

Study: Social networking dominates smartphone, tablet use

By Dawn C. Chmielewski, Los Angeles Times

A new report from Nielsen examines a fast-evolving segment of the media landscape: viewing on smartphones and tablets.

Consumers are taking advantage of their portable devices to watch videos, access news and information, check sports, engage in social networking and shop. The time devoted to social networking dwarfs that of streaming video or accessing sports, Nielsen found in its cross-platform report for June.

Smartphone users spent 9 hours and 6 minutes a month on social networks – say, posting status updates on Facebook, tweeting their thoughts to followers on Twitter or checking-in on Foursquare. Apple iPad users devoted 3 hours and 41 minutes a month to social networks.

By comparison, smartphone users spent about 1 hour and 15 minutes a month streaming video on the device, and around 1 hour and 11 minutes engaged in sports, Nielsen reported. iPad users invested more time watching video on the device's larger screen – about 1 hour and 48 minutes a month, (with 50 minutes on sports), Nielsen found.

Peak usage of these mobile devices coincides with TV's prime time: with iPad app usage cresting at 9pm, Nielsen found.

Time invested in mobile apps surpasses usage of the mobile Web on smartphones and tablets.

Nielsen found smartphone users spent about 87 percent of their "app/Web" time engaged in mobile apps, with just 13 percent of that time on the Web, the researchers found. The same trend is

true of iPad users, who spent 76 percent of their time using mobile apps, according to Nielsen.

U.S. viewers seemed to find more time for entertainment in the first quarter of the year: TV viewing rose, compared with the same time a year earlier, as did the amount of time-shifted TV viewing of previously recorded programs, and viewing of video via the Internet and on a mobile phone.

Only the time spent using a game console fell in the first three months of the year, Nielsen found.

Nielsen drew its mobile device research from a panel of 5,000 smartphone and 1,300 iPad users, whose browser and app activity was electronically measured in March.