Mobile technology at a sit-still: iPad users like browsing at home

Ellen Lee Thursday, July 14, 2011

Lorna Villa Seven manages her "FarmVille" virtual world last month. "FarmVille" and similar games significantly add to the gaming industry's $5.9 billion in revenue for the past year.

The iPad may be designed for people on the go, but most iPad owners prefer to use them as they lounge on the couch or in their bedrooms, according to a recent survey.

This spring, the Reynolds Journalism Institute, part of the University of Missouri's School of Journalism, surveyed 561 iPad owners with an average age of 45.

Among its findings - much of it aimed at understanding how people use the iPad to access news - 23 percent said they had downloaded 75 or more apps and just 9 percent said they had downloaded fewer than 15.

The top two apps, not surprisingly, were the Safari Web browser and e-mail. But the other top contenders included the New York Times, USA Today, AP News, the Weather Channel and Flipboard.

The top things to do with their iPad included catching up on the news through an aggregator and reading newspapers, magazines and books. Shopping, working and watching videos ranked at the bottom.

Three quarters of the respondents also said that they did not plan on purchasing a rival tablet in the next six months. More than half are Apple loyalists and own an iPod, an iPhone, or both. A little more than a third owned an Amazon Kindle.

Farming for sales

People purchasing purple cows and the like in "FarmVille" helped push gaming sales to $5.9 billion, a 1.5 percent bump over the same time last year, NPD, a market research firm, said this week.

Up until a few years ago, the gaming industry was largely fueled by more traditional PC games and Xbox and PlayStation games aimed at young men.

But that has been shifting. NPD said that of the $5.9 billion spent during the first three months of the year, $1.85 billion came from other kinds of gaming such as social-networking games like Zynga's "FarmVille" and mobile games like "Angry Birds."
It's no wonder, then, that all eyes are on San Francisco's Zynga as it prepares for its IPO. About 60 million people play its games daily and spend real dollars on virtual goods such as tractors, fruit trees and animals for their virtual farms.

Meanwhile, $2.03 billion was spent on new video games and PC game software, NPD said.
Earthquake workshop shakes up teachers

By JANESILVEY
Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Twenty teachers from Missouri and six other states along the New Madrid Seismic Zone are on the University of Missouri campus this week getting an education in earthquakes.

The goal is to give the junior high, high school and junior college educators a more in-depth understanding of seismic activity in hopes they'll take that information back to their classrooms.

"It's essential they have accurate information and a solid background in order to communicate effectively with students and people in their communities," said Lloyd Barrow, a professor in MU's College of Education.

The workshop started yesterday and continues through next Wednesday. Today, the group is reviewing the history and theory of plate tectonics and other technical material. Later this week, they'll learn what insurance companies are bracing for along the New Madrid fault line and learn how buildings, pipelines and other structures might be affected if a quake were to hit here. On Sunday, the group begins a tour of sites along the fault line, including stops in New Madrid, Tennessee and Kentucky.

"They'll see the remnants of what happened 200 years ago," Barrow said.

In late 1811 and early 1812, a trio of earthquakes and respective aftershocks changed geographic characteristics. The quakes caused ground to rise and fall, high banks along the Mississippi River to cave and collapse into the water and trees to bend so low their branches intertwined, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

By seeing the "bumps in the ground" caused by the earthquakes 200 years ago, Paco Gomez hopes the educators get a better grasp of the amounts of energy produced by earthquakes. Gomez is an associate professor in the Department of Geological Sciences and is co-hosting the workshop.

Mainly, he is interested in getting teachers more enthused about earth science. "The better teachers understand a subject, the more enthusiastic they will be," he said.

Tonya Delaney will be teaching the topic for the first time this year in her district in New Berlin, Ill. She now teaches life science to seventh- and eighth-graders, but this fall, the district will offer earth science to gifted eighth-grade students. The workshop is serving as a refresher course in the subject, she said, adding that the first day didn't disappoint.

"We've gotten extensive information already," she said. "They have a lot of resources available."

Forty teachers applied for the workshop, but the class was limited to 20. Rita Crocker, who teaches science to eighth-graders at Sherwood Cass R-8 in Creighton, was grateful to be among those selected. "This will be fun," she said.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU science professor receives $50,000 award for embryo research

By Bi Yoo
July 13, 2011 | 6:50 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Randy Prather is known for his bacon.

As an MU curator's professor who specializes in reproductive physiology and molecular biology, Prather is widely known for his research on swine. Prather won the 2011 Distinguished Agriscience Scientist Award on Tuesday. The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation gives the $50,000 award to only two scientists each year.

"It is really an honor to receive such an award," Prather said. "To date, there are only four awardees, so it is really special."

Prather, who has worked at MU for 22 years, will receive half of the money directly and the other half will help him and his team fund further research to genetically modify pigs that can be more resistant to disease.

Prather is best known for his genetically engineered pigs that produce omega-3 fatty acids and that might provide insight into potential treatments for cystic fibrosis.

Cystic fibrosis to omega-3 bacon

Prather and his team are attempting to develop a genetically engineered pig that may provide a cure for cystic fibrosis, one of the most common life-threatening genetic diseases in humans. About one in every 2,500 to 3,500 American newborns has from cystic fibrosis.

Prather is also known for modifying genes in pigs to create omega-3 fatty acids, a fat that helps reduce the risk of heart diseases. He said his research is still waiting for FDA approval.
However, that is not the only thing he is working on.

Prather's current research focuses on improving the reproductive rates of farm animals by reducing the percentage of lost embryos that occur during early development.

He also is participating in a study to improve human organ transplants by using the organs of genetically modified pigs.

"Genetically engineered pigs may provide organs for people who desperately need them," Prather said.

**Why pigs?**

Prather said he used to study cattle at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the late 1980s. At that time, researching cattle was popular, and everyone competed to study them. So when there was an empty spot for swine research in Madison, he said it was easy for him to make the transition.

Since then, he has filled various positions relating to swine research, including co-director of the National Swine Resource and Research Center and associate-leader of Reproductive Biology Cluster in MU's Food for the 21st Century effort.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Mixed reactions after bill lowers Missouri concealed carry age

By Sarah Hoffman
July 13, 2011 | 7:01 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — House Bill 294, which lowers the age required to obtain a conceal and carry endorsement from 23 to 21, was signed by Gov. Jay Nixon on Friday. The law will go into effect Aug. 28.

“I don’t see why the restriction from 21 to 23 was necessary in the first place,” said Target Masters sales representative Steve Brown. “I really don’t see a lot of people that all of a sudden reach some magic age then suddenly develop an interest.”

Zach Moosa, 21, said he will feel safer and more protected when walking around Columbia.

“I feel that if you’re, you know, able to be trusted to buy a firearm when you’re 21, they should be able to trust you can go through the conceal and carry class,” Moosa said.

Guns are not permitted on campus, according to MU rules and regulations, but some want that to change.

“We prefer that everywhere in town would allow all to conceal carry,” said Target Masters manager Barry McKenzie.

Harry Tyrer of the MU Faculty Council does not expect to see a change in policy even though the law will make a larger percentage of the student body eligible to conceal and carry.

“Most students that I come across are really not concerned about carrying guns or carrying weapons with them,” Tyrer said. "I think they see the campus as a safe environment, and they don’t need to be worried about protecting themselves."
MU professor Leona Rubin said guns make it too easy for people on campus to respond to disagreements with a potentially deadly level of force.

“I think that’s true for everyone, not just students,” Rubin said.

Applicants for a conceal and carry endorsement must complete a safety training course. They must fire 50 rounds each with both a semi-automatic pistol and a revolver and 20 rounds from each with an instructor present.

Target Masters offers a concealed carry course for experienced shooters.

“The main goal of the course is to have a person qualified to carry a gun, not just a piece of paper that says they are qualified,” McKenzie said.

Thirty-seven states honor Missouri concealed carry endorsements.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia hospitals move toward healthier foods in cafeterias

By Drew Warden, Lainie Mullen
July 13, 2011 | 7:14 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – Biscuits and gravy and Kellogg’s Corn Pops cereal.

That’s what Danny Decker chooses for breakfast at University Hospital’s cafeteria, The Grille Downstairs. Decker, a pastor from Warsaw, Mo., visits the hospital often to be with church members having surgery.

Rachel Figard and Cecilia Botero try to eat healthy options. Figard, a nurse with MU Healthcare, eats a lot of salad. Botero, a pharmacist for MU Health Care, gets the Southwest chicken with carrots and mashed potatoes.

Both say that working in a hospital has made them more conscious of what they eat.

"We become very sensitive to eating healthy," Botero said. "I try and stay away from unhealthy things."

It’s an idea hospitals in Columbia want to instill in their workers and patients.

A 2008 study surveyed 760 nurses across the country and found “almost 54 percent were overweight or obese,” according to the May volume of the Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.

Though healthcare workers are key to educating patients on healthy living, the authors wrote, “anecdotal observation suggests that nurses, advanced practice nurses and nurse educators may exhibit a higher incidence of obesity than the general population.”

The authors continued, “As obesity becomes an alarming health problem nationwide, diet, exercise and weight management become increasing priorities for all healthcare providers.”
Jon Larson, director of nutrition and food services at Boone Hospital Center, said he believes people are willing to choose healthier foods.

"They have it in their demeanor – they want to try and eat healthy, and the hospital is going to do the things that they can do to help," he said.

The hospital decided to emphasize healthy foods and educate employees and the public after hospital dietitians began seeing more overweight people in their outpatient weight reduction clinics.

"If we are going to be the nutritional experts, we need to start doing this in our own facility," he said.

Changes began soon after, among them educational programs for employees, offering nutritional listings on menus and subsidizing certain healthy entrees. Other area hospitals have been doing the same, focusing on educating employees and others on the benefits of healthy living and providing healthy food options in their cafeterias.

Despite hospitals' commitment to healthy living, employees and visitors like Decker may be tempted into less healthy options by the generally lower pricing of less healthy foods.

Figard said prices may affect the choices people make at the cafeteria. She said her decision to buy healthier foods sometimes comes down to whether she has "extra cash."

Decker said cost has no impact on his decision.

"I know what I want," he said: sugary cereals and biscuits with gravy.

**Healthy foods cost more**

Adam Drewnowski, the director of the Center for Public Health Nutrition and professor of Epidemiology and Medicine at the University of Washington in Seattle, has studied the correlation between poverty and obesity. He found that diets composed of things like "fast foods, snacks, caloric beverages, sweets and desserts" are more affordable than diets based on lean meats, fish, fresh fruits and vegetables.

That reality is reflected in the prices on lunch menus at The Grille Downstairs in University Hospital.
At the salad bar, customers can pay $4.80 for a pound of salad. At the grill line a few feet over, a cheeseburger costs $1.90.

Matt Splett, a spokesman for MU Health Care, said that several factors are taken into consideration in the pricing of food. He said that labor — paying workers to prepare and serve food — and the cost of ingredients have an impact.

Larson agreed that cost can be a factor when it comes to healthy foods. He said a few of the healthier foods the hospital serves are more expensive and that the increased price has caused customers to shy away from buying them. The list includes salmon, stuffed sole, turkey and black bean burgers, among others.

"People pick their lunch in the cafeteria based on cost," he said. "That restricted some people's ability to buy them — because of that high cost."

The hospital has tried to change this by subsidizing nine healthy entrees with a 15 percent discount. The discount has made choicessuch as a 4-ounce portion of salmon more affordable, he said.

The response has been good, and sales of these entrees has increased, he said.

The Veterans Canteen Service, the division of the Veterans Administration responsible for food service nationwide in hospital cafeterias, has a similar program to make healthy food more affordable. The program offers healthy meals that are priced for the volunteers that work at the hospitals. They’re called "Smart Choice" meals.

"So it's a healthy meal, but it's also priced well so that volunteers at our hospital, caregivers, can get a meal at a good price," said Stacy Papachrisanthou, marketing operations specialist for the Canteen Service's Central Office.

But prices and portions may still favor unhealthy eating. A hamburger, for instance, costs $2.69, while a 12-ounce salad costs $4.68.

Customers who do purchase healthy foods may also have smaller portions.

"If you're talking about a mini salad compared to a cheeseburger," Papachrisanthou said, "the prices are comparable."
A larger salad, she said, would cost more.

The same goes for some healthier foods at Boone Hospital Center. Some of the hospital’s new healthier snack options "come in a smaller package because the healthy items do cost more," Larson said.

He doesn’t feel that this phenomenon is exclusive to hospitals though and said the food market often dictates higher prices for things that are "fresh."

"It’s a sure thing in any food venue – there are things you are going to have to pay money for," Larson said. "It’s a difference in quality."

Some customers are willing to pay for that quality, though. Employees have taken to healthy changes on the menu at University Hospital, Splett said. Sales at the upstairs restaurant, Essentials, rose 10 percent after a renovation last year brought healthier foods and extended hours.

Essentials opens every day from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and another shift was added a year ago from midnight to 2 a.m., providing balanced meals to night shift workers who, before, had limited options.

“Our overnight hours have been a huge success simply because there was no restaurant service available prior to our opening of Essentials," Splett said.

MU Health Care’s Becky Hassinger, manager of dining and nutrition services, intends to renovate the 404 Diner at the MU Women’s and Children’s Hospital next fall.

**Some customers still opt for junk food**

When Larson first implemented a healthy eating program at Boone Hospital Center’s cafeteria in 1990, workers complained.

"At first, employees hated it," he said. "They thought it restricted their choices."

The program, which he called "Good Hearted Cuisine", was multi-dimensional but had an emphasis on providing healthy foods and recipes to customers. Over two decades later, he is confident that this perception among workers has been "turned on its head."
"We take criticism now if we don't have a good, heart-healthy selection at the cafeteria from employees," he said.

While customers may look forward to these specials, they do sometimes want less healthy foods.

Fried chicken is still the hospital's best-selling entree. When it is served once every month, the kitchen will go through anywhere from 400 to 500 servings in a day, Larson said.

And people still want cheeseburgers and soda, Larson said. The latter is in such high demand and the hospital has to provide it, though Larson said he drew the line at providing cups larger than 16 ounces. The hospital also does not sell bottled soda in its cafeteria, he said.

Richard Sheff, the principal marketing consultant to the canteen services, is familiar with the conflict between healthy choices and customer preference.

"When the tire hits the road, there are times where customers are going to say, 'You know, I really want a hamburger' – and they're just going to buy one," he said.

On a national level, he said hamburgers were still one of the top sellers at VA hospitals.

And while many customers may prefer the taste of less healthy foods, Sheff stresses the need to provide healthy options.

"It's important, and there's an obligation for health institutions to have these options and make them available," he said.

Larson echoed this sentiment, saying it was a hospital's responsibility to provide nutritional entrees and education to employees and the public.

"We're a hospital food service – our business is health," Sheff said.