

OPEN RESEARCH STUDY

How Consumers Research and Purchase Smartphones During the Upgrade Process



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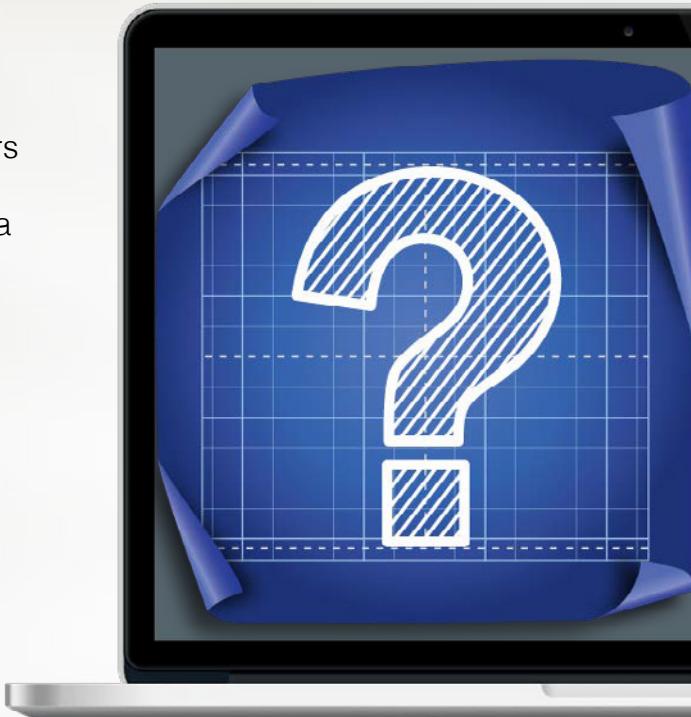
Introduction: Open Research Studies

Open research studies, conducted using remote unmoderated usability testing, reveal current patterns in online behavior that can define new opportunities for an organization and inspire improvements to the customer experience.

Open research studies reveal the unguided user journey. In this type of study, users start on a blank webpage and are free to take any route or action that they naturally would to complete an online task. By conducting open research, you can discover how users behave organically and where they would go both on and off your primary website.

There are many benefits to using this kind of approach, including:

- Understanding opportunities for new products, services and resources based on gaps in the process or user experience
- Identify and overcome barriers for acquiring and retaining new customers
- Optimizing SEO, if your open research includes search data (i.e. typing a word or phrase into a search engine such as Google)
- Building and understanding personas of your current or potential target markets
- Following users over time in order to understand their behavior across various points in the customer journey
- Researching any topic in any industry and for any brand – even your competitors



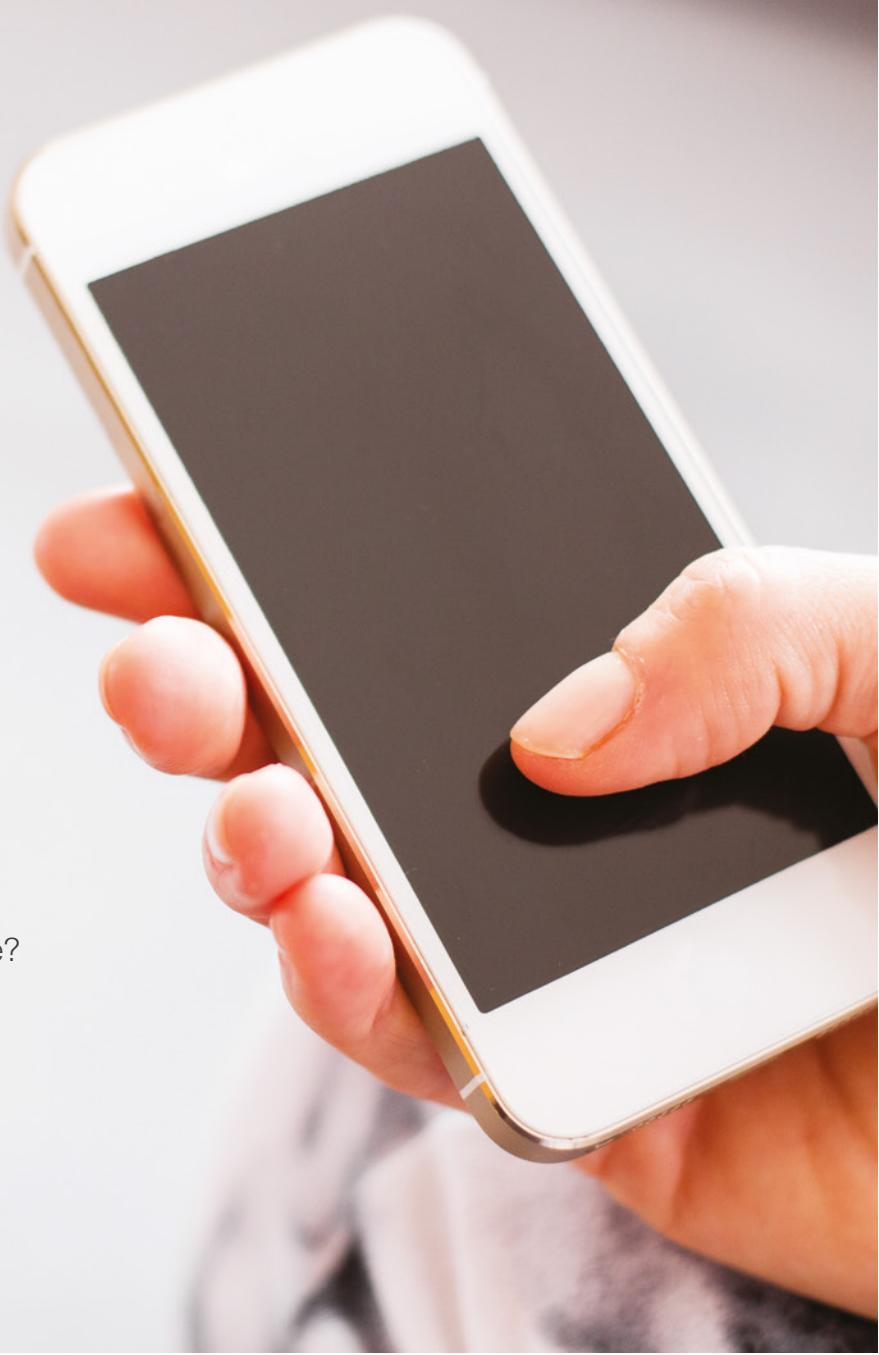
Study Goals

UserZoom conducted an open research study to understand how consumers research and purchase smartphones when it is time to upgrade.

Replacing a smartphone entails making many decisions, some related to smartphone cost and specifications while others are related to the network service providers and their terms/contracts.

The goals of the study were to better understand:

1. What factors drive a purchase decision?
2. What features and functionality are important to users?
3. How does the Internet aid in making these decisions?
4. What types of sites do users visit?
5. From which site do users prefer to purchase a smartphone?



Methodology



Methodology



Study method

Remote Unmoderated research study



Medium of Test

Desktop and Laptop



Number of participants

200



Participant Profile

- US participants
- 18 and above
- Currently own a smartphone

- Participants were recruited from a panel to participate in the study.
- They were screened to ensure that they met the qualifying criteria.
- Next, participants were instructed to perform two tasks from a blank webpage in order to eliminate bias and provide a neutral starting point.
 - For the first task, participants were asked to research smartphones online as they normally would and select one they would be interested in purchasing.
 - For the second task, participants went through the process of purchasing the smartphone they selected in the first task.
- Finally, participants provided feedback on their overall experience in the Final Questionnaire.

Qualifying Questions

Tasks



Research your next smartphone

Starting on a **BLANK WEB PAGE**, research a new smartphone that suits your needs and lifestyle.



Checkout Review

Assume you want to purchase the smartphone you chose in the previous task. How and where would you purchase it? STOP on the BILLING page.

Final Questionnaire

Summary



Summary



Open Research Task 1:

Research your next smartphone



- **On average, most participants used two sites to research a smartphone**
- **76% used a generic search term to start their research process, while the rest typed a specific URL directly in the address bar**

Participants most commonly searched for a specific device brand (31%), suggesting that most participants had a specific brand in mind.

Meanwhile, 29% used general terms (e.g., best smartphones) to begin their research.
- **After using generic search terms, most participants visited either device manufacturer sites (e.g., samsung.com) or network service sites (e.g., verizonwireless.com) to research smartphones**
- **75% only researched one device**

Samsung and Apple were the most common brands researched

 - 59% researched Samsung devices
 - 31% researched Apple devices
 - 10% researched other Android brands
- **Cost, screen size, brand, battery life and operating system were the most important factors in selecting a smartphone**

Task 1

Research your next smartphone

Description:

Starting from this BLANK WEB PAGE, **spend some time researching smartphones** online as you normally would. Think about the features and functionalities that are most important to you.



Task 1

Success & Ease

- 96% participants were successful in researching smartphone features and functionalities online and 87% found the research process "Very Easy."
- Those who had difficulty said, "It was not easy to compare models side by side and that there is no consistency in displaying information."

Were you able to find a smartphone to meet your needs?



200

How difficult or easy was it to research options for smartphones online?



7 point scale where 1 was "Very Difficult" and 7 was "Very Easy."

What was less than easy about researching smartphone options?

"Searches all gave advertising for one product" (Review site, Tom's Guide, TechRadar)

"I needed to enter zip code before I could use Sprint's website, didn't get the info I was looking for."

"It would have been helpful to see options compared in a way that makes it easier to see differences--a grid of some sort maybe." (TechRadar)

"When describing storage, they all use different terms." (Walmart, Cricket Wireless)

There are so many options, and the information available isn't necessarily consistent. (Bhphotovideo)

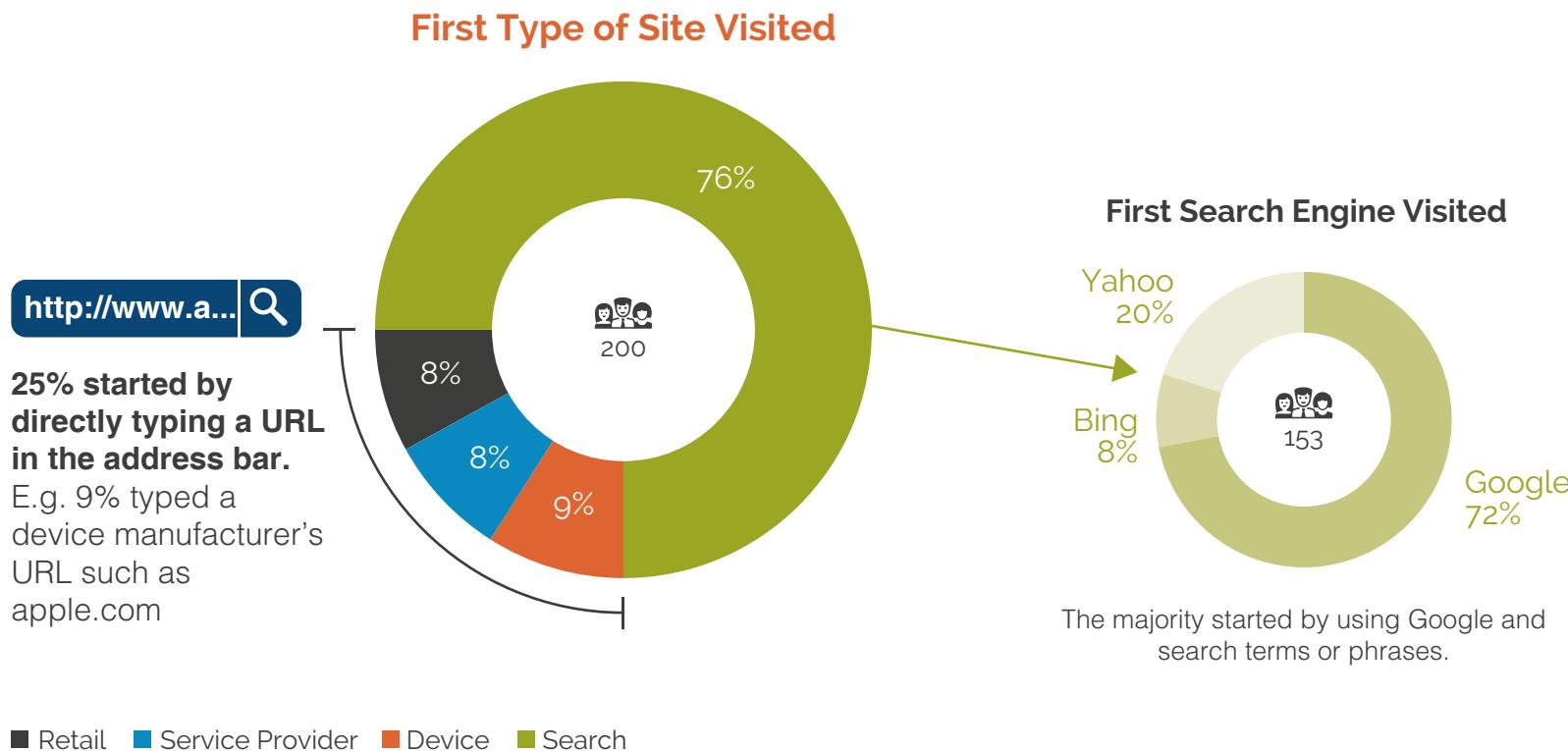


Task 1

Starting Point: First action performed

- Searching by general terms is a vital part of researching smartphones online.
- 76% used a general term to start researching smartphones.
- Of the search engines first visited, Google was most popular (72%) followed Yahoo (20%) and Bing (8%).

How did participants begin researching smartphones?



Task 1

Search Terms or Phrases Used while Researching Smartphones

- Of the 76% participants who started researching smartphones by using a search term, 31% started by searching specific device types whereas 29% searched for “best smartphone 2015” or “latest smartphones.”
- Most participants visited 2 sites and spent an average of 2.32 minutes.

What were common search terms or phrases that participants used?

Samsung..... 

Device brand names were most frequently used search terms.

Only 8% used comparison phrases such as “Samsung galaxy S6 vs. iPhone 6.”

Search Terms & Percentages	
Device (e.g. iPhone, Samsung, LG etc)	31%
“Smartphones,” “Best Smartphone 2015” (or variations)	29%
Comparisons (e.g. “Samsung Galaxy S6 Vs. iPhone 6”)	8%
Service Provider (e.g. Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile)	5%
E-Commerce/Retail (Amazon, BestBuy, eBay)	3.5%

Research Smartphone Task Stats

Average Time Spent	2.32 min
Used search	76%

Number of Sites Visited

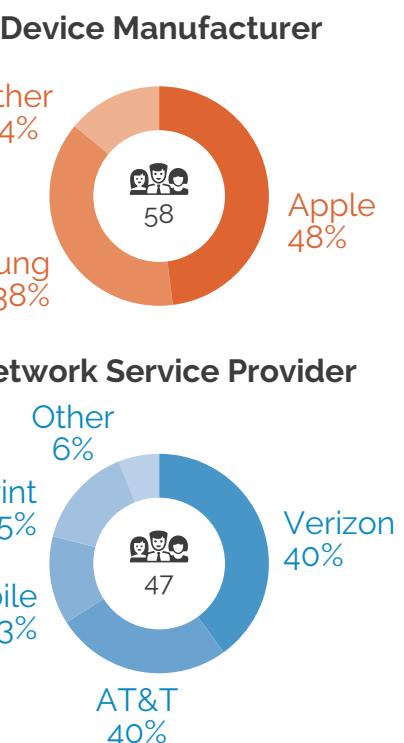
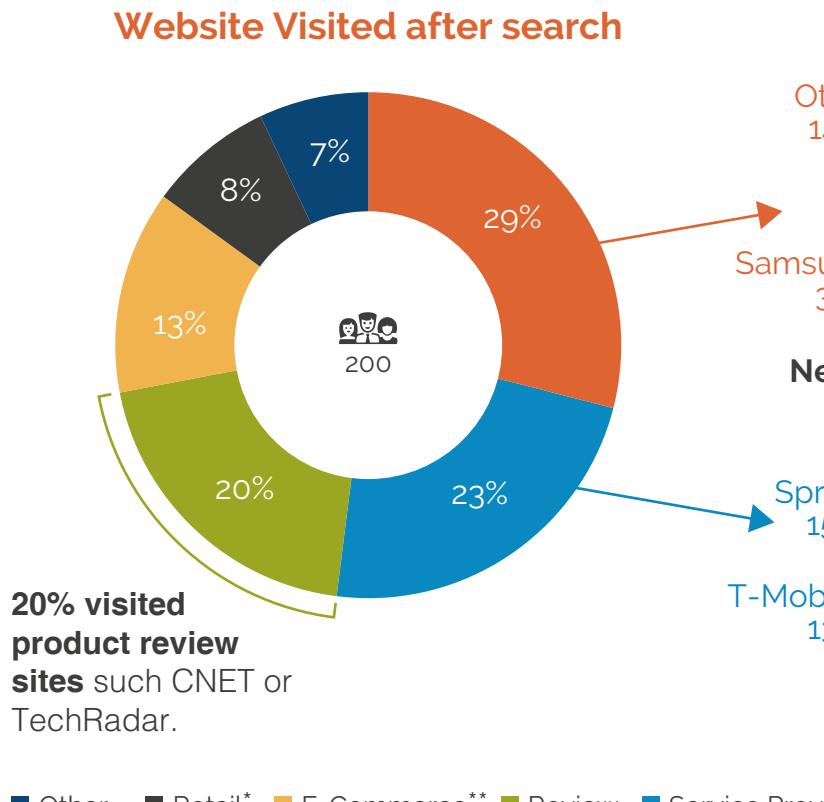
1 website	25%
2 websites	67%
3 websites	8%
Average websites visited	1.85

Task 1

First Site Visited to Research Smartphones

- After searching, 29% visited device manufacturer websites to research smartphones. (e.g. Apple, Samsung, etc.)
- 23% started their research on a service provider's website after searching (e.g. Verizon, AT&T etc.)

After search, where did participants go to research smartphones?



Apple was the most frequently visited among device manufacturer websites.

- 48% visited Apple
- 38% visited Samsung

Network Service Provider websites were the second most frequented website.

- 40% started on Verizon
- 26% started on AT&T

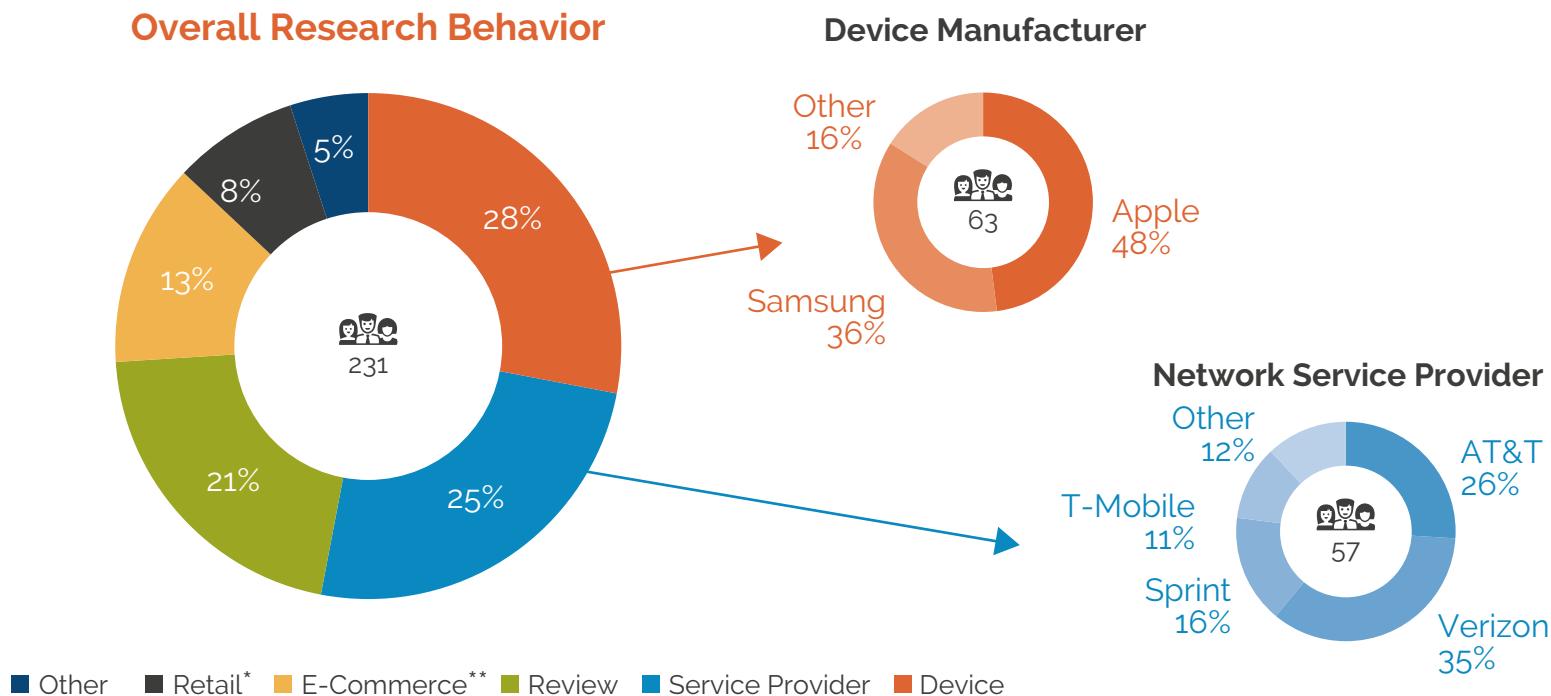
* Brick & Mortar stores such as Best Buy and Walmart ** E-Commerce websites such as Amazon or Ebay

Task 1

Overall Sites Visited to Research Smartphones

- The overall websites visited at any time during the smartphone research process were almost identical to the first website visited to research smartphones.
 - Device manufacturer (28%) and service provider (25%) websites were most frequently visited to research smartphones.
- 21% overall reviewed device comparison articles or product reviews on websites such as CNET and TechRadar.

Overall, what were the most frequently visited websites to research smartphones?



* Brick & Mortar stores such as Best Buy and Walmart ** E-Commerce websites such as Amazon or Ebay

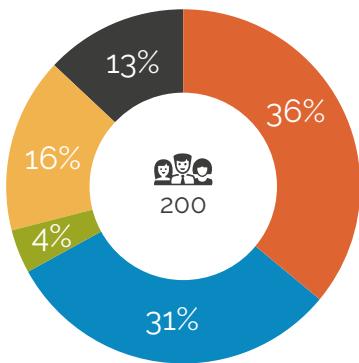
Task 1

Smartphone Brands Researched

- Samsung and iPhone were the most popular researched brands.
- 36% researched Samsung devices followed by 31% iPhone.
 - Samsung Galaxy s6 and iPhone 6 were most the popular researched devices.

What were the most frequently researched smartphone brands?

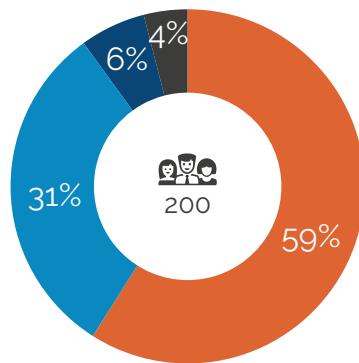
Overall Brands Researched



Only 10% compared 2 or more devices.

Only 2% compared Samsung & Apple smartphones.

Participants' Primary Device



The percentage of participants who owned Apple devices and those who researched Apple smartphones were identical.

Device Research Behavior

1 Device	75%
2 Devices	7%
3 or more devices	2%
Did not select a device	16%



Most participants seemed to have a device in mind that they researched since **75% researched only 1 device.**

Task 1

How did participants make comparisons?

- Only 15% researched **smartphones** on **2 or more websites**.
- Only 10% compared **devices**.
- An overwhelming majority of participants that compared devices or visited multiple websites to research smartphones were women.
 - 95% who **compared multiple devices** on **1 or more websites** were **female**
 - 66% who **compared the same device** on **multiple websites** were **female**



Smartphone Comparison Behavior.

Two types of behaviors were observed in terms of device comparisons.

1. Compared **single device** on **multiple sites (N=29)**

Review websites (e.g. CNET, TechRadar) were most commonly visited to read product evaluations of smartphones.

- 45% visited review websites
- 31% visited e-commerce or retail websites

2. Compared **multiple device (N=19)**

While only 19 participants compared one or more devices, the majority of them compared different versions of the same brand.

- For example, 11/19 participants compared Samsung Galaxy S6 vs. Samsung S4 or iPhone 6 vs. 6+
- Only 2 /19 compared iPhone vs. Samsung
- 6/19 compared other android devices to either iPhone or Samsung

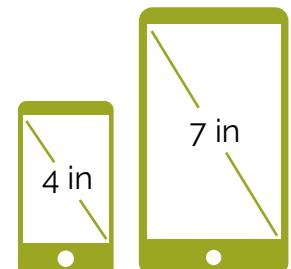
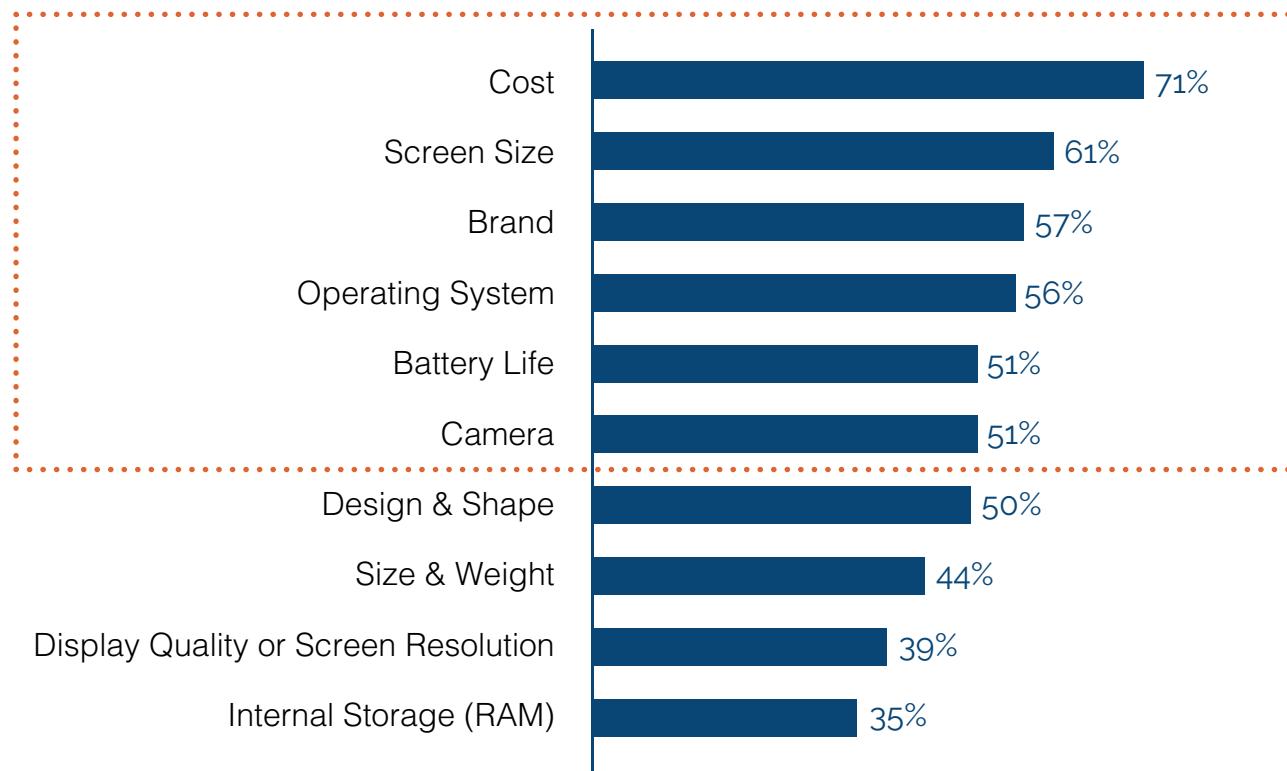
Overall, review websites were most commonly visited to read product evaluations or to compare smartphone brands.

Task 1

Most important factors when researching smartphones

- Participants indicated that cost, screen size, brand, OS, Battery life and camera quality were important factors when determining a smartphone purchase.

Question: Which of the following types of information did you look for while researching your next smartphone? [Check all that apply].

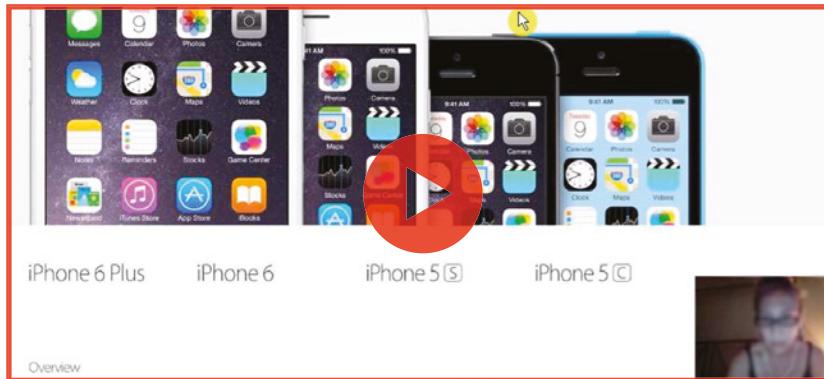


61% indicated that screen size is the top device feature taken into consideration when researching smartphones.

Task 1

Participant Smartphone Research Experience Video

The following video illustrates one of the more common behaviors participants exhibited when asked to research smartphones starting from a blank page. Click to play the video.



Observations

Participant has a general idea of the brand of phone she wants to purchase.

Feature comparisons between different device versions was also an important factor.

Storage and phone size were important considerations while researching an upgrade.

Selected the iPhone 6 due to more storage even though the phone size was initially a concern.

Comments

"I'm a pretty dedicated iPhone user, so I would compare iPhone models."

"I would compare the 6 and 5S & see if I really need to upgrade."

"I might stick with an iPhone 5, if I just need to replace it...because the iPhone 6 is so huge."

"How much room is in it? I have a baby now and I'm taking videos & my phone is constantly filling up."

"iPhone 6 would be my replacement..."

Summary



Open Research Task 2:

Go through the checkout process, stop at the billing page.



- **42% started the checkout process on a service provider website. 92% of these participants were able to complete the checkout steps until the billing page on the same website**
 - **Overall, 70% indicated that the process of purchasing smartphones online was easy**

Of the sites participants visited to purchase a device, AT&T rated highest on ease of completing the checkout process
 - **39% completed the checkout task with a Samsung device while 29% with an Apple device.**
 - **22% started to checkout on a device website; apple.com and samsung.com were the most visited device sites**
- Almost all who started on apple.com, succeeded in completing the checkout task
- Meanwhile, those who started the purchase process on samsung.com were redirected to either a network service provider or a retail site, adding additional steps in the purchase process

Task 2

Checkout Review

Description:

Go through the process of purchasing a Smartphone. **STOP** on the **BILLING** page. Use **fake information** while going through the purchase flow.



Task 2

Success & Ease

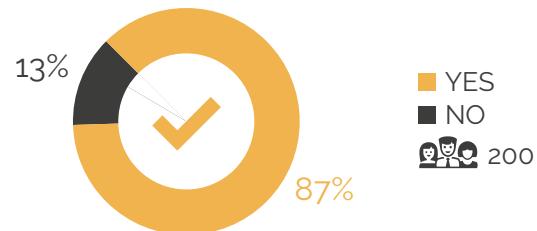
- 87% indicated that they were successful in going through the checkout process and stopping at the billing page.
- 70% found the checkout process “Very Easy.”

Participants who rated the overall checkout process as “Very Difficult” or “Neutral”

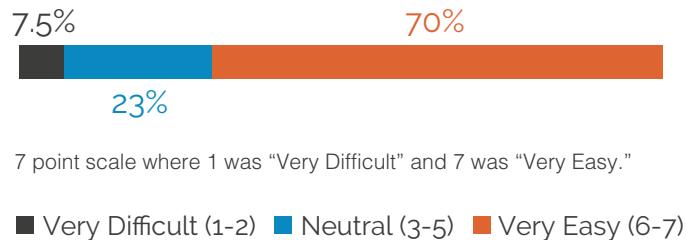
struggled with having to navigate more than 1 website to complete their checkout and indicated that it was “annoying.”

E.g. On retail websites such as Best Buy, participants are directed to service provider websites, where they had to go through additional steps to checkout.

Were you able to go through the checkout process with the smartphone you selected?



How difficult or easy was it to go through the checkout process?



What was less than easy about the checkout process?

“I couldn’t finish the sale in one spot, but needed to go to AT&T and login to finish the sale. It wasn’t difficult just annoying” (Best Buy)

“During the check out, a direct 2 you popup continually showed up, I didn’t want that service, but it kept popping up. The checkout was window after window” (Sprint)



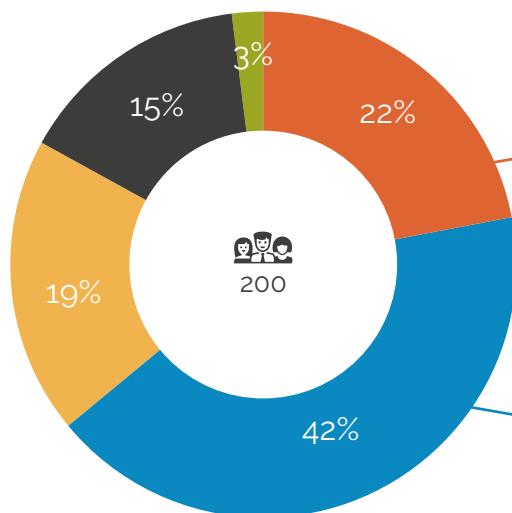
Task 2

Starting Point to start the Purchase Process

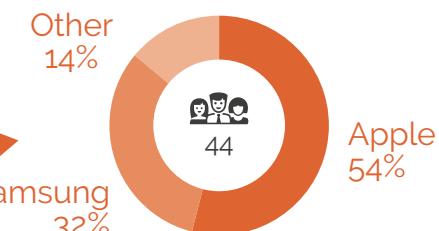
- 42% started the checkout process on a service provider's website while 22% started on a device manufacturer's website.
- The vast majority of participants (92%) who started their purchase on a service provider's website were able to complete the steps one website.

Where did participants begin the checkout process?

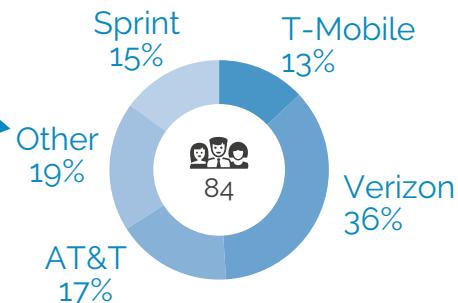
First Type of Site Visited



Device Manufacturer



Network Service Provider



■ Other ■ Retail* ■ E-Commerce** ■ Review ■ Service Provider ■ Device

* Brick & Mortar stores such as Best Buy and Walmart ** E-Commerce websites such as Amazon or Ebay

98% (n = 24) who started on apple.com completed the steps to checkout on the same site.

The majority of participants who started the checkout process on samsung.com (n=14), were directed to service provider, or retail sites.

Open Task Data

Average Number of Sites Visited	1.21
Average Time Spent	2.61 min
Visited more than 1 website	18%

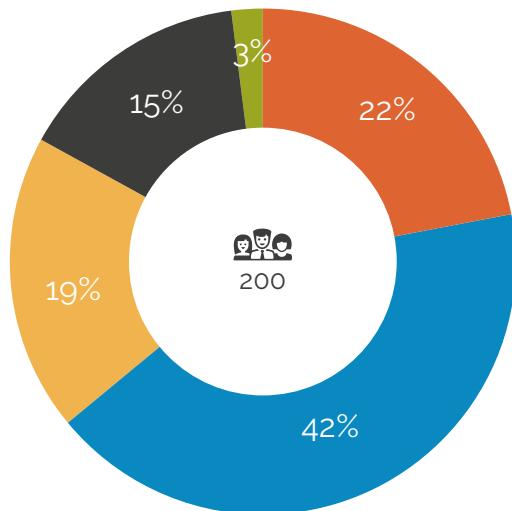
18% visited **2 or more websites** to through checkout (before stopping at billing).

Task 2

Overall Steps in the Purchase Process

- 18% (n=35) visited 2 or more websites to complete the steps in the checkout process (before stopping at billing).

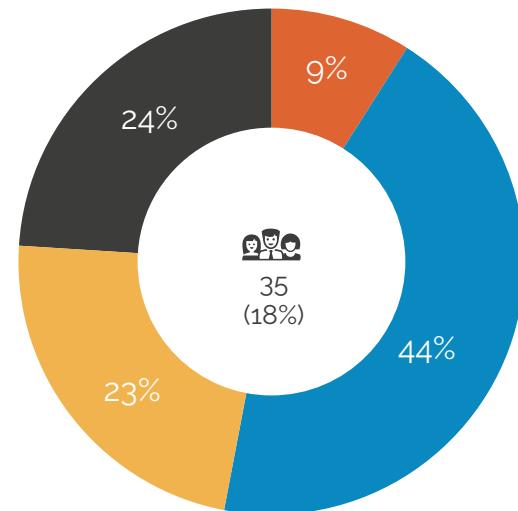
First Type of Site Visited



24 participants who started the checkout process on apple.com only visited 1 website to checkout.

22 participants who started their checkout on the apple website were able to complete the checkout steps till the billing page.

2nd website visited



49% who visited 2 or more websites started on a device website to complete the checkout process.

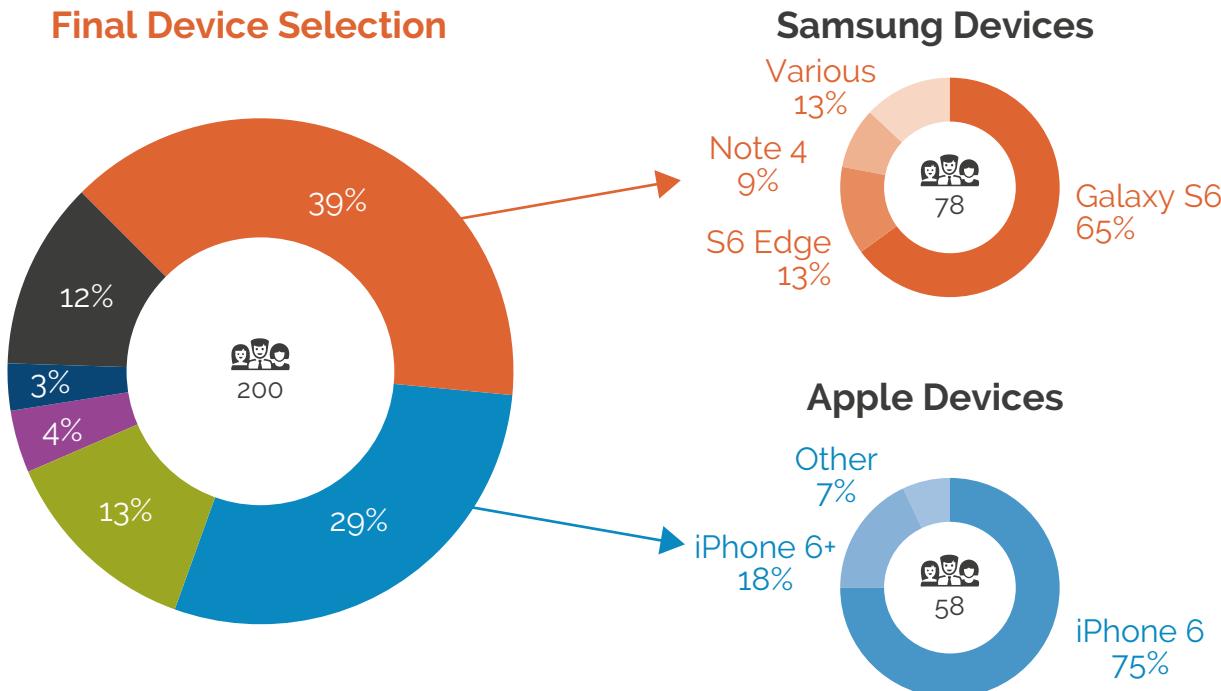
■ Other ■ Retail* ■ E-Commerce ** ■ Review ■ Service Provider ■ Device

* Brick & Mortar stores such as Best Buy and Walmart ** E-Commerce websites such as Amazon or Ebay

Task 2

Final Device Selected During Checkout

- 39% selected Samsung devices through the checkout process.
- 29% selected Apple.



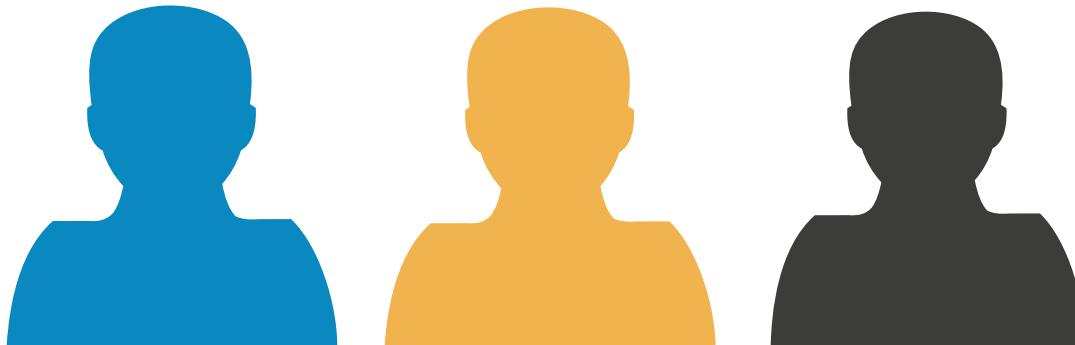
Samsung Galaxy S6 and iPhone 6 were the most popular devices during the research and checkout tasks.

■ Other Devices ■ Did not select a device ■ LG ■ Apple ■ Samsung ■ Windows ■ Motorola

Task 2

Of the 35 participants who visited more than 1 website:

1. 17 participants started on a device website such as samsung.com
 - 10 of the 17 were directed to **Service Provider** websites and then completed the rest of the checkout process there
 - 3 completed the checkout on **E-Commerce** websites such as Amazon.com
 - 4 completed checkout on **Retail** websites such Best Buy
2. 6 participants started on E-Commerce websites such as Amazon.com
 - 4 of these participants completed checkout with **Service Provider** (2 AT&T, 1 T-Mobile)
 - 2 completed checkout on other **E-Commerce** websites such as OverStock & Shop11
3. 4 started on Review websites such as CNET and TechRadar
 - These participants then completed the checkout process on **Service Provider** or retail websites

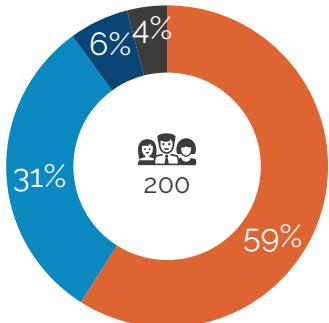


Task 2

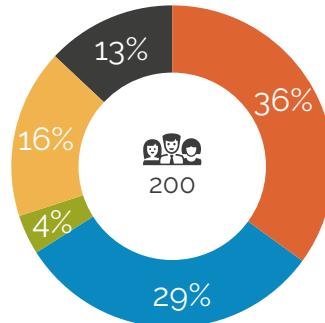
Overall Device Selection Pattern

- After Samsung & Apple, LG was the next most popular brand researched by participants.
- 6% indicated that they currently use Windows devices while only 3% selected Windows in the checkout task.

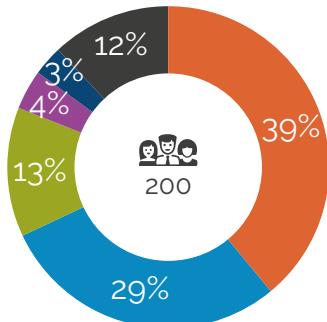
Devices that Participants Owned



Overall Brands Researched



Devices Selected to Checkout



The percentage of participants who currently own Windows devices and those that selected Windows in the checkout task fell by half.

Task 2

Overall Ease Ratings

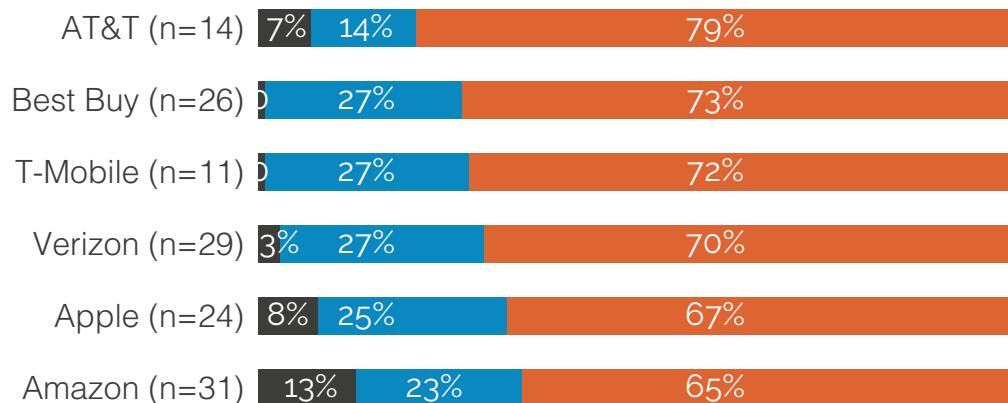
- Of the most frequently visited sites to purchase, AT&T was rated as “Very Easy” to use.

How difficult or easy was it to go through the checkout process?

Overall ratings



Ratings per website based on the actual sites visited during the study



7 point scale where 1 was “Very Difficult” and 7 was “Very Easy.”

■ Very Difficult (1-2) ■ Neutral (3-5) ■ Very Easy (6-7)

Task 2

Likelihood to Purchase Online

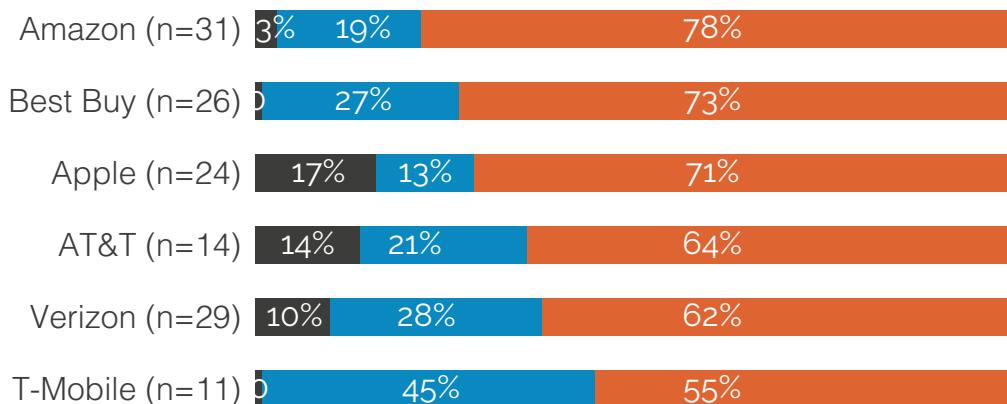
- 69% indicated that they are likely to purchase their next smartphone online.

Based on your experience today, how likely are you to purchase your next smartphone online?

Overall ratings



Ratings per website based on the actual sites visited during the study



7 point scale where 1 was "Very Difficult" and 7 was "Very Easy."

■ Not at all Likely (1-2) ■ Neutral (3-5) ■ Very Likely (6-7)

While only 65% of the Amazon visitors rated the checkout process as "Very Easy", 78% indicated they are "Very Likely" to make a smartphone purchase on this website.

The ease of shipping and an easy return policy may be the reason why Amazon was rated the most likely site where participants would purchase online.

Task 2

Overall Purchase Experience Feedback

- 60% said that they were satisfied with the purchase experience and that they would not change anything.
- 15% said that they would like the process to be faster, with fewer steps in the process.

What would you change about the purchase experience?

"Not everyone shops online. **Make it more novice friendly.**"

"Explain the charges better. For example, what is the 15 dollar charge and all the fees that are included when I just wanted to purchase the phone"

"The loading ability of the page seem to be strained. **It took longer than average for each page to load.**"

"It makes you purchase a plan to buy a phone. **I think we should be able to buy phones without buying a plan.** It makes you create an online account. It would be nice to be able to purchase items online without having an account."

"The site design could use some improvements. **I occasionally don't get where I want to go because I clicked instead of hovering.**"

"Not require so much personal information"

"While the information provided was thorough and very helpful, I would reduce the image size in the purchase process and organize the information provided on the phone itself into smaller elements to help simplify the purchase process even more. **I felt that the Apple site could have been a little bit more concise. However, it is very informative and helpful.**"

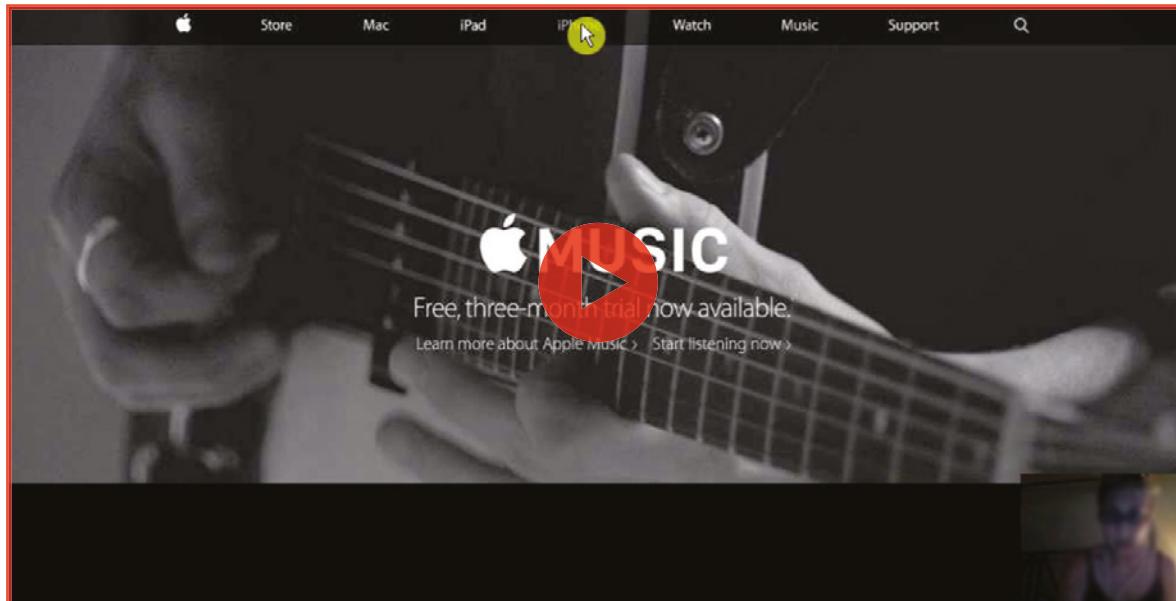
"Surprisingly, there's no "buy now" button. Had to go through multiple screens in order to get to the cart"

Task 2

Participant Purchase Experience Video

The following video illustrates one of the more common behaviors participants exhibited when asked to go through the checkout process starting from a blank page. Click to play the video.

- Participant went through the checkout process with AT&T as the service provider.
 - “The last one I bought, I got through the service provider (on apple.com) so that is what I would do again.”
- Went through the checkout process till “check upgrade eligibility.”



OS: Mac OS X

Browser: Chrome

Site: apple.com

Time spent: 4:15 sec

Devices: iPhone 6

Key Takeaways

Best Smartphone 2015



General Search Terms was the number one way that people researched smartphones. 76% of the participants used search phrases to start the research process.

Screen size is the most important device feature participants considered while researching smartphones, while cost, brand, operating system and battery life were other top purchase decision influencers.



<http://www.apple.com>



Device websites were the most popular way to research smartphones, while service provider websites were the most popular way to start purchasing.

E-commerce websites such as Amazon and online retail websites such as Best Buy had the highest percentage of participants that indicated an intention to purchase online.



Samsung Galaxy S6 phones were the most researched smartphones, followed by the iPhone 6.

About UserZoom

UserZoom is the #1 platform for cost-effective and agile usability testing and user experience analytics. We offer a worry-free, all-in-one solution: software + services + recruitment.

1 Software Platform

Unmoderated Remote Usability Testing

- ✓ Live Web & Mobile Task-based Surveys
- ✓ UX Benchmarking
- ✓ Competitive Research
- ✓ International Research

Information Architecture & Design Validation

- ✓ Card Sorting
- ✓ Tree Testing
- ✓ Click Testing
- ✓ Prototype Testing

CX Measurement / VOC

- ✓ Live Web & Mobile True Intent Studies (Intercepts)
- ✓ Online Surveys
- ✓ Web Analytics Integration



2 UX Research Services

Our UX Research Team ensures your success:

1. Strategizing
2. Initial training & support
3. Setting up studies
4. Managing all recruiting tasks
5. Launching, monitoring
6. Analyzing results, reporting

3 Recruiting Solutions

We recruit in 3 ways:

1. Using a Panel
 - ✓ Strict quality controls
 - ✓ National and international reach
2. Customized invitation layer
 - ✓ Intercept studies
3. Invitation links
 - ✓ Private email list
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The best way to understand the power of UserZoom is to start using it.

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