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Does Your Ministry Need a Mobile App Now?

by SR. SUSAN WOLF, SND on OCTOBER 7, 2014

in [TECHNOLOGY](#)

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While most parishes, dioceses, religious communities and catholic organizations are addressing their use of websites and social media for mission, there is a small but growing number of ministries offering mobile apps to increase engagement with their constituencies. Does your ministry need a mobile app?

For those not sure what a mobile app is, here is how [Techopedia](#) defines it:

A mobile application, most commonly referred to as an app, is a type of application software designed to run on a mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet computer. Mobile applications frequently serve to provide users with similar services to those accessed on PCs. Apps are generally small, individual software units with limited function.

You may recall my [blog article from January 29, 2013](#), where I discussed The Pope App:

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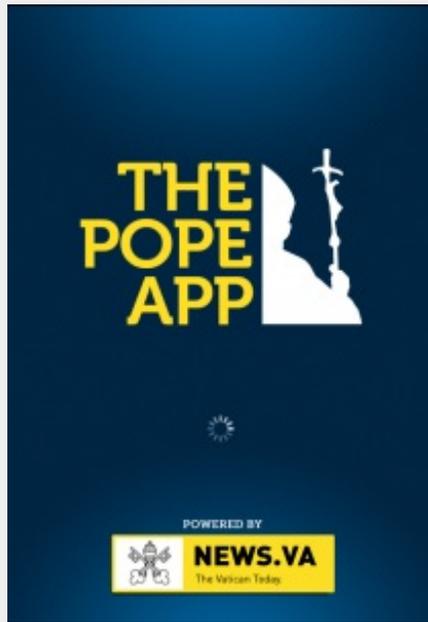
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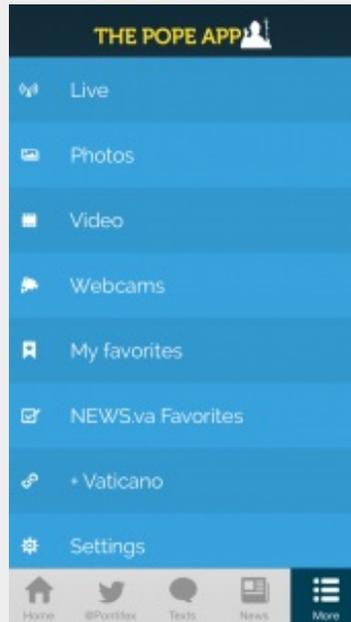
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App Icon Image



Pope App Menu

According
to the
Mobile

Technology Fact Sheet posted by the [PewResearch Internet Project](#):

As of January 2014:

- 90% of American adults have a cell phone
- 58% of American adults have a smartphone
- 32% of American adults own an e-reader
- 42% of American adults own a tablet computer

The percentages above are averages across age groups. Here is the breakdown of smartphone owners (January 2014) according to age group: 18-29, 83%; 30-49, 74%; 50-64, 49%; and 65+ 19%.

A 2014 report by [Flurry](#), the app analytics provider, states that app usage on smartphones is continuing to grow at the expense of the mobile web (browser).

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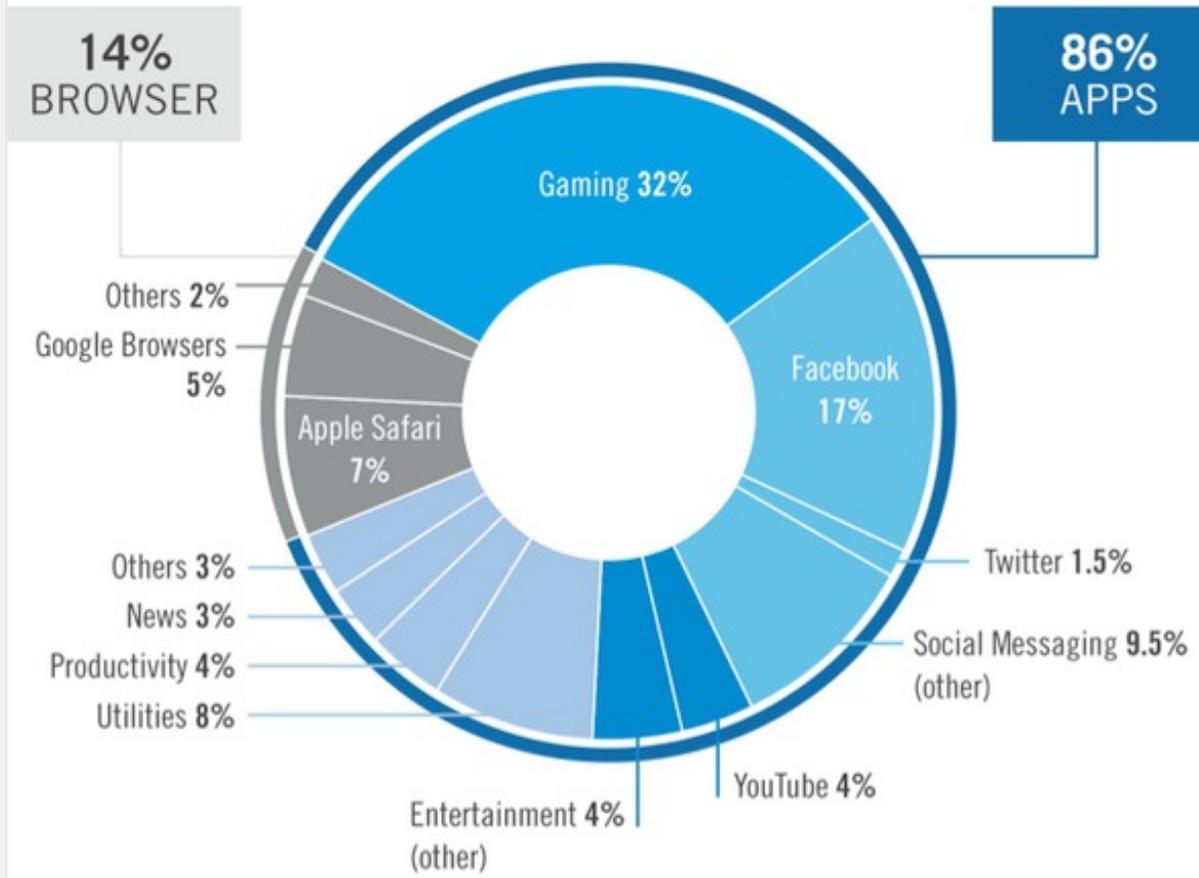
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Source: Flurry Analytics, ComScore, NetMarketShare

The above graphic is from [Techcrunch](#)

What does all of this mean for ministries with a website and social media sites?

Smartphone users (most of whom are under 65) use their phones more than their computers to access the Internet and social media and are more likely to connect through a mobile app than a mobile browser such as Safari or Google. This trend is continuing to grow.

It is simply easier and more convenient to click on an app to get to the information or resource you want rather than to open the browser, type in the website url and search the website. And if the website is not a responsive design which adapts to the screen of the mobile device, interest wanes quickly.

My conclusion from this data is that after ministries update and upgrade their websites and social media sites, they probably need to explore a mobile app.

If your parish, diocese, religious community or organization already has an app, please tell us about it in the comments below: name of the app and who created it. Please tell us the software you used if you created it in-house or the name of the outside service you used. I plan to do more research and will write another article on resources for developing an app and would appreciate any information or questions you may have.

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Tagged as: [mobile apps for ministry](#)

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Faye October 7, 2014 at 8:57 am

Thank you for this article. I recently found out about the company, Parish Solutions Co, at <http://www.parishsolutionsco.com/mobile-apps.html>

Would be interested to find out about others who have experience with this company and in general with mobile apps for parishes, including the process, costs, etc.

Thank you!

Sr. Susan Wolf, SND October 7, 2014 at 9:16 am



Thank you, Faye, for the company and the questions. I will add them to my list.

Caroline Cerveney, SSJ-TOSF October 7, 2014 at 4:41 pm



In October, the Diocesan Publications company (<http://www.diocesan.com/florida>) at a St. Petersburg diocesan event, provided an early showcase of a parish app that will soon be available to all parishes. They will soon be announcing the availability of this app in the very near future.

Sr. Susan Wolf, SND October 8, 2014 at 10:16 am



Thank you for the information, Caroline. I will be very interested to learn what Diocesan Publications makes available. Keep me posted.

Mark Mastroianni October 9, 2014 at 9:01 am

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Sr. Susan Wolf, SND October 9, 2014 at 9:48 am



What is your company, Mark?

Richard Schletty October 10, 2014 at 3:47 pm



This app was created by the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis for its Rediscover program:

http://rediscover.archspm.org/rediscover_videos/rediscover-app/

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