How Mobile and Social Are Creating New User Personas

With more than 1.5 billion smartphone users and 1.7 billion people using social media worldwide, mobile and social are becoming the dominant modes of human interaction. While this means accepting the painful reality of texting your kids to summon them to the dinner table and knowing that every embarrassing picture snapped of you may be instantly shared online, it also changes the rules for how companies do business and engage their customers and employees.
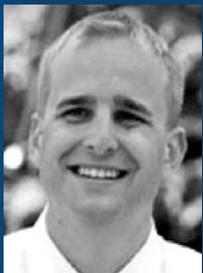
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MOBILE IS ALWAYS ON, immediately available and provides awareness of your situation and surrounding environment. For companies of all sizes, the mobile devices carried by their customers and employees have become the eyes and ears of a new generation of predictive analytic systems.

Social media is the ultimate amplifier. Every customer, user and friend now has a digital megaphone and high-powered antenna readily at hand. An amplifier with limitless and immediate reach to share every like and disappointment.

So what are the implications of this never-before-seen shift in the connectedness of individuals? What will this mean for how people work, play and learn? What strategies need to be rethought? What can you learn from the companies that are at the forefront? What new capabilities should you be building now to position your organization for success?

Mobile and social have the power to make or break businesses. While the technologies can add value by creating new business models and revenue streams, failure to deliver a quality experience using one of these channels can just as easily mire a company in mediocrity because of a poor customer impression or

inefficient use of employees. To successfully harness mobile and social, businesses need to rethink how customers and employees use and interact with these emerging technologies.

BRING YOUR OWN PERSONA (BYOP)

At their core, digital users are individuals who bring a unique digital profile and set of behaviors to every situation. This new digital world of "Bring Your Own Persona" (BYOP) requires a fundamentally different way of thinking about customers. It used to be that people exhibited predictable behaviors in their public and private lives based on their socio-demographics, allowing us to use classic segmentation for targeted interactions. Those models are failing now. Almost all demographics have access to mobile and social media. What distinguishes different user segments is their savvy in knowing how to use these tools and their comfort levels with data disclosure and privacy in various scenarios.

New digital personas can be characterized along two important dimensions: digital capability and trust.

DIGITAL CAPABILITY takes into account the user's ability to fully use all the latest features, functions and services available with mobile and social to improve their overall effectiveness and quality of life. This includes basic activities such as mobile Web, mobile apps and social communications, and more advanced tools such as voice agents, video chat, notifications, QR codes, location-based services, mobile payments, crowdsourcing and wearable devices.

TRUST involves user willingness to share personal data and in some cases, relinquish privacy in exchange for a perceived benefit. As "Quantified-Self" technology races ahead with the ability to capture every aspect of our lives through smartphones, sensors and social media, we are still wrestling with the fundamental question of whether we prefer personalization to privacy. Some of this comes down to the value that companies and their customers place on different types of data. For instance, in the early days of E-ZPass, many people preferred to sit in long lines at tollbooths rather than have their whereabouts known by the government.

Using trust and capability as the core drivers of digital behavior, we have mapped out six digital user segments (show in Figure 1) to capture the new interaction models we expect to see. These digital segments transcend traditional domains and industry boundaries as people adopt behaviors across a range of settings and selectively apply those same behaviors in different settings depending on their level of trust and sophistication. BYOD—Bring Your Own Device—is old news. In the new digital age, a BYOP model will be crucial in optimizing mobile and social experiences of your customers and employees.

	LIMITED	BASIC	ADVANCED
HIGH	WANNABES (23%)	MAINSTREAMERS (26%)	NOMADS (10%)
LOW	ANALOGS (7%)	PARANOIDS (17%)	CHAMELEONS (17%)

TRUST / DATA SHARING (vertical axis) — **DIGITAL CAPABILITY** (horizontal axis)

FIGURE 1 – Bring Your Own Persona (BYOP) Digital Segmentation Map

These segments are:

- **ANALOGS.** They are unwilling and/or incapable of using digital technologies. They may have been capable digital users who decided to "unplug" due to privacy or life-balance concerns. At best, analogs might be willing to dip their toes into the digital waters via easy-to-use touch points like simple kiosks or websites before progressing to more advanced interactions like mobile and social. Today, they represent approximately seven percent of your user base.

- **WANNABES.** Here we have embryonic users of mobile and social who are very eager to learn the basics so they can seem to be experienced. Wannabes are a group that you want to engage going through their peers who have more advanced capabilities. Once Wannabes see their friends doing something cool or valuable, they will educate themselves to at least get by. Think of seniors talking to their grandkids on Facebook. Once they realized this was the place their grandkids hung out, they put in the effort to become basic Facebook users (not many have progressed to be power users). Today, they represent approximately 23 percent of your user base.

- **MAINSTREAMERS.** These are people willing to opt in to most digital solutions with a strong possibility of a benefit in the near future. Mainstreamers represent the pregnant middle of the market, ready to be nudged toward behaviors and outcomes that are good for them and others. Show them the value of each interaction, and they can quickly become loyal digital patrons. If the value equation diminishes (compared to competing offers), you may lose them. Today, they make up approximately 26 percent of your user base.

- **PARANOIDS.** They are cautious users, very protective of their data and need to be persuaded that there is a value in sharing their data. Paranoids represent a potentially dangerous group as they will lash out like frightened animals if they believe their personal information is being compromised or misused somehow. Companies that do not respect the privacy needs of this segment risk public scrutiny and bashing. Today, Paranoids are approximately 17 percent of your user base.

- **CHAMELEONS.** Here are people who will change their digital behaviors and data sharing to suit each situation and personal interests. They are protective of their data when they perceive there is limited benefit or have low trust. Chameleons will educate themselves on the privacy policies of different brands and make sure they share only what they need to. It will take an extremely strong value proposition or clear privacy controls to engage them with highly personalized interactions. Today, they represent approximately 17 percent of your user base.

- **DIGITAL NOMADS.** This segment truly wants to port their digital profile anywhere in any setting. They are willing to share data on the promise of a future benefit for them or a broader group. Digital Nomads fully expect that you will not just collect their data, but use it to deliver an exceptional user experience and significant benefit for them and other users like them. Achieve this and they will be your greatest champions. Fall short, and they will become your biggest critics. Today, they are approximately 10 percent of your user base.

The distribution of users across these new digital profiles will obviously change over time with a general trend toward the upper right (Nomads) of the segmentation map. However, depending on shifts in customer attitudes toward privacy, regulation, market dynamics and the perceived value being delivered by digital solutions, this could go in the other direction or even fracture with a population of users choosing to disengage if the privacy-versus-benefit equation does not work.

While traditional methods of classifying users are based on demographic profiling, the BYOP segmentation approach focuses on digital attitudes and preferences, regardless of age or income. For instance, the fastest growing age groups for iPad adoption are younger than 12 and older than 65.* Also, users aged 25 to 54 are more willing to share their location data than teenagers. Instead of just focusing on customers in a specific vertical, the BYOP model presumes that people will transport their digital behaviors (selectively in the case of Chameleons) across segments and settings. Some examples of digital behaviors being adopted across segments are:

- **Waze**—Sharing your personal data with others to provide a more accurate real-time map of traffic than the major traffic-information providers
- **Uber**—Giving out your location to a network of available cars/drivers to get to where you're going faster than a taxi and cheaper than a limo
- **DriveFactor**—Offering your driving data via an in-car sensor in exchange for better insurance premiums
- **Jawbone Up**—Using advanced sensors, positive peer pressure and gamification to improve activity and fitness levels
- **Fooducate**—Scanning the bar code on a food product to get detailed nutrition information and compare to your dietary needs

WINNING OVER THE NOMADS AND ANALOGS

As we shift toward a BYOP model, how can companies engage their customers and employees, come up with new products and services and, in building the right components, win? The key areas we suggest companies and their leaders focus on are:

- **Adopt a Digital Segmentation Model like BYOP.** Companies need to modernize the way they target digital consumers to maximize value in each segment. A great example is eBay's strategy with PayPal, a relationship that appeals to multiple demographics with more flexible payment options.

* Comscore Tablens, 2013

- **Be Transparent with Customers about Data Usage.** Consumers and employees alike are willing to give up data for value. Clear and concise disclosure for what data is being used and why, as well as simple user controls to opt in and out of different levels of data sharing, are essential to establishing end-user trust.

- **Develop a Strong User-Centered Design Capability.** Whether through developing in-house capabilities or through third parties, companies must tailor the user experiences of applications and Web interfaces for the specific needs of each BYOP segment. This requires creative thinking. An example is WellDoc's behavioral approach in designing its DiabetesManager application.

- **Identify and Engage Nontraditional Partners with which to Innovate.** Some of the best opportunities for solutions with broad appeal exist at the intersection of traditional industries (for example, Nike's success at the intersection of fitness and healthcare). Verizon is engaged in similar efforts with its LTE innovation initiatives.

- **Use Big Data and Predictive Analytics.** An analytics infrastructure grounded in Big Data allows innovative businesses to drive precision offers based on collaborative filtering, BYOP segmentation and interface gamification. Wal-Mart and Target are pioneers in Big Data innovation.

Companies that are able to reorient their marketing and product-development efforts around digital customer segments and behaviors will tap into the hypergrowth that mobile and social are experiencing. By tailoring the interactions to their unique digital abilities and attitudes, successful companies will create more offerings that appeal to Wannabes, Nomads and Mainstreamers. Likewise, market leaders will be aware of the limited competency and privacy fears of Analogs and Paranoids, being sure to engage them with clear and transparent interactions. Finally, a select few will find ways to engage Chameleons through digital interactions that build trusted relationships and clear value that nudge their behavior toward being a Nomad within the context of their brand.

As the boundaries between customers and employees become indistinguishable, the BYOP segments will take on even more importance among employers looking to raise their employee and consumer user experiences and unlock the full potential of digital innovation within their organizations.

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