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Accessing Data to Drive Value

by David Parker

Will consumers share the personal data that is needed to drive all these new exciting offers and propositions? New research has conflicting answers.

Everyone always says users will share data if they can see a real benefit from doing so. Research often supports this theory as 60% of smartphone users want their mobile device to manage purchase receipts as well as conduct payments. This is supported by 47% of mobile users stating they would share personal data in exchange for deals and discounts while only 17% reported that they would never do so.

– Milward Brown

Brown goes on to say that deals are the key to obtaining consumer information, asserting that nearly half of mobile users would share their personal data with brands and marketers in order to receive deals and discounts. Nearly a quarter of mobile owners would share personal data in order to post on social media or check in at a location, while 45% are comfortable with sharing information in exchange for information on a topic they've requested. And Brown claims that consumers find it useful to receive a push notification from a brand on their mobile device. Crucially, 20% said that they redeemed a deal or offer after receiving an SMS or push notification and 13% made a purchase as a result.

Accenture research reports that 60% of those who currently make mobile payments also said they were highly likely to pay by phone more often if instant coupons and reward points could be stored on their phone for future purchases at the store.

And 50% reported they would pay by phone if they received preferential treatment or priority customer service as a result. The dichotomy is, how can these types of value-added services be provided if consumer behavior data is not tracked and used to drive them. Consumers want added value, extra benefits and personalization but are worried about privacy. Recent research does acknowledge that there is an issue with privacy with 37% of respondents stating that this was a barrier to adoption of mobile payments. This figure is more potentially about the payments side than just tracking/sharing other data, however.

A recent TRUSTe survey is far more cautious/negative, saying that 45% of smartphone users would not share personal data. Research is just that though and it can be argued that a lot depends on how you ask the question, but it does raise the whole issue of what consumers will freely share.

The Brown research also adds: Smartphone users are most willing to share their gender (53%), their age (44%) and their e-mail address (39%) - all increasing from 2012 findings.

Smartphone users protect their contacts and photos the most and are less willing to share these with mobile apps than personal details such as home address, phone number or location. Information required to enable apps to work properly, or be fully monetized via advertising – like location, surfing behavior and contacts – are not readily shared, which has significant implications for the app developer ecosystem. Key though is the finding that almost a quarter of all surveyed, 24%, will not share any personal information with mobile apps.

The key question remains - will consumers allow developers to track and have access to usage information in order to receive better services? After all, to target offers where you are based on past behavior, someone needs to track you. These days my PC anti-virus software blocks all those nasty programs trying to track me. In this world where everyone wants to track everyone more and more, so they can better target consumer offerings, will the consumer rebel, or will governments step in and regulate what can and cannot be tracked?

It will be interesting to watch as mobile technology evolves and is increasingly utilized.■