

Voice search: Google has numbers on who, why, where

October 15 2014, by Nancy Owano



American teens are more likely to use voice search on their smartphones than are adults. About 55 percent of the 18-and-under crowd use Cortana, Google Voice Search or Siri more than once a day. While the majority of U.S. teens (55 percent) use hands-free search every day, the number goes up to 75 percent among teens who are heavy users of smartphones (using it 11-plus hours per day). Adults are, well, behind the teens but adults are certainly using voice search, with 41 percent talking to their phones every day.

The numbers are from Google's Mobile Voice Study of 1400 smartphone users. The age ranges used were 13 years of age and older

(400, ages 13 to 17) and adults ages 18-plus (1000 adults). The study was commissioned by Google and was executed by Northstar Research. Google wanted to understand [voice search](#) habits among American smartphone users across age ranges.

Google's official blog got right in the spirit of the findings on Tuesday with the headline, "OMG! Mobile voice survey reveals teens love to talk." Scott Huffman, Google's vice president for conversational search, said, "We weren't surprised to find that teens—always ahead of the curve when it comes to new technology—talk to their phones more than the average adult."

He spoke about the aim of the study. "We wanted to learn more about how people of all ages use Google hands-free on their phones. We found that for teens, voice search comes as naturally as checking social media and they're getting very creative about how (and where) they use it."

The study revealed that 51 percent of teens (32% of adults) use voice search "just for fun." Obviously, teen users who make generous use of voice search do not experience the kind of self-consciousness that would deter them from speaking solo into a device, while 45 percent of adult Americans admitted to "feeling like a geek" in talking to their phones.

In other answers, 57 percent of teens said they used voice search with friends, while only 24 percent of adults said likewise. "Teens don't seem to associate any stigma with using voice search while hanging out with friends, whereas only one-quarter of adults speak to their phones when in the company of others," said Huffman.

Interestingly, respondents of all ages said voice search will be "very common" in the future (89 percent of teens and 85 percent of adults agreed).

When asked to "pick one thing you wish you could ask your [phone](#) to do for you," 45 percent of American teens selected "send me pizza." while 44 percent of adults wanted voice search to give them the location of their keys, versus just 34 percent of teens.

Google also looked at how the numbers shake out geographically, among all age ranges. They found that Northeasterners were the most active users in the U.S. and New Yorkers were the likeliest Americans to use voice search to ask about the weather (43 percent).

Huffman said, "The study gives us great ideas about new ways we could help people—maybe even help them find their keys and other elusive objects."

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