

MOBILE

Neuroscience shows mobile lag causes stress

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Slow load times on mobile cause significant stress

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Using neuroscience technology, Ericsson found that delays in loading Web pages and videos caused mobile users' heart rates to rise 38 percent.

While the findings point to the need for wireless carriers to invest in high-speed mobile networks as data consumption grows, there are also implications for marketers, who are still exploring the best ways to reach mobile users with brand messages. While delivering video ads and other data-heavy content could increase users' stress levels thereby potentially associating the brand with a negative feeling there are also challenges with native experience that are meant to be less intrusive.

"Marketers should always be mindful of load times and the experience of advertising," said Lara Mehanna, general manager of U.S. and vice president of sales and business development at [Sonata](#). "Stress, irritability, and the inability to continue to multitask and create time savings are all reasons that lead people to close out apps or sites prematurely, not use apps or sites due to poor user experience and influence increased ad blocking risk.

"Not that I believe ad blocking has had too much of an impact to date but it does stem from the need to alleviate these poor ad experiences," she said.

"Avoiding is a tough word, however ensuring that the ad experiences work properly and provide the best consumer experience possible is critical."

Working under pressure

Ericsson's research found that when consumers are working under time pressure, delays in loading content followed by an additional pause in video plays lead to mobile users' stress levels.

A delay-free experience triggers a positive emotional response and increases brand engagement for mobile operators, per the report.

Neuroscience technology was used to objectively measure emotional responses to varied smartphone experiences.

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Delays in being able to access content caused mobile users' heart rates to rise an average of 38 percent. Six-second

delays to video streaming caused stress levels to increase by a third.

The stress incurred is equivalent to the anxiety of taking a math test or watching a horror movie alone.

Once a video begins, an additional pause can cause stress levels to increase dramatically.

Emotional connection

The findings underscore how attached consumers are to their devices.

"The Ericsson report punctuates the emotional connection consumers have with their mobile devices and proves that 'nomophobia' aka the fear of being out of mobile phone contact is real," said Jeremy Sigel, head of mobile for North America at [Essence Digital](#).

"Marketers should recognize that mobile phones have always and will continue to be connected to emotional experiences i.e. texting a friend, talking to a loved one, taking pictures of a child," he said. "For this reason and the findings of the Ericsson report, it is vital that marketers consider annoyance in their advertising by taking the time to understand how and when a user will experience their brand.

"Additionally, in response to the connectivity challenges that are innate in mobile and contribute to user annoyance, marketers should strive to create content experiences that are lighter, cleaner and faster."

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The findings could support the need for marketers to explore marketing alternatives that are native to the mobile experience, such as sponsored content and news feed ads.

However, there is also potential for experiences to be intrusive.

Overall user experiences

The bigger takeaway is that marketers need to pay close attention to the overall user experience when developing mobile marketing strategies.

"Native and in stream ads were built to help incorporate the experience without addition interruption to the consumer however I have seen experiences that are just as stressful' and disruptive," Ms. Mehanna said. "The intentional mindfulness of the creative and its experience to the end consumer keeping in consideration all external factors such as connectivity, etc. is most important."

Ms. Mehanna suggested that all mobile ads have a quick, noticeable, and easy exit rather than forcing consumers to sit through a 30-second ad after they have waited 5 seconds for content to load.

"Focusing on more integrative experience that fit with the situation of the customer at that moment is so important," Ms. Mehanna said. "There are good indicators for when an ad is shown on the go or at a physical location.

"These are simple parameters to help identify the mindset of the consumer and what type of ad should be considered," she said.