So many women are using digital and mobile tools it’s hard to target all of them. Here’s a look at the mobile warriors as well as the more casual, utilitarian users.
Introduction

Always On Women

A survey of how women are using technology today

BY BETH SNYDER BULIK

You may not know who Elisa Camahort Page, Jory Des Jardins and Lisa Stone are, but you probably know the web and media community they cofounded called BlogHer. It was in 2005 that they first organized a women-blogger conference that then turned into a community website in 2006 with 60 female bloggers. Today, there are more than 2,500 BlogHer bloggers in its publishing network, which reaches 27 million visitors every month.

These three female execs may have realized it earlier than most, but the rest of the world is finally catching up to the fact that women are a powerful force on the web.

“Female users are the unsung heroines behind the most engaging, fastest growing and most valuable consumer internet and e-commerce companies. Especially when it comes to social and shopping, women rule the internet,” wrote Aileen Lee, a partner at the storied venture-capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers.

And it’s not only the web as we think of it today where they’re beginning to “rule.” Women are also adopting mobile technology like smartphones quickly and are beginning to drive trends in that space, like mobile video viewing and mobile payments, as well.

So many women use technology every day that segmenting and targeting all of them becomes difficult. There are mobile warriors who are connected 24/7 at one end of the spectrum and much more casual, utilitarian users annoyed by tech intrusions at the other. But there are definite commonalities across all age and social groupings of women. (See Chart 1)

First and foremost is purchasing power. Women spend about $5 trillion, or half of the nation’s GDP, every year. And there’s also the well-known industry fact that women control or have a say in 80% (or more) of all household purchases. That’s not an audience any marketer can afford to ignore.

Another common trait women share is engagement. Whether you believe that women are innately better communicators than men or not, they do talk more and text more than men every month, 28% and 14%, respectively, according to Nielsen data, and use social features of their mobile devices like SMS, MMS and social networking more when compared with men. “Online, women are more engaged than men, spending more time on fewer sites during a single sitting—a valuable attribute to advertisers. They also visit more social and community sites, which is especially important given the popularity of immediate online/social discussion during major TV events like awards shows and reality programming,” wrote Jackie Bergeron, VP-local audience insights,
When it comes to the world wide web of women, the Meredith Women’s Network just clicks. In fact, 25 million women come to us for exceptional digital experiences around home, family and personal wellness each and every month. Our trusted brands provide premium content that women and their families rely on to do more, live better and connect with what matters most.

To move your brand into her inner circle, contact Lauren Wiener, Senior Vice President, Meredith Women’s Network, at lauren@meredith.com.
## Chart 1

### What Devices Are Women Using, and What They Are Doing with Them?

**Activities by device (female)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>CELL PHONE (N=77)</strong></th>
<th><strong>LAPTOP (N=73)</strong></th>
<th><strong>DESKTOP (N=47)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MILLENIALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search the web for information</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing games</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read up on current events</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal organization</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch video</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use online maps/GPS</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check the weather</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>CELL PHONE (N=147)</strong></th>
<th><strong>LAPTOP (N=103)</strong></th>
<th><strong>DESKTOP (N=129)</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GEN X</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search the web for information</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing games</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read up on current events</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal organization</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch video</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use online maps/GPS</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check the weather</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>CELL PHONE (N=166)</strong></th>
<th><strong>LAPTOP (N=110)</strong></th>
<th><strong>DESKTOP (N=157)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOOMERS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search the web for information</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing games</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read up on current events</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal organization</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch video</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use online maps/GPS</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check the weather</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Small base size for Millennials on desktop.
Q: Which of the following activities do you do on each of these devices? You may select as many, or as few, of the activities for each device. If you do not do any of the following activities for that device, you may leave that column blank.
Source: JWT/Sonar
Nielsen Media Research, in a recent blog post.

What it comes down to is this: Women aren’t interested in the gee-whiz-look-what-it-can-do abilities of technology. Instead, their approach to technology is much more practical, and they’re using technology to do more, to extend themselves as career woman, wife, girlfriend, mother, friend, sister and volunteer.

“Until now the story has been about women catching up with men, whether that’s in use of mobile or using the net or whatever. But the next wave of women and technology is not just about catching up, but setting and influencing trends—from social gaming to group buying and more,” said Melissa Lavigne-Delville, VP-trends and insights, NBC Universal. “In Web 3.0, women are poised (to be key) in the humanizing of technology. Streaming, intuitive, collaborative and connected (media) are all very suited to women.”

We wanted to find out not only what role women might play in shaping that Web 3.0 future, but also what they’re doing right now, as a way to better understand their choices, capture their attention, and communicate with them. Ad Age partnered with JWT, which conducted a quantitative survey in the U.S. using Sonar, JWT’s proprietary online research tool, surveying 1,001 adults age 18-plus (515 women and 486 men) from March 29 to April 4, with the data weighted by age and gender. Much of the data is analyzed by generational cohort: Millennials (ages 18-33), Gen X (ages 34-46) and Boomers (ages 47-66).

Media Usage

Lori Culwell carries five tech gadgets in her purse at all times—an iPhone, a BlackBerry, an iPod, a flash drive that also plays music and a camera. And she needs them all.

As a tech author and founder of website consulting firm Get Creative, she’s not your typical female tech consumer. But she agrees that women are buying more tech devices and doing more with them than ever before.

“I have a friend who is a stay-at-home mom and she’s not very tech savvy but she has a computer, a mobile phone and a digital camera. I think that’s the baseline for most women,” she said. “Tech used to be the realm of men—and there are still some things I won’t touch, like the TV, DVR and DVD player … but women today are more likely to be social and sharing and living more online, and so gadgetry is coming along with that.”

Most research shows that women have caught up with, and in some cases surpassed, men in the ownership, use and, yes, even the love of tech gadgets. A Burst Media study found that, overall, 74% of people think technology has improved their lives, with Gen X women leading other female age groups and men with a whopping 83% who say technology has improved how they keep in touch with family and friends.

And whether desktops, laptops, mobile phones, MP3 players or even video-game consoles, women have just as many tech toys as men. According to Pew Internet research in December 2010, 82% of women owned mobile phones (compared to 88% of men), 59% owned a desktop (60% of men) and 51% owned a laptop (54% of men). Another 46% owned an MP3 player (47% of men), 40%
WHAT ARE WOMEN DOING ON THEIR SMARTPHONES?

Smartphone activities (female), N = 515

Q: Do you typically use your smartphone web browser or an app (or neither) to do each of the following online activities?

Source: JWT/Sonar

WHAT ARE WOMEN BUYING ON SMARTPHONES?

Things purchased on smartphones (female), N = 88

Q: What have you bought using your cell phone?

Source: JWT/Sonar
owned a game console (45% of men), 5% owned an e-book device (4% of men) and 3% owned a tablet (5% of men).

According to GfK MRI’s Survey of the American Consumer, Spring 2011, of all the U.S. adults who purchased a computer in the past 12 months, half were women, and 47% said they influenced the purchase decision. Twenty-two percent of all women said that they shared a home computer with a child under 18. Gen X women, however, were twice as likely to have a child under 18 sharing a home computer.

GfK MRI also found that of all the U.S. adults who bought a TV in the past 12 months, 50% of them were women, and 52% of women buyers said they were the decision maker for the purchase. Millennial women were 9% more likely to have purchased a TV in the past 12 months, while Gen X women were 5% more likely. Women were also responsible for half of the DVD/Blu-ray purchases in the past 12 months, with millennial women 42% more likely to have made a DVD/Blu-ray purchase, while Gen X women were 11% more likely.

They’re also connected: 76% use the internet at least occasionally, according to Pew. ComScore data last year found that North American women spent about 38 hours online per month, just one hour fewer than men.

JWT looked at three particularly important devices for women—mobile phones, laptops and desktop computers—and queried women to find out what role those devices play in their lives. The researchers also looked at the up-and-coming tablet category and how both women and men are using the devices. Although the respondent pool for tablets was small, we outlined some of those findings as well, with the caveat of low sample size.

**Mobile Phones**

Women use their phones most often for making phone calls (96%) and texting (74%). As many millennials use their mobile phones for texting (90%) as for making phone calls (92%). And while those are the two most utilitarian features, women also rank them as the top two “must have” uses when asked what they couldn’t live without in a mobile device. The third most important feature, in keeping with women’s traditional role as family chronicler, was taking pictures and videos. More than 38% of women named that feature as most important, while only 27% of men did. (See Chart 2)

According to GfK MRI’s Survey of the American Consumer, Spring 2011, millennials women used picture messaging 75% more than the general population, while Gen X women used the feature 30% more than the average. Millennials were also twice as likely to have used the video-recorder feature on their mobile phones as the general population, as well as twice as likely to use an MP3 player on their phones. Millennials were also the only cohort to overindex for using the video player on their mobile phones, as they used that feature 75% more than the average U.S. adult.

JWT’s survey found shopping (11%), watching videos (11%) and paying bills (8%) all ranked low in usage, which may reflect the still nascent uptake and ongoing security concerns around mobile commerce. As for “must have” features, women ranked the abilities

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**CHART 5**

**HOW WOMEN ARE SHOPPING WITH CELL PHONES**

Top source for info? A call to family and friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MALE (N= 136)</th>
<th>FEMALE (N= 101)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calling a family member or friend to ask for his or her help or opinion</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching the web to get more information on a product</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for reviews on an item I’m looking at</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanning a product’s bar code</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing if I can find the product I’m looking at for cheaper at another vendor</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending a picture of the product via email or social networks to get opinions</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanning a product’s QR code</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Augmented Reality to get more information on a product</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting a shopping list stored on my phone</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching for a recipe</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing a coupon stored on my phone to a store clerk</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding my way around a store, using an indoor digital map on my phone</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching for a coupon for a product I’m thinking of buying</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: How have you used your cell phone to help you shop while in a retail store? Source: JWT/Sonar

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**ALWAYS ON WOMEN**

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to shop, read the news and watch videos in equal last place. In fact, not one Gen X or baby boomer woman chose shopping online as a must have. But 6% of millennials did, again indicating the quicker adoption by the digital-native generation and boding well for future mobile purchasing. (See Chart 2)

Of the 22% of women who do use their cell phones while shopping, they use them in a variety of different ways. Almost three-fourths (73%) use a mobile device to make phone calls to ask family or friends for help or opinions. While that seems pretty low-tech, the next most used functions are to get more information on the product and scanning the product’s bar code (both 43%). And those aren’t the only higher-tech uses that made the list. A smaller percentage use a stored shopping list (26%), 23% scan a product’s QR code and 20% show coupons stored on the phone to store clerks. (See Chart 5)

Carey Witmer, VP-group publisher for the Parents Network at Meredith, said those shopping numbers skew to millennials, with 22% using their cell phones while shopping compared with 11% of Gen Xers in the Parents Network Moms & Media study. Millennials are driving mobile web use in general among moms. They also use smartphones to connect to social networks (62% vs. 42% of Gen X) and for banking and finance (35% of millennials vs. 23% of Gen Xers).

“Smartphones in particular are their umbilical cords to the world,” she said. “Millennials are driving the change as digital natives that have wholly grown up with technology, and particularly mobile technology.” In fact, millennials are 75% more likely to live in a household without a landline, and use only a cell phone, according to GfK MRI.

Ann Mack, director of trendspotting at JWT, said, “Right now the phone is being primarily used for its basic communications functions akin to the early days of the internet, when people were tapping into a fraction of its full potential. If you look at the wide range of activities that people across generations are doing on laptop and desktop computers, from game playing and shopping to watching video and catching up on current events, you can see the room for growth for the mobile phone, especially with the growing proliferation of smartphones. The mobile phone is evolving into an everything hub, but it’s still early days.”

**Laptops**

In a nod to the growth of the untethered lifestyle driving mobile, laptops are now playing a greater role in women’s lives. In JWT’s research, the younger millennials in particular reported doing much more on laptops in almost all categories of activity from shopping and personal organization to watching videos and listening to music. (See Chart 1) Millennials are also 15% less likely to own a desktop computer than the average U.S. adult, according to GfK MRI, and 18% more likely to own an Apple/Mac brand computer.

Some tech marketers are getting that message and designing laptops that appeal to women. Hewlett-Packard partnered with women’s clothing designer Vivienne Tam several years ago to create custom-designed netbooks for women, even debuting them on stage at Fashion Week in New York. The Vivienne Tam HP Mini had soft corners, pianolike keys and a gleaming lacquer exterior with a digital clutch look meant specifically for women. The original netbook was originally forecast as a limited edition, but demand pushed the run to special-edition status. It sold five times more than the original forecast, and sold out inventory completely in five months. Gen Xers, according to GfK MRI, are 35% more likely to own a netbook.

However, slapping pink and pretty on any tech product isn’t the takeaway. In fact, Dell in 2009 rolled out a “Della” site and products designed just for women, and got blasted for patronizing and stereotyping women with content that included “tech tips” around calorie counting and finding recipes. Dell did respond quickly and changed the content, but it no longer exists today.
Aimee MacDonald learned something this summer that many people of her generation seem not to understand. Her lesson? The value of a good old-fashioned person-to-person phone call.

“I’ve found that stepping into the real world this summer with my job, that it’s a lot better to pick up the phone and call instead of text. Conversations are underrated. When you text, you can’t get their tone of voice or inflection. You can get so much more out of a voice call,” she said.

Of course, that wasn’t always the case. She admitted that just two years ago, when she was still in high school, she rarely placed calls and instead “only texted.”

“It used to drive my parents crazy. They were always saying, ‘Could you please just pick up your phone?’” MacDonald said, echoing many older generation’s feelings about teens’ constant phone-typing. Her father’s family vacation rule, in fact, is that everyone’s tech devices stay at home.

She's also atypical in the mobile phone she carries, which is an older nonsmartphone version. She says all her friends and family members have smartphones, but while she would like one someday, she doesn’t want to pay the extra money every month, and added, “It’s just not that big of a deal to me.” She has an iPod touch for Wi-Fi connecting on the go and a digital camera for photos.

She does carry her beloved Apple Mac laptop with her many places, and when asked if she had a desktop, she asked sincerely, “What do you mean? ... Oh, a computer! No, not since years ago.”

MacDonald spends about three hours a day on Facebook, she said, and an almost equal amount of time on her newest favorite site, StumbleUpon. She also watches a lot of YouTube videos, TV shows and Netflix DVD and instant-streaming movies. Her college in Vermont doesn’t allow cable in the dorms, and so with limited TV reception, she said her laptop is “kind of like my TV.” She added that Hulu is very popular on campus.

She also uses her computer to check her email “constantly.” MacDonald said many of her friends have been into Tumblr for a while, although she’s just learning about it. She doesn’t have a Twitter account and said neither do most of her friends.

“I use Facebook because it makes sense. It’s useful for keeping in touch with my friends and family and to share things quickly. Twitter I don’t really get. I don’t know how it connects people. It’s big with celebrities, so I think that’s the draw,” she said.

She admits that she uses technology a lot, maybe even too much. But she really likes all her tech things, and so do her friends.

“I feel ridiculous sometimes with my laptop, phone and six tabs open on the internet and listening to music. When you’re hanging out with people and everyone’s doing that, it does look funny when you step out of it.” she said.
**CHART 7**

**WOMEN ARE WATCHING VIDEO ON DEVICES OTHER THAN THEIR TV SETS**

Types of video watched by device

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CELL PHONE (N = 47)*</th>
<th>LAPTOP (N= 166)</th>
<th>DESKTOP (N= 196)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clips</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV shows</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music videos</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Small base size for cell phone.

Q: Which type of programming do you watch on the following devices?
Source: JWT/Sonar

**CHART 8**

**HOW DO WOMEN DISCOVER THE VIDEO THEY WATCH?**

Source of videos watched

Q: Which of the following explains how you find videos to watch?
Source: JWT/Sonar
2.4 million downloads and counting

Whether it’s shopping for the latest specials at a local grocery store, planning a dinner party at home or scanning through a magazine on the go, Meredith has an app for that. We connect women to the content that appeals to them—when and where they need it most.

To place your brand in the palm of her hand, contact Lauren Wiener, Senior Vice President, Meredith Women’s Network, at lauren@meredith.com.
Desktops

In the past year, everyone from Google executives to media pundits has declared that the desktop computer is no longer relevant—or well on its way to irrelevance anyhow. Don’t tell that to women, however, as they still use the weightier devices more often than laptops for email, shopping, playing games, using online maps or GPS, and checking the weather.

It’s probably no surprise then that the oldest generation profiled, baby boomers, use desktops most often for most activities and especially for more “traditional” online activities such as email, searching the web, looking up maps and checking the weather. Boomers were 13% more likely to own a desktop computer at home, according to GfK MRI, while Gen Xers were 9% more likely to use a desktop computer at home. Gen Xers are also more likely to share a home computer with either another adult or a child under 18 than any other age group. Only in gaming did significantly more millennials (68%) use desktops than the other generations (59% for Gen X and 55% of boomers), as well as for travel research and booking (74% use a desktop vs. 58% and 57% of Gen Xers and boomers, respectively), according to the JWT data.

Tables

Considering the visual and tactile appeal and experience of tablets, it’s not a surprise that many women use tablets for information and entertainment. (Again, keep in mind, the base was small for owners of tablets in the JWT survey, so these figures are for directional purposes only.) They read current events (75%), read about health and/or beauty (74%), watch videos (55%) and play games (55%) on their tablets. (See Chart 9)

However, they differed greatly from the men, who tended to use tablets more like a traditional computer. For instance, significantly more men used tablets to shop, pay bills and check the weather than women. This is also the one area where women didn’t outshine men in social media. Only 31% used a tablet for social media, while 65% of men did. Why the disparity? “Technology use is very similar among women and men, except when it comes to the tablet,” Mack said. “True to form with tech, men are early adopters. They are using the tablet for a much wider range of activities than women, from social networking and emailing to searching the web, listening to music and paying the bills.”
Like many Gen Xers, Krista Darr is somewhere in between digerati and Luddite. She checks her email and Facebook every morning, but not before reading the local hard-copy newspaper. She enjoys Facebooking daily, but sees no need for a Twitter account. She can’t stand to be without her BlackBerry, but she doesn’t text.

Her feelings are also conflicted when it comes to technology. She loves the efficiency and effectiveness of being able to get things done without having to go to her desk and log in, but agrees that being “always on” can be overwhelming.

“As a person who is super conscious of my time and how little free time I have, it’s proven to be very efficient in getting things done during downtime, like waiting at the doctor’s office,” she said. “At times, it can be overwhelming, but on the flip side, it’s much easier for me to have a good work-life balance.”

Darr has her beloved BlackBerry, a laptop for work, a laptop at home, a desktop computer at home and an iPod. Her family has an Xbox 360 and a Wii that they share. Her husband also has a laptop, a mobile phone and a Kindle, which she uses for reading sometimes. Each of her two children has mobile gaming devices including two Nintendo DS game systems and a PlayStation Portable. The tween children also each have an iPod touch enabled with texting software.

She is the lone Facebook account holder in the family and uses it in her personal life to keep up with friends and family. She checks in once a day or so, and doesn’t usually “friend” her work colleagues. She uses LinkedIn instead for business friends.

When asked if she posts embarrassing things on Facebook and that’s why she doesn’t have work friends, she laughed and said, “No, but I really think of Facebook as something social and personal, and sometimes I might include political or other points of views that I wouldn’t want affiliated with work.”

Her kids don’t have mobile phones yet—next year, her older son, who will be starting middle school, will get one—but they do text from their iPod touches. Ms. Darr said her kids haven’t passed her yet in tech savvy, and although she doesn’t text yet, she sees it coming.

“As I get it when they get phones, I know I’ll need it then to keep in touch with them. Most of my friends and co-workers have smartphones, so I can get around texting for now,” she said.

Video games loom large in her children's lives, although more for her son, who games socially with friends, than her daughter, who tends to play casual fashion and art games. Darr, however, plays few games. She enjoys some of Nintendo’s Wii Fit games and Harmonix Music System’s Rock Band with the entire family, and on her mobile device, she admits to being a WordFu “addict,” but not much else because, as she said, “I just don’t have time for it.”

She goes with the flow when it comes to technology and knows that she’ll adopt more and more in time.

“As life changes, I know I’ll add texting, and as I start a new business, I’m going to need to know how to use Twitter and add that to promote the business. These are just things I haven’t had a need for yet and although she doesn’t text yet, she sees it coming.
Marketers

If you’re a marketer and you’re not using digital means to reach women, it’s a safe bet you’re leaving money on the table. The lone fact that women dominate online shopping should be convincing enough. But add the fact that they’re as wired (or as wireless) as men, and it becomes just short of a mandate that marketers figure out how to interact with women through these channels.

However, acknowledging that brands need to use technology to reach women is one thing, using it effectively to reach women is completely different. Ask Pepsi about its Amp iPhone app that was meant to (humorously) help men “score” with women. It featured an arsenal of pickup lines for 24 different stereotypes of women, meant to (humorously) help men “score” with women. It featured an arsenal of pickup lines for 24 different stereotypes of women, such as the bookworm, the cougar and the goth girl. The app even included a way to easily post “conquests” and comments on Twitter after the fact. It took less than two weeks until Pepsi removed it from the app store after an avalanche of mostly female criticism.

While it seems a no-brainer that women do not like to be objectified, what’s less obvious to most brands is what types of content to use to get across a message, when is the right time to contact consumers and which digital media is best for reaching women. As we have seen repeatedly throughout research and this report, no two women are alike in personal or tech tastes. However, some brands have found success studying their target customers’ general preferences and then using technology to market to them.

Macy’s found out just how well digital and interactive tools can work, in fact. In February, the retailer began using Quick Response, or QR, codes as a test to see how its mostly female customer base would respond. Called Backstage Pass, the mobile campaign was built around dozens of fashion-themed videos with designers and celebrities offering advice, tips or just general information. In some of Tommy Hilfiger’s videos, for example, the famous designer talks about things like his roots in fashion, where he gets his ideas and why quality is important, while in others, he talked about his spring must-haves, which included a chambry shirt and classic blazer. Other videos included makeup artist to the stars Bobbi Brown, domestic diva Martha Stewart and rapper-designer Sean John. Brown’s tutorial on how to create a smoky-eye effect, identified as an important trend for spring, was the most downloaded.

“We know our shopper, and she really does love fashion, but she is also a little intimidated by it and looks to Macy’s for guidance,” said Martine Reardon, exec VP-marketing at Macy’s. “The amount of views doubled (with the QR-code campaign.) ... And don’t think it’s just younger people. Any Nielsen metric will say that tech is driven by millennials, but we are very strong with 31- to-54-year-olds, and clearly that’s whose been downloading these videos. ... We may not be as quick to adopt as millennials, but we are adopting it.”

Oxygen, NBC Universal’s cable channel aimed at women, uses its online Oxygen Live website as a hub for chat and buzz that viewers can tap into while watching a show like “The Glee Project” or “The World According to Paris.” From the hub they can then do social-media campaigns, such as a recent one for Verizon through which fans checking show chatter could earn custom cobranded TV show and Verizon “stickers” to post on Facebook and Twitter. Along with its own social media at Oxygen Live, the women’s cable channel also does “a ton of advertising” on social spaces such as Facebook.

Another NBC media channel, iVillage online, is a veteran in the digital-marketing realm with programs such as iVoices, a part of the site where women from around the country can apply to become regular video correspondents for iVillage. They then offer iVoices to sponsors, such as Frito Lay, which underwrote an iVoices Go Green campaign in April. iVillage also uses a lot of social media, as does its Oxygen sibling, knowing that is a key component in its target audience’s communications’ arsenal. T.J. Maxx recently got thousands of iVillagers to submit photos of their personal style for summer on a custom message board. The comments were also used in social ad units that automatically updated with new comments and posts.

However, for as many marketers using tech, and especially social media, to target women, there is one industry that seems to still have a gender gap. And that’s the tech industry itself.

“Women want computers that work well and cell phones that work well,” said Mia Kim-Solloway, a digital-media and marketing strategist and founder of Popgadget. “But tech marketers are off the track pushing the mommy thing or just turning the products pink. ... Efforts so far have been pretty superficial. Go to CES and see exactly what the whole industry is about—a testosterone factory with booth babes wearing iPods as bikinis.”

She did say that one positive sign is that tech marketers have begun more aggressive marketing to women as mothers. While it may just be a first step, and one in their comfort zone as marketers have a firm grasp on mothers as a demographic, at least it’s a step toward courting women with technology designed for them.
MOBILE SURVEY

As a complement to its online survey, JWT conducted a mobile survey in the United States using mobile software from Technos, surveying 140 women age 18-plus about their mobile-phone usage and attitudes from April 29 to 30 and from May 6 to 7.

While the sample size is small, the close association and dichotomy of views women have about their phones is worth noting. Women have mixed emotions when it comes to their cell phones. In the online survey, JWT asked women to describe their relationship with their phones, and came up with a fairly even three-way split of disparate views.

Almost one-quarter (22%) described the relationship with their mobile phone as a “full-on love affair”; while 29% eschewed that and deemed it “strictly business.” The largest percentage, at 41%, viewed the relationship as simply personal and private, and characterized it as “what happens on my phone, stays on my phone.” A remaining smaller percentage, 9%, indicated they are ruled by their phones and identified most with the statement “my phone wears the pants in the relationship.” (See Chart 10)

The wide polarization of feelings indicates that there is a broad range of emotions about how and where mobile devices fit into their lives, and those feelings vary from individual to woman, and possibly situation to situation. Strictly business at work becomes personal and private at home on the couch texting friends. Yet no matter how they feel, not many of them are going to put the devices down, according to the mobile survey. For instance, almost 45% of those women said their mobile phone is the “first thing they touched” in the morning. And a full 84% had it in their hands within 30 minutes of waking up. That’s more than eight in 10 women who picked up her phone—in some cases, to turn off the alarm, as 65% said they use their phone often or sometimes as a morning alarm—before even getting dressed.

And the phone continues to play a big role in the rest of their day. Ninety percent of the women said they would feel “totally” or “sort of” anxious if they lost their mobile phone right now. The loss of information, access and/or the overall ability to connect was unerring to almost all of them. It was interesting to note, however, the “totally anxious” feeling was much more prevalent on Friday afternoon, when 81% would be “very upset” about losing their phone, compared with just 40% who would be emotionally distraught if it happened on a Saturday afternoon.

What they’re doing with the phones, no matter what day it is, was pretty typical across the women in the broader survey. The majority used it to check and send email (63%), make voice calls (51%) and send texts (48%). Many also reported using their phones to check and update social media content (45%), use an app (38%) and search the web or read online content (36%).

While apps and social media were the most used tools on their phones, the women in the survey seemed selective in their choices. The most popular number of apps used was just one to two (57%), followed by three to five (35%). Only 2% of the women use six to 10 apps, and none of them use 10 or more apps. Another 7% said they don’t use any apps at all.

The JWT mobile survey finished with one open-ended question to tap into women’s desires. Respondents were asked, “What do you wish your phone could do?” A wide variety of answers showed up on the wish list, including read my email to me, hold a charge for longer, and set the alarm for house and car. But the most popular answer was nothing. That is, of those who answered the question, the majority replied that their phone already did most everything they needed or wanted.

Attitudes

The following are excerpts from the diary of Kim, a 33-year-old Denver mother of two, logging her daily tech experiences for NBCU’s ongoing proprietary panel of women age 18 to 30:

7:30 A.M.: Attempt to play a game of Word Mole, but it needs my full attention and apparently so do my kids.

9 A.M.: Jump on to Facebook … surprisingly, Abby drank too much the night before, Adam’s commute to work was an SOB and Allyssa is in awe over her newborn. I’m such a FB hater/addict/ voyeur. But seriously, can’t someone post something witty or interesting or stimulating?

12 P.M.: Return from gym and try to pound out some work on my laptop … my Gmail is running SO slow, the words are not registering on the screen until about 10 seconds after I type them out. Must Google “why is my email so slow.”

4 P.M.: Off to Starbucks and Petsmart to kill time, my sister calls me. My BlackBerry drops the call five times, then the screen jams up.

9:30 P.M.: I stumble into bed with the phone on the pillow next to me and get ready to do it all again tomorrow.

Kim’s day is not only full of technology, but full of feelings about that technology. In the morning, she is distracted by technology, later she’s annoyed by Facebook, frustrated by a slow-running computer, upset that her phone is dropping calls and, finally, exhausted, but falls asleep with her phone next to her on the pillow.

She, like most women, has integrated technology into her life with mixed emotions. It’s not exactly a love/hate relationship with technology, but it seems to be causing mixed emotions at times. Feelings from joy (your new baby niece’s photos) to accomplishment (responding to work emails while waiting at the dentist office) to guilt (haven’t posted to Twitter in three days) to overwhelmed (email inbox full and no time to delete).

“When we asked women if technology makes their life easier or more complicated, when forced to choose, they pick easier,” said Melissa Lavigne-Delville, VP-trends and strategic insights at NBC Universal. “They recognize the benefits definitely, but there is also the idea of the side effects of technology in women’s lives.”
Some of those side effects include “churn burn,” or the feeling that technology changes so quickly that women don’t even bother to try to keep up (75% of NBCU’s panelists agreed with that sentiment); or hyperdocumentation, which is the need to capture every single event as a photo or text or status update (41% agreed). Other negatives included e-guilt (30%); entertainment debt, or the state of having too much great content saved and downloaded you may not be able to use it all (28%); fear of missing out on something going on online when you’re not (24%); and obsessive status disorder, which is thinking about all real-life events as how will this look or read as an update (22%).

The good news is that digital natives, especially Generation Z (the teens and tweens following on the heels of the millennials and born into mainstream use of technology devices and adoption) have fewer side effects, Lavigne-Delville said, adding, “They don’t see it as real-life vs. digital-life problems. It’s just life.”

And there are positives in technology for women.

Burst Media’s Left to Their Own Devices gadget and tech behavior study found that “Mom CEOs,” as it dubbed them, think that tech gadgets have made managing their households better: 56% of women age 35 to 44, and 61% of women age 45 to 54 agreed. Gen X women also were the most keen on tech in their households, with 25% saying tech devices have greatly improved how they run their homes.

Meredith’s Parents Network Moms & Media study found that moms (which includes 80% of all women at some point in their lives) have significantly increased both their usage and positive reception of technology. Carey Witmer, VP-group publisher for the Parents Network at Meredith, called them “media omnivores.”

“It’s and, not or. For moms, media is additive. She didn’t leave behind TV, magazines or books, she’s adding to them and using tech to enable that consumption,” she said. In fact, 70% of the moms in their Moms & Media study agreed that their ability to multitask improved when they had a child.

Moms do still have some conflicted feelings, though. A full one-half of those surveyed said Facebook is a waste of time, and one-third said it makes them feel overwhelmed. However, 74% of them are still using it. The lesson for marketers is if you’re going to market and advertise on Facebook, you had better make sure your content is valuable and relevant because many of the women are going in already thinking it’s a waste of time, Witmer said. Don’t confirm their feelings.

Mothers also have strong feelings when it comes to their kids and technology. JWT found that while moms of children under age 12 tended to use mobile phones to entertain their kids (33%) or get them to quiet down (28%), moms of children 13 and older wished their kids didn’t use their cell phones as much (47%) or would pick up the phone when she called (65%). (See Chart 11) The average age women thought it was acceptable to give a child a mobile phone was 14, with 33% saying 12 or 13 was appropriate, and 30% choosing 15 or 16 as the appropriate age for a first mobile phone. Gen X women were 43% more likely to have four or more mobile phones in their households, according to GfK MRI’s Survey of the American Consumer, Spring 2011.

Although the survey found men had similar feelings about mobile-phone usage and kids, the research did find that men are more likely to use the phone to entertain kids (45%) or get them to quiet down (41%).

“Dads tend to use the phone to pacify their kids more than moms do, so the question is what can brands do to help moms feel OK about handing kids the mobile for a spell?” said JWT’s Mack.
**BOOMER PROFILE**

**Paula Moore, 55**  
**Administrator, George Washington Hospital, Washington, D.C.**

Paula Moore’s life is filled with technology—and she loves it. The 55-year-old hospital administrator has six desktop computers (four for work and two at home), one laptop, one iPhone, three pagers (two for work and one personal), an iPod and a Wii video-gaming system.

She uses organizer software on her phone to keep her work and personal schedules, and texts throughout the day with her three 20-something sons, her husband, friends and family, and the doctors she works with.

“I don’t know how I survived 10 years ago without all this technology,” she said. “If I leave my phone at home, by the time I start to back out of the driveway, I know something is wrong.”

She is a baby boomer, of course, and while her sons had computers growing up, beginning when they started school, she didn’t use one until she got one on the job. But while she marvels at their ability to pick up any technology and use it without cracking a manual, she is also proud of her own tech savvy, which, as a non-digital native, was earned.

“I had to take a computer course when I first started and I’m still learning in many ways,” Moore said. “But I picked it up quickly, and I’m pretty good at it, but I have my sons if I need it. They are my tech resources.”

Her 5-year-old grandson might be another resource soon as well. He already has his own laptop and mobile phone and sends her texts all the time, she said.

But she’s not into every latest technology wave. She doesn’t do much video gaming. She has a Ms. Pac-Man game on her phone she plays when she’s waiting sometimes, like at the airport when traveling. And she doesn’t even think of her Wii—which her family bought her for Christmas two years ago—as a video-gaming machine. When asked about video gaming, she said she doesn’t use Xbox and PS3 like her sons, but regarding the Wii, she said she only uses it for exercising every day. She recently got a workout program that has a camera and can “tell you the areas you need to work on,” she said, adding with a laugh, “like I didn’t already know where.”

Moore also doesn’t watch videos or TV shows or movies on her laptop, desktop or mobile phones, and isn’t absorbed by social media. She does have a Facebook account, set up specifically for a class reunion a few years ago, and she checks in “maybe twice a year” to see if there are any old friends there, but otherwise, she said she doesn’t need it.

“I just don’t have time for any of that. And anyway, I like to keep my business to myself,” she said.

Texting is her favorite way to use technology, calling it her “best friend” and using it to keep caught up with work, family and friends “all day, evening and night.”

In fact, one of her biggest challenges is turning it all off. Her husband made her promise to leave her computer and mobile phone at home when just the two of them go on vacation next month. After some negotiating, she got him to agree to take his mobile phone at least, in case their children need something, but hers stays parked at home.

“I don’t know how I’m going to do it,” she lamented. “Wish me luck!”
USE TECH SOLUTIONS TO MIMIC, AMPLIFY, AUGMENT OR SIMPLIFY EXISTING BEHAVIORS.
Don’t get wrapped up in the gee-whiz of new technology, using tech for tech’s sake. Women are busy and don’t want or have time to do or learn more. Instead, focus on how technology can augment what’s already happening in the analog world. Alternatively, focus on how it can simplify existing behavior or fit organically into women’s lives rather than trying to create new behavior.

FULLY LEVERAGE THE SOCIAL NATURE OF WOMEN.
Well before the dawn of the internet, women tapped into their real-world social networks to get and make recommendations on what to buy, read, eat, see and do. Facebook amplifies that to the nth degree. Women, especially younger ones, are also looking for validation. Consider ways you can increase your brand’s social currency—how can you create a message that will drive people to socialize around it? And how can you tap into the social graph at point of purchase, when women tend to call family or friends for opinions? The “social” in “social network” can help spread the word about exclusive merchandise, sales, and brand and product preferences, and ultimately drive sales. And if retailers know what their customers need, want or enjoy, the chances of getting the right product in front of the right customer increases.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY.
Brands, particularly tech brands, can continue to play up connectivity, social networking and all the benefits that make digital media so addictive for women; certainly, digital media helps them meet some basic needs. At the same time, women are tech fatigued, stressed out, overstimulated and also afraid: Digital technology has created a seismic shift in how humans relate to each other, and they’re afraid of losing closeness with those they care about or missing out on real-world experiences. Brands whose core message exudes simplicity or human connection will find a well of opportunity.

CREATE EXPERIENCES DESIGNED FOR SIMULTANEOUS CONSUMPTION AND ENGAGEMENT.
Women are no longer interacting with media and technology in a focused, linear way; rather, they’re chatting on Facebook as they watch TV, texting while flipping through a magazine, gaming on an iPad while listening to music. Brands should steer attention between one medium and another in a continuous loop, timing secondary content to stream alongside primary content (paid TV media, for instance). Leveraging women’s impulse to multitask can turn a potential negative (distraction) into a positive (an immersive experience).

CONTINUOUSLY ASK, WHAT’S THE VALUE EXCHANGE?
Since women are so strapped for time, offer them something of value in return for doing anything above and beyond what they already do. What do women get in return for viewing, interacting with, contributing to or amplifying your content or campaign? Unless there’s some sort of value exchange, there’s little reason for a positive action to take place at all. The fact that women spend more time on fewer sites, and the fact that they are selective with the apps they choose, indicates that they’re generally looking for a more qualitative experience.

MAKE MORE OF THE MICRO-MEMORIES.
As the family chroniclers, women have always used cameras to capture memories—birthdays, graduations, weddings. Now, as smartphone cameras get more turbocharged, a camera is always in her pocket, and as photo-sharing apps proliferate, she’s capturing not only the big but the small: her son’s scowl on a car ride, her daughter’s ice cream-covered face. While these micro-moments or micro-achievements were rarely chronicled before, today they’re continually recorded and then shared in real time via email, text or social media. How can brands better embrace, encourage and leverage this behavior?

FIND WAYS TO EASE FOMO (FEAR OF MISSING OUT).
Social media today fuels fears of missing out, with people feeling that their peers are doing, know about or possess more than they do. For moms, there’s FOMO around the lives of other families as well as the lifestyles of childless friends with far more free time. For others, social media turns an evening at home into a guilt-ridden night of continually checking Twitter feeds and Facebook status updates. Marketers can help ease this anxiety, assuring the afflicted that they’re not missing out on much after all; brands offering simple pleasures, for example, can convey that stepping back from the fray rather than following the crowd can be a smarter choice. Marketers can also outline how their offering is just as fabulous as whatever’s inducing FOMO, pointing out that it delivers similar satisfaction.

MASTER MOBILE COMPATIBILITY, COMMERCE, MESSAGING AND LOCATION-BASED EVERYTHING.
Right now, most women are using the mobile phone primarily for its basic communications functions, much like the early days of the internet, when people tapped into a fraction of its full potential. But as the availability of wireless broadband expands and the cost of advanced mobile phones drops, the device is becoming the preferred hub for digital activity—with digital natives (i.e., the millennial) leading the way. The mobile phone is evolving into a woman’s Swiss Army knife, helping her manage all her identities (mom, daughter, boss/employee, wife, friend, etc.) and responsibilities (making social plans, shopping, paying bills, etc.) simultaneously. As a result, brands need to create seamless experiences optimized for mobile and local. (And because adoption of shopping and bill paying on mobile is low, brands will need to address any security or privacy concerns that come with transactions on that platform.)

LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO MERGE TECH WITH NON-TECH CATEGORIES.
As the Hewlett-Packard/Vivienne Tam partnership demonstrates, synergies and desirability can be gained from the marriage of technology and non-technology brands. For non-tech brands, the challenge is to figure out how to make their offerings tech-enabled or to find relevant collaborations. For tech brands, the challenge is to identify partnerships that feel organic rather than forced.

ACTION STEPS FOR MARKETERS
BY ANN MACK, DIRECTOR OF TRENDS SPOTTING, JWT

1. ACKNOWLEDGE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY.
2. CREATE EXPERIENCES DESIGNED FOR SIMULTANEOUS CONSUMPTION AND ENGAGEMENT.
3. CONTINUOUSLY ASK, WHAT’S THE VALUE EXCHANGE?
4. FULLY LEVERAGE THE SOCIAL NATURE OF WOMEN.
When women talk, we listen. And we want them to know that we’re their biggest fans. Whether it’s a step-by-step workout video, a list of the top ten playgrounds in the area, or a slideshow of do-it-yourself makeover miracles, our mission is to engage women with shareable content they can use to enrich their everyday lives.

To put your brand on her list of favorites, contact Lauren Wiener, Senior Vice President, Meredith Women’s Network, at lauren@meredith.com.

2.1 million fans and growing
THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES IN LIFE.

The Meredith Engagement Dividend.
Powered by Nielsen, this ground-breaking ROI* tool quantifies the direct impact of your Meredith media investment on product sales. And that's not all. Because we believe so strongly in the power of our magazine brands, we're offering the industry's first and only proof-of-performance guarantee.

To secure your Media Back Guarantee, contact Michael Brownstein, EVP, Chief Revenue Officer, at michael@meredith.com or visit engagingmeredith.com.

*ROI: Incremental sales generated per media dollar spent