



## **Coaching, Social Media and New Technology**

**Using social media and new technology in the UK; how coaching does not always follow the trends.**

**sports coach UK Research Briefing**

**May 2014**

**Follow the Research Team on Twitter @researchhub**

## Introduction

In April 2014 the Communication Regulator Ofcom produced a report on the online habits of people in the UK<sup>1</sup>. This Research Briefing provides some selected highlights from the report and compares this with research conducted by sports coach UK into the online activities of coaches<sup>2</sup>.

*In each section of this report the Ofcom results are presented as bullet points and coaching research as plain text.*

## Key points

- 1 More people are using iPads and similar devices (labelled as Tablets) in the UK. This is consistent with research that has shown more coaches are using Tablets in their everyday coaching.
- 2 Social networking remains a popular pastime in the UK, especially with younger age groups. However using social media for coaching is more popular with marginally older age groups (25-34 and 35-44). It may be the case that younger people see social networking as a social rather than learning activity.
- 3 Facebook is the most popular form of social media among both the UK population and coaches. This is forecast to remain so with coaches in the future.
- 4 YouTube is used by a majority of internet users to look for information and is also popular with coaches. In the UK younger age groups are most likely to use Youtube but with coaching it is older coaches (45+) who state Youtube is most useful.
- 5 Key gender differences include the fact that females are more likely to use Facebook while males are likely to install more apps and significantly more likely to use Twitter and Youtube.
- 6 Nine out of ten people in the UK use the internet while around 70% of coaches use the internet for coach related reasons. While the UK picture shows browsing declines with age the drop-off with coaches does not occur until later in life (65+).

## The growth of Tablets in the UK is mirrored in coaching

- The number of adults using tablets to go online has almost doubled; from 16% in 2012 to 30% in 2013. Growth has been especially high in age groups over 35.
- Six in ten UK adults (62%) now use a smartphone, an increase from 54% in 2012. This increase is driven by 25-34s and 45-54s, and those aged 65-74 are almost twice as likely to use a smartphone now compared to 2012 (20% vs. 12%).

Research conducted with coaches in 2012 showed that wireless technology was one of the fastest growing areas – the first iPads were only available to buy two years ago in 2010, however already one quarter of coaches report to using one (or equivalent). Similarly we know that smart phones are the second most common tool for young coaches to access the internet. This growth in wireless technology among coaches can be explained by what we already know about coaches' preferences. Almost nine out of ten coaches prefer to learn on the job and the portable nature of iPads and smart phones

---

<sup>1</sup> Ofcom is the communications regulator. They regulate the TV and radio sectors, fixed line telecoms, mobiles, postal services, plus the airwaves over which wireless devices operate. A copy of their report is available at <http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/2014/04/tablets-help-drive-increase-in-older-people-going-online/>

<sup>2</sup> Coaching research used includes sports coach UK reports The Appetite for Online Learning (2012) and The Coaching Panel (2014) plus research published in blogs on the sports coach UK website.

means they can be used at pitch side, pool side, track side and wherever else the coach is coaching.

### **The use of social media by coaches is different to the national average**

- Social networking overall remains a popular pastime, with 60% of users visiting sites more than once a day, an increase from 50% in 2012. Social media is particularly popular with younger age groups with 83% of 16-24s visiting sites more than once a day (69% in 2012). Having a profile is more likely among those aged under 45 and less likely for those aged 55 and over.

Around a third of coaches use social media to learn about coaching which is below the national average. While the most frequent users of social media in the UK are 16-24 year olds the same is not true for coaching. Coaches who use social media are more likely to be within the 25-34 age group (52% of coaches in this group) and 35-44 age group (44%) than the 16-24 age group (41%). This perhaps suggests that younger coaches regard social media more as a social activity than a learning source.

The number of people using social media declines after 45 years of age which is consistent with general usage.

### **Facebook remains the default service for social networking**

- Two-thirds (66%) of online adults say they have a current social networking site profile, unchanged since 2012 (64%). Nearly all with a current profile (96%) have one on Facebook, although the incidence of having **only** a Facebook profile has fallen to 43% in 2013 compared to 53% in 2012.
- Despite this decline in having 'only' a Facebook profile, Facebook is still the dominant social media service provider. Nearly all (96%) adults with a current social networking profile have a Facebook profile, and this does not vary by age. In addition, 86% of adults with a current social networking profile consider Facebook to be their main social networking profile, with this more likely among those aged 55+ and females.

Facebook is the most popular type of social media used by coaches to discuss ideas with other coaches (25% of coaches use Facebook to discuss coaching) and we predict it will continue to be the most popular source for coaches. 33% of coaches stated they will definitely use Facebook in the future and this rises to 66% in terms of who would 'maybe' use it.

### **Twitter is more about following friends than information gathering**

- The majority of those with a Twitter profile use it for following, or being followed by, 'friends' (72%). Slightly less than half (45%) use it for celebrities (45%) or news (45%). One in four (23%) use it to search for information.
- Females are more likely than males to use Twitter to follow celebrities (53% vs. 37%) while the opposite is true for sports news, with 47% of males using it for that purpose compared to 27% of females.
- The vast majority of Twitter users (81%) say that they use it for reading tweets from people or organisations that they follow, while a large minority say they use it to read tweets from a range of people based on a topic they are interested in, or as a live news feed to keep up with current events (46% and 40% respectively).

15% of coaches use Twitter to discuss coaching and we predict this will increase to 22% (definitely) and 47% (maybe).

The fact that people are more likely to use Twitter to follow friends and celebrities rather than search for information may help explain the lower proportion of coaches using social media for learning (this may be especially true among younger age groups).

### **YouTube and online video are important for coaches**

- YouTube is used by a majority of internet users to look for information (59%), and one in eight of all internet users (12%) say it is a very important information source. Among YouTube users, this equates to 20% considering it a very important source.
- One in five social networkers (22%) have a YouTube profile and 20% have a WhatsApp profile. Young people aged 16-24 are more likely to use YouTube (75%)
- In 2013, around six in ten (62%) internet users ever watched online/ download short video clips such as music videos or comedy clips (e.g. on YouTube) and half (48%) did this at least quarterly.
- In 2013, gender also played a role, with males significantly more likely than females to have ever undertaken either of these activities (66% vs. 57% for watching short clips online and 58% vs. 51% respectively).

When we asked coaches what were their most useful experiences of using online resources 19% stated watching videos / You Tube clips for practical examples. This was the second most popular option and shows coaches are more likely to regard Youtube as an important source of information.

As with social media, YouTube appears to be favoured by younger age groups but there was no evidence that younger coaches favour YouTube compared to older coaches. In fact it was coaches aged 45-54 who were the most likely to identify Youtube as useful.

### **Apps are more popular than browsers for various activities**

- Just under half of mobile phone users (48%) say they download apps on their mobile phone (up from 37% in 2012). Smartphone users have an average of 23 apps on their phones, of which they say they use ten regularly.
- There is a clear preference for using apps rather than browsers for gaming and for downloading videos and music, and half of app users who look at news said they prefer to use an app (50% vs. 36% who prefer a browser). However, app users prefer to use browsers for shopping online and for looking for information (50% and 62% respectively).
- Although in this area there are no differences by age group, there are differences by gender; men have a greater average number of apps than women (26 vs. 21).
- While the mean number of apps installed on smartphones is 23, the mean number used regularly is less than half: ten apps.

There has been little research conducted on how coaches use Apps. A small pilot study carried out by sports coach UK showed that all coaches who used an App would recommend it to another coach.

### **Browsing preferences differ by age and gender**

- Seven in ten (68%) say their preferred device for surfing or browsing the internet is the PC/ laptop/ netbook, with the next most-preferred device being a mobile phone/ smartphone (19%). One in ten nominated a tablet computer (11%).

Users aged 16-24 and 25-34 are less likely than all users to say they prefer to surf/ browse using a PC/ laptop/ netbook and more likely to say they prefer to use a mobile phone/ smartphone. The reverse is true for users aged 55-64 and 65+.

- As is the case for surfing and browsing, younger users are less likely than all users to say they prefer to look at news websites/ apps using a PC/ laptop/ netbook, and more likely to say they prefer to use a mobile phone/ smartphone. The reverse is true for users aged 55-64 and 65+.
- In terms of differences by gender, females with a current social networking profile are slightly more likely than males to use Facebook (98% vs. 94%). However, males are significantly more likely than females to use Twitter (34% vs. 24%), YouTube (28% vs. 16%) and MySpace (9% vs. 4%).
- Over half of internet users aged 16-24 (57%) and 25-34 (51%) prefer to use a mobile phone. This preference for social networking via mobile phones may help to explain why those aged 16-24 are more likely than all adults with a current profile to visit any of their profiles more than once a day (83% vs. 60%) and twice as likely as all adults to visit any of their profiles more than ten times a day (28% vs. 15%).
- Seven in ten (72%) internet users say they are confident using the internet to do creative things (like making blogs, sharing photos or uploading short videos), and more than four in ten (44%) say they are very confident. At an overall level these measures have not changed significantly since 2011.
- There are some significant differences by age regarding doing creative things online, with 89% of 16-24s saying they are confident in this, compared to 72% of all users, and the opposite being reported for older people, with 57% of 55-64s and just over a third (36%) of those aged 65+ saying they are confident doing creative things online.

The table below shows how different age groups use the Internet. Generally usage declines with age however this is a trend that is less evident among coaches.

*Table: How people use the Internet by age (% of total)*

	<b>All</b>	<b>16-24</b>	<b>25-34</b>	<b>35-44</b>	<b>45-54</b>	<b>55-64</b>	<b>65+</b>
General surfing/ browsing the internet	91	95	93	95	92	85	77
Looking at social networking sites/ app	69	96	85	72	66	37	30
Finding information for your work/ job/ studies	57	75	59	65	55	49	21
Find information for your leisure time including cinema and live music	53	69	62	54	45	45	27
Watch online or download short video clips such as music videos or comedy clips	48	74	58	47	42	31	16
Sharing links to websites or online articles –perhaps on Twitter, Facebook, Reddit or LinkedIn	38	61	52	42	32	12	9
Finding information about health related issues	37	34	44	40	37	26	29
Looking at sites or apps for news about, or events in your local area/ the local community	32	28	32	38	30	32	25
Send or receive Twitter updates	22	41	27	22	19	5	4
Maintaining a website or blog	16	24	19	17	14	6	3
Doing an online course to achieve a	9	16	9	10	8	5	2

qualification							
---------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--