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MOBILE APPS: THE DATA

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The Swrve App Metrics Report - July 2014

INTRODUCTION

The mobile app now represents the channel of choice for the 21st century consumer. We spend more 'Internet hours' on mobile apps than online on PCs and laptops. So it's clear that if you want to build long-term, valuable relationships with your customer, you need to be doing it on mobile.

But we still don't know enough about what success *looks like* on mobile. How many sessions a month should we expect engaged users to enjoy? Of those who install an app, how effectively are they retained? What times of the day deliver 'peak mobile use' - and thus represent an opportunity?

This report intends to answer those questions and more. We've looked at apps from across our platform, drawing together data that represents tens of millions of users and billions of mobile events. And we're able to lift the lid on the mobile app behaviors of today's consumers.

Enjoy!

Notes on Our Methodology

As previously, all Swrve reports are based on real data from millions of users across dozens of apps. Please note:

- The report covers data from the calendar month of May (all 31 days)

- Any user active in that month (with the caveat below) is assessed against all activity within that month. Events falling outside May are not analyzed

- Retention rates quoted are for new app users in that month with at least 7 potential days of activity in the app

- The report covers apps of all types. In total over 50 apps were analyzed, covering 10s of millions of users and billions of mobile events

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PART ONE: RETENTION, OR "STICKING AROUND"

It's a well-known fact (and one that we have previously reported) that a full 24% of apps installed are used precisely once. But what can you expect in terms of longer-term retention?

It should be noted that different categories of apps can have retention rates that differ significantly, but nevertheless it can be helpful to look at these averages.

In terms of 'Day 1 Retention' (which measures the % of users have a session at any time between 24 and 48 hours from the first session start event), we find an average of 26% or just over 1 in 4. Do remember that this doesn't necessarily mean that 74% of users will never be seen again - rather they didn't have a session within this particular time frame - which makes it a valuable metric for comparative purposes.

In terms of Day 7 Retention, for which the same logic applies, the rate is 13%. As we only looked at data from within the calendar month of May, we are unable to report Day 30 Retention. However, a clear pattern emerges by Day 7.

It's interesting to note the star performers when it comes to retention. Some Swrve customers have Day 1 Retention and Day 7 Retention rates of over 60% and 40% respectively - typically those that can have a reasonable expectation of being used every day.

26%
of users are active 24-48 hours from the first session start

13%
of users are active 7 days after the first session start

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PART TWO: ENGAGEMENT, OR "GETTING INVOLVED"

How often can you expect people to use your mobile app - and for how long in any one session? Engagement is a crucial metric in the world of mobile apps.

The more engaged the audience, the more likely you are able to drive users to the behaviors you desire: whether that's purchasing or anything else. So how does the landscape look?

By totaling every user active in the month (which will include those who used an app only once), and all sessions, we are able to arrive at an average monthly number of sessions of 13.69. That's an encouraging figure that suggests apps are used more often than we might think. In some cases (probably mobile games), session counts are above 100 in a month!

A full **75% of apps are used at least 7 times in a month**, so if your users typically return less often than at least once a week, you've probably got a problem.

When it comes to typical time spent during a session, average session length comes in at 5 minutes 7 seconds. If we plot all session lengths in a histogram, we see some interesting data - notably that over a third of sessions (34.1%) last less than a minute, and that **13.3% of sessions last longer than 10 minutes**.

13.69
average monthly sessions

5m 7s
average session length

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Session Length Histogram for May
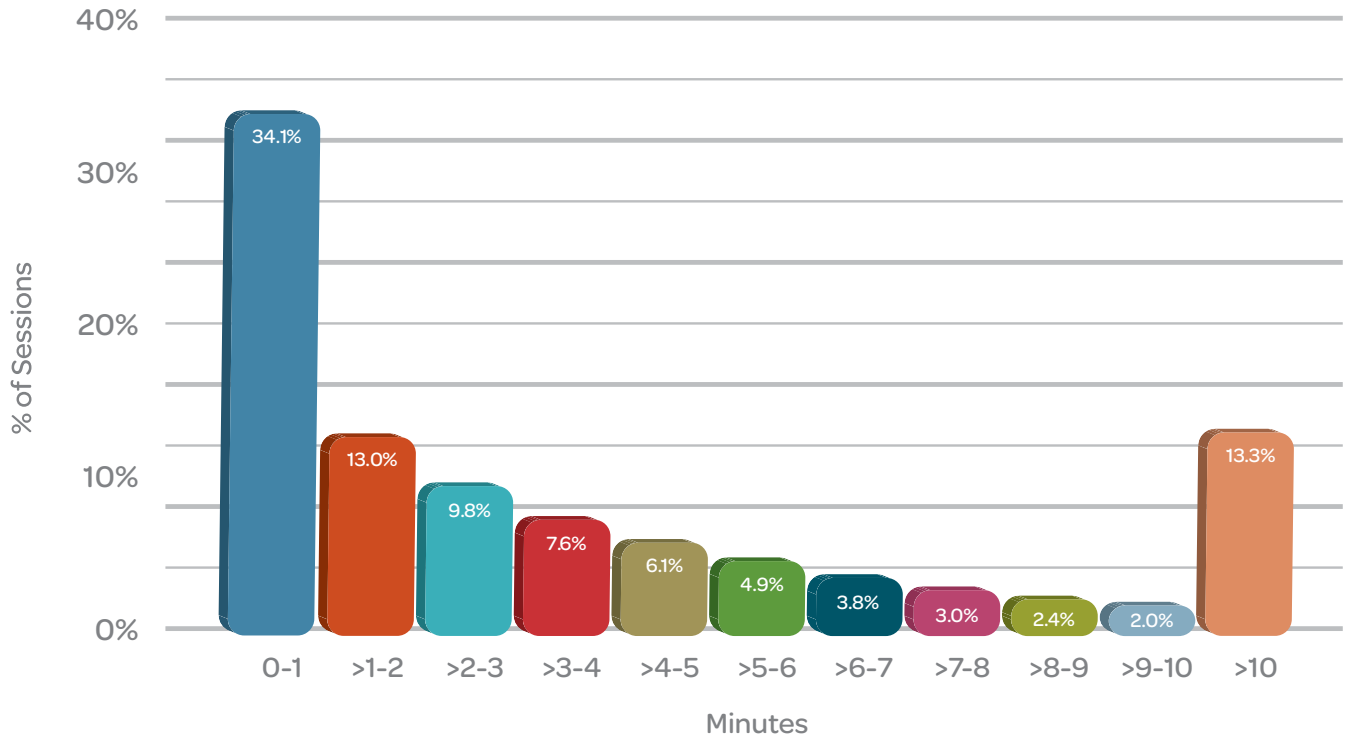
It is of course worth remembering that higher session lengths are not always 'better', unless spending time in the app is considered an end in itself. That might be true of media apps, for example, but not retail apps where time in app could be a sign of user frustration.

PART THREE: TIME, OR "WHEN APPS ARE USED"

As part of our analysis we looked at when apps are used, aggregating (in local time) all session data across our full sample, and then building out the 24-hour histogram shown below.

Hourly Session Percentage
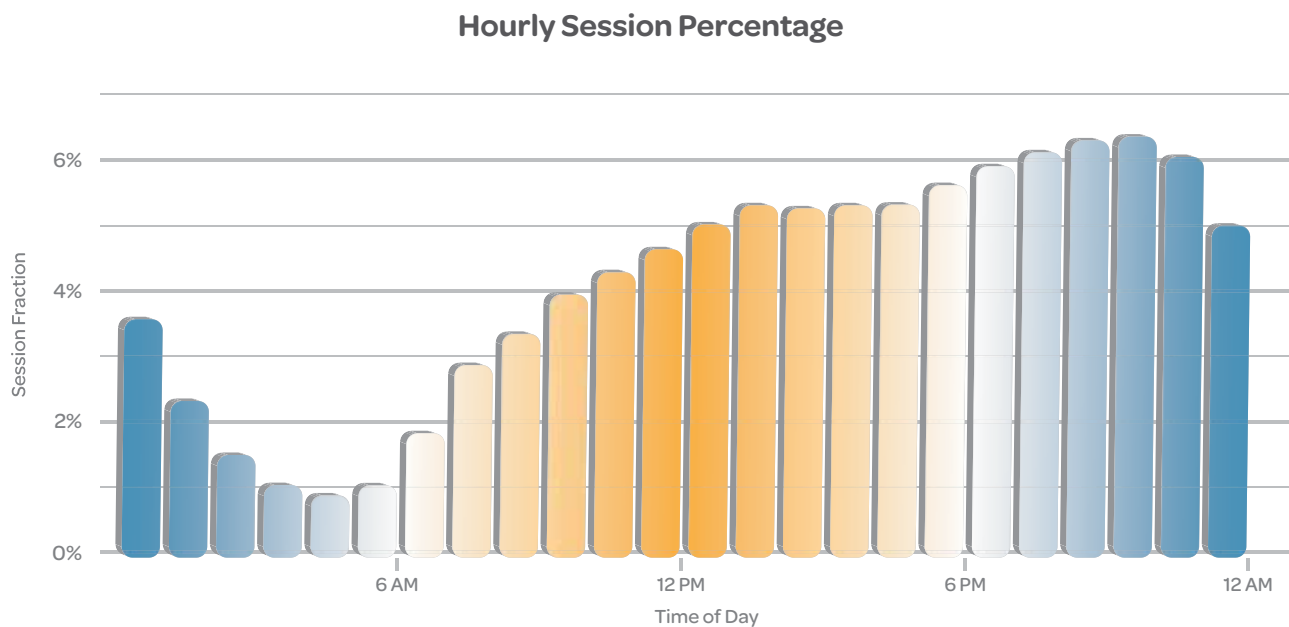
This data shows, not surprisingly, a **clear peak in the hours around 8pm to 10pm**, with over 15% of all sessions taking place in this 2 hour period. It is nevertheless interesting to note that 'working hours' still contribute a notable amount of total sessions from a sample that with one or two exceptions does not include apps designed for professional purposes. App usage is consistent throughout the day, certainly from 9am when already 4% of all sessions (the 24 hour average) take place per hour.

More evidence that the mobile app is taking over our lives!

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PART FOUR: MARKETING, OR "TALKING TO USERS"

It is increasingly the case that the core app itself is only the start of the experience. Products like Swrve enable app developers and managers to deliver targeted campaigns using either in-app messages or push notifications in order to drive user behaviors they want to see.

That activity begs the question - what does success look like for these campaigns? Based on this initial research we are able to provide guideline 'click through' rates for both types of promotion, that may help benchmark your own efforts. The results are to be filed under 'surprising but explicable'!

In-app messages take over the screen during an app session. Of course, the option to dismiss is always present, but nevertheless these campaigns deliver an average click-thru rate of 37%. By any standards, that's an impressive number. Some particularly well targeted campaigns have delivered click-thru rates of over 90% - typically achieved through particularly fine targeting.

In the world of marketing push notifications it is a somewhat different story. An average click-thru rate of 0.6% suggests that the fact that these campaigns are typically used to re-activate users and bring them back to the app mitigates against their effectiveness. However, it must be remembered that the alternative to 0.6% in this context is 0.0%. And we've seen well-targeted re-engagement campaigns deliver click-thru rates of over 2%.

37%
click-thru rate for campaigns using in-app messages

0.6%
click-thru rate for campaigns using push notifications

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PART FIVE: SOCIAL, OR "GETTING USERS TO SHARE"

Most apps offer users the option to share content or achievements via social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. But do users take advantage of them?

We analyzed every app in our ecosystem that offered this option and found that **only 8% of all active users delivered at least one 'social share'** in the month. There's clearly work to do in this area.

When analyzing the frequency of those who did share, we found that over half shared just once in the month, but there does exist the 'hardcore' of sharers - almost 15% having shared over 5 times in the month. App developers would be wise to identify these users and look after them.

8% of Active Users Share Socially - Here's How Often They Shared Within the Month

SOCIAL SHARING
BY APP USERS IN MAY

50.9%
27.0%
22.4%
5.0%
3.2%
14.8%

SHARES
1
2
3
4
5
>6
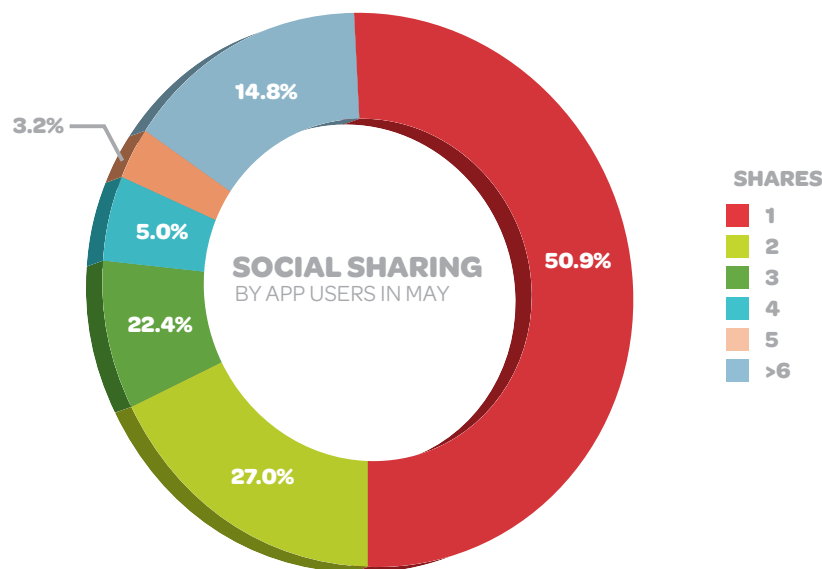
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ABOUT SWRVE

Swrve is mobile marketing automation.

Swrve is the world's leader in driving engagement, retention and revenue in mobile apps and games.

The Swrve platform delivers everything product and monetization managers need to ensure their mobile apps succeed where it counts.

We do this by building long-lasting, profitable relationships with their users and driving the bottom line as a result.

Swrve includes:

- A/B testing - to optimize user experience and improve retention rates
- Targeted in-app campaigns - delivering the right offers, to the right audience, at the right time
- Push notifications - driving engagement even when users are outside the app
- Real-time optimization - automated campaigns reacting in real-time to user behavior in the app
- All the analytics and segmentation you'll ever need

Swrve is trusted by some of the world's largest and most successful mobile app businesses. We handle billions of events a day and process data in real-time for multi-million DAU titles.

If you'd like to join them, drop us a line at sales@swrve.com

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