features television characters accessed on their mobile phones. To answer this question, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the occurrence of mobile phone features in relation to frequency, age and gender. The results are listed in Table 2 and indicate that the characters on television use a variety of features in their mobile phone communication. Teens represented a majority of characters using mobile phone features ( $n = 168$ , 64%). Characters in this age group used the voice (32%), text (27%), text and picture (26%) and voice mail feature (10%). The 40-59 age group ( $n = 68$ , 26%) constituted the second largest group of characters representing mobile phone features, the characters in this group tend to use the voice feature almost exclusively (93%) with only a few instances of text (6%) and picture (1%). Similarly, the 23-39 age group ( $n = 20$ , 8%) also used the voice feature almost exclusively (80%) with a few instances of text (10%) and picture (10%). The 60 and above age group had few instances of mobile phone feature representation, voice (50%) and text (50%). All the entries in the 12 and younger age group represented the voice feature. There were also differences in mobile phone feature representation depending on the character's gender. Female characters (64%) represented more mobile phone features than male characters (36%). Mobile phone feature use also varied dependent on the character's gender. For example, female characters used the phone's voice (46%), text and picture (24%) and text (20%) feature. On the other hand, male characters used the voice (62%) and text (22%) feature.

The third research question was concerned with differences in mobile phone representation between teen and adult television programming. To answer this question, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the occurrence of mobile phone use in the two types of shows in relation to frequency, feature, medium and gender. The results are listed in Table 3 and indicate that the characters in the teen and adult television series use mobile phones for communication in unique ways. There was twice the number of references to mobile phone use in the teen series ( $n = 261$ , 70%) versus the adult series ( $n = 113$ , 30%). The teen series also had a larger range of mobile phone uses than did the adult series. The following was represented the

most: adverse use (23%), interpersonal (20%), display (17%), microcoordination (16%), hypercoordination (9%). On the other hand, the adult series represented the following uses the most: interpersonal (35%), microcoordination (28%), display (16%). The voice feature was represented more in the adult (56%) compared to the teen series (44%). However, the teen series ( $n = 87$ ) represented the text feature more often than the adult series ( $n = 13$ ). Twenty-five percent of the feature references in the teen series included text and picture, social networking (1%), Internet (2%), voicemail (6%) and music function (3%) was only represented in the teen series. The teen series tended to represent smart phone use (60%) versus the adult series (22%). On the other hand, adult series represented regular mobile phones (45%) more often than the teen series (20%). There were also differences in how the phones were referenced. The teen series tended to both talk (50%) about the mobile phone as well as displaying its use (50%). The adult shows, however, almost exclusively visually depicted mobile phone use (96%) versus talking about the phone (4%).

## **Discussion**

The current study explores how television characters use mobile phones, what features of mobile phone technology television characters use, and whether differences exist between teen and adult television programming behaviors. The results of this study are important because it provides further insight in the role television plays shaping individual decision-making in mobile phone use as theorized in Apparategeist.

The first research question asked how television characters use mobile phones. Consistent with previous gender and mobile phone research, female characters use the mobile phone more than male characters (see Horrigan, 2008; Leung & Wei, 2000; Ling, 2004; Ling & Haddon, 2003; Katz, 2006). In addition, mobile phone literature suggests that teenagers use the mobile phone in much the same manner as adults (Katz and Aakhus, 2002). However, our results show teen characters are the largest group using the phone, followed by adults 40-59 and adults 23-39.

An interesting finding in primary mobile phone use among female teens is adverse uses (24%). Whereas male teens, adults aged 40-59 and adults 23-39 rank their uses of the mobile phone to be interpersonal, microcoordination, display and safety, respectively. An example of adverse mobile phone use by female teens is portrayed on *Gossip Girl* where students consistently bully peers by sending damaging texts and picture messages around their high school. This phenomenon was the basic premise of the show, as the 'Gossip Girl' was actually a text messaging service that provided high school students with gossip throughout a school day.

The second research question asked what features television characters accessed on their mobile phone. This study found inconsistencies in previous literature in how adult and teen characters use mobile phone features. Teen characters represented the largest group using the mobile phone features of voice, text and text and picture. Adult characters tend to mainly use the voice feature. Previous literature on gender differences in mobile phone use has pointed out that females tend to stress the importance of non-technical functions of the phone while males stress technical aspects of their mobile phone (see Campbell, 2007; Haddon, 2004; Skog, 2002; Turner, Love & Howell, 2007). This study also found female characters use more mobile phone features than males (see Bakke, 2009).

The third research question was concerned with differences in mobile phone representation between teen and adult television programming. The teen series have twice the number of references to mobile phone uses than the adult series, and the teen series have a greater range of mobile phone uses than adult series. Teen characters also tended to use smart phones most often, while adults were shown mostly using regular mobile phones. These differences are interesting, as smart phones are a more expensive model, and often times, the internet capabilities required by smart phones cost extra. Adults would be the age group most likely to have the income to afford these features.

This study is a step to further understand the uses of mobile phones in our society as viewed through the cultural lens of television. Some findings with previous literature and show



apparent disagreement in the behavior of mobile phone use among teens and adults depicted in popular TV series. More often teen characters are using mobile phones and more advanced features than adult characters. In addition, female characters use more features than male characters and is not necessarily consistent with previous research. Adverse uses of the mobile phone by female characters are an area of future studies. If found to be an inaccurate portrayal, it could cause parents to be overly concerned about allowing their children access to mobile phone technology. It is also a possibility that the highly influential teen viewers could be drawn to these adverse behaviors themselves.

Mobile technology was presented as a prop to introduce characters or scenes. If an older adult character was presented as trendy, this trait was reflected in their mobile phone choice. They may be seen with a Sidekick or an iPhone, while most other adults use analog or basic flip models. Mobile technology was also used as an extension of character emotions. For example, *One Tree Hill* lead Brooke became frustrated with her mother. When her mother attempted to call, Brooke became angry and threw her mobile phone into the water. It was almost as though these mobile phones held certain personality characteristics of their own.

For most of the series, *Gossip Girl* character Chuck carried around a mobile Sidekick. He would use it to talk to friends and to plan weekend parties. However, the storyline eventually evolves and Chuck is forced to get a job. In the work setting, Chuck is shown using a Blackberry to conduct business. This presents the Sidekick as a mobile phone for fun trendy teenagers, while a more serious mobile use requires a Blackberry. However, both of these models of mobile technology hold the same capabilities, and it is unlikely that a teen would own and use two different models at the same time.

Throughout all four programs, mobile phone use doubled as product placement advertisement. Future studies may wish to include this in their analysis. Each of these programs had a very clear mobile sponsor. In reality, it is highly unlikely that a real life group of friends would all utilize the same phone and have the same network carrier as each other. Although this

study provides an indication of how the mobile phone is represented on television, it does not illustrate how viewers of television may be influenced by these representations. Mobile phone providers obviously recognize the power of television in demonstrating the cultural ideals of society. They spend great amounts of money to make sure that popular characters are using their phone and their network in hopes that television viewers will be influenced to buy what they see their favorite characters using. Future studies may incorporate Apparageist Theory into audience reception studies to understand this phenomenon.

The similarities and differences between television mobile phone representations and real-life use show how mobile technology is changing television storylines. Writers seemingly embrace the mobile phone as a consistent resource in characters' lives, as they no longer need to hold face-to-face conversations in order to participate in an engaging plot. Additional patterns were found throughout this analysis that future studies may wish to examine.

The current study illustrates how new technology is changing the way in which storylines are developed and how characters interact with each other. Classic sitcoms like *Seinfeld* did not have to justify why a group of friends were engaged in face-to-face conversation. Today television producers are forced into split screen conversations where characters talk to each other on the go. This research showcased the mobile phone as a considerable role in storylines. It was utilized as a source of betrayal, companionship and bullying. Television writers are breaking classical storyline molds to incorporate new technology. This progression will provide future viewers a glimpse into the important role mobile phones play in today's culture.

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Table 1

*Combined mobile phone use in teen and adult television series by gender and age*

		Types of mobile phone use								
		Interpersonal	Micro- coordination	Adverse Use	Display	Hyper- coordination	Safety	Avoidance Use	Anti use	Total
Age	<12	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
	13-22	46	39	59	41	24	12	12	5	238
	23-39	10	8	3	2	1	6	2	0	32
	40-59	28	24	6	12	9	3	2	0	84
	60+	5	1	0	6	1	1	0	0	14
Total		91	72	68	62	35	22	16	5	371
Gender	Female	56	43	57	38	26	9	9	5	243

	Male	35	29	11	22	9	13	7	0	126
Total		91	72	68	60	35	22	16	5	369

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Table 2

*Combined use of mobile phone features in teen and adult television series by gender and age*

		Mobile phone feature									
		Voice	Text	Picture	Text and picture	Social networking	Internet	Internet, text and picture	Voice mail	Music function	Total
Age	<12	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	13-22	53	45	4	44	1	3	3	10	5	168
	23-39	16	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
	40-59	63	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	68
	60+	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Total		137	54	7	44	1	3	3	10	5	264
Gender	Female	78	33	3	41	1	2	3	5	2	168

	Male	59	21	4	3	0	1	0	5	3	96
Total		137	54	7	44	1	3	3	10	5	264

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Table 3

*Mobile phone use and feature selection by television genre*

		Mobile phone feature									
		Voice	Text	Picture	Text and picture	Social networking	Internet	Internet, text and picture	Voice mail	Music function	Total
Series	Adult	77	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	87
	Teen	60	47	4	44	1	1	3	3	10	177
Total		137	54	7	44	1	3	3	10	5	264

  

		Types of mobile phone use								
		Interpersonal	Micro-coordination	Adverse Use	Display	Hyper-coordination	Safety	Avoidance Use	Anti use	Total
Series	Adult	39	32	7	18	11	4	2	0	113

	Teen	52	42	61	45	24	18	14	5	261
Total		91	74	68	63	35	22	16	5	374

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