

New (Technological) Year by Cheryl Pearson-McNeil

Written by □ By Cheryl Pearson-McNeil
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The countdown has ended. As we welcome a brand new shiny year, I've already been pouring through the magazine articles that promise me, "A New Year, A New You!" Here we go – again. Last year I was convinced that if Jennifer Hudson could lose weight through Weight Watchers, then I could too. And of course, there was an "app" to help me with that. I am not alone in my quest to find a quick way to a new and improved way of life – via my smartphone, according to a recent Nielsen study.

The State of the Media: The Mobile Media Report, the latest of Nielsen's ongoing smartphone analytics research, tells us nearly half of all American mobile consumers (44%) now own a smartphone. Plus, Nielsen's recently released State of the African-American Consumer Report, confirms 44% of all new mobile phones purchased by Blacks are smartphones, so that now 33%, or a whopping 14 million, of us own one.

Smartphones are those handheld mobile devices that allow us to make and receive phone calls, emails, surf the web and perform a host of other activities, depending on just how "smart" of a model you own. Regardless of the model you choose, Nielsen knows that more Blacks prefer an Android (37%) or RIM Blackberry (30%) than the 16% of us who choose an Apple iOS, otherwise known as the iPhone.

Regardless of the model, we can download diet plans and fitness apps with virtual trainers for practically pennies. Apps are also available to help with other popular resolutions (and pretty much anything else that might tickle your fancy) like getting organized, spending less to save more, learning something new, etc.

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And since my quest to be slim like Jennifer did not make it past February 1 in 2011, I decided to get a head start on things this year. Like a zealot on a mission, I spent the entire day after Christmas downloading new and improved apps in preparation for 2012. I have my “to-do list” app all ready to go and my “new goals” app is synced with my Outlook calendar and this time I’m entering the year of new possibilities armed with a “personal trainer” app and even a “101 Ways to Be Healthy” app!

Couple those with the apps I have to stay abreast of my financial situation and those that keep my wardrobe organized, and my home redecorating projects coordinated for a total of 49 apps (including those that come with the phone). According to Nielsen, I’m over-indexing on the apps things, since most smartphone app downloaders report having an average of 33 apps on their mobile phone (Apple iPhone app downloaders have an average of 44 apps, while those with Android smartphones have an average of 32). But hey, you can’t say I’m not ready!

No end-of-the-year column is complete without a year in review right? So here’s a smartphone recap for 2011:

Most of the 18% of mobile subscribers who had smartphones two years ago were more likely to be male. In 2011, more than half (51%) of the 44% who own smartphones are female.

Younger consumers still led in smartphone penetration. 64% of 25-35 year olds and 53% of 18-24 year olds owned smartphones.

In 2009, RIM’s Blackberry smartphone was the device of choice (even still the choice of President Obama). In 2011, Blackberrys were used by 17% of the smartphone market.

Apple was the top smartphone manufacturer in the U.S. with 28.6 percent of the market, and Android was the most favored operating system by manufacturers, with 44% of the market.

The number of smartphone subscribers using the mobile Internet has grown 45% since 2010.

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Whether you're a smartphone user or New Year's Resolution maker or not, on behalf of Nielsen I wish you a safe and Happy New Year. I look forward to sharing more exciting information with you in 2012, because – say it with me – knowledge is power!

Cheryl Pearson-McNeil is senior vice president of Public Affairs and Government Relations for Nielsen. For more information and studies go to www.nielsenwire.com