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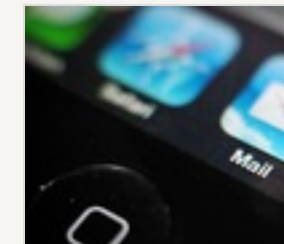
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BY LAUREN DRELL / AUG 14, 2013

Steve asks,

Is dayparting important to mobile? How do I use it?

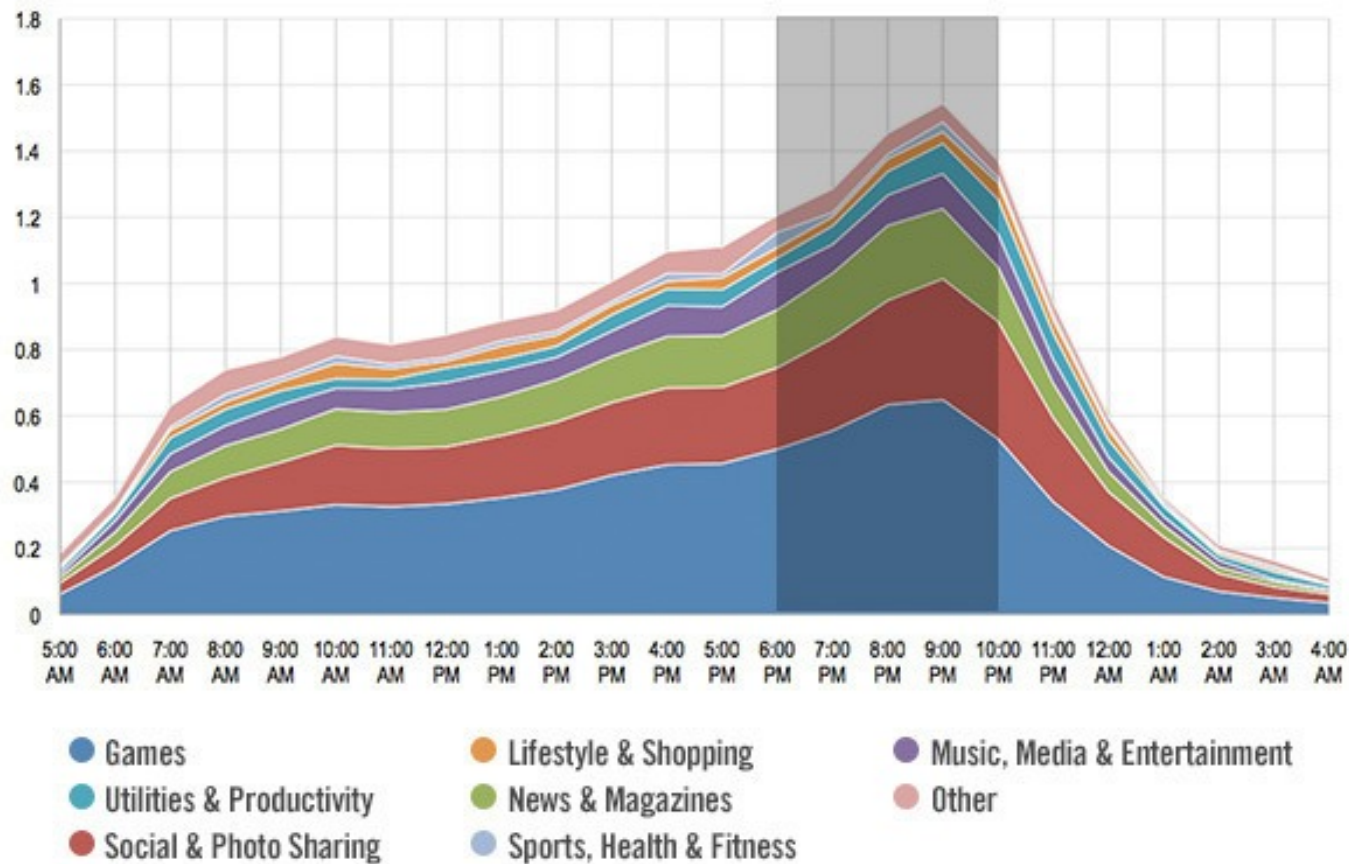
The answer, in short, is a resounding *yes, dayparting is important*. The term refers to dividing the day into several parts and providing unique programming during each — and it becomes especially relevant as mobile devices travel with users all day and night. The world is going mobile, and by the end of the year, there will be [more mobile devices than people](#) on Earth. Not leveraging dayparting, says [MediaWhiz](#) Director of Marketing and Communications [Keith Trivitt](#), means "marketers risk seeing their mobile campaign fall victim to the old marketing adage that *half of a brand's advertising spend is wasted, but marketers don't know which half it is.*"

So don't waste your time or your ad spend; use both wisely. Dayparting can help, allowing you to presenting the right message — via text, email, push notification, paid search, display ad — at the right time to the right people. Any marketer will tell you that context is king. Of course, it takes considerable effort to gather the data and understand consumer behaviors so that you know exactly what, when and who is "right" for your business.

We know that mobile usage peaks between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. — roughly after work until bedtime. Below is a chart that illustrates usage habits for American mobile users on iOS:



Average Time Spent on iOS Devices - US Only




 Source: Flurry Analytics; random sample of 15,271 American (13+) iOS device owners, May 2013 data.

Image: Flurry

But that's not enough detail to inform your dayparting strategy.

Sometimes the way a business should daypart is intuitive — a coffeeshop, for instance, would be wise to invest in mornings and afternoons, when people are

looking for a caffeine kick. Restaurants should reach out right before meals. Brick-and-mortar shops should allocate their spend to business hours. Brands looking to reach stay-at-home parents should optimize daytime, while evenings would be better for reaching working parents. Etailers should daypart for meals and before bedtime (and consider different time zones), since online shopping is an activity that spikes during meals and before bed.

But you need more specific information for effective dayparting. [Rob Landry](#), founder at [Plein Air Interactive](#), an agency that specializes in digital marketing for museums, says roughly 7 in 10 visitors to children's museums are women under 40 years old, while 65% of art museumgoers are over the age of 50. So it's not enough to think about museum visitors as a category — you need to determine *which* museum visitors you need to reach. Your digital marketing approach ought to be customized for these disparate audiences.



Image: iStockphoto, [airportrait](#)

Beyond time of day and customer behavior, you can also use dayparting to leverage other factors, such as GPS, weather, competitors' prices and demand. Again, context is key. "Using those signals to influence an agile planning approach and adapt not only ads but also content on mobile landing pages, prices in store and other things, is when things get truly interesting," says Andy Wasef, Head of Innovation and Technology at [MEC](#).

You might be wondering how much it costs to daypart. Landry says that in his experience, "



Dayparting really doesn't cost any more than other campaigns

Dayparting really doesn't cost any more than other campaigns." If you're being smart about targeting the right audience and doing it well, he says, "You get a greater return on your investment, so your cost per customer is lower."

If you're dayparting your paid search strategy, study the graph of your spend and conversions. Allocate more to the time of day when your conversions peak and pull back at dormant times, so you're optimizing the spend and getting the best traffic for your buck.

Some Things to Consider

We know now that dayparting is important to mobile. Here are some insights that you should keep in mind as people develop dayparting strategies.

- Don't assume that mobile means "I'm not home." Think about how much you use your phone or tablet when you're sitting on your couch.
- More than half of smartphone users look at their phone as soon as they wake up — it's a captive audience if you can deliver the right message

- Realize that not all categories are sensitive to timing, says Wasef
- Consumers use different devices for different things and at different times; target accordingly. This graph shows device usage in the UK:

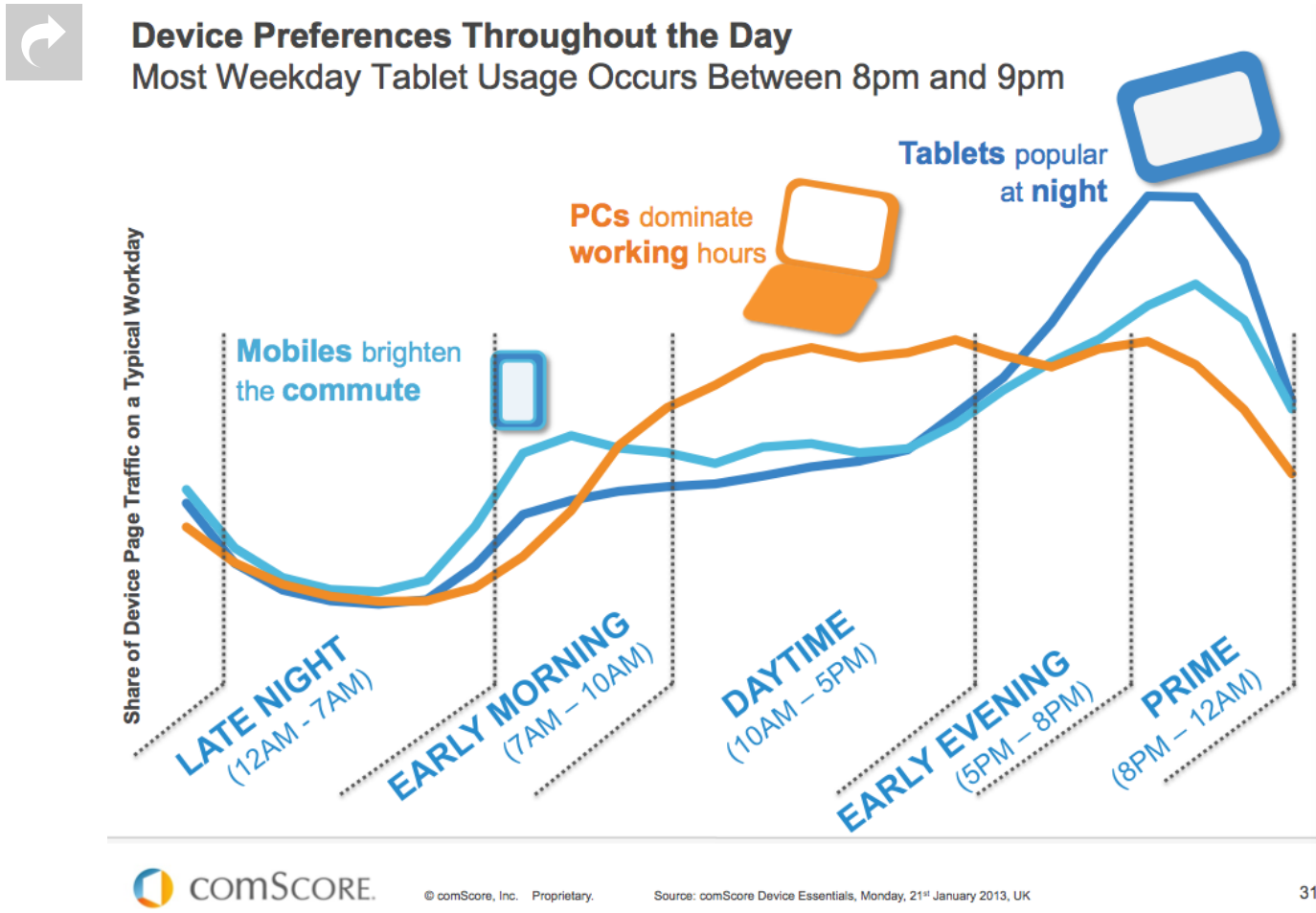


Image: Smartinsights.com featuring comScore data

- It can be helpful to employ dayparting in tandem with the device's Internet connection — Wi-Fi versus 3G/4G — to determine the user's intent and

place within the purchase funnel, says Paolo Vidali, senior digital marketing strategist at [DragonSearch](#).

- Social media tools can help you optimize for time of day. Tools like [Tweriod](#), [Buffer](#), [SocialFlow](#) and [HootSuite](#) optimize your social messaging so it posts when your audience is most likely to be paying attention and engaged.
- Make sure your site is mobile-ready, or else dayparting for mobile will have a greatly limited impact, says Alyssa DiLoreto, paid search manager at [LunaMetrics](#).
- Smartphone and tablet screens are smaller than desktop PCs — there's not as much room for advertisements, so consumers are more averse to these ads than on desktop ads. Therefore, advertisers should use a soft touch to provide information that is truly useful, at the precise moment it's needed, says Matt Grebow, Director, Search Media, at [The Search Agency](#).
- Be aware of "gap time" — the little gaps of time people have while they are out and about, in line for coffee or checking out at the grocery store. "There are opportunities to connect with people on a more frequent basis, but maybe only deliver bits of prioritized information," says David Lai, CEO and creative director at [Hello Design](#). "In these situations, it's more about discovery and browsing, so it may not be as important to daypart, but it's still important to be *relevant*."

- Robert Livingstone, CEO of [RoyalText.com](#), says his company doesn't send text messages between 7 and 9 a.m. and 5 and 7 p.m. since those are rush hours. "No one wants to encourage texting and driving," he says, which is something to consider in driving cities.
- Platforms such as [Appboy](#) and [CaptureCode](#) can help you glean insights into your customers and their habits, enabling you to leverage data to drive engagement and sales.
- Remember to serve *your* audience — don't follow another brand's dayparting strategy. Your customer base is unique, and it requires a unique approach.

How has your brand leveraged dayparting? What was your experience? Tell us in the comments.


Thumbnail image: iStockphoto, Tsuji

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