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Perceptions of the Mobile Device as a News Medium in Sweden and Japan

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Mobile 2.0?



Technological transformation of the mobile; beyond voice and interpersonal communication

Has become a mobile multimediuum to access news

Possession vs. Usage

Need for better understanding of attitudes towards ICT's in different cultures



Socio-cultural profile; Sweden

- Relatively little hierarchies and small power distances
- Highly individualistic; values personal freedom and the freedom of the press
- Feminine culture with little difference between men and women
- Low uncertainty avoidance; allow for informal relationship
- Treat outdoor space as their own



Socio-cultural profile; Japan

- Relatively much hierarchies and inhabitants who tend to do as they are told
- Rather collectivistic; people have a broader sense of collective obligation
- Masculine culture where women are oriented towards the home
- Low uncertainty avoidance; allow for informal relationships
- Keen on adopting new technologies
- Long commutes
- Spend much time outside of their homes



Media/ICT-cultural profile; Sweden

- 84% newspaper reach in 2006 (75 online editions and 91 dailies in print)
- 77 % use PC Internet and 36 % have broadband (2007)
- 72% daily TV reach in 2007 (5 min consecutive viewing)
- 101 mobile subscribers per 100 (2005)
- 1/10 mobile revenue comes from data services (2008)
- High diffusion of mobile broadband 3G & 3.5G (HSPA)



Media/ICT-cultural profile; Japan

- 92% newspaper reach in 2006 (102 online editions and 108 dailies in print)
- 69 % use PC Internet and 22 % have broadband (2007)
- 84% daily TV reach in 2007 (1 min consecutive viewing)
- 76 mobile subscribers per 100 (2005)
- 3/10 mobile revenue comes from data services (2008)
- High diffusion of mobile broadband 3G & 3.5G (HSPA)



Accessing news with the mobile; Sweden and Japan

Sweden (at least monthly, age 15-85)

2005: 7 percent

2006: 11 percent

2007: 12 percent

Japan ("often", age 15-64):

2006: 12 percent

2007: 13 percent



Arguments for cross-cultural comparison of Sweden and Japan

- Many cultural differences, but similarity in adoption of ICT's and news media
- Study of diffusion of wireless communication in 64 countries (Sundqvist 2005); Scandinavian and Central European countries in one cluster + Japan
- Big difference in adoption of mobile internet, but not for mobile news



Study rationale

To investigate the current attitudes among the Japanese and Swedish populations in regard to accessing news with the mobile.



RQ1: How is the usefulness and usability of news on the mobile perceived?

- (1) “The mobile is a good medium for news”.
- (2) “I have no need of being able to access news on my mobile”.



RQ2: What are the attitudes to cost-related issues regarding mobile news consumption?

- (1) “Using the mobile for news services is too expensive”.
- (2) “I am not willing to pay for news services in my mobile”.



Method: Surveys in 2007

Sweden:

- Postal-based survey with 2000 randomly-selected people aged 16-65.
- A total of 764 people responded (response rate of 38%)
- Administered by Erik Bohlin (Chalmers University of Technology) and Oscar Westlund (University of Gothenburg)

• Japan:

- Web-based survey with people aged 15-65 based on a self-selection principle.
- A total of 2500 people responded
- Administered by Mobile Society Research Institute (NTT DoCoMo).



Methodological concerns

- Representativeness of the sample within respective nation.
 - Comparative analyses with other statistical accounts of the Swedish and Japanese populations have been carried out.
- Concerns for cross-cultural comparisons
 - different sampling techniques
 - differences in languages
 - differences in culture
 - different scales in measuring respondents' opinions



Percent of Swedes holding attitudes towards the mobile as a news medium in 2007

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Age</i>		
		Male	Female	16-29	30-49	50-65
<i>RQ1: Usefulness of mobiles for accessing news</i>						
1. "The mobile is a good medium for news"	15 (40)	20 (31)	12 (47)	13 (31)	21 (33)	11 (53)
2. "I have no need of being able to access news on my mobile"	55 (18)	54 (15)	58 (21)	60 (12)	55 (17)	54 (24)
<i>RQ2: Cost factors</i>						
1. "Using the mobile for news services is too expensive"	20 (68)	15 (75)	24 (61)	27 (57)	21 (69)	13 (76)
2. "I am not willing to pay for news services in my mobile"	56 (25)	59 (21)	54 (28)	60 (16)	58 (22)	52 (34)



Percent of Japanese holding attitudes towards the mobile as a news medium in 2007

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	16-29	30-49	50-65
<i>RQ1: Usefulness of mobiles for accessing news</i>						
1. "The mobile is a good medium for news"	47	47	47	48	47	46
2. "I have no need of being able to access news on my mobile"	34	31	38	26	31	46
<i>RQ2: Cost factors</i>						
1. "Using the mobile for news services is too expensive"	59	57	61	51	61	64
2. "I am not willing to pay for news services in my mobile"	71	69	74	67	73	72



Conclusions

- **The mobile as a news medium”**
 - The Japanese have a more positive attitude – consistent among different groups.
 - Fewer Swedes are positive, although varying between groups depending on experience
- **Cost issues**
 - A higher number of people in Japan than Sweden find costs as too high, and fewer are willing to pay
 - The differences in lack of personal user experiences explain cross-cultural gaps
- **Cross-national comparisons are challenging**



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Thank you for your attention!

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