

New Research Highlights Gadget-to-Gadget is More Popular than Face-to-Face

Four in five UK adults prefer to text rather than talk - more than a third use their smartphone while having a face-to-face conversation - almost one in ten avoid social interaction altogether in favour of gadgets.

BROMLEY, ENGLAND, September 03, 2014 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- With 72% of the population aged 16 to 64 owning a smartphone*, research from [Foresters**](#) (the member focused financial services organization) highlights the anti-social trend for phones and gadgets displacing face-to-face and even voice-to-voice conversations.

Despite its traditional purpose, most people (81%) use their phone more to text, email, play games and use the internet rather than to telephone and actually talk to someone.

The research also reveals that over a third (39%) of phone owners suffer from EDI - electronic displays of insensitivity - and will text, use social media, or surf the internet while having a face-to-face conversation.

Using a mobile phone during dinner with family or friends is another common anti-social habit, with more than a third (39%) guilty of doing this. At its worst, anti-social behaviour due to technology can result in people avoiding family dinners or social occasions altogether so as not to be parted from their favourite gadget (7%).

Rebecca Bell from Foresters comments: "The study highlights just how anti-social we are becoming, preferring to interact with our gadgets rather than our friends and families. Not only is this damaging our relationships with those we love and care about, but the younger generation are losing out on basic social skills."

"Foresters are encouraging individuals and families to pledge to a Tech Timeout, enabling them to take a short break from technology and improve the quality of the time they spend together. The ethos of the campaign, which has been running in the UK since last September and has attracted over 33,000 pledges, is that we all need to disconnect to reconnect."

Ms. Bell points to the results from the study as a real indication that technology has overtaken our relationships and adds: "There is no doubt that technology has made many areas of our lives much easier and we can now communicate globally at the push of a button. However, as our research suggests, technology is also negatively impacting on our ability to communicate and interact with those around us. This paradox means that while our relationships with people who are far away are easier to maintain, we also find it difficult to disengage from technology and as a result communicate less with those closer to home."

"Relying on digital forms of interaction, or even using technology while speaking or socialising with someone, can have a negative impact on our relationships and the quality of the time that we spend together. Implementing a regular tech timeout, such as banning mobile phones during dinner or social occasions, can shut out all the noise of the technological world and help us to really listen to each other."

To find out about Foresters' Tech Timeout campaign, visit www.techtimeout.com.

Notes

*Deloitte Consumer Review (June 2014)

**Study of 1,000 people across the UK, Spring 2014, carried out on behalf of Foresters by Wriglesworth.

Key data:

- 81% prefer to text/email/play games/search the internet rather than speak on the phone/face-to-face
- 39% use social media or their phone while speaking with someone face-to-face
- 39% text or use their phone during dinner with family or friends
- 13% post negative comments about someone online, either openly or anonymously
- 7% avoid family dinners or other social occasions where you can't bring your mobile phone/tablet/laptop etc.

About Us

At Foresters we believe in enriching the lives of our members, their families and the communities they live in. We're member-based, family-focused, and community spirited.

Our products benefit both your family and your community. We champion the well-being of families through quality financial products, unique member benefits and inspiring community activities.

We share our financial strength with over one million members across the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. Throughout our 140-year history, our purpose has been to enrich the lives of members, their families and communities. The priorities remain today and will guide our future.

As an example, our work with Cash for Kids in their 2013 Mission Christmas Appeal helped over 278,000 children to have a better Christmas. The whole campaign raised GBP8m and involved 1,463 Foresters volunteers.

Forester Life is responsible for funds under management of over GBP3bn* and is part of Foresters, the international financial services organisation.

Internationally, Foresters has over GBP14bn* funds under management and has been assigned an 'A' excellent rating by A.M. Best.**

Safeguarding our members' interests is at the heart of what we do. Being financially strong and responsive, with sound governance and continuing professional service have always helped us to protect our members' benefits.

*As at 31st December 2013

**An 'A' excellent rating is assigned to companies that have a strong ability to meet their ongoing obligations to policyholders and have, on balance, excellent balance sheet strength, operating performance and business profile when compared to the standards established by A.M. Best Company. In assigning Foresters rating A.M. Best stated that Foresters outlook rating is 'stable', which means it is unlikely to change in the near future, assuming Foresters financial strength is maintained and operations grow. A.M. Best assigns rating from A++ to F, A++ being superior and A and A- being excellent ratings. This rating was assigned on 3rd July 2013. Our International Head Office is located at 789 Don Mills Road, Toronto, Canada M3C 1T9. DAC Ref No. 2013321 FM/CO 01/15

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