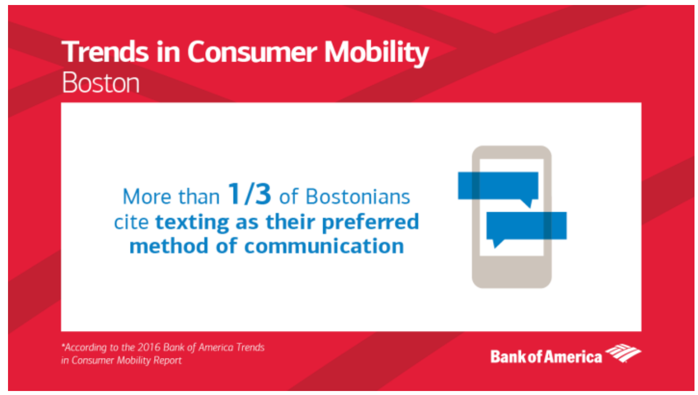
Majority of Boston Residents Deny Smartphone Overuse

Many interact with mobile more than loved ones; increasingly turn to digital for banking and payments

We are increasingly reliant on devices to navigate everyday life. Accordingly, the third annual **Bank of America Trends in Consumer Mobility Report** delves further into the drivers and emotions behind our mobile behaviors, including the impact on our key relationships and daily interactions. It also takes a closer look at the notable impact on the changing financial landscape, seeking to explain where, why and how we are using mobile devices to manage finances, including the evolving constructs of payments and banking, particularly as mobile wallets and digital currencies become more mainstream.



Daily Dependency

The majority of Boston residents appear to need a dose of reality when it comes to their own smartphone behaviors. Fewer than one in four (23 percent) local residents believe they are on their mobile phone too much, while nearly six in 10 (56 percent) believe other adults are guilty of overuse. Just 13 percent consider themselves 'tuned out to the world' while on their device and 57 percent believe they mind their mobile manners; these perceptions are drastically different when considering the behaviors of others at 58 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

What's more, nearly three in 10 (28 percent) Boston residents cite that in an average day they interact with their smartphone more than anyone, including their friends (11 percent) and parents (5 percent). More than half (56 percent) even admit to using their mobile to escape a social interaction.

This growing device reliance is also visible in managing finances: Almost two-thirds (63 percent) of Bostonians are constantly checking their finances via mobile, including account balances and budgets, compared to only 30 percent that report frequently checking health-related items, such as steps and calories.

Banking Behaviors and Payment Preferences

Boston residents are increasingly turning to digital channels to engage with their financial institutions. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) use mobile or online as their preferred method of banking, and 65 percent say they actively use a mobile banking app. Of those mobile banking users, 32 percent access the app once a day or more, while an overwhelming majority (83 percent) check once a week or more.

In further examining behaviors of Boston residents using a mobile banking app:

- Popular activities include checking balances or statements (89 percent), transferring funds (64 percent) and depositing checks (51 percent)
- Majority (75 percent) are using banking notifications and alerts, such as fraud/unusual activity (48 percent) and credit card payment due (40 percent) alerts
- Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) are taking action when they receive an alert, with transferring money between accounts (41 percent) and contacting the bank (35 percent) the most popular actions

Boston residents are also adopting digital payments. The majority (60 percent) of Bostonians would consider or are already using a peer-to-peer money transfer service from their bank. Additionally, nearly half (47 percent) would use or already use their phone to make a purchase at checkout.

Changing Communications

Bostonians are divided on their preferred method of conversing. More than one-third (35 percent) cite texting, which is higher than any market surveyed, while the same number (35 percent) cite in person. When texting, Boston residents are looking for instant gratification, as the majority (68 percent) believe the appropriate response time is under an hour and 45 percent say under 10 minutes.

Emojis and selfies are also on the rise. More than three-quarters (79 percent) of Bostonians say they take selfies, and one in four (25 percent) report taking them at least once a week, which is more often than those nationally (19 percent). Similarly, 77 percent of local residents admit to using emojis, and 12 percent say they use them in every text.

Additional Boston Highlights

- When they don’t have access to their smartphone, many respondents feel anxious (36 percent) and experience FOMO (21 percent)
- More than half (57 percent) of Bostonians say their mobile personality differs from their in-person personality. Respondents are most likely to say their smartphone makes them more confident (27 percent) and more likely to share (21 percent).
- In the next decade, nearly half (46 percent) of local residents believe children currently under the age of 18 won’t use cash and many (42 percent) think they won’t use physical credit cards

At a glance: Mobile use across the country

About Bank of America Mobile Banking

With 20 million active mobile users and growing, Bank of America's mobile banking platform is an evolving source of increased customer engagement and satisfaction. During the first quarter of 2016, mobile banking customers logged into their accounts almost 900 million times, or approximately 46 times per user. During that same period, customers made nearly 24 million mobile bill payments and 70 million transfers, a growth of 29 percent and 20 percent, respectively, over 2015. Customers also used their mobile devices to deposit more than 254,000 checks daily and to schedule 104,000 appointments with a personal banker or financial center specialist. More customers are opening new accounts through mobile, with sales increasing by 50 percent over the past year.

Methodology

Braun Research, Inc. (an independent market research company) conducted a nationally representative, telephone survey on behalf of Bank of America March 29-April 12, 2016. Braun surveyed 1,004 respondents throughout the U.S., comprised of adults 18+ with a current banking relationship (checking or savings) and who own a smartphone. The survey was conducted by phone to a dual-frame landline and cell. In addition, approximately 300 adults were also surveyed in seven target markets: Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Phoenix and San Francisco. The margin of error for the national quota of n=1,004 is +/- 3.1 percent with a 95 percent confidence level; the margin of error for the oversampled markets (where n=301-307) is +/- 5.6 percent; and the margin of error for the oversampled markets (where n=300) is +/- 5.7 percent, with each reported at a 95 percent confidence level.