

China outpaces Western Europe with mobile application and game downloads

- Social networking sites and e-books highlight regional differences

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For immediate release

Findings from a survey conducted for the new Canalys Mobile Application Analysis services suite show that 51% of Chinese end users downloaded applications or games on their mobile phones - 29% more than their Western European counterparts¹. A similar Canalys survey carried out in France, Germany and the UK found that only 22% of respondents downloaded applications or games on their mobile phones².

Weather, news, navigation and mapping applications consistently featured in the top application download categories in both China and Western Europe. The high uptake of social networking applications in Europe did not feature as prominently in China; however, survey results showed that two thirds of social networking users in China were willing to pay for access to their favourite social networking sites. More than half of these respondents were open to paying at least RMB10 (US\$1.47) each month for the privilege.

While Facebook ranked highly across Europe as the top social networking site, local social networking site Qzone led the Chinese market. More than 80% of respondents were registered with its service, followed by Kaixin001 and Renren. Of the worldwide social networking brands, MySpace held the top spot in China, with 23% of respondents signed up with the service.

‘International vendors with ambitions in China must keep abreast of these cultural preferences and work with local publishers to expand and localize their content offerings,’ said Canalys Senior Analyst T Y Lau. ‘Consumers in China already show an increasing affinity for application downloads that go beyond smart phones. As new devices are brought to market, such as e-book readers and pads, vendors must be ready to rejuvenate existing content and engage their developer communities to support the leap to larger screen sizes.’

In China, mobile downloads extend well beyond smart phone-only users. Almost half of Nokia’s non-smart phone customers surveyed use their phones to download applications and games.

¹ Canalys survey of 1,515 people in China in July 2010.

² Canalys survey of 2,560 people in France, Germany and the UK in May 2010.

‘The high frequency and popularity of application downloading in China stems from wide availability,’ said Lau. ‘There is a broad selection of Java content on portals, such as Sina, Sohu and QQ (Tencent), as well as a good range of dedicated phone apps available from mobile operators and phone vendors, such as Apple, Motorola, Nokia, Samsung and Yulong, which already operate their own application stores in China.’

Books featured as the top application category in China to download to mobile phones, with 68% of respondents who downloaded applications stating that they read books on their phones. There were distinct differences in behaviour depending on the age of respondents, with 76% of younger respondents (aged 16 to 25) downloading books to their phones, compared with 55% of older respondents (aged 36 to 55).

A wide variety of free and paid-for e-book content, including Chinese classics, novels and popular comics, is available via China Mobile’s MM Store, publishers and vendors, such as ChineseAll, Hanwang/Hanvon and Shanda. With the rapid pace of globalization, productivity-boosting reference applications, such as translation apps and dictionaries, also ranked highly among Chinese respondents.

Around the world, mobile application use continues to rise, while the growing availability of third-party applications supplements the mobile phone user experience. All major smart phone operating systems have corresponding application stores, which provide a direct channel for developers to launch applications.

‘Improvements in the variety of content, payment flexibility and better application discovery capability must continue to be the focus for these stores,’ said Canalys Analyst Tim Shepherd.

About the Canalys Mobile Application Analysis service

The survey results discussed in this release come from Canalys’ Mobile Application Analysis suite of services, developed to provide market intelligence on consumers’ interest in, and uptake of, different categories of mobile applications and services. The suite consists of a core service, Mobile Application Delivery Analysis, and four related service modules: Community and Communications, Games and Entertainment, Information and Advertising, and Navigation and Mapping. Canalys offers country-by-country services in Asia Pacific, North and Latin America,

and EMEA, as well as worldwide market overviews and analysis of consumer and enterprise end-user attitudes and preferences toward mobile applications, devices and services.

About Canalys

Canalys specializes in delivering high-quality market data, analysis and advice to the world's leading technology vendors. It is recognized as a key provider of continuous advisory services and confidential custom projects for marketing managers and strategists within blue-chip IT, telecoms, navigation, and consumer electronics companies. It has unrivalled expertise in routes to market for all kinds of high-technology products and services and provides worldwide market data and trends analysis. Canalys does not release preliminary, incomplete data and uses consistent definitions and methodologies to ensure total consistency across all of the market data that appears in its services. The company publishes its final market data every quarter for every country tracked simultaneously on the same day.

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Americas: Suite 280, Town & Country Village, 855 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA 94301, US | t: +1 650 681 4488
APAC: 137 Telok Ayer Street, #04-08, Singapore 068602 | t: +65 3106 2330
EMEA: Diddenham Court, Lambwood Hill, Grazeley, Reading, Berkshire RG7 1JQ, UK | t: +44 118 984 0520
www.canalys.com