



MOBILE FACT SHEET

It is estimated that by 2014 more people will be accessing the Web from mobile devices than from computers.¹ The mobile user and the traditional computer user experience the Internet in different ways, and it is important to understand the unique attributes and opportunities that mobile Web use provides.

Mobile Friendly Sites

With the exponential growth in social media use, it may seem that fewer people are visiting individual webpages; however, a department's Web site is still a key place for information storage. With more and more people viewing the web from their mobile device it is important that the content on the website is mobile friendly.

There's an App for That

There is a mobile application, or an app, for just about anything, including finding low gas prices and diagnosing medical symptoms. Law enforcement agencies can take advantage of the popularity of apps by creating their own. Law enforcement mobile application themes may include crime mapping or community resource locators.

QR Codes

Law enforcement agencies are using Quick Response (QR) code technology to spread messages to their community. QR codes are barcode-like codes that can be placed on any print medium, including magazine ads and posters. A person can scan the code using a QR reader application on a smartphone. Scanning the code reveals a message or directs the person to a website or some other content. Boca Raton, Florida, Police used QR codes on posters throughout local malls. When community members scanned the code they were given a crime prevention message and a coupon for a merchant in the mall. Other agencies have used QR codes to link to contact information or even social media sites.

Mobile Social Media

Many mobile users get access to social media by way of their mobile device. Therefore, using social media platforms to disseminate information and alerts can reach a wide range of people no matter where they are.

Implications for Investigations

Because of the wealth of information and activity that can be accessed through a mobile device, it is important for investigators to be aware that these devices could contain valuable evidence. Education and training on the particular attributes and capabilities of various mobile devices can be immensely valuable to an investigator.

Next Generation 9-1-1

Mobile technology means that people at the scene of emergency incidents can now take pictures and video. This information has implications for suspicious activity reporting or crime reporting and could be helpful to dispatch centers by giving them a better idea of the scope of the situation. Some communities, such as Chicago, Illinois, have already embraced this new technology. However, few jurisdictions have the capacity to receive and use multimedia and text messages from mobile users. As more and more mobile users emerge, various institutions will strive to develop technologies that will lead to the next generation of 9-1-1.

Mobile Statistics

- 40 percent of adults use the Internet, e-mail, or instant messaging on a mobile phone.²
- 1 in 5 mobile phone owners in the United States has a smartphone.³
- Smartphone ownership rises 85 percent each year.⁴
- 76 percent of cell phone owners have used a mobile phone to take pictures and 34 percent have used a mobile phone to record video.⁵
- The average mobile media user is 32 years old.⁶

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¹Mary Mecker, "Internet Trends," Morgan Stanley, April 12, 2010.

²Aaron Smith, "Mobile Access 2010," Pew Internet and American Life Project, July 7, 2010.

³The State of Mobile: U.S. Mobile Media Landscape and Trends," ComScore, June 8, 2010.

⁴The State of Mobile: U.S. Mobile Media Landscape and Trends," ComScore, June 8, 2010.

⁵Aaron Smith, "Mobile Access 2010," Pew Internet and American Life Project, July 7, 2010.

⁶The State of Mobile: U.S. Mobile Media Landscape and Trends," ComScore, June 8, 2010.