



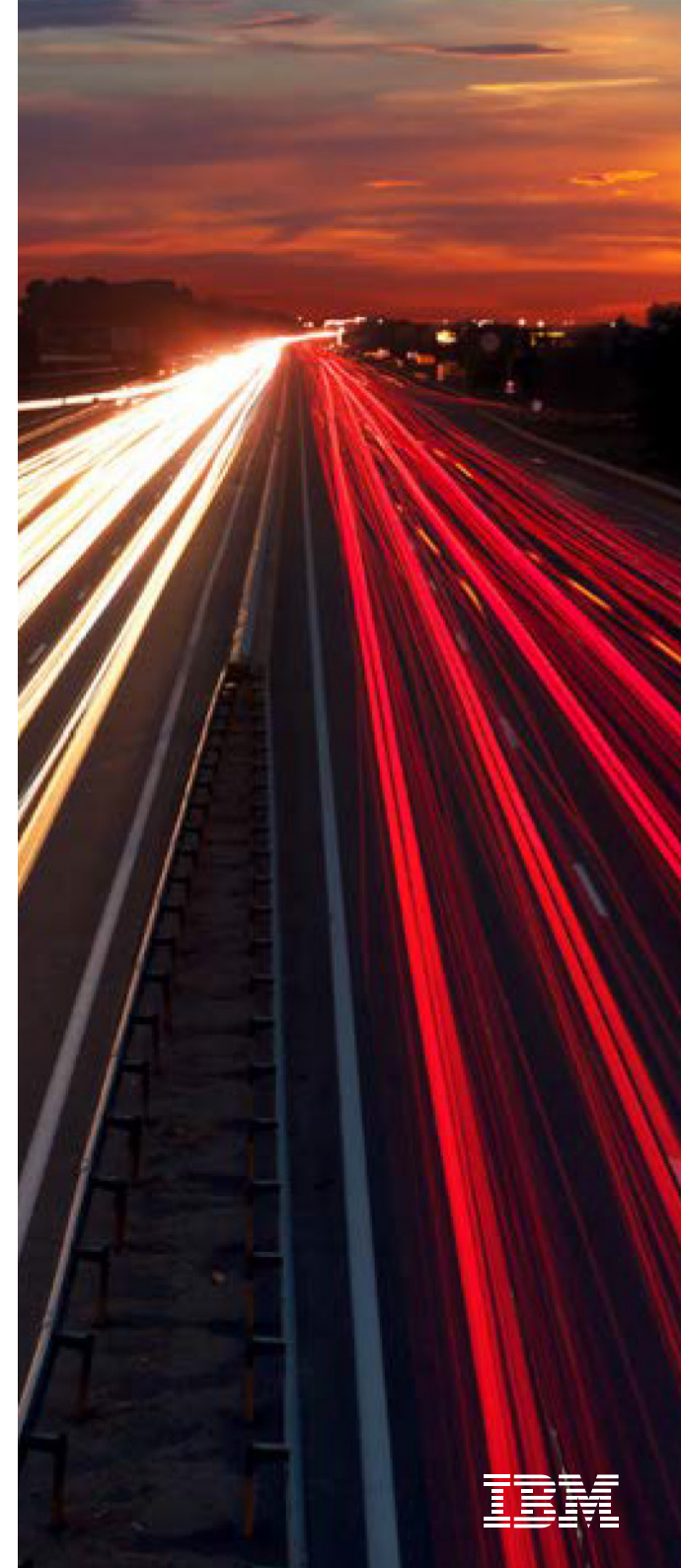
Consumers and Traffic: A National Study of Attitudes and Behaviors

Published by: The Weather Company, an IBM Business



Table of contents

Introduction	3
General findings	4
How often do consumers check traffic?	5
Why do consumers check traffic?	6
Where do consumers get traffic information?	7
How do different demographics access traffic information?	7
How are these demographics influenced?.....	8
What do consumers value about each source?	9
What role does social media play?.....	10
How does mobile relate to TV?	11
Conclusion	12

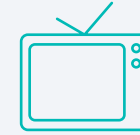


Introduction

Technology has changed how commuters receive their traffic information and how it is consumed. These changes are important to the providers of traffic information and how they are distributed via TV, websites, smartphones, tablets and radio.

To learn more about how and why users access traffic information, The Weather Company, an IBM Business (Weather), commissioned a national survey of consumer attitudes and behaviors. The study was conducted by an independent firm, CJ&N, and was based on 800 online samples between the ages of 18-54, who check traffic and road conditions at least twice a week.

Key benefits:



TV is a primary traffic information source



Mobile is rapidly gaining ground



Stations have an opportunity to leverage viewers into mobile viewers

General findings



The research showed that overall, TV is the most important source for traffic information for consumers, especially in the early morning hours (before people leave for work). However, mobile is gaining momentum as a critical source, as consumers turn to their smartphones and tablets once they are away from home for the day.

Importantly, TV and mobile apps are closely connected in terms of consumer use and loyalty. TV stations strongly influence which apps consumers download and use, and which websites they visit for information. This gives TV stations an opportunity to leverage viewer loyalty into increased mobile use and revenue.

It should be noted that these trends hold true across all regions in the U.S. and most demographics, with a few interesting exceptions.



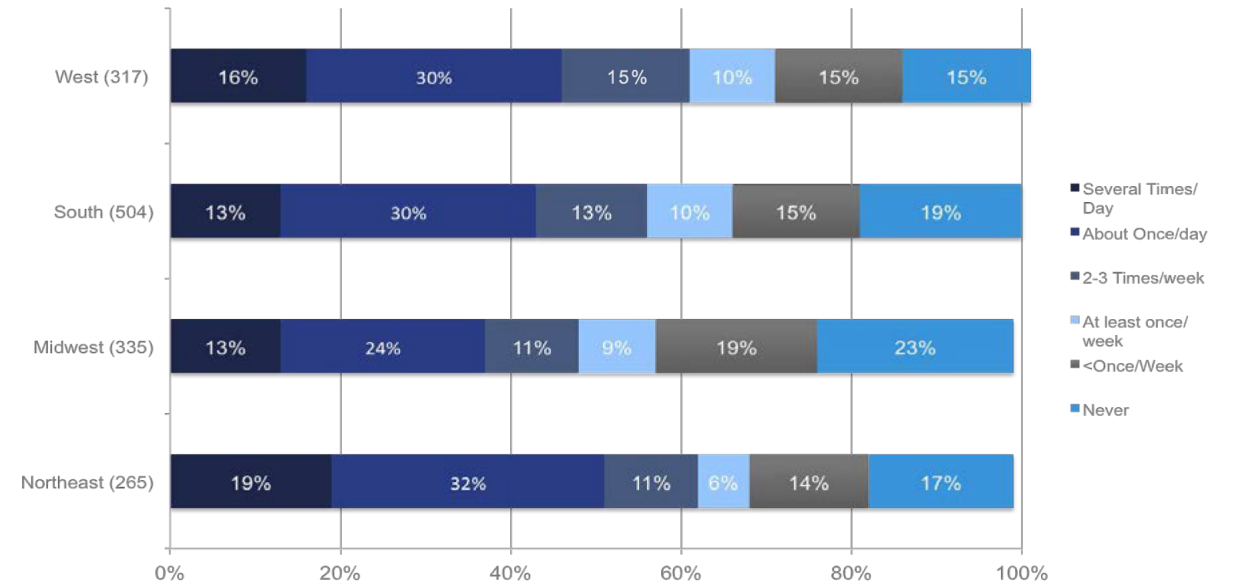
How often do consumers check traffic?

Consumers were asked, “How often do you check local traffic information and road conditions for your area – from any source?”

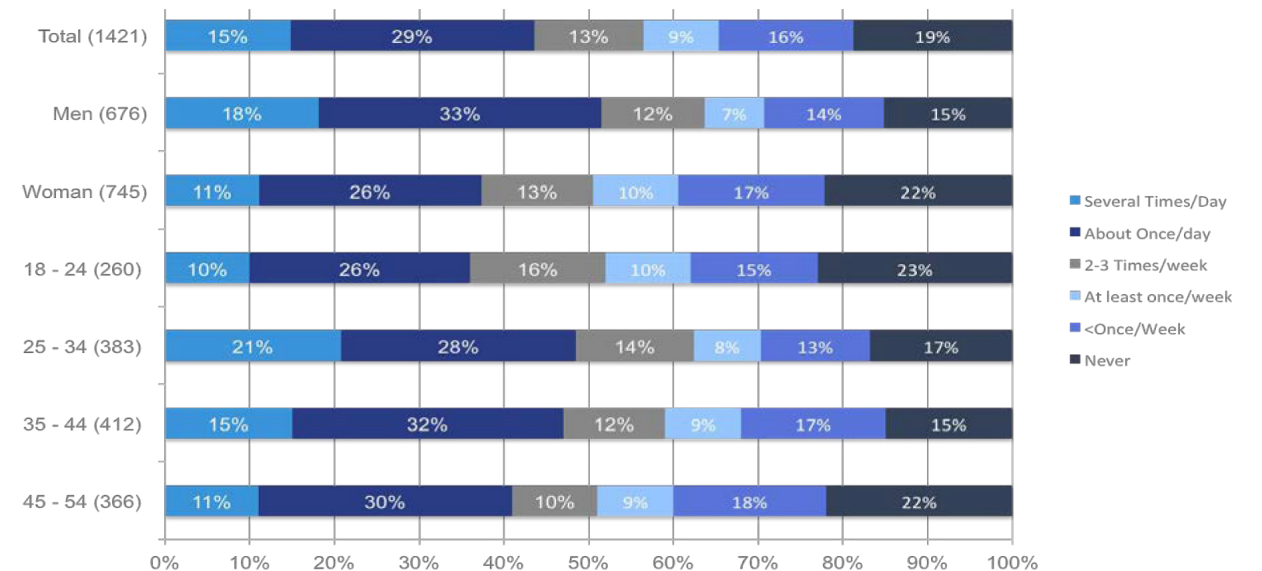
A core group of consumers check traffic several times, but the largest group consists of those who check about once a day. Overall, about 40 percent to 50 percent of consumers check traffic at least once per day.

The study shows men check for traffic more often than women, and the 25-34 age group checks far more often than other groups. Also, checking traffic reports is fairly consistent across regions. Although Northeast and West have the highest frequency—possibly related to the higher population density.

Frequency of checking for local traffic information: by region



Frequency of checking for local traffic information: by gender and age



Why do consumers check traffic?

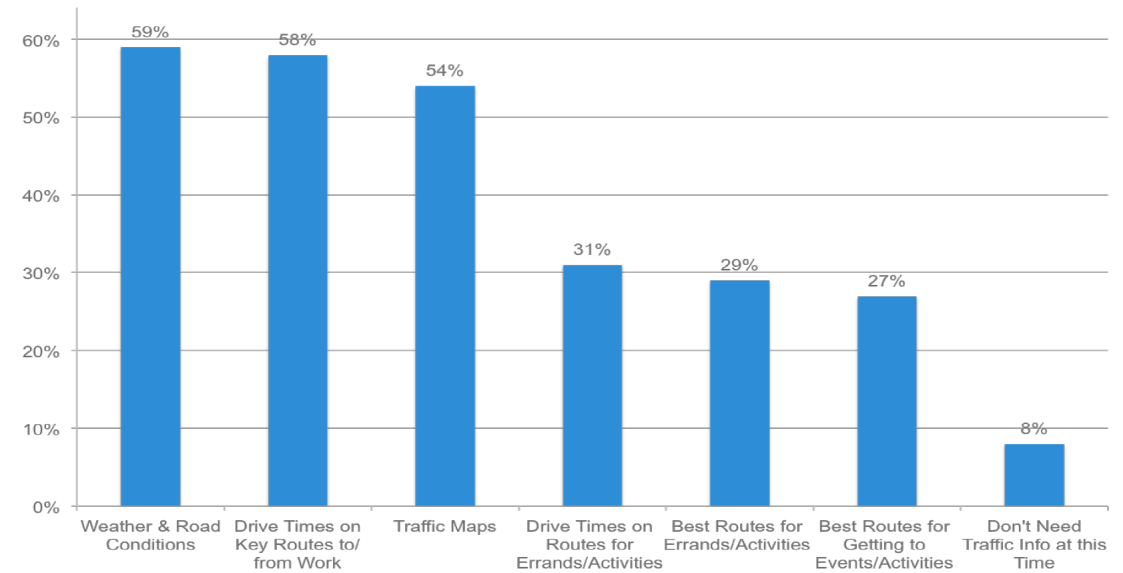
Consumers were asked to indicate what kinds of traffic information are or would be useful. A clear difference was found between weekday commuting periods and other times of the week.

During morning and evening commute times, consumers check traffic for three main reasons:

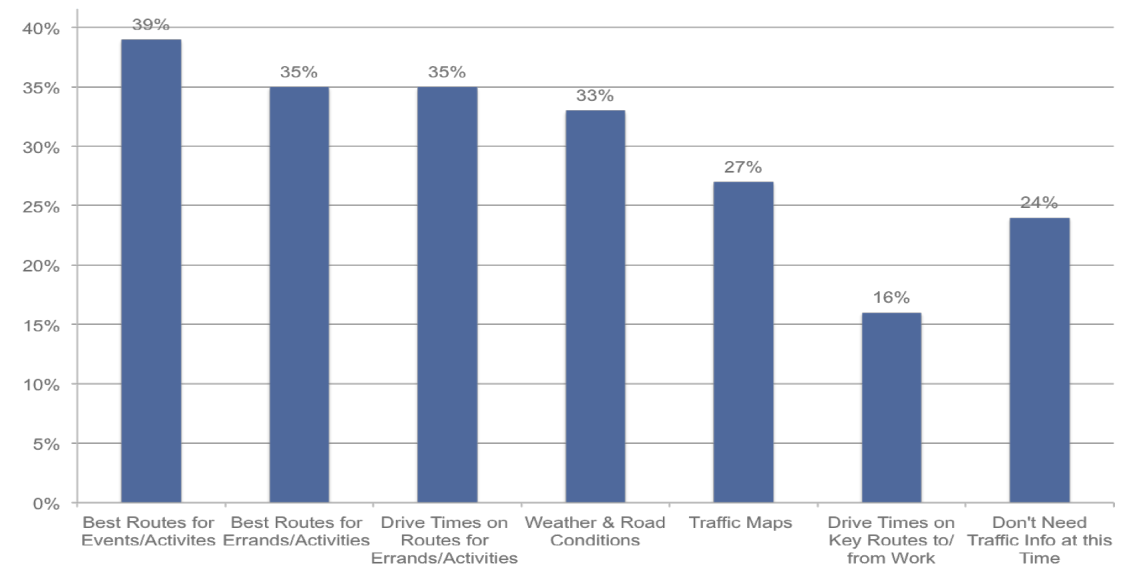
- **To learn weather and road conditions**
- **To see drive times on key routes to/from work**
- **To view traffic maps**

During non-commute periods (weekdays and weekends), consumers were most concerned with finding the best routes for running errands, getting to events, and activities.

Reasons for checking traffic information: weekday mornings



Reasons for checking traffic information: weekends



Where do consumers get traffic information?

Consumers get traffic information from a wide variety of sources, and time of day heavily influences their choices.

- **Weekday mornings** - There is a strong reliance on TV as people prepare for their morning commute. Using smartphone apps is a close second. This holds true until about 7:30 a.m.
- **During the weekday and into the evening** - Smartphone use increases, presumably because people are at work or on their way home.
- **On weekends** - TV again is used more often, with smartphones coming in second.

How do different demographics access traffic information?

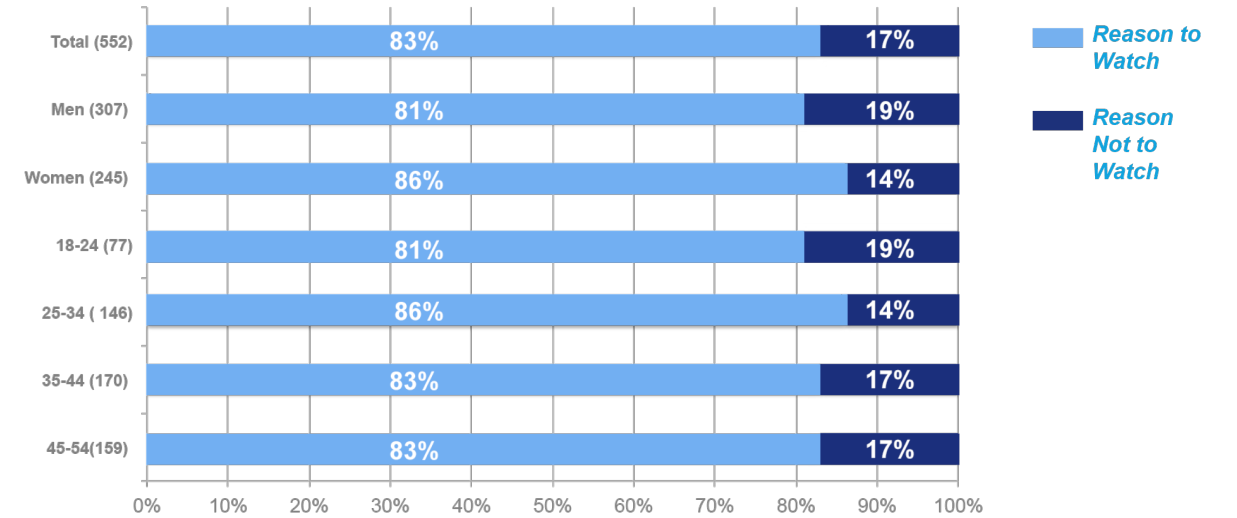
How do different demographics access traffic information?

- **Men and women** - have very similar habits regarding which sources they prefer.
- **18 - 34** - Smartphones are the preferred source of traffic information for younger consumers.
- **45 - 54** - Consumers over the age of 34 prefer TV, especially those in the 45-54 age group. Radio is the second source for this older demographic.

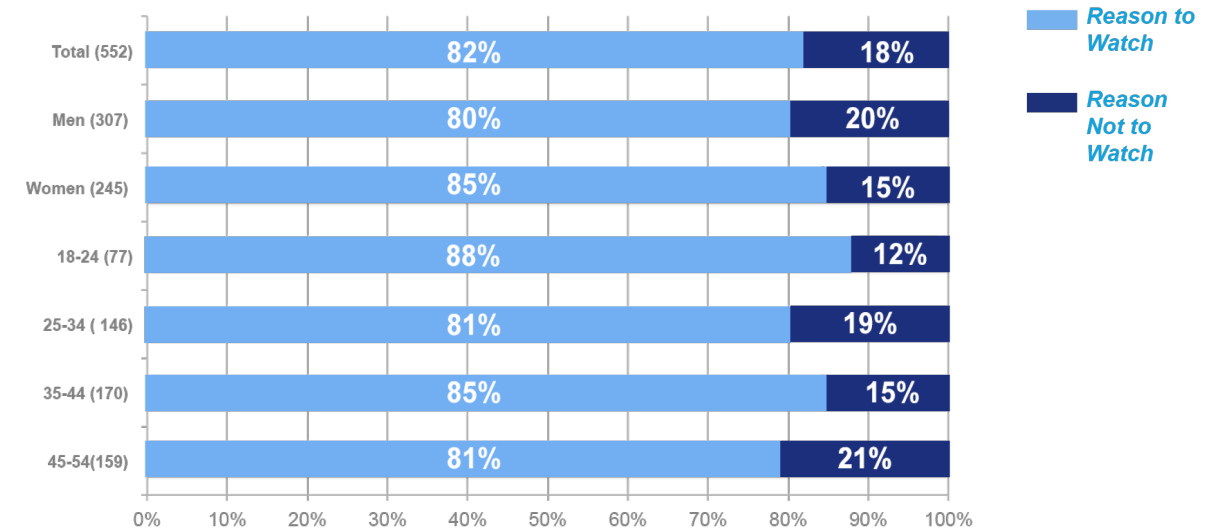
How are these demographics influenced?

Traffic information is an influencing factor to viewers watching TV news. Studies show that one of the main reasons viewers will watch certain stations is based on the traffic information.

Traffic as an influence on choosing a local morning newscast



Traffic as a reason to watch local morning news



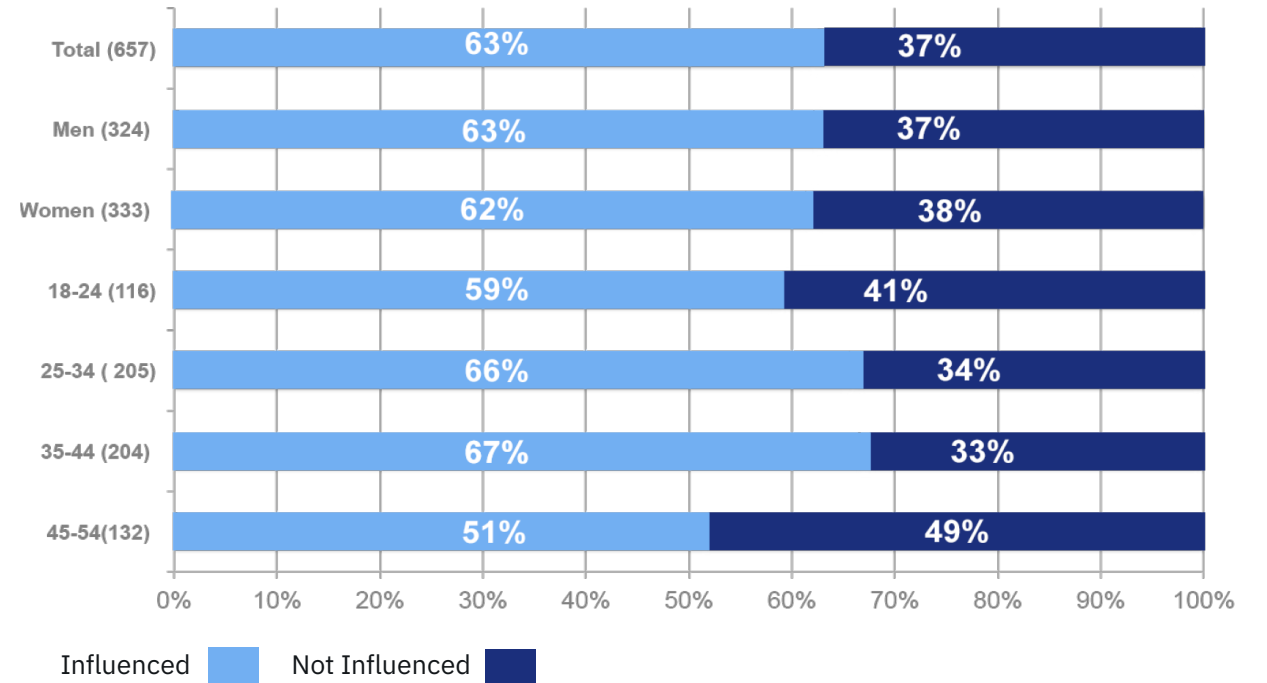
What do consumers value about each source?

Consumers rate the various sources of traffic information about equal in terms of value, with smartphones being rated highest as an “excellent source” by 44 percent of consumers. This may be because smartphone apps are the most personalized and available source.

While consumers rated the sources roughly equal, each source was seen as having its own unique advantages:

- **TV convenience of live pictures and reports**
- **Internet convenience of lost of information in one place**
- **Smartphone convenience of mobility**
- **Radio convenience of listening in the car**

Rating traffic information sources

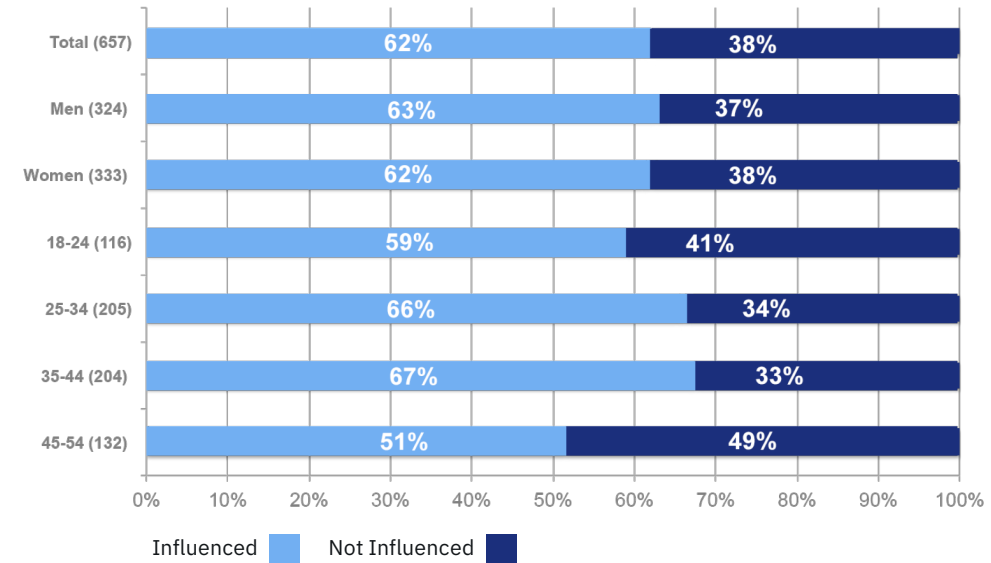


What role does social media play?

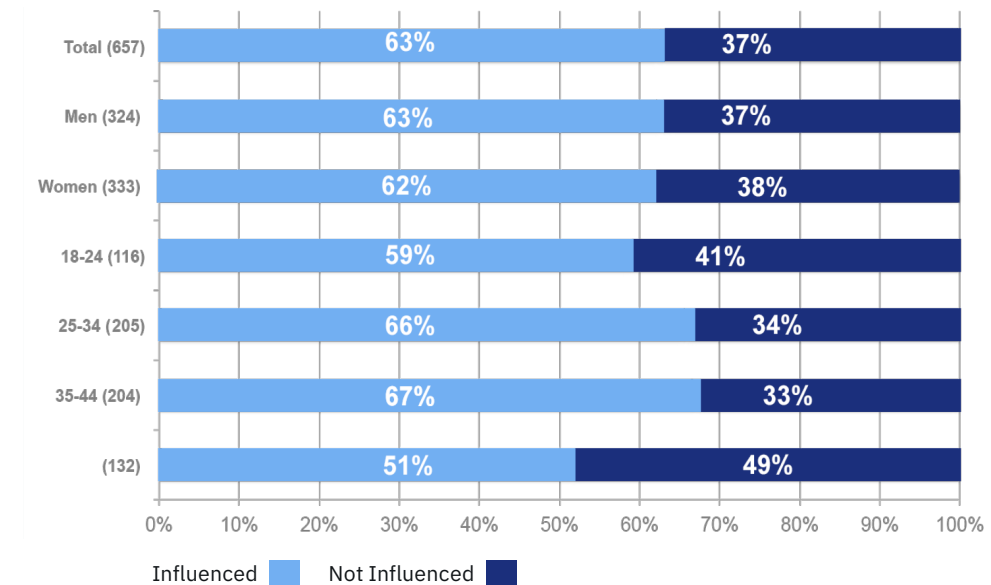
The role of social media in traffic information varies widely depending on demographics.

The charts below show how consumers answered when asked about their interest in getting local traffic updates through Facebook and Twitter. Both sources were generally rated highly by consumers, with a high percentage either “very” or “somewhat” interested. However, there are relatively low “very interested” numbers for age groups 18-24 and 45-54 on both platforms.

Interest in Facebook for traffic information



Interest in Twitter for traffic information



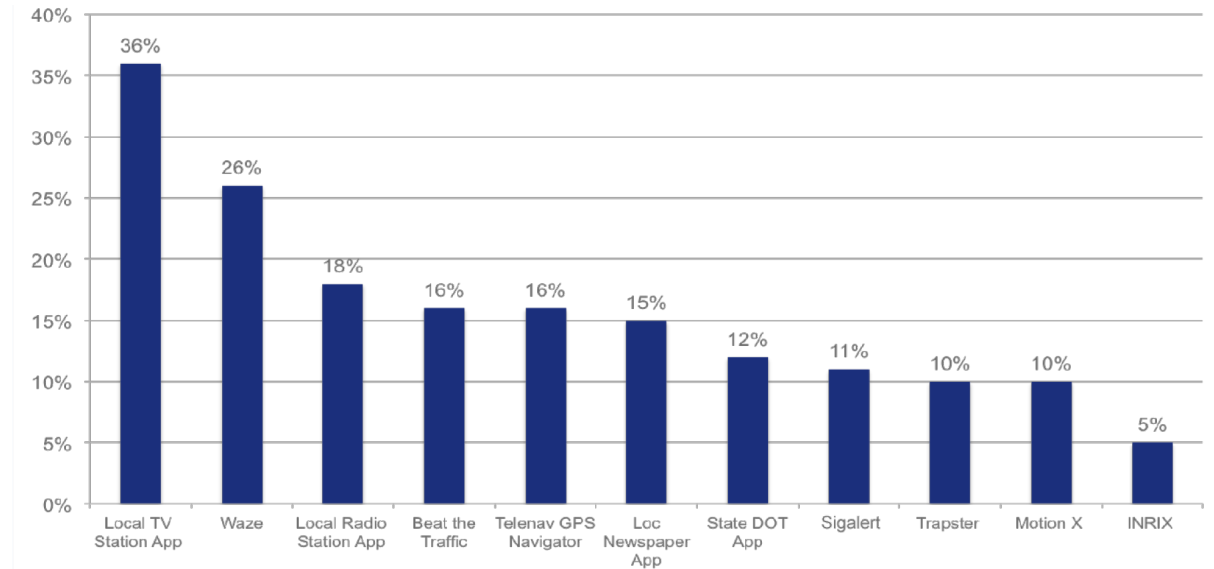
How does mobile relate to TV?

The research found a strong connection between mobile apps and the TV stations that consumers watch. Specifically, consumers prefer to use an app from their local TV station over any other source. They also value their TV station's website over other websites. This suggests that consumers have a significant loyalty for a TV station's traffic news, and they value accessing that source via mobile as well as television.

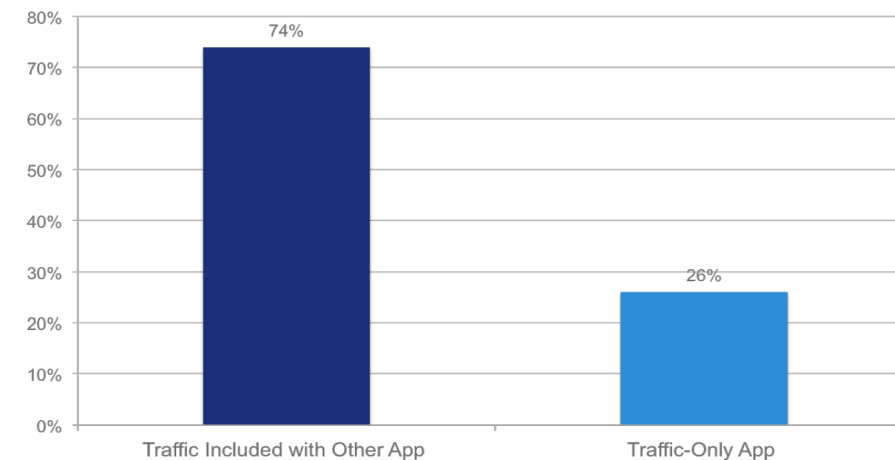
In addition to the usual traffic information, mobile device users want the ability to:

- **Find routes from one place to the next**
- **Receive alerts about problems on their route**
- **Plug-in their route and learn about possible delays and problems**

Which apps are used for information about local traffic and road conditions?



Preference for type of app



Finally, it's worth noting that while mobile users value traffic information, they prefer an app that has traffic included with other news, as opposed to a traffic-only app.

Conclusion

It's clear that while TV is the major source for traffic information, mobile apps are gaining in importance. This trend will no doubt continue as the population becomes increasingly mobile in information access and use. Providers of traffic information should consider:

- **Smaller screen graphics for mobile devices**
- **Audio alerts for traffic news**
- **“Alternate routes” technology for all platforms**

In particular, TV stations should look for ways to leverage consumer loyalty by developing their own traffic apps and cross-promoting them on broadcasts and social media.





The Weather Company, an IBM Business, is the world's largest private weather enterprise, delivering up to 26 billion forecasts daily and among the most accurate, personalized, and actionable weather data and insights. It helps millions of consumers and businesses make better decisions via its enterprise and consumer products from The Weather Channel and Weather Underground.

Visit ibm.com/weather/industries/broadcast-media or reach us by email at weather@us.ibm.com.

© Copyright IBM Corporation 2019

The Weather Company, an IBM Business
1 New Orchard Road
Armonk, NY 10504

Produced in the United States of America
July 2019

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, and Watson are trademarks of International Business Machines Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names might be trademarks of IBM or other companies. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the web at "Copyright and trademark information" at <http://www.ibm.com/legal/us/en/copytrade.shtml>

The Weather Company® and the Weather® logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of TWC Product and Technology, LLC, an IBM Business.

This document is current as of the initial date of publication and may be changed by IBM at any time. Not all offerings are available in every country in which IBM operates.

The performance data and client examples cited are presented for illustrative purposes only. Actual performance results may vary depending on specific configurations and operating conditions.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED "AS IS" WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WITHOUT ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND ANY WARRANTY OR CONDITION OF NON-INFRINGEMENT. IBM products are warranted according to the terms and conditions of the agreements under which they are provided.

