October 19, 2009

Intel Study Reveals Importance of Keeping Tech Tasteful During the Holidays

Survey Finds Most U.S. Adults Won't Tolerate Mobile Technology Etiquette Violations, Especially During Holiday Gatherings

SANTA CLARA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- According to the recent "Intel Holiday Mobile Etiquette" study conducted by Harris Interactive* and sponsored by Intel Corporation, most online U.S. adults (80 percent) feel there are unspoken rules about mobile technology usage, and approximately 7 in 10 (69 percent) agreed that violations of these unspoken mobile etiquette guidelines, such as checking e-mails, sending text messages and making phone calls while in the company of others, are unacceptable.

Mobile etiquette breeches have particular relevance during the upcoming holiday season, as the survey found that more than half (52 percent) would be offended if they were at a holiday party and someone attempted to secretly use an Internet-enabled device, such as a laptop, netbook or cell phone, at the table. The restroom, however, doesn't seem to command the same reverence when it comes to mobile technology. Despite hygiene considerations and potentially awkward explanations, 75 percent feel it is perfectly appropriate to use Internet-enabled devices, including laptops, netbooks and cell phones, in the bathroom, with only 25 percent agreeing that it was inappropriate behavior.

Technology All the Time

The survey also found that 62 percent agree that mobile devices, such as laptops, netbooks and cell phones, are part of our daily lives and society needs to adapt to the fact that people use them at all times.

"The social rules for new technologies are continuing to be established across cultures and geographies around the world, and etiquette will continue to change and adapt over time along with it," said Dr. Genevieve Bell, renowned ethnographer and director of Intel's User Experience Group. "As technology becomes increasingly engrained in our daily lives and we attempt to strike the right balance between constant connectivity and setting boundaries on accessibility, the social and cultural guidelines for appropriate behavior surrounding mobile technology will continue to develop and change."

According to the study, many online adults view the need for constant connectivity as a function of expectations set by the current business culture, with 55 percent agreeing that the nature of business today demands people always be connected via mobile devices, even if it means taking a laptop on vacation or answering a call during a meal.

"Etiquette surrounding mobile technology is becoming increasingly relevant, particularly in social situations such as holiday gatherings and events," said Anna Post, author and etiquette expert for the Emily Post Institute. "As technology continues to become more

prevalent and play an integral role in our everyday lives, it becomes more challenging to discern appropriate behavior from potentially offensive behavior."

Key Survey Findings

Clicking Send on Holiday Greetings: According to the survey, the holiday dinner table isn't the only place where technology is playing a role in traditional etiquette conversations; social guidelines and traditions surrounding holiday greetings and general communications are also being affected by Internet connectivity. In fact, more than half of online adults (62 percent) would send an electronic greeting card or e-mail in lieu of a traditional card, and despite what manner-minded parents have always taught their children about the value of a handwritten "thank you" note, almost 9 out of 10 (88 percent) online adults would not be offended if they received an e-mail or electronic thank you card in lieu of handwritten notes of gratitude.

Mobile Manners and Holiday Activities: Despite the growing acceptance of technology as it applies to holiday communications and greetings, it seems that certain lines of traditional etiquette are drawn when it comes to sending holiday gift lists, using technology at religious services and technology usage during travel and certain social situations. For example:

- One in three online adults (30 percent) would be offended to receive an online gift wish list from a friend and/or an immediate/extended family member.
- An overwhelming majority of online adults have no tolerance for mobile technology etiquette violations at holiday services, with 87 percent agreeing that it is inappropriate to use a mobile device at religious venues.
- Travel can be a little bit tense around the holidays, and some feel that it is no time for multitasking - 36 percent of online adults agree that it is inappropriate to use a mobile device in an airport security line.
- A majority (60 percent) of online adults consider using a mobile device while on a date as inappropriate.

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Intel from Oct. 1 - 5, 2009 among 2,625 adults ages 18 and older. The survey data are weighted to represent the online adult population. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Becky Emmett.

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