

Press information

Acision research shows SMS is still the king of messaging with half of UK Smartphone users stating they would be lost without it

New opportunities for operators to ensure messaging relevance and revenue by providing new services which consumers want and are willing to pay for

- *95% of UK consumers polled actively use SMS*
- *93% of Smartphone owners communicate with SMS, despite access to Instant Messaging (IM) services*
- *3 out of 4 Smartphone owners (74%) said they need SMS, of which 51% state they would be lost without it*
- *68% of Smartphone owners are willing to pay for RCS type services*

MWC 2012, Barcelona, Spain: UK: 27th February, 2012

According to new research launched by Acision at Mobile World Congress, SMS still dominates the mobile messaging market when compared to other messaging services such as 'Over the Top' (OTT) Instant Messaging (IM) services. 95% of all respondents questioned stated they actively use texting, significantly more than Smartphone owners actively using OTT/IM services such as Facebook Chat (37%), Skype (20%), Twitter (17%), Blackberry Messenger (17%) and WhatsApp (16%) – the five most popular OTT/IM services today.

The research, which was conducted by Vanson Bourne and examines consumer messaging habits and preferences, is the most comprehensive study to date on the mobile messaging landscape. Based on interviews with 1000 mobile device users in the UK across smartphone (63%) and feature phone (37%) owners, the research revealed that SMS proves most popular with smartphone owners – 93% of this demographic reported using SMS. In fact, smartphone owners appear to appreciate SMS the most, with 3 out of 4 stating a clear need for SMS (74%) – 51% of which say they would be lost without it, despite the ability to access different OTT/IM messaging services on a Smartphone. This highlights the immense value and dependence of text messaging in consumers' lives today.

When asked about their preference to SMS or OTT/IM mobile messaging services, smartphone owners cited they preferred SMS because of its reach (42%); reliability (42%); price (38%), speed of delivery (37%) and the ability to send to groups (28%). Only 4% of smartphone users said that IM is more reliable and faster than SMS, with 35% saying that they find SMS to be more reliable and faster

Commenting on the research, Jorgen Nilsson, Chief Executive at Acision, said: "Reports that suggest that SMS is on its deathbed, it seems, have been greatly exaggerated. In fact, it appears that smartphone and feature phone owners alike are united by their affection for text messaging. What is interesting is that SMS seems to excel on devices that have been more commonly associated with IM services. Based on these results, we can see a long and healthy future for SMS, the first and still the greatest of mobile applications."

While the research shows there is a continuing appetite for SMS, users are also interested in enhanced messaging services. When asked about SMS based personalised services, a significant number of respondents said they would be like to use: message delivery notifications (47%), black/white listing (40%); message copy (37%); message search (37%) and reminder services (35%), This gives evidence to the opportunity for operators to extend the functionality and life span of text, increase customer loyalty and generate premium revenues.

In order to test the appetite for Rich Communication Suite (RCS and RCS-e) type services, respondents were asked to rate a service offered by their operator that would include IM, file transfer, group chat and video sharing, and allow them to exchange messages with all SMS and MMS users. Only 5% of UK Smartphone users said they would not use such a service and 68% said they would be happy to pay for such services, highlighting the revenue-generating potential messaging still has to offer.

Nilsson concluded, "After looking at these results it is clear that while IM is growing in popularity it still has a long way to go to catch up with the reach, reliability and ubiquitous nature of SMS. Analysts are predicting it will only hit 1.3 billion users by 2016*", compared to over 5 billion users with access to SMS today.

"Mobile IM does have its advantages but the market is currently fragmented as services cannot communicate with each other, and relies on a smartphone or tablet device with a mobile broadband connection. As experts in delivering both SMS and IP messaging services, we are excited about the new opportunities in IP messaging services but believe SMS will still play a leading role in our messaging backbone, not only as a connectivity tool but particularly for brands wanting to reach the 5 billion consumers using SMS today."

This research is part of a wider messaging study conducted by Acision, with further results for regions including the US being announced over the coming months. To find out more about Acision's mobile messaging research and its role in messaging, please visit Acision on stand A93 in Hall 8 or visit us at the GSMA's RCS Showcase on stand C118 in Hall 8.

- ends-

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Vanson Bourne and the research

Vanson Bourne, a specialist research-led consultancy, carries out user research within a technology context. The company interviews senior decision makers from a variety of functions, across a whole range of industries, in organisations from the smallest to the largest, in markets around the globe. Vanson Bourne's clients range from start-ups to well-known companies that need expert guidance, delivering robust and credible research-based analysis.

Acision's mobile messaging research was conducted in January 2012 with a sample of 1,000 adults in the UK.

About Acision

As the global leader in mobile messaging, Acision connects the world by powering relevant, seamless messaging services, which enrich the mobile communications experience and create new opportunities for carriers and enterprises across the world. For more information, visit Acision at www.acision.com

Press contacts:

Maria Hudson
Acision
Tel: +44 (0) 7894 604 040
Email: maria.hudson@acision.com

Elcin Kurtulus
Hotwire PR
Tel: +44 (0) 7743 072 322
Email: acision@hotwirepr.com