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Mobile Discourtesy

National Survey Results on Episodes of Convergent Public and Private Spheres

The mobile phone revolution has provoked a spate of qualitative and quantitative studies of European and Asian users.[1] Many studies focus on the use of mobile phones in social settings and social relationships. By far, the most common segment of interest are teens,[2] though there have been studies of children as young as four and among many other specialized populations.[3] These studies are drawn heavily from a Northern European setting, although Asian rim countries are increasingly studied.[4] This study provides an overview of the issue of social interaction surrounding mobile phone use in the U.S. in 2000.

Mobile communication releases us from being tied down to one spot. With it, we can move around much faster, and personalize our information in some extremely helpful ways. The wireless revolution is not only changing our lives by amplifying our ability to do the things we like, it is also complicating our lives and those of the people around us. As our studies and those of other researchers have shown,[5] the more

[1] See the contributions in B. Brown, N. Green and R. Harper (eds.), *Wireless World: Social and Interactional Aspects of the Mobile Age*, London: Springer, 2002; James E. Katz and Mark Aakhus (eds.), *Perpetual Contact: Mobile Communication, Private Talk, Public Performance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; James E. Katz (ed.), *Machines That Become Us: The Social Context of Personal Communication Technology*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003; Kristóf Nyíri (ed.), *Mobile Communication: Essays on Cognition and Community*, Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2003.

[2] N. Green, "Outwardly Mobile: Young People and Mobile Technologies", in Katz (ed.), *Machines That Become Us*, pp. 201–218; T. E. Johnsen, "The Social Context of the Mobile Phone Use of Norwegian Teens", in Katz (ed.), *Machines That Become Us*, pp. 161–169.

[3] C. Licoppe, "Two Modes of Maintaining Interpersonal Relations through Telephone: From the Domestic to the Mobile Phone", in Katz (ed.), *Machines That Become Us*, pp. 171–185.

[4] Katz (ed.), *Machines That Become Us.*

[5] James E. Katz and Ronald E. Rice, *Social Consequences of Internet Use: Access, Involvement, and Interaction*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002.

possibilities people have to communicate, the more they will do it, so time is not necessarily saved. The mobile phone can be instrumental in many significant – and unexpected – ways, such as during the September 11 World Trade Center attacks,[6] but using a mobile phone in the car, whether with handset or hands free, is distracting to drivers, and is associated with four times the accident rate of those who do not use mobile phones in their cars.

Mobile communication is likely to increase both the level of social control exercised over people as well as the channels through which this control can be exercised. Mobile communication makes us more subject to the informal influence and concerns of people with whom we have a social relationship, such as friends, family members and co-workers. Puro notes that while mobile phones increase mobility and free time, they also make people more accessible (in places where before they were not, such as in public) and under more control by others (as, one's boss calling one while out of the office).[7] Worse, now even non-users are more controlled both by users who place calls as well as users who receive calls.

Wireless communication may help maintain family ties over a distance, and thus help preserve family order and integration. But the widespread use of mobile phones by family members may make in-person supervision and monitoring less necessary, and therefore less frequent, perhaps thus loosening family bonds. Mobile phones are used by couples to stay in touch during the day, and even for "nagging" purposes, according to a 2002 British survey. The commercially sponsored survey found about 1 in 3 couples reported using mobiles more than 10 times a day. The survey of 1,000 adults even found one in 20 called their partner from the doorstep to let them know they are home. According to the research, the most popular reason for phoning or sending a text message to their partner was to tell them they were running late (81%). Next, with 67%, was to ask them to do something they had forgotten, then 42% who wanted to check whether they need anything from the shops.[8]

The importance of communication generally, and communication across distance specifically, has been a long-standing area of research in communication studies.[9] Fox argues that mobile phones are an important

[6] J. E. Katz and R. E. Rice, "The Telephone As a Medium of Faith, Hope, Terror, and Redemption: America, September 11th", *Prometheus*, 20/3 (2002), pp. 247–253.

[7] Jukka-Pekka Puro, "Finland: A Mobile Culture", Katz and Aakhus (eds.), pp. 19–29.

[8] Ananova, "Couples Keep in Contact and 'Nag' via Mobiles", retrieved March 17, 2003 from http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_578143.html.

[9] L. Rakow, *Gender on the Line*, Champagne, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992.

complement to well-established grooming protocols, which have been important for both evolutionary and social hierarchy reasons.[10] In a small-scale survey and a series of focus groups, conducted in the UK, she finds that 27% of women and 21% of men say they use their phones primarily for gossip. ("Men seemed to prefer the term 'keeping in touch' [26%], which on closer probing in focus groups turned out to be essentially a euphemism for gossip.") An interesting result turned up in a European survey of mobile phone usage sponsored by Siemens. It found that 24% of married mobile owners sent text messages to their spouses, while 61% of unmarried people in relationships text their partners.[11] While mobile phones help some coordinate their work and family life, others do not like the pressures and strain of work spilling over into their personal lives.

Public space looks and sounds different now than it did a mere five years ago. People are yakking or typing on the phone; pedestrians punch keypads as they pound the pavement to their next appointment. Because planes and trains are public, unlike private automobiles or phone booths, the public is now forced to listen to other people's business and personal matters, sometimes being screamed into apparently empty space as mobile phone owners increasingly use extended microphones to avoid potential brain damage from alleged cell phone emissions.

No matter how public the context, one can be forced to be exposed to at least one portion of what might be a highly private conversation (possibly important, but usually trivial): "a mobile phone ... privatizes public places".[12] More specifically, it allows users to participate in what might be a very private communication (often turning away or looking down while talking into the phone) in a public context. Puro calls this "an autistic form of public behavior".[13] Thus, paradoxically, being exposed to part of an other's dyadic conversation without being a part of it, being exposed to much trivial or non-understandable half-conversations, and being visually shunned by mobile phone users, may increase one's feeling of loneliness in public spaces.

[10] K. Fox, "Evolution, Alienation and Gossip: The Role of Mobile Telecommunications in the 21st Century", Social Issues Research Centre, 2001, retrieved March 16, 2003 from http://www.sirc.org/publik/gossip.shtml.

[11] Tomi Ahonen Consulting, "The Messaging Future – Let the Fun Begin", Revenue sharing report, 2002, retrieved March 17, 2003 from www.telecom2002.co.il/presentations /Tomi%20Ahonen.ppt.

[12] Puro, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[13] *Ibid.*

RQ2: To what extent does the use of a mobile phone improve or degrade the social interaction between the respondent and the spouse /bestfriend?

RQ3: What predicts the perception of a significant other's discourteous use of the mobile phone?

Method

The data came from a national probability telephone survey conducted in March 2000, designed by us but administered by a commercial survey firm.[25] General demographic variables included *gender*, *age* (dichotomized at 40 years), *income* (at $35,000), *education* (at college degree), *race* (due to sample sizes, only African-American and white non-Hispanic), *marital status* (dichotomized at other, or married), *children* (at none, or any), and *work status* (at full time, or other). Media use measures include number of *letters* sent weekly (dichotomized at none, or any), *phone calls* made weekly (up to 9, 10 or more), and *e-mail messages* sent weekly (at none, or any). *Specific mobile phone measures* included ownership by respondent and by spouse/bestfriend, frequency of mobile phone use the prior day with spouse/bestfriend, characterizations of spouse/bestfriend's use of a mobile phone, and characterization of general others' use of a mobile phone.

Results

General Mobile Phone Usage

Of the 1329 respondents, 54.4% were current mobile phone users; 9.0% had stopped using mobile phones; and 36.5% had never had a mobile phone. 53.8% of those who indicated the year they first adopted the medium (N=725) did so before or during 1997 (i.e., veteran users).

Digital Divides: Nonusers, Recent Users, and Dropouts Compared to Users, Veteran Users, and Current Users

Taking into account shared variance among the predictor variables through logistic regression identifies unique influences on different categories of usage. Mobile phone *users*, compared to *nonusers*, were more

[25] For methodological details, see Katz and Rice, *Social Consequences of Internet Use.*

Table One. Demographics of U.S. Mobile Phone Usage Categories, 2000

Demographic	Nonusers (Never, Former)	Current Users	Veterans: 1997 or Before	Recent: 1998 or After	Dropouts	Current Users
Overall Percent & N	45.6% 606	54.4% 723	53.8% 390	46.2% 335	14.1% 119	85.9% 723
Gender: Male Female N / Chi-square	44.7% 55.3% 606	46.6% 53.4% 732 / .5	48.5% 51.5% 390	44.5% 55.5% 335 / 1.1	41.2% 58.8% 119	46.6% 53.4% 723 / 1.2
Age: < 40 yrs >= 40 yrs N / Chi-square	47.8% 52.2% 580	52.8% 47.2% 708 / 3.3	43.6% 56.4% 381	63.2% 36.8% 329 / 27.4 **	48.3% 51.7% 116	52.8% 47.2% 708 / .8
Income: < $35K >= $35K N / Chi-square	47.8% 52.2% 492	22.4% 77.6% 608 / 78.5 ***	14.6% 85.4% 335	31.8% 68.2% 274 / 25.5 ***	46.2% 53.8% 104	22.4% 77.6% 608 / 26.2 ***
Education: < College >= College N / Chi-square	70.1% 29.9% 606	60.9% 39.1% 723 / 12.5 ***	52.3% 47.7% 390	71.0% 29.0% 335 / 26.6 ***	68.9% 31.3% 119	60.9% 39.1% 723 / 2.8
Race: African-American White N / Chi-square	12.9% 87.1% 549	12.7% 87.3% 636 / .01	10.3% 89.7% 359	16.1% 83.9% 279 / 4.8 *	14.3% overall 16.3% 83.7% 104	11.2% overall 12.7% 87.3% 636 / 1.0
Marital Status: Other Married N / Chi-square	59.6% 40.4% 606	45.8% 54.2% 723 / 25.1 ***	34.9% 65.1% 390	58.2% 41.8% 335 / 39.6 ***	28.6% 71.4% 119	30.6% 69.4% 723 / 1.2
Children: None Any N / Chi-square	60.6% 39.4% 606	53.3% 46.7% 723 / 7.2 **	56.4% 43.6% 390	49.9% 50.1% 335 / 3.1	61.3% 38.7% 119	53.3% 46.7% 723 / 2.7
Work: Full time Other N / Chi-square	48.5% 51.5% 606	65.3% 34.7% 723 / 37.9 ***	71.8% 28.2% 390	57.0% 43.0% 335 / 17.3 ***	58.8% 41.2% 119	65.3% 34.7% 723 / 1.9
Letters sent: None 1 or more N / Chi-square	67.2% 32.8% 384	66.4% 33.6% 616 / .07	67.1% 32.9% 347	65.4% 34.6% 269 / .2	63.1% 36.9% 84	66.4% 33.6% 616 / .4
Phone calls: None to 9 10 or more N / Chi-square	42.7% 57.3% 384	37.2% 62.8% 616 / 3.0	40.1% 59.9% 347	33.5% 66.5% 269 / 2.8	48.8% 51.2% 84	37.2% 62.8% 616 / 4.2 *
E-mails sent: None 1 or more N / Chi-square	39.3% 60.7% 384	33.9% 66.1% 616 / 2.9	33.4% 66.6% 347	34.6% 65.4% 269 / .09	45.2% 54.8% 84	33.9% 66.1% 616 / 4.1 *
Religious org.s None Any N / Chi-square	47.5% 52.5% 606	44.4% 55.6% 723 / 1.3	39.7% 60.3% 390	49.6% 50.4% 335 / 7.0 **	45.5% 54.6% 119	44.4% 55.6% 723 / .04
Leisure org.s None Any N / Chi-square	95.2% 4.8% 606	93.8% 6.2% 723 / 1.3	93.3% 6.7% 390	94.0% 6.0% 335 / .15	91.6% 8.4% 119	93.8% 6.2% 723 / .8
Community org.s None Any N / Chi-square	79.0% 21.0% 606	73.9% 26.1% 723 / 4.9 *	68.5% 31.5% 390	80.0% 20.0% 335 / 12.4 ***	79.8% 20.2% 119	73.9% 26.1% 723 / 1.9

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Another way in which we can conceptualize this convergence/incursion of the private into the public is that callers often have no idea of the receiver's physical location or setting. Thus the caller's private context is the only one available, again diminishing the role and social status of the public: "it breaks apart the reference of synchronous vocal communications and the spatial contexts of the interlocutors".[14] In this sense, one's current interactions, even a private face-to-face conversation, can be invaded by someone else's private communication, possibly more so because the caller is imposing their own (and only) social context. Licoppe and Heurtin provide some very pithy quotes of people caught in such context switches, including many vehemently against being imposed upon in public (and especially semi-public, such as at a restaurant table) by others' mobile phone (half) conversations.[15] The situation is made worse by the fact that one cannot predict when one will receive a call and thus cannot predict the public social context of the private communication. Some call receivers deflect control in the content of the conversation, by lying about their location or being vague about it.

Mante found, not surprisingly, that mobile phone users were noticeably more accepting of others' public calling than were non-users.[16] Licoppe and Heurtin note various strategies that users apply in order to respect the public context, and be more courteous (talking in a lower voice, stepping aside, making the call short, apologizing to others, simply not answering, etc.).[17] Kim comments on how rapidly the Korean social norm against talking about private matters in public ("shameless") has changed with the swift diffusion of the mobile phone.[18] One facilitator of this growth in usage is a Korean cultural value of collectivism, whereby "it is important to be in touch any time and any place" by other members of one's group and network.[19] Indeed, Korean mobile phone users were more likely than non-users to get together with their colleagues, join after-work drinking, and be innovative.

Fortunati suggests that the mobile phone is dissolving the traditional separation of the public and private, while also blending the intimate

[14] C. Licoppe and J.-P. Heurtin, "France: Preserving the Image", in Katz and Aakhus (eds.), pp. 94–109.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] E. Mante, "The Netherlands and the USA Compared", in Katz and Aakhus (eds.), pp. 110–125.

[17] C. Licoppe and J.-P. Heurtin, *op. cit.*

[18] S. D. Kim, "Korea: Personal Meanings", in Katz and Aakhus (eds.), pp. 63–79.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

and the extraneous.[20] She refers to intimate relationships as those that are selective, excluding most others and fostering dependence by allowing reciprocal control. Clearly, this is quite at odds with public spaces and traditional public behaviour. The mobile phone "favors the progressive encroachment of intimacy in the public sphere and of extraneousness in the private sphere".[21] Intimacy is "made public and imposed on those around without their prior assent and involvement".[22] This can be considered a form of social control, quite different from the more familiar issues of surveillance or workplace monitoring. De Gournay raises a similar concern about the convergence of private and public through mobile phone use: informal and trivial communication is displacing more formal and substantive interaction in public settings.[23] She argues that "the mobile phone ... offer[s] a format that enables users to transgress codes of human interaction and to redefine, or at least individually to renegotiate, the collective norms governing social and emotional relationships (courtesy, reciprocity, publicity/confidentiality of interaction, etc.)".[24] This occurs in four ways: using direct mobile phone access to bypass (or protect) institutional authority, expanding the private sphere and intimate rituals into public space, simplifying language structure (or more accurately, using the cryptic, informal and trivial content of individual and private interactions in public settings), and reducing the scope of the public sphere by imposing exclusive two-way communication which excludes public interaction among community members or even strangers. In other words, the increased yet asymmetrical accessibility of the mobile phone is deregulating civil coexistence.

Research Questions

The following study focuses on the social relations aspect of mobile phone use, and, in particular, when one person is using the mobile phone while in a social situation with another person.

RQ1: What are the demographic characteristics of current mobile phone users relative to other categories of users and nonusers?

[20] L. Fortunati, "Italy: Stereotypes, True and False", in Katz and Aakhus (eds.), pp. 42–62.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[23] C. de Gournay, "Pretense of Intimacy in France", in Katz and Aakhus (eds.), pp. 192–205.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

Table Two.
Logistic Regressions Predicting U.S. Mobile phone User Categories, 2000

Predictor	Nonusers (0) / Users (1)	Veteran (0) / Recent (1)	Dropouts (0) / Users (1)
Income	.99 ***		.99 ***
Age		-.64 ***	
Work	-.58 ***	.73 ***	
Marital	.27 *	-.69 ***	
Phone calls			.47 +
Member of religious orgs		-.3 +	
Chi-square	102.1	71.8 ***	16.2 ***
Nagelkerke R-Sq	.12	.13	.05
Correctly predicted	64.3%	64.4%	87.5%
N	1100	710	590

Values are unstandardized beta coefficients from logistic regressions.
+ p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table One provides bivariate percentages,
while Table Two provides multivariate results.

likely to have full-time jobs, have higher income, and be currently married (explaining 12% of the variance). *Recent*, compared to *veteran*, mobile phone users, are more likely to not work fulltime, be younger, not be married or have a partner, and have a slight tendency to belong to fewer religious organizations (13% of the variance). *Current* users, compared to mobile phone *dropouts*, were more likely to have higher income and make more weekly phone calls on a regular phone (5% of the variance).

Mobile Phone Use by Spouse/Bestfriend

A quarter of the 1327 responding to the question said that they spoke to their spouse/bestfriend by mobile phone "yesterday", with the overall mean of .59, median 0.0; for those who did, the mean was 2.47 and median 2 times. Just over half reported that their spouse/bestfriend currently uses a mobile phone, with 7.2% dropouts (used to, but not now).

Table Three.
Levels and Characterizations of Mobile Phone Usage by Spouse/Bestfriend

Variables			All (N = 1327)		Any (N = 319)	
Yesterday, how many times did you speak to your sp/bf by cell phone?			Mean .59	Median .00	Mean 2.47	Median 2.00
Does your sp/bf use a cell phone?	**Yes, currently uses** 52.4%		**No, used to but not now** 7.2%		**Never** 40.4%	**N** 1326
Ever seen someone be thoughtless of others while using a cell phone?	Yes 66.6%		No 33.4%			N 1094
	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**N**
Because of the cell phone, I feel closer to my sp/bf when my sp/bf is away.	20.3%	33.1%	15.4%	20.4%	10.8%	710
My sp/bf spends too much time on the cell phone.	3.1%	6.3%	10.0%	41.2%	39.4%	709
Because of the cell phone, my sp/bf is distracted when we are together.	2.0%	5.1%	5.8%	50.1%	37.0%	710
There have been times when your sp/bf has been thoughtless of others when using the cell phone.	1.6%	10.3%	8.2%	44.9%	35.1%	709
There have been times when your sp/bf has been thoughtless of you when using the cell phone.	1.3%	7.5%	8.0%	46.1%	37.3%	710
If you or your sp/partner/fr has a mobile phone, is how it is used a source of disagreement?	**Extremely Important** 2.9%	**Important** 4.7%	**Neutral** 8.1%	**Unimportant** 35.9%	**Not Important at All** 48.4%	**N** 791
How satisfied are you with your level of communication with your sp/bf?	**Very Satisfied** 56.2%	**Satisfied** 31.1%	**Neutral** 7.8%	**Dissatisfied** 3.4%	**Very Dissatisfied** 1.5%	**N** 1329

Table Three summarizes usage levels and characterization
of social aspects of mobile phone use by respondent's spouse/bestfriend

In general, most respondents (87%) are either satisfied or very satisfied with their level of communication with their spouse/bestfriend. As we might expect, over half agree or strongly agree that because of their mobile phone, they feel closer to their spouse/bestfriend when the other is away. However, nearly a third disagree or strongly disagree.

Concerning negative social aspects, two-thirds (of 1094 respondents) have seen someone be thoughtless of others while using a cell phone. When asked for an example, 676 provided a response. These were coded into six categories with the following percentages in decreasing order: driving and talking (47.0%), talking to someone [on the phone] while with someone else (17.0%), using phone in a public place (10.7%), talking in a restaurant (9.8%), talking too loud (6.4%), having a cell phone go off at the movies (4.7%). Clearly the mobile phone use seen as most thoughtless is driving while talking, presumably because the consequences of this behaviour – a car accident – has the most significant consequences, in general, and for people other than the mobile phone user.

These "others" that respondents are bothered by, however, do not seem to include their own spouse/bestfriend. Only about 12% indicate that there have been times when their spouse/bestfriend has been thoughtless of others when using the mobile phone, and less than 9% feel their spouse/bestfriend has been thoughtless of the respondent. In general, slightly less than 10% agree or strongly agree that their spouse spends too much time on the mobile phone. Indeed, less than 8% feel that how the mobile phone is used constitutes an important or very important source of disagreement.

We might conclude that people see the use of mobile phones by oneself and one's spouse/bestfriend as a private activity that does not distract or intrude on others, but see general others' use of mobile phones as an activity that does intrude; that is, people exhibit an attributional bias that others are more thoughtless than one's spouse/bestfriend.

Only about 10% of respondents felt that the mobile phone use by their spouse/bestfriend was too frequent, a source of distraction, thoughtless of others, thoughtless of the respondent, or a source of disagreement (these figures would almost double if we included "neutral" responses). We created a mean scale of these five characterizations of mobile phone use. The loadings on a single principal component were .77, .81, .86, .87 and .60, respectively, explaining 62% of the variance, with a scale mean of 4.15 (s.d. 4.15), and a scale alpha of .84. We called this mean scale "gooduse", where a higher value means that the respondent felt the use of the mobile phone by the spouse/bestfriend was better (less a source of these discourtesies).

It turns out that the "gooduse" scale means were not significantly different between those who have (n = 559), and have not (n = 233), seen someone be thoughtless of others while using a mobile phone. Nor was it significantly different overall or between any two of the six examples of

thoughtless mobile phone behaviours. However, the "gooduse" scale was slightly negatively correlated (Spearman $r = -.07$, $p < .05$, n = 933) with the number of times the respondent spoke with their spouse/bestfriend yesterday by mobile phone – the more one talked with the other via mobile phone, there was just a slightly greater perception of discourtesies. And, the more satisfied the respondent was with the level of communication with their spouse/bestfriend, the slightly greater the perception of "gooduse" (Spearman $r = -.16$, $p < .001$, n = 933), and the slightly more times one had talked with their spouse/bestfriend via the mobile phone the day before (Spearman $r = -.10$, $p < .001$, n = 1327).

These results support two interpretations about the validity of the relatively high levels of courtesy reported of one's spouse/bestfriend's mobile phone use. First, there is no particular evidence of attributional bias (others are worse than one's spouse/bestfriend). Second, the high levels of courteous usage receive external validity from the (slight) associations with greater communication satisfaction and greater use of the mobile phone for communicating with one's spouse/bestfriend.

We ran a series of regressions to identify other influences on the extent to which respondents perceived their spouse/bestfriend's mobile phone usage as courteous. Demographic variables (work status, marital status, have children, gender, income, education and race, all dichotomous) were entered stepwise in the first block, then other media use (number of times contacted people in the past week via letters, telephone, or e-mails) in the second block, the satisfaction with the level of communication with one's spouse/bestfriend in the third block, and the number of times spoke to one's spouse/bestfriend by mobile phone yesterday in the fourth block. A final regression with all variables entered in one block stepwise identified these significant predictors of higher levels of perceived mobile phone courtesy by one's spouse/bestfriend: being married (standardized *beta* = .15), higher satisfaction with level of communication with that spouse/bestfriend (-.12), having any children (-.10), fewer times using the mobile phone the prior day (-.09), and higher education (.08) (all $p < .005$). However, the adjusted r-square was only 6% ($F(5,927) = 13.1$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

In an attempt to better understand the use and consequences of the mobile phone, particularly the convergence of the public and private spheres, this study summarized overall usage of, and perceived discourtesies from, mobile phone calling, based on a nationally representative

U.S. study conducted in 2000.

Nearly 55% of 1329 respondents were current mobile phone users. A quarter of the respondents (almost half of the users) reported that their spouse/bestfriend also uses a mobile phone. While a mobile phone digital divide has not been discussed and analyzed like the internet digital divide has, there are some significant demographic differences between users and non-users, such as income, which also influences whether one continues or drops out from mobile phone usage, and social relations (work and marriage). However, recent adopters are overcoming some of the traditional demographic divides, and are also more likely to represent those who are less integrated into the traditional social settings of work and family and even religious organizations. Alternatively, recent users are more likely to be young and independent.

The prior literature identifies many possible benefits of mobile phone usage. But, because it involves speaking and concentration, mobile phone usage also represents a new incursion of the private into the public (as opposed to the more critiqued incursion of the public/corporate into the private realm of home and relationships). Indeed, we find much more evidence of perceived thoughtlessness of generalized others using their mobile phones in public (especially while driving, but also in restaurants, movies and other public places) (67%) than of one's own spouse/bestfriend (around 10%). And, even those thoughtless uses are more perceived by those who have satisfying communication with their socially close others, have children, and use the phone less frequently to communicate with their spouse/bestfriend. It seems likely that use by one's spouse/bestfriend is perceived and evaluated in the context of a private setting, and thus seen as less thoughtless, even while others are perceiving that very same interaction as a thoughtless incursion into their public setting. In this sense, we have some preliminary evidence of a convergence of the public and the private, with the private interaction trumping the public peace, as well as perceptions of behaviours.