

# The Smart-life

*A qualitative study on smartphone use and integration*

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Master thesis

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The Smart-Life – A qualitative study on smartphone use and integration

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# Abstract

The smartphone diffusion in Norway is prevalent, and we have downloaded countless “apps” for our “droids” and iPhones. The purpose of this master thesis is to examine what people use their smartphones for in their everyday life. It also examines *whether*, or *how*, the smartphone has become an integrated and mundane feature in the lives of the users. Embedded in this effort is an attempt to get behind the smartphone hype of “constant connectedness”. Through 32 spontaneous focused interviews with young and mature adults, the smartphone use of these digital natives and settlers is examined. The findings of this thesis indicate that the majority of the informants use their smartphones in a way that fit into their lives. They are living the “smart-life”; harnessing the smartphone’s possibilities for a wide range of purposes – in a wide range of settings. Further, the findings suggest that owning a smartphone is expected; because the smartphone in itself is seemingly becoming a social fact.



# Preface

Writing a master thesis is an interesting ordeal. It is a challenge for the mind *and* the body – as I have learned.

At the time you embark on this journey, it is (most likely) the greatest academic endeavor you have ever attempted. And mind you; you will know it. Immersing yourself in the literature to a point where you can no longer string together a sentence without name-dropping famous theorists or use narrow terms or concepts from your field. Let alone *function* in a social setting beyond the study-hall. We are ultra-geeks in our chosen topics, and in the lunch break we laugh at each others geekyness, measure chapter lengths and weigh concepts against each other. From way before sun-up to way after sun-down we have been tucked away in the basement of our department. After daylight-savings we squinted for a week. My supervisor casually rounded off our meeting in March by saying; “How ‘bout you get three chapters done by next month, because I’m guessing you *won’t* be taking an Easter holiday?” I guess I won’t. And I didn’t. I spent my Easter in the basement, torturing myself by frantically checking Instagram for the latest #easterholiday #happiness #mountain #sun #ilovemylife, bashing out my theory chapter until my arm eventually gave in. I’m getting cortisone pills tomorrow. Writing a master thesis is the ultimate form of masochistic self-realization. And it has been fun.

Would I do it again? - What kind of question is that? You either advance, or get off the gravy-train while your social skills are still re-bootable. If I *would have* done it again, knowing what it entailed; the answer is yes. Because I will remember the master thesis as that *one* time where I could spend a year of my life devoted to my geeky topic of interest – no questions asked, and without constrained work-hours set by an employer. I will remember the laughter during the lunch break, the fifth cup of coffee that I really didn’t need, the occasional break-downs and the shoulder patting that followed, face-planting the desk from exhaustion, motivational speeches – given and received, and the pity-beers during the weekends.

The process of writing a master thesis is a contradictory form of enslaved freedom; freedom from lectures and exams, enslavement by your own determination and conscience. It is challenging and rewarding, and indeed a great endeavor.

So, hats off to:

The best supervisor I could ever ask for; Tanja Storsul.

My awesome geek-buds and fellow coffee lovers.

Norwegian Coffee Association; for providing the coffee!

My loving family for their support, high-fives, and occasional free meals.

My significant other, who has been geeking it out at another UiO institute.

Thank you for making this adventure a good one.

Gabi Høium Hurlen,  
May 8<sup>th</sup> 2013  
Forskningsparken, Oslo



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# 1 Introduction

“Hooonk, hooonk, hooonk!” The earth shaking sound of a cruise liner’s fog horn abruptly pulls Mia out of her summer dream and back to the snowy reality of Oslo. “Why do they have



Figure 1: (Gabi H. Hurlen)



Figure 2: (Inspired by WeekCal<sup>1</sup>)

classes this early?” with an automated move she grabs her iPhone and turns of the alarm. Time to get current. With swift fingers she skims through the new notifications; comments and “likes” on a Facebook picture, a message, a couple of new tweets from someone she follows, nothing on Instagram so far, and yet another SnapChat picture of her friend’s new dog – “when is *that* gonna stop?”. As she gets out of bed she hears the faint tunes of a familiar piano song. Mia rushes for the bathroom.

In the bedroom next door the piano music comes to a sudden stop for the second time. While Brenda’s eyes adjust to the light from the screen, she hears the shower turning on in the bathroom. “Dammit, now it’s going to take forever before I get in there”. She opens the Week Calendar - application on her smartphone, and browses today’s reminders. “Those, I can take care of right away”. Brenda opens her online bank-application and with a couple of clicks and strokes she pays a bill, and transfer’s the money she had promised her son the day before. She returns to the Week Calendar and checks off on two of the reminders. “Two down, two to go!” Such a satisfying feeling, and before even getting out of bed.

<sup>1</sup> Illustrative screenshot by WeekCal BV 2013, found at: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/week-calendar/id381059732?mt=8> (Last visited: May 8<sup>th</sup> 2013).

This was a glimpse of the average morning routine of seventeen year-old girl and her fifty year old-mother. For the remaining average day, Mia's iPhone will almost spend as much time in her hands as her pocket – even at school. Social media-applications dominate her use, she does not call that much but she texts – or iMessages' – frequently<sup>2</sup>. Mia is a self-proclaimed smartphone addict, and if her iPhone runs out of battery and she can't get any "updates", she will be very annoyed. Her mother Brenda, uses her smartphone as a watch, and a day-planner. She also texts, but mostly for the purpose of micro-coordinating with her family; when should we have dinner, can you do the grocery-shopping, and Mia; when are you coming home. As opposed to her daughter, Brenda likes to sit on the bus and just watch other people getting on and off, hurrying about, or tinkering with their smartphones – without even sacrificing her own smartphone a thought. The reason for her need to even bring it with her, is to be available to her children – and also, to some extent, in case there is a crisis at the hospital where she works.

This short, introductory story is based on two exploratory in-dept interviews conducted at an early stage of this master thesis work. Besides serving as a point of entry to this thesis, the story also illustrates part of the purpose of this study; to examine how people use their smartphones in their everyday lives, what they use and why they use it? Furthermore, this story can also lead to some assumptions about how age difference can influence use; for the teenager it seems to be all about the social media, while the mother's smartphone use evolves around planning, organizing and being available. The exploratory interviews will be picked up in the method chapter. Now, another source of inspiration will be accounted for.

## 1.1 What is the iLife?

In the article "iTime: Labor and life in a smartphone era", Ben Agger (2011) depicts what could seem to be a dystopia of connectedness, where people are enslaved to their smartphones. The quote below is from the article's abstract.

---

2 iMessages is Apple's version of Instant Message (IM). Allowing the user to send «texts» over the internet to other iOS devices (iPhones, iPads, and iPod touch), thus bypassing the sms costs of the carrier.

The smartphone changes everything, or so it seems. iPhones create iTime and fundamentally alter the boundaries between public and private and day and night. We are now online anytime/anywhere, requiring new theoretical understandings of time and place. This starts with the young, who are inseparable from their phones, and has now spread to their parents. Smartphones use us, bending us to their compulsive rhythms and demanding our attention (Agger, 2011:119).

Agger goes on to explain that for the working man and woman, iTime eats away downtime because much of their labor consists of tasks that can be done anywhere/anytime (writing emails, texts and memos). This blurs the distinction between paid and unpaid work time. And even though they resist by silencing their phones, the messages and emails accumulate, driving the need to respond. For the young; the teens and students, “(...) availability makes way for the compulsion to connect, not to miss anything. (...) Time morphs into iTime as connection and diversion dominate one’s waking hours. iTime is *mobile time*, time that is portable as well as elastic” (Agger, 2011 p.124, *emphasis in original*). Roughly ten years ago, media scholars predicted that an age of perpetual contact was dawning (Katz & Aakhus Eds., 2002:2). Judging by Agger’s iTime (2011), this prediction could seem to have come true. Or is it overrated? Another part of this thesis’ purpose is to get behind the hype of blind “ever-connectedness” and smartphone-enslavement, and to investigate what people have to say about their own experiences of their smartphone use.

### **1.1.1 Status Norway – are we living the iLife?**

Because my thesis investigates how people use their smartphones in their everyday life, and what gratifications they seek from these multi-function devices; I find it important to present the reader with a brief situation report on the current state of Norwegian connectedness. The information presented in this paragraph is concise and fact-based, so that the reader – Norwegian or not – with greater ease can understand the assumptions, and frames of reference within the (geographic) field of this thesis.

The research-based Norwegian website *Medianorge* (Translates to “Media-Norway”) explains smartphones to be advanced mobile-phones with operative systems that make it possible to

install application programs (applications, ‘apps’). In reality a smartphone is a small hand-held computer with touch-screens, internet access, and far more features than traditional mobile phones (Medienorge, 2013:2). Within wealthy countries, smartphones are quickly becoming something that everyone owns. From the beginning of 2011 to the end of 2012, smartphone saturation amongst the Norwegian population rose from 46 to 68 percent (ibid:11). The expansion of 4G (fourth generation of mobile telecommunications technology, around ten times faster than 3G) have started, and is currently available within major cities (ibid:2-3). Amongst the Norwegian internet population (15+ years), 62 percent had downloaded applications for their smartphones by the fourth quarter of 2012. 82 percent of the 15-29 year-olds had downloaded applications, while the figure for the 45-59 year-olds was 52 percent. The most used applications by the third quarter of 2011 were – in sequence – Facebook, news-applications, weather-applications and games (Medienorge, 2013:15). Marshall McLuhan wrote that “the medium is the message”, saying we must not only consider the “content”, but the “(...) medium and the cultural matrix within which the particular medium operates” (McLuhan, 1994:11). This introduction was written with this in mind; to give the reader a crash-course, and a glimpse of the matrix within which the smartphone in Norway operates. Judging by these facts, it might seem as though Norwegians to an increasing degree have what is necessary to live the iLife. But is it so? – And if it is; how is this lived world perceived by the “average Joe”? This is part of the surface that this thesis aims to scratch.

### **1.1.2 Why does it matter?**

As a considerable body of evidence has demonstrated, the Internet, and its diverse range of applications, is the communication fabric of our lives, for work, for personal connection, for information, for entertainment, for public services, for politics, and for religion. (Castells, 2010:xxvi).

The embedding of mobile communication in society matters because coordination is increasingly done via the mobile phone. (...) At a personal level, knowing how the mobile phone is increasingly interwoven in society helps us understand why we have become so attached to it and why we can have a sense of anxiety (some would say freedom) when we are without it. Understanding the process of social embedding helps us to think about whether this is pathology or just a healthy need for social interaction (Ling, 2012:3-4).

Reading these two quotes together, the first on the importance of the internet, the second on the importance of understanding the mobile phone; it becomes clear that – surely – the smartphone must be of equal importance. Because the smartphone is the embodiment of these quotes combined. It is a mobile phone and a small personal computer. Furthermore, the quotes also provide empirical points of entry to the purpose of this thesis: The first quote on the *what* and *why* of our use; for being social, for work, for information, and entertainment, etc. The second on *how* mobile communication technology becomes embedded in our society and in our lives, and what this entails. Previous research on smartphones has, to my knowledge, focused on either the one or the other. “(...) most of previous research on smartphones has been conducted on the assumption that [the] smartphone is used as a specialized tool for a particular purpose, such as smartphones for logistics or smartphones for medical use” (Kang, et al., 2011:919). Or, it has – as the Agger article – been focused on the displacement of time and space, and the public and private (Agger, 2011). On this note it is time to explain the main purpose of this thesis, and its research questions.

## 1.2 Research Questions

The main purpose of this thesis is to get behind the smartphone-hype and examine what people really use their smartphones for, when they use it, and why they use what they use in their everyday life. For this purpose I have formulated two research questions (RQs):

*RQ. 1: What do people use their smartphones for – which features and applications; why do they use what they use, and when do they use it?*

*RQ. 2: How – and to what extent – have the smartphones been integrated into the lives of the users?*

The research questions will be examined on the basis of age and gender. Two different age-groups make up the informants in this thesis; the young adult group of 18-24 years – these thesis’ digital natives, and their parent generation of digital settlers between 40-55 years – the mature adults.

The discourse of digital natives and digital immigrants is a familiar one within popular science and media studies. As coined by Marc Prensky, digital natives are born into the digital world (2001:1,3). They grew up with digital technologies such as the internet and computer games, and they speak the digital language fluently. Digital immigrants, on the other hand, have to adapt to a new environment and will always “speak digital” with an accent (ibid). However, a lot have changed in the digital landscape during the twelve years since this was written. And during the analysis it will become clear why I have found reasons to replace the digital immigrants-term with that of digital settlers. This is not to say that the digital immigrants no longer exist. Even in internet-saturated countries such as Norway, there are bound to be some technological holdouts. But I did not encounter them.

As this introduction has vaguely foreshadowed, I am curious about whether the young natives are more focused on using social media-applications and chat-applications than the mature settlers. And whether the mature settlers are more focused on using their smartphones for planning and organizing through applications and micro-coordination, than the young natives. This is something that has been suggested by the theoretical contributions of this thesis (Agger, 2011, Ling, 2012, Ling & Yttri, 2002, Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). The term “chat-application” is in this thesis a loose term for applications that runs on an internet connection (Wi-Fi, 3G or 4G). It is a message system allowing the inclusion of several participants, sending each other texts, picture, audio, and/or video. Examples of chat-applications can be “WhatsApp”, “iMessages” and “SnapChat” (see Figure 1, p. 1). The term “micro-coordination” entails a short and instrumental form of coordination (Ling & Yttri, 2002:139). It can be used to make/confirm appointments and delegate tasks during the daily management of one’s day; for instance a text about who is getting the groceries, that you are running late, or when it is time for dinner.



## 1.3 The structure of the thesis

Whilst the introduction gave a glimpse as to where this thesis is “coming from” physically and culturally, the second chapter will provide its academic background and framework. It is the theory chapter; accounting for the two main theoretical perspectives, and how they have been combined in order to shape this thesis. The third chapter is the method chapter. It is this thesis’ after action review; explaining the method of data gathering, how it was conducted, the processing of the data, and the challenges encountered. The fourth and longest chapter is the analysis. In the analysis the main findings are presented and discussed, ending with an assessment of the theories. In the final chapter – the conclusion – the research questions will resurface and be answered. The conclusion will end by suggesting possibilities for further/future research.

## 2 Theory

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the what, why, and when, in terms of how people use their smartphones in their everyday life, while getting behind the hype. It also examines whether, or how, the smartphone has become integrated in peoples lives. In order to do this, two main theories have been utilized that create a framework for this thesis; Uses and Gratification (UG) theory, and domestication theory. UG-theory was the theoretical point of departure of the project, whilst domestication theory materialized as a needed supplement during the analysis of the data material. In the first section of this chapter I will briefly present a few theoretical concepts that I find to be an overarching theme of this thesis. Starting as a vague notion of “this is something that keeps reoccurring”, I hope presenting them here make them tangible also to the reader. Second, there will be an explanation of UG-theory through its history and evolution. Key topics here are “gratifications sought and obtained”, the discussion about the “active audience”, and a paragraph accounting for relevant studies. Thirdly, I will present domestication theory following the same logic; initiating with a brief history, a discussion about “dislocating the domestic”, and one on criticism, before a paragraph on relevant studies. At last, there will be an account for the use of a mixed theoretical approach, and how the two theories are being applied in this thesis.

### 2.1 Overreaching terms and theoretical concepts

I have found it relevant to include a few theoretical concepts at this early stage of the theory chapter. These can be helpful in explaining some underlying factors that have guided the reflections in the analysis and the conclusion. The first concept is that of social facts.

A social fact is identifiable through the power of external coercion which it exerts or is capable of exerting upon individuals. The presence of this power is in turn recognisable because of the existence of some pre-determined sanction, or through the resistance that the fact opposes to any individual action that may threaten it (Durkheim, 1982:56-7).

I interpret this to be similar to a social norm. Furthermore, social facts can be understood as *things* (ibid:36). Durkheim uses the examples language and currency (1982:51), but more relevant to this thesis are smartphones or the internet. The internet can be considered a social fact; it's out there, and people use it all the time. It is not controlled or affected by the resistance of any single individual, it is a natural part of society. The internet as a social fact employ constraints on individuals through the teaching of Information and Communication Technology (ICT's) in school, and by expecting us to know how to use its basic features (i.e. email, searching for information, reading online news, etc.). Social facts can change over time, like the evolution of the internet from the web to the "web 2.0". By ignoring social facts "(...) we place ourselves outside the common forms of interaction" (Ling, 2012:20). Social facts have such a subtle but mundane presence in our lives that we take them for granted. And we assume the same of our fellow citizens; we assume they know how to use the internet, and we assume they have a mobile phone (soon, I will argue, we might even assume they have a smartphone). In the book *Taken for Grantedness*, Rich Ling (2012) explains just this. He says the mobile phone is disappearing because it is becoming embedded in society. We no longer think of mobile communication as remarkable; in fact we expect it. Furthermore – and closing in on the second concept – by assuming and expecting that nearly all members of our society have a mobile phone it potentially becomes a problem for us if they don't. The second concept might be called the "Katz principle" (in Ling, 2012:3). Though the term seems to have been named by Rich Ling, he states that the concept was originally suggested by James Katz (ibid). The "Katz principle" describes a phenomenon that occurs when the few resisting non-adopters of an embedded technology become a source of agitation for the mainstream adopters.

In wealthy industrialized societies, the conscious decision for anyone under sixty to not 'go mobile' is worthy of critical comment bordering on opprobrium. The group views such a decision as the imposition of an inconvenience bordering on social dereliction (Katz, 2008:443).

As the social facts notion and the "Katz principle" suggest; owning a mobile phone have become a social obligation – a norm it seems. By not abiding to this informal law you potentially create a problem for others who try to reach you. You become a dead-end amongst

the many pathways of the mobile network; a sudden stop in a fluent stream of communication.

If *they* are not available via the mobile phone, then it becomes *our* problem. (...) We need to somehow work around those individuals who are not available via mobile communication and use other, perhaps less efficient, forms of communication with them (Ling, 2012:3 *emphasis in original*).

I have found reasons to believe that these concepts; social facts and its “taken for grantedness”, and the social norm illustrated by the “Katz principle”, could be applicable to this thesis. Clues indicating this will be seen throughout the analysis, and will ultimately be picked up in the conclusion chapter.

## 2.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

In order to examine the first research question of this thesis; what, when, and why people use what they use on their smartphones, I have found Uses and Gratification theory to be of great relevance. In broad strokes, the UG-theory examines what motivations or incentives (i.e. gratifications sought) the user or audience has for engaging with the media/media content. And it may also examine if, or, to what degree, the user/audience *obtains* the gratifications they seek. The main notion being that the user/recipient does not remain passive while the message/medium exerts their effects on them. Rather, the user/recipient is more or less actively deciding what content – and which medium – to use, and *how* to use it. In many ways UG-researchers have been their own worst critics, causing the theory to evolve over the course of 60 years. Results of such criticism can be found in the formulation of gratification sought (GS) and gratification obtained (GO) as well as in the discussions of the active audience. Because these subjects will be dealt with in the history paragraph below, the contemporary criticism – or formulated constraints – have been baked into the UG and internet paragraph, and will not stand as a paragraph on its own. At last in the UG-section is a brief presentation of relevant UG-studies.

### 2.2.1 A brief history of the Uses and Gratifications theory

“Early mass communication research was mainly preoccupied with media effects, especially on children and young people and with an emphasis on potential harm” (McQuail, 2005:403). The audience was conceived as “passive” and “exposed” to influence, rather than active seekers of specific media content. This changed as “behavioral” audience research became a reaction to, and a shift from, media *effects* focus, to media *use* focus. The *motives* the users had in choosing media and media content became the point of departure (ibid). In the 1950s and 1960s social and psychological variables were identified by researchers, assumed to be important in revealing patterns of consumption of gratifications (Ruggiero, 2000:5). Different variables included individual mental ability, boredom, relationships, media use as escape, companionship, news, information, social interaction, and even race. This cross-disciplinary work between psychologists and U&G researchers has led to a plethora of research on how people interact with the media (Ruggiero, 2000:6).

The ‘uses and gratifications’ approach is not strictly ‘behavioral’, since its main emphasis is on the social origins of media gratification and on the wider social functions of media, for instance in facilitating social contact and interaction or in reducing tension and anxiety (McQuail, 2005:403).

Until the 1970s the researchers had been focused on motivation for media use, ignoring the actual outcome of this use. From the 1970s however, this began to change.

#### **Gratification Sought and Obtained**

The distinction between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained, became noticeable in the U&G research in the 1970s. Several social and psychological needs said to be obtained by exposure to mass media was identified, and some concluded that “(...) gratifications sought and gratifications received were two different conceptual entities that deserved independent treatment in any further U&G research” (Ruggiero, 2000:7). The notion here being that what people seek – their motivations – to use and engage with media, is not necessary in unison with what they get from it. To use an example from this thesis; imagine a young digital native downloading the game-application “Wordfeud” (i.e. Words with friends/scrabble) to his mothers smartphone. She thinks it is a nice social gesture that they can play against each other. Her gratification *sought* is socializing with her son, because she does not care much for

digital games. However, as she starts to play she finds herself enjoying the challenge and entertainment – making her *obtained* gratifications challenge and entertainment. This did not mean gratifications sought and gratification obtained should be studied separately, rather that they should be compared. Because gratification sought would have a much greater explanatory power if compared with gratifications obtained (LaRose et al., 2001:396).

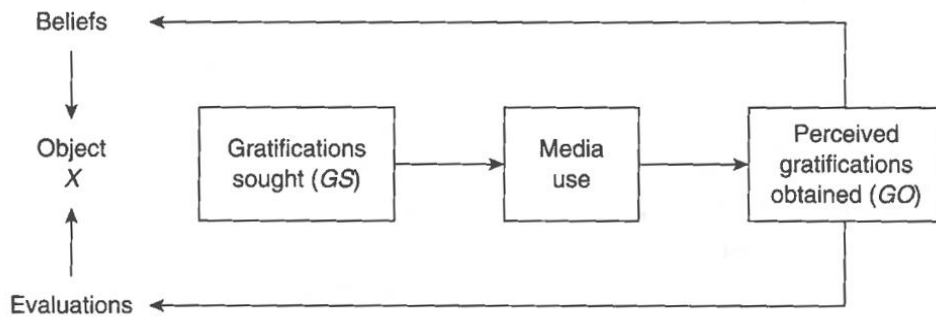


Figure 3: Expectancy-value model of media gratifications sought and obtained (By Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1985, in McQuail, 2005:428).

Figure 3 illustrates the interplay of gratifications sought and obtained, and what could be called an evolving gratifications-cycle. Building on the example above it could be explained as follows: The mother’s gratification sought is socializing with her son, but as she engages with the media content (i.e. the Wordfeud-application) she obtains the gratifications – challenge and entertainment. The next time she uses Wordfeud her gratifications sought has been modified and she now seeks challenge and entertainment. If these gratifications sought are obtained, it spurs a repetitive use until perhaps; she no longer obtains any gratifications from the use (i.e. she gets tired of it, bored, disappointed, etc.). Then, she might go on to seek the same gratifications (challenge and entertainment) through different media content (i.e. game/puzzle-application), and the cycle repeats. Or, her gratification incentives changes, and she no longer seek entertainment and challenge through her smartphone.

Venturing into the 1980s and 1990s research, the UG-theory was strengthened as researchers were refining the methodology, extending their studies, and sought to advance the field theoretically (Ruggiero, 2001:7). This was also a period where the notion of an active audience was reevaluated.

## The Audience

(...) [T]he primary difference between the traditional effects approach and the U&G approach is that a media effects researcher usually examines mass communication from the perspective of the communicator, whereas the U&G researcher uses the audience as a point of departure (Windahl, 1981; paraphrased in Ruggiero, 2000:7).

Biocca proposed several versions of the meanings and concepts of audience activity; and the utilitarianism concept speaks directly to the U&G approach: “Here the audience is the ‘embodiment of the self-interested consumer’. Media consumption represents the satisfaction of some more or less conscious need, such as those postulated in the ‘uses and gratifications’ approach” (Biocca, 1988, in McQuail, 2005:415). Several researchers point to the notion of “audience activity” as an unsatisfactory concept, and Biocca even states that “It is, by definition, nearly impossible for the audience *not* to be active” (1988, in McQuail, 2005:416). Furthermore, Blumler points out that the *measurement* of said activeness should also be given thought (1979:14). He suggests variables such as *degree of attention paid*, and *ability to recall*, for measuring activity during consumption, as well as variables for measuring activeness pre- and post- media consumption (ibid).

In light of the reevaluation of the active audience, there was an increased emergence of theoretical models ranging from high to low levels of involvement. “For example, both dependency and deprivation theories suggest that some individuals under certain conditions such as confinement to home, low income, and some forms of stress form high levels of attachment to media” (Ruggiero, 2000:8). Furthermore, theories of low-level and variable audience activity have been formed, suggesting that some factors lead to a less active audience than previously believed. One of the factors, ritualistic or habitual use, indicates that habitual use of a certain medium for diversion might lead to a greater attachment to this medium (ibid:10). However, ritualistic use is likely interrelated with the goal-oriented instrumental use. If the same individual can use the same medium for both passive diversionary use, and the more active instrumental use, it illustrates a potential challenge: The activity of individuals can be as variable as that of the audience (Ruggiero, 2000:10). Despite the apparent troubled notion of audience activity there are still theoretical and practical

reasons for keeping it, however it must be “(...) clearly defined and empirically tested” (McQuail, 2005:416).

## **U&G and the internet**

Though the active audience concept has been gaining credibility within new media research, some criticize the notion of regarding the audience members as universally active (Ruggiero, 2000:26). Furthermore, the concept has to be revised when applied to research on the internet. As the notion of the active audience entail, it might not grasp the *personalness* of individuals' interaction with the web. Unlike traditional media, the internet does not have a target audience, and the audience is not a result of its function – though it might be a result of its diversity. “This concept of ‘personalness,’ social presence, or the degree of salience in interpersonal relationships is being explored increasingly by U&G researchers, particularly in relation to interactivity” (Ruggiero, 2000:21). And even though the UG theory has evolved to meet criticism and stay current with a changing media landscape, the basic questions remain the same. “Why do people become involved in one particular type of mediated communication or another, and what gratifications do they receive from it?” (Ruggiero, 2000:29).

### **2.2.2 Relevant UG-studies**

To shed light on how the UG-approach can be used, and what we might expect it to yield; a paragraph on relevant UG-studies has been included. The research contributions presented in this section have been considered relevant because they study relevant *media* (such as smartphones or other mobile communication devices, or the internet), and have a relevant *focus*. During the presentation of these studies, there will be some foreshadowing onto what the UG-approach will bring to the table when it comes to findings and discussions that might answer this thesis' research questions.

An empirical analysis on the effect of smartphone use on addiction (Chae & Lee, 2011), found that UG-theory can prove useful in discussing behavioral addiction to media. Distinguishing between active and passive addiction, the survey of Korean smartphone users



found that loneliness correlated with passive addiction. “People who are looking for tension reduction to escape from their loneliness tended to feel more fear from not being able to use their smartphone” (Chae & Lee, 2011:3123). Furthermore, the behavioral addiction indicated by the gratification incentives of “fun” and “excitement-seeking” was characterized by the users seeking continuous connectedness (ibid). The notion of smartphone addictiveness came up several times during the data gathering for this master thesis, and is discussed in the analysis below. It was not a topic I initially thought I would devote much attention to, however; it became relevant during the data gathering. The study of Chae and Lee (2011) have been a useful reference point to discuss the informants statements regarding smartphone addiction – even though our studies seem to arrive at different conclusions. Rounding off their study, the authors state that behavioral addiction is not bound by a substance and it should be called by a different term, pointing to other researchers use of “pathological internet use” (Chae & Lee, 2011:3123). They suggest that future studies on addiction to media devices should use other approaches than those coming from substance addiction frameworks.

LaRose et al., conducted a study on internet usage with a social-cognitive approach to UG-theory (2001). 171 undergraduate students participated, questionnaires were administered twice over a two-week period and during this time the respondents kept diaries of their internet use (ibid:403). The researchers found, in relation to the users’ prior expectations, that expectance to please sensory, novel sensory, and social outcome was positively related to internet usage. And that expectation of negative internet outcomes was negatively related to internet use (LaRose et al., 2001:404, 406). The latter supported by a finding in this thesis, where a young man was reluctant to use a certain feature of his smartphone due to expectations of a negative outcome. Furthermore, the LaRose et al. study found that when the respondents had a self-reception of an internet addiction, this was positively related to internet usage (2001:406). In the analysis chapter of this thesis we will see that this is both confirmed and challenged by my findings. As with the study of Chae & Lee (2011), this study also sought an alternative addiction term. “*Addiction* may be a misnomer in that high scores in this measure were often associated with moderate levels of Internet use, whereas the term is usually reserved for deviant levels of use. (...) Thus, a more appropriate term might be *deficient self-regulation* (...)” (LaRose et al., 2001:407 *emphasis in original*).

A longitudinal field study of the personal digital assistant (PDA), examined how gratifications can change over time (Peters & Allouch, 2005). A group of 25 novice PDA users was selected. They were observed multiple times before and after the treatment, and was sent bi-weekly questionnaires over a course of three months, as well as a questionnaire before and after the trial period (ibid:244-245). The results suggested that the initial perceptions and expectations to the new technology were more instrumentally oriented, and less oriented towards intrinsic use. However, during the bi-weekly questioning these motivations evened out as other gratifications like entertainment, fashion/status became more important.

After four to six weeks of daily use people were no longer aware of the fact that they were always connected, which does not mean that permanent access or social interaction have become less important gratifications sought. It could be that the new mobile communication technology became institutionalized after four to six weeks (Peters & Allouch, 2005:252).

During the data gathering of this master thesis, people with different smartphone experience were interviewed. A few did not have a smartphone, a couple was new to the smartphone world, and some were experienced smartphone users. Though this thesis does not focus on changing gratifications over time, there are similarities in the findings in terms of *integration* of the new mobile communication device. And this is the queue for the next section: Domestication theory.

## 2.3 Domestication theory

To answer the second research question of this thesis; how, and to what extent the smartphones have become integrated into the lives of the users, domestication theory was chosen as it describes how adopters integrate new technologies into their lives (Ling, 2012:16). The traditional use of the domestication term refers to the taming of wild animals. Metaphorically, new “wild” or “unknown” technologies needs to undergo a “taming-process” by its users (or owners) when they seek to integrate them into their lives. And drawing on this symbolism, in the long run, just like pets, the technology can become a part of the family

(Berker et al., 2006:2). This section will present the short story of domestication theory, venturing into the expansion of the term, ending with current criticism. Then there will be a paragraph presenting a couple of domestication studies.

### **2.3.1 The short story**

The history of domestication theory is in comparison with UG-theory a short one, emerging as late as the early 1990s (Haddon, 2003:44).

Domestication as a concept originated in large part from anthropology and consumption studies, as well as from a move in media studies to consider the contexts in which information and communication technologies (ICTs) were experienced (Haddon, 2006:195).

The approach argues that prior to first-hand experience with ICTs, consumers already have pre-formed meanings and perceptions as a result of the media discourses surrounding them, advertising and design. However, as consumers/users interact with the ICTs, their own significance and meanings are invested in them, both as individuals and households. This includes pre- and post-acquisition efforts. First, we imagine where and how the ICT (for instance the computer) would fit into our homes and lives, and we discuss whether or not to acquire it. In the process *after* acquisition we attempt to fit the ICT into the domestic time and space (Haddon, 2003:44). As the name entails, the context of the domestic household and the media that would fit therein, was the primary and original focus of domestication studies. However, this has changed – and is still changing. As portable and personal, mobile media devices increasingly have become part of our reality, the confinement of the domestic have been challenged. Especially in industrialized countries with strong economies and a strong consumer base, these devices have entered our everyday life, in some cases facilitating the restructuring of our daily routines (Berker et al., 2006:8-9, Ling, 2012:3,11, Lie & Sørensen, 1996:9).

## **Dislocating the domestic**

“Theoretical discussions and empirical studies of domestication always considered the interrelationship between the home and rest of everyday life” (Haddon, 2003:49). However, whilst they registered this notion, there was little focus on it as a point of departure. This changed as the arrival of the mobile phone spurred an interest in further extension of the approach. Norwegian researchers identifying themselves with the domestication tradition, argue that the domestication of technology does not only happen within the confinement of the home (Lie & Sørensen Eds., 1996:13). The smartphone is a good example of a device that dislocates the idea of home; enabling its user to bring – not only their network (i.e. their list of contacts) – but the world with them. How we use the smartphone when we are in our home might be different to how we use it outside the home. If you are a working family man or woman, your in-home smartphone-use might be sporadic during an average afternoon/evening, depending on whether you get any calls or texts. Perhaps you check it just to be sure you have not missed any calls or perhaps you check your email. On the average morning, however, your mind is set for the working day, and you may use the smartphone more actively getting ready for work. You have the alarm, calendar, perhaps you check your email, the news, and maybe the train or bus-schedule if you are a commuter. On the train to work you might do some more news consuming, micro-coordinating confirming meetings and appointments, perhaps play a game, or talk on the hands-free if you are driving. Then there is another specter of use while you are at work, and yet another during the lunch-break, and on the way home, and so on. If one can imagine a scenario like this, it is reasonable to imagine how – in order to grasp the full extent of the domestication process – one must stretch the domestication term beyond the home and into all spheres of life. Roger Silverstone argues that the concept of the home and the household within domestication studies, poses problems in itself (2006:240-1). As the example of the smartphone-use above indicates, this (and other devices) has breached the walls of the home, taking private family matters into public space.

Above all, the boundaries around the household are breaking down. Thresholds are crumbling. The distinctions between public and private spaces and frames of reference, always particular to society and culture, are losing their force and their significance. Public, private: who notices any more, who cares? (Silverstone, 2006:241).

This is what we are told he says. And the way I interpret his argument, he states that the dismantlement of the household can be seen as a parallel to the exaggeration of globalization and the global challenges to the power of the nation state. In this respect, the struggles of the household become the micro-version of the macro-version – the nation state, because the two are inevitably interlinked (Silverstone, 2006:241). Silverstone points out that the household have not died, but that it is threatened by disruption by these technologies and our use of them (ibid:242). Our challenge lies in being able to take this disruption seriously and use the technologies in defining – or redefining – the household, by domesticating new technology as well as extending the domestic beyond the household. Because we as individuals and citizens are dependent on the home in the construction of our identities. “To be homeless is to be beyond reach, and to be without identity” (Silverstone, 2006:243).

## **Criticism**

In addition to the discussion about the dislocation of the household, further criticism of the domestication theory can be accounted for in its duality. On the one hand, domestication can be seen as a conservative response by consumers/users in absorbing the threats posed by new technologies. They seek to protect and preserve their private values and cultures by fitting the technologies into them, in a “process of moral defensiveness” (Silverstone, 2006:246). On the other hand, if we succeed in the defense it could neutralize the potential for disruptive – but positive – change that new media often promise (ibid). Of course every now and then media innovations succeed in creating such change, but this criticism entails, to my understanding, that in succeeding with domestication we might be failing (or at least missing out on) social change made possible by new media technology. Silverstone goes even further, saying that in domestication’s attempt at “cultural anesthesia” it “(...) refuses the claims for a wider sense of responsibility for the world, and for those who share it with us (...) in their global reach” (2006:247).

Hartmann points to another area of criticism; that of the “double articulation” (Hartmann, 2006:85). Whilst all technology once acquired, serve as material objects with more or less symbolic value (i.e. a dishwasher or hair dryer), *media* technology also have a second articulation which lies in its content (ibid:87). Following Hartmann’s criticism, it is that of the domestication theory and research’s unsatisfactory focus on this duality. Research has either

been too focused on the technology as an object and its role in the house, paying little attention to its content. *Or*, its emphasis is primarily on the contents most general level (the flow of the program and surrounding talk), not including the specific (for example, the individual program or application), or the more general (for example, genre) (Hartmann, 2006:87). “Underlying all this is still the question of how we are to understand media use in context. In order to do so, we need to become a part of the context – and we need to return to the content” (Hartmann, 2006:97). How I have chosen to meet the criticism of duality and double articulation in my implementation of domestication theory will be explained below, but first I will present some brief examples of what domestication theory has yielded in previous studies.

### **2.3.2 Domestication studies**

Though the smartphone is the focus of this thesis, there is little research on the smartphone with a domestication approach. I will lean on research on the mobile phone and the internet, and by foreshadowing to topics within my own analysis I will illustrate how these studies can be relevant. Furthermore, - as with the relevant UG-studies, these domestication studies can give clues as to what domestication theory might bring to the table when it comes to findings and discussions that can answer this thesis’ research questions.

In 2004, Nordli and Sørensen studied the domestication of mobile phones in Norway based on 21 qualitative interviews with Norwegian men and women (Sørensen, 2006:51-5). The study included both early and late adopters, of two age groups. To put this in a timely context, 86 per cent of Norwegian nine to 79 year olds owned a mobile phone by 2003, and the late users in the study had already owned a mobile for one to three years prior to the date of the interview (Sørensen, 2006:52). The study found that those who initially resisted the mobile usually either said it was because they did not need it, or because they did not want to be accessible all the time. However, some of these became quite active after acquiring one. Furthermore, the study revealed a gendered pattern of acquisition. The male informants either got a mobile through work, or bought one themselves, while the women got their first mobile as a present.

As a communication device, mobile phones seem to carry the seed of their own diffusion – an object-generating object. As an increasing part of the population owns one, access becomes increasingly tempting, even a pressing concern (Sørensen, 2006:53).

Though the study found it to be a significant variation between the informants in terms of degree of domestication, they also found the emergence of a more intensive communication practice. After a while the pattern of the other users started to resemble that of heavy users, becoming more eager than they initially planned to be (ibid:53,55). In this thesis we will also see a variation between the informants, in terms of their domestication of the *smartphone*. In regard to resistant users, there are similarities in some of the findings of this thesis. One of my informants talked about what it would take for him to “convert” from resistance to ownership, and a few others talked about *still resisting* and how this was experienced in a context of smartphone using peers.

Maren Hartmann<sup>3</sup> combined the methods of discourse analysis and qualitative interviews in her study of the discourse of “the web-generation” and young adults use, and attitudes towards new ICTs (2005). Between December 2001 and February 2002, nearly 550 interviews with young Belgians aged 18 to 25 was conducted. The discourse analysis showed that within the web-generation discourse, new technologies had been extensively adopted with far-reaching consequences for everyday life (Hartmann, 2005:143). However, the interviews with this presumed web-generation did not conclusively support this discourse. Though they knew what they were talking about and used the ICTs widely in their everyday lives, they did not naïvely embrace the new ICTs. Rather the decision to acquire or engage with the specific media was part of a careful and thought-through decision (ibid:145, 153). In this thesis there are also examples of young informants who clearly have given this decision great thought. Not only in terms of whether or not to acquire a smartphone, but also in regards to the content (i.e. whether or not to download/purchase applications, or use certain functions). By paying attention to what the interviewees said when they presented themselves, Hartmann found how they constructed boundaries around their own use. “This was primarily

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3 For the sake of clarity: This is the same Hartmann that criticised the dual articulation above. That criticism was partly a result of the study accounted for here (see Hartmann, 2006:93).

done by condemning other people's uses, but the interviewees' own fears, values and ideas were clearly visible underneath" (Hartmann, 2005:153). Similar findings appear in this thesis, when the informants compared themselves to, or distanced themselves from, their smartphone using peers.

## 2.4 Mixed theoretical approach

The combination of UG- and Domestication- theory have been tried before as part of a theory triangulation. From a marketing perspective, Nysveen et al., used the theories in combination with information systems research theory, to unveil consumers' intentions to use mobile services (2005). Furthermore, the theory triangulation of Nysveen et al., was used by a group of researchers in a study on adoption of technology (Dickinger et al., 2008). Because these works stem from other academic backgrounds, and their focus does not appear relevant to that of this thesis, my use and blending of these theories will follow a different approach.

This master thesis investigates how smartphones are being used by their owners, and to what degree these devices have become integrated in their lives (domestication). It does this by examining what purposes and functions the smartphones serve, and how owners experience rewards for this use (Gratifications Sought and Obtained). It is not the purpose of this thesis to predict smartphone behavior, nor the mobile future, but rather to analyze and explain the behavior, its intended, and/or actual outcome, and how this can be put in to a larger context. "The approach [U-G] is appropriate for application to the Internet and other new media, especially for comparison and description, and is increasingly being applied" (McQuail, 2005:427).

The uses and gratifications position also reminds us that theoretical propositions in our field need to be tested for their plausibility against the realities of audience experience, which constitute an inescapable funnel through which all mass communication content must flow before it can effect whatever impact it is destined to exert (Blumler, 1979:12).



In regards to Domestication theory, the expansion of this can be used to describe what it means to integrate new technology into our daily routines. It describes how users work through the adoption phase, and also how they master the technology, and how they use it (Ling, 2012:16). Lie and Sørensen says it is meaningful, and even necessary, to study this process, because it might imply a redefinition of the users own routines and practices (Eds., 1996:9).

### 2.4.1 “Uses & Domestications” approach

After the presentation of the theoretical backdrop for this master thesis, this paragraph will account for how the theories have been applied to this study.

McQuail points out that “The steady diversification of the media environment has made it even more difficult to find any single explanatory framework of audience patterns” (2005:426). Since this was written in 2005, the smartphone market have increasingly been gaining ground. The mobile application markets were not only launched, but they have erupted, flooding these smartphones with over fifty billion applications within 2013<sup>4</sup>. In turn; making the smartphone a highly diverse medium in it self. In relation to the diversified media environment that is exemplified by this “app-world”, as well as the other functions and fixed features of the smartphone, this thesis will consider part of this content as the units of study when applying Uses and Gratifications theory. Borrowing form the expectancy-value model (see figure 4. below), I will examine, not only whether gratification sought that initiate smartphone use is *obtained*, but also if repeated use of an application or function automatically means gratification obtained. Several of the informants in this study mentioned that they used certain features every day, but (as will be discussed in the analysis) what they said when they talked about this use did not always imply that they were gratified by it.

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4 From ABI Research – technology market intelligence: <http://www.abiresearch.com/press/android-will-account-for-58-of-smartphone-app-down> last visited: 05.05.2013.

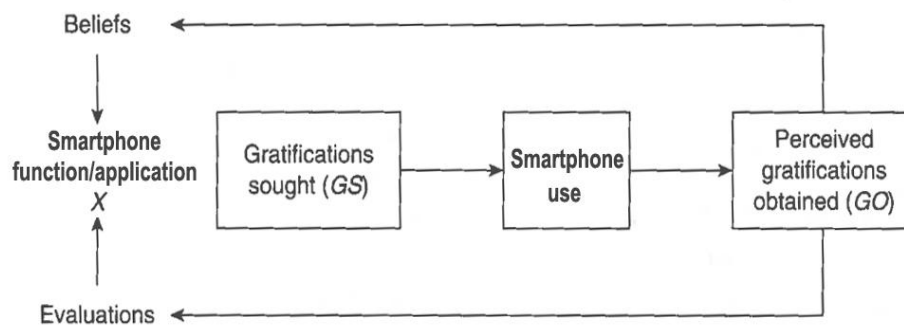


Figure 4: Smartphone expectancy-value model (inspired by Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1985, in McQuail, 2005:428).

In regards to the notion of an active audience, the potentially diverse smartphone content makes the formulation of the audience difficult. By owning a smartphone they could all be members of the smartphone audience. By using the Facebook-app they are members of the Facebook-app audience. However, here in lies the reason for why – in this study – I have found it appropriate to abandon the term “audience”. In stead I will use the terms “smartphone users/owners”, and “mobile phone users/owners” for those few that did not have a smartphone. I have done this because within several of the applications and features of the smartphone, the users are not only (active) audience members, but also *producers*. The Facebook-application is an example of this, as is other social media-apps, the email feature, calendars, and document-applications, etc. Furthermore, because there are so many different ways of using the smartphone, I believe this will give room for a more personal look on how the informants as individuals experience gratification with their smartphones.

“How exactly the concept of domestication has been employed in analysis and with what emphases has depended both upon the researcher and the particular goals of the project” (Haddon, 2003:44). My goal is to strengthen and expand the theoretical framework of this thesis to provide (1) a point of departure for the analysis, and (2) a way to place the most consistent findings into a bigger picture.

The domestication theory presented above, have shown how technologies come preformed with meanings, but after acquisition users invest them with their own meanings and significance (Haddon, 2006:196). Therefore, in this thesis I have also taken into account how the informants formulate, conceptualize and reflect on their own, and others smartphone use (as can be seen in Hartmann, 2005). This signifies the qualitative nature as have been the main methodology used within the domestication tradition. In regard to the criticism of domestication theory mentioned above, I find the duality depicted by Silverstone to be somewhat polarized, though he states himself that this is only partly how it is (Silverstone, 2006:246). Domestication is not only a matter of social determination by incorporating new technology into our daily lives and absorbing its threats. Nor is it only technological determination of media innovations effortlessly disrupting our rhythms causing radical social change. It is about understanding the mutuality of transformation (as we decide to take in, and tame the new technology, we must also change in order to make room for it in our lives) as well as the nature of this interrelationship (ibid:235). Both of these features will be discussed in the analysis. Some informants claim to manage and control their days *through* the smartphone, whilst some seem to be controlled *by* their smartphones.

As a response to the criticism raised by Hartmann, I hope in this thesis to achieve a modest – if not a superficial – differentiation between the two articulations, at least in relation to the smartphone. The aim is that the domestication theory will look at the first articulation (the physical technology – the smartphone – and its role as a material object and a consumer object), whilst UG-theory will provide a grasp of the second articulation (what, how, and when the content is being used).

## **2.5 Summary**

In this chapter I have tried to condense, and make a relevant account of, two large theoretical fields within media studies, and how I will apply them to this study. This will be evident in the analysis where the findings are continuously discussed and examined in light of the theory. Furthermore, it will also be evident in the conclusion when findings and theory merge

with the overreaching concepts. In broad strokes, the UG-theory will assist in examining the *what*, *when* and *why* of smartphone-use. What do they use, when do they use it, why do they use what they use, and what do they get from it. It will have a user/content focus. The domestication theory will assist in examining whether the smartphones have been “tamed” and *how* they have been integrated into the lives of the users. It will have a user/medium focus. As mentioned, this thesis aims to examine smartphone use and integration by young and mature adults, also looking at the similarities or differences between these groups, trying to get behind the hype. Rephrased in relation to the theories presented here; examine how they experience the relationship between gratification sought and obtained with their smartphone-content, and whether - or to what extent – they have domesticated their smartphones. On the basis of the accounts made of the two theories in this chapter, it can be interesting to make some suggestions as to what these theories might help to uncover in the analysis.

Drawing from UG-theory one suggestion could be that because of the highly diverse smartphone-content available, and the “personalness” of individuals use; it might be difficult to tie a certain gratification to a given application. In regards to domestication theory we might anticipate a positive correlation between domestication and perceived high frequency of smartphone use. Whether there is any hold to these theoretical suggestions, will be discussed at the end of the analysis in section 4.6 *Assessment of the theories*.

# 3 Method

The term *method* refers to the concrete processes of designing and conducting scientific studies, whilst *methodology* describes ways of thinking or frames of reference in developing and utilizing these methods (Grønmo, 2004:29). In this chapter I will account for both of these terms, without any further differentiation between them as I have found them to be inevitably interlinked. The method chapter follows a chronological set-up, starting with the work done prior to the data gathering; the explorative interviews, an explanation of the method used, and the pilot interviews testing this method. The second section will account for how the data gathering was conducted, discussing and reflecting on the challenges during this process. The third section will explain the processing of the data after its gathering; transcribing, coding, and the stages of the analysis. The fourth section will account for validity, reliability and generalizability. At last there will be a paragraph explaining the ethical considerations I have taken during this project.

## 3.1 Selecting the method

By using a method called *spontaneous focused interviews*, I have interviewed 32 people – 16 young adults (18-24 years), and 16 mature adults (40-55 years). I chose my method after conducting two exploratory interviews and figuring out *what* I wanted to study. What you want to study should be decisive when selecting a method, but other factors also come into play; such as the researchers time and resources, and the number of subjects needed to figure out what you need to know (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:112-3). I find it relevant to include an account of the exploratory- and pilot-interviews because the findings during this process were decisive for how the method was chosen and applied. Further, because the method is not very well known; I want to make it clear to the reader that I have taken solid precautionary measures before embarking on the data gathering. In addition, the findings from these preliminary interviews are an important backdrop venturing into the next chapter; the analysis. In this respect, the exploratory- and pilot-interviews were a “warm-up” for the data

gathering, and in the same way I will let it be a warm-up for the reader. The explorative interviews consist of two qualitative in-depth interviews with two people that I knew well; a 17 year old girl in her last year of high school (videregående), and her mother in her early fifties. These interviews were conducted as explorative interviews; thematic on smartphone use and open in structure, allowing for plenty of follow up questions, exploring; seeking new information and new angles on the topic at hand (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:106). In the following paragraph, the main findings will be briefly accounted for.

### **3.1.1 Explorative interviews**

It proved more difficult than expected getting the teenager to answer extensively. Her answers were mainly short and to the point, and I realized when transcribing, that what I was lacking was interviewing experience. I lost the tread a couple of times, and I forgot follow-up questions because I did not want to interrupt, but I should have been writing them down. In this manner, these interviews did not only serve to focus the scope of my thesis, but also gave me valuable experience in interviewing. This type of “hands-on” experience is exactly what Kvale and Brinkmann suggest when learning interviewing as a craft (2009:81). In broad strokes the empirical findings were as follows: The smartphone is an integrated part of the teen’s life, using it anytime and anywhere – and mostly the social media applications Facebook, Twitter & Instagram. The teenager explained that her motivation for using these applications is her curiosity of what her friends are doing and generally being updated and social. She also said she feels unease if her smartphone runs out of battery. It is the first thing she hears in the morning, and the last thing she sees before going to sleep. It’s her coffee: it wakes her up, and keeps her awake. Her mother also wakes up to the sound of her smartphone, and it is also the last thing she checks before going to sleep. It is an integrated part of her daily routine. However, her phone is also her daily planner and calendar which appeared to be the reason for most of her use, as well as micro-coordinating with her family, and a need to be available to her children. Her use of the smartphone is primarily instrumental, and the few game-applications she had was downloaded by her children. The findings from the explorative interviews made me more interested in focusing on comparing the age groups, on the “available” versus “social” aspect, and also the instrumental/incremental aspect. Furthermore, I wanted to do several, and in turn – shorter –

interviews, in order to have time to cover more informants for better grounds of comparison. This led me to the method of *spontaneous focused interviews*.

### 3.1.2 Spontaneous focused interviews

Aksel Tjora explains *spontaneous focused interviews* as short interviews conducted spontaneously and “on the spot” after a short invitation (2010:139, see also Tjora, 2012:230). The method was used in a study on “café-life”, and its conduction (explained in the quote below) is a good illustration of how the method can be used:

[I]nterviews with an average length of 7 minutes and 35 seconds were undertaken. The shortest interview lasted just over 2 minutes (...) All interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed. In all the cafès observed, the café staff was asked if it was a problem to use the café as arena for the research and they were generally positive (Tjora & Scambler, 2009, quoted in Tjora, 2010: 139).

Further, *focused interviews* can be explained as being short semi-structured interviews where the topic at hand has been narrowed down prior to the interviews (Tjora, 2012:222). Within the qualitative research tradition, the usual interview is typically no less than one hour long. However, it can prove fruitful – Tjora argues – for researchers to consider shorter interviews if the topic allows for it, it is assumed that trust can be established relatively quickly in the interview situation, *and*, as not to waste the time of the interviewees as well as the interviewer (2012:126). In a study using focused interviews, the researcher interviewed nurses while they were at work (Iversen, 2008, in Tjora, 2012:127). The study found that several were eager to get “to the point” and did not have time to beat around the bush. That the informants were pressed for time was something I experienced several times during the data gathering. They usually had someplace they needed to be, or a train to catch. In order to make sure that *spontaneous focused interviews* was a viable choice for the purpose of this study; I decided to conduct a pilot study.

### **3.1.3 Pilot interviews**

“One should always start out with a pilot interview in order to test the research design” (Schrøder et al., 2003:163). I felt it was particularly important to conduct pilot interviews to test the method and research design, because I did not have any prior experience with it. However, I did have some useful experience from the explorative interviews; take notes to remember follow-up questions. This ran a lot smoother in the pilots, and I did not have to worry about interrupting the informants. Limited to two interviews (a young adult girl and a mature adult man), the pilot study was conducted in a manner closer to what I would experience during the data collection; approaching strangers in cafés and cafeterias. The young adult did differ a bit from the teenage girl in the explorative interviews. The young adult used LinkedIn, which is a social networking site for people in professional occupations. This was a clear signifier of the small but important age difference between the two. However, they were both frequent users of other social media applications. Though the mature adult male also used LinkedIn, his general smartphone use was instrumental (i.e. practical, task-oriented). My research design withstood the pilot interviews well; I figured out that I could get sufficient information from a few questions and limited interview duration. It also shifted my focus from teens to young adults (18-24 years of age) – still fitting the digital natives label.

## **3.2 Conducting the spontaneous, focused interviews**

This section will explain what the method *spontaneous focused interviews* have come to be in this thesis. In the following paragraph the process of data gathering will be presented in detail, both how, and where the informants were approached, and how the interviews were conducted. Including also a spacious paragraph of self-reflection in regards to this process.



### 3.2.1 Approaching the informants

If the number of subjects is too small, it is difficult to generalize and not possible to test hypotheses of differences among groups or to make statistical generalizations. If the number of subjects is too large, there will hardly be time to make penetrating analyses of the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:113).

I interviewed 32 people from two predetermined age-groups: 18-24, and 40-55 years, young adults and mature adults. With 16 – eight men and eight women – in each age-group. Though the interviews were short, with an average length of four minutes, the pilot interviews had shown that it was possible to get good data from short interviews. The shortness of the interviews also allowed me to conduct more interviews with the time and resources available. The 32 interviews and the equal division of men/women, young/mature, I would say yielded sufficient data for comparing these groups. Prior to the interviews I had made a semi-structured interview guide containing four questions that all the informants were asked (see Figure 5. below), except of course those that did not have a smartphone. I made a similar semi-structured interview guide for those who did not have a smartphone in order to secure – at least a minimum of – consistency in the data material (see Figure 5. below).

<b>Smartphone user</b>	<b>Mobile-phone user</b>
Can you describe how you use your smartphone throughout an average day?	Why do you not have a smartphone?
Can you show me which applications you have on your smartphone?	Have you ever been in a situation were you wished you had a smartphone?
Which applications do you use the most?	What do you mostly use your mobile for?
What would you say is the most important to you regarding your smartphone?	What would you say is the most important to you regarding your mobile?

Figure 5: The interview guides for smartphone users and mobile-phone users.

Though the interview guides were short, I found them helpful in order to stay on course. Follow-up and clarification questions became a natural part of the interviews. I had decided prior to the data gathering, on the basis of the pilot interviews, that I would interview those I came across who did not have a smartphone. This was done for two reasons, the first being

that it could help me get a sense of how normal it is to have a smartphone, by how many out of 32 people interviewed would not have one. Second, I figured it could give me some interesting insight into the reasons why they did not have one, and also their thoughts about their smartphone-using peers. I believe that their “outsiders perspective” have enriched my data material.

The data gathering process was conducted during nine weekdays over the course of a month and a half, stretching from late September 2012, to early November 2012. 14 of the interviews were conducted within the very center of Oslo, mainly the cafés around the Oslo train station area, and the adjoining shopping malls (Oslo City and Byporten), and the cafés of Karl Johans gate (main shopping street leading from the train station to the royal castle). 12 of the interviews were conducted in cafeterias on campuses within Oslo<sup>5</sup>. Nine of those interviewed on campus grounds were in the young adult category, and three were mature adults. The remaining interviews were conducted on cafés scattered within the area of the Oslo metro circle-line. All interviews were conducted on a week-day within regular work-hours (7. am – 4.pm.). During the data gathering I kept a log of the interviews containing date, time, place, and the code for each informant. An example of such codes is “13YW6”. The first number is the interview number, this code is the 13<sup>th</sup> interview I conducted. YW indicates that this is a Young Woman (age-group and gender), whilst the last number indicates that she was the sixth young woman interviewed. “09AM3” would indicate the ninth interview, with an Adult Male, the third adult male interviewed.

When selecting my informants I sought out strangers in different cafés and cafeterias around the centre of Oslo. Before starting, I had made up my mind to approach the first person I saw that sat alone, unless obvious clues indicated that they were too young or too old. If such a person (or persons) were found within a given establishment after a short scouting, I would approach the staff and ask to speak with the daily manager, or assistant daily manager. I briefly stated my purpose for being there, and asked their permission to approach a couple of their guests. All over, the response was good, only one establishment turned me down – and no interviews were conducted there. In contrast, at another establishment the manager came

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5 These campuses were: The University of Oslo (UiO), the University-Collage of Oslo and Akershus (HiOA), and the Norwegian Business School (BI).

around the counter to shake my hand and thank me for my polite and informative approach. After obtaining permission I approached the guest/s, briefly stating my business, and asking them if they would mind part-taking in a short, anonymous interview. Here as well, the response was generally positive. Once they agreed the informants were asked a couple of introductory questions. One, if they were between the ages of 18-24, or 40-55 – to make sure they fit my selection criteria. Two, if they were okay with me using a digital audio recorder – they all were. And three, whether or not they had a smartphone. Only the first two questions required a positive answer, and once obtained they were given a written information slip (see appendix) describing the study. This way of approaching the informants became my version of “setting the stage” for the interview (see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:128). We had broken the ice; they had been briefed on my purpose and the topic at hand. The interview could begin.

### **3.2.2 Conducting the interviews**

Spontaneous focused interviews could be considered a shorter version of the qualitative in-depth interview, and it can be an effective way of investigating what experiences people have with social phenomena (see Tjora, 2012:15), such as the smartphone. When conducting qualitative, face-to-face interviews it can be an advantage to conduct the interviews in a location where the informants are at ease, for instance their homes or work-place (ibid:120). Naturally, the method and its employment in this thesis made this impossible. However, the spontaneity of these interviews can also be its greatest advantage – it catches the informants off guard. They do not have the time to plan what they want to say, or pre-formulate strong statements. Rather, the spontaneity of the interview situation, I would claim, has the potential to make them more honest.

During the conduction of the interviews I strived to formulate the questions as openly as possible, maintaining a curious approach. I avoided asking leading questions unless they were follow-up questions. Kvale & Brinkmann say that leading questions can be used to check the reliability of the informants answers, and to verify the interviewer’s interpretations (2004:172). An example of such a leading, follow-up question that I had to ask could be: “ It

sounds like most of your applications are practical, would you say this is a correct perception?”. A “probing” technique was used on the informants who had a smartphone. In this study, the probing entailed that I gave the respondents a small task to perform during the interview (see Tjora, 2012:128). I asked them if they could show me their smartphones and browse through the applications that they had on them (see Figure 5: The interview guide). I experienced that this was a good way to make the informants remember what applications they actually had, and it also made them talk more about their use. When we had been through the questions in the interview guide, and the follow-up questions needed, the interviews were rounded off. I would look over my notes from the interview to confirm that I was not forgetting anything. Then I would let the informants know that I was satisfied, and ask if they had anything more to add before we finished. And after thanking them for their time, I turned off the recorder.

### **3.2.3 Challenges and reflections**

On two occasions I experienced technical difficulties with the audio recorder, this affected three interviews. The first occasion was also the first two interviews I conducted during the data gathering process. They were conducted immediately after each other within the same establishment, but I did not realize until after they were finished that the audio recorded never got started. Beginner’s mistake, I figured. Still it happened again with another interview, far into the data gathering. Because I did not have recordings of these three interviews they were discarded, and “new” interviews were conducted. Though I call it technical difficulties human error is really at fault. I was perhaps too eager to get the interviews started, and forgot to make sure that the recorded was – in fact – recording. However, I maintain that these hick-ups did not disrupt the final outcome and the quality of my data material. Looking back, what I could have done differently in order to prevent this, could be to have a small check-list next to the interview guide to remind myself to not be so eager, and to take the time to double check that the recording had been started.

At the end of the fourth interview I learned a valuable lesson: to wait until the very last minute to turn off the audio recorder. It had been a very successful interview with a mature adult

woman, she was very talkative and out-going. When the interview was rounded off she said it had been a pleasant talk and wished me luck with future interviews. I turned off the recorder and put it in my pocket, but as I was gathering my notebook and pen she continued talking about the topic. Only briefly, but enough to make me realize that from that point on, turning off the audio recorder would be the very last thing I would do. Sticking to this plan proved fruitful; further into the data gathering another woman made an interesting remark after we had rounded off and I had gotten out of my chair. Only this time I got it on record.

Another difficulty I encountered was that of a language barrier. At one occasion I approached a person that did not understand a word I was saying, in Norwegian nor in English – making an interview impossible. I also experienced on several occasions that the people I approached was not in my age-group. Some of the mature adults were in fact very excited to learn that they were too “old”, taking it as a compliment that they seemed younger than they were. Though it did not result in an interview, it did result in smiles, thank-you’s, and good luck’s. It was worse on those (few) occasions when it was the other way around, and they were in fact too young to be in the mature adult group.

Conducting spontaneous focused interviews, I did not know anything about the informants before-hand other than what I could observe as I approach them (i.e. gender and approximate age). I had no way of knowing if they were technologically superior or oblivious. Relating this to interviewing-terms, I did not know if I was about to interview “elites” or “children”. “Elite interviews are with persons who are leaders or experts in a community, who are usually in powerful positions” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:147). When interviewing children there is usually a disproportionate power balance in favor of the adult researcher, and one must take extra care not to ask implicitly leading questions, or let the child think there is a right or wrong answer (Lobe, et al., 2008:33). The child might also be afraid of saying something wrong or to make a mistake. “The researcher should encourage the child and make him/her feel comfortable in answering whatever the answer might be” (Lobe, et al., 2008:33). Juggling between the “app-savvy” and “app-oblivious” was a challenge requiring all my social-skills, and the ability to adapt quickly. I had to adjust my approach (i.e. attitude, formulations, body language, etc.) in order to be as professional as possible with each of the

informants. When interviewing elites, “[t]he interviewer should be knowledgeable about the topic of concern and master the technical language(...)” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:147). Being a digital native, having owned a couple of smartphones already – both android and apple – with a sturdy selection of “apps”, I felt confident in my smartphone-lingo. However, there were several occasions where I had to have the informants (young and mature) explain to me, the purpose of certain applications. Thankfully, this was never a problem. On the contrary, most of them seemed to enjoy the task of “educating” a researcher.

As mentioned, I approached people sitting alone. However, during two of the interviews I experienced that they were in fact there with someone, only they were in line or out for a smoke. In both cases this led to a short interruption when the informants had to explain to these people what was going on, but they quickly got back on track. In these situations I tried to remain unaffected and neutral, to see if the informants wanted to include the third person in the interview situation or if they wanted to continue on like before. On one occasion, the third person went back outside. The other time, the third person sat down but was not interested in participating. Though there was a brief interruption in the interview, I did not experience that it took the focus away from the topics at hand, and both interviews came out good. Neither of these informants said anything about waiting for someone, or that we had to “hurry” during the initiation of the interview. However, some of the people I interviewed were pressed for time and said so at the beginning of the interview. After I had presented myself and my purpose they asked if it was going to take long, because they had someplace they needed to be. When I answered that it depended on how much they had to say, and that it could take anywhere from two to ten minutes, this was usually fine. During these interviews I paid extra attention to their body language to see if they seemed stressed or if they started checking the time, indicating to me that they wanted to round off the interview. I found that they were able to focus and answer all my questions and follow-up questions without needing to cut me off. I was aware of this risk going into the interviews, but I figured it was one I was willing to take given the uncertainty of approaching random strangers spontaneously, and in public.

### **3.3 Processing the data**

The interviews were conducted in Norwegian, and the quotes used in the analysis have all been translated by me. This is important to mention as it could potentially challenge the validity of the data. The act of translating, as with other types of data processing, can not always be done in a completely objective manner. However, sparing myself the translation by conducting interviews in English was quickly discarded as an option, and translation was chosen as the lesser of two evils. I believe that had I insisted on conducting the interviews in English I would have a hard time acquiring informants. Also, the data would have been weak, because speaking in a secondary language could prevent them from talking freely and in length about the questions and topics posed, thus affecting the quality of the responses. Two of the interviews included in the data material were conducted in English however, because the respondents were from English-speaking countries – living in Oslo.

#### **3.3.1 The transcribing**

I transcribed all the interviews in a simple, straight forward manner, including every audible syllable uttered by the respondents. The transcription was done continuously, preferably on the same day the interview occurred as I wanted to have it fresh in mind to ease the process. I included pauses, if they interrupted themselves, if they emphasized certain words, the occasional stuttering, if we talked simultaneously, if they laughed, if someone for various reasons disturbed the interview, and if something was inaudible. The latter happened occasionally, but this was no surprise giving that the interviews took place in cafés and cafeterias. During the pilot interviews I got to test the quality of the recorder, and I found that it worked very well. If there was ever something the informants said that came out inaudible on the recording, it was usually just a word or two rarely affecting the understanding of the sentence's content. Transcribing oral language can make it appear artificial, and the people talking may sound less intelligent than they really are (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:187). The language was made more fluent (i.e. less oral) in the coding of the interviews.

### 3.3.2 The coding

During the transcription of the interviews I was able to create a pretty good picture of what seemed to be the major themes of the combined data material, and I could begin to organize the content. Coding can be described as the process of identifying words or phrases that describes paragraphs or smaller sections of the data material (Tjora, 2012:179). Apart from gender, age-groups, and whether or not they had smartphones, I created seven codes. These were either based on the questions in the interview guide, or they describe topics that were reoccurring in the interviews.

1.1: Gender	
1.2: Age-group	
1.3: Have/does not have Smartphone	
2.1: How do they use their (smart)phone	
2.2: Features/applications they have but do not use/ talk negatively about	
3.1: Advantages/disadvantages with the (smart)phone	
4.1: Valued usefulness	
5.1: Reflections on own use	
5.2: Comparing their use to others/ talking about others	
6.1: Their mobile/smartphone future	

Figure 6: The code-book.

This way of finding relevant codes from the data material is called data driven codes, as opposed to concept driven codes where the codes are predetermined by the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:202). All the interviews from the data gathering were coded after the code-book (Figure 6.) In addition I also made own print-outs of documents organized by



code; for instance all answers to code 5.2 in one document. This made the process of comparing the informants' answers a lot easier. As mentioned, I took the opportunity to "wash" the language during the coding so that it would not stand out in the analysis as oral slang. This can also be said to be an ethical consideration for the sake of the informants. Naturally, even though *how* they say things have been modified, *what* they say remains the same. The coding was an important step prior to the data analysis. It made it much easier to get the big picture of what the respondents talked about, who talked about what, and to what extent. It also made it easier to get a sense of similarities and differences across age-groups and between genders.

### **3.3.3 The data analysis**

The process of data analysis in this master thesis had three stages. These stages were necessary in order to find the general tendencies of the different groups' use of the smartphone. Including their use of the *content*, and the relationship between gratifications sought and obtained, and how the smartphone as a *medium* fits into their lives. In order to do this systematically I started to analyze the data following the structure of the code-book. This was the first stage of the data analysis. The print-outs organized by code were of great use in this process, as I did not have to shuffle back and forth between all the coded interviews. I started analyzing the data on the young adult women, then the young men, before the mature women and at last; the mature men. This process of analyzing was tedious work but it gave me good insight on the data. It made it possible to determine both the broad strokes, and the details of smartphone content use; what features and applications were most popular to the natives and settlers, where they overlapped and differed from each other. It also gave clues as to the most talked about gratification incentives. It became clear that using quotes from the informants was going to be an important feature of the analysis, and that this would also strengthen the validity and reliability of the study.

The second stage was an effort to lift the focus of the analysis beyond the content and the focus on age-groups. I went back to the codes to find if there was any common denominator or aspect shared by all the informants, and if any topics talked about occurred across the age-

groups. I wanted to focus on that *before* looking at similarities and differences between age and gender. This process led me to the formulation of several gratification incentives that were reoccurring in the data material (examples include; “availability”, “planning/organizing”, “time-kill”, “social”). It is what Kvale & Brinkmann calls *meaning condensation*: “Meaning condensation entails an abridgement of the meanings expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations” (2009:205). Formulating these reoccurring gratification incentives was imperative in order to move beyond a detailed focus on content. However, there was still something missing in order to describe and anchor the perhaps clearest finding so far. After some discussion back and forth, this missing piece surfaced in the form of domestication theory. I feared expanding the theoretical scope of the thesis that far into the process could be problematic, but it turned out to be exactly what was needed in order to make the most out of the data material and the findings<sup>6</sup>. Combining these theories in the analysis enabled me to view the findings both through a microscope *and* a wide-angle lens.

The third and final stage of the analysis, was mainly one of structure. The right pieces were there, but they needed to be organized in a way that made sense *while* having a flow. I decided it would be more natural to start with the wide-angle lens before zooming in. Beyond that, topics were merged and new headings appeared until the final result was ready. But before that, there are still a couple of paragraphs left in this method chapter.

### **3.4 Reliability, validity and generalizability**

Simply put, one can say that reliability concerns the internal logic throughout the research project, whilst validity concerns the logic coherence between the research design, its findings, and the questions it seeks to answer (Tjora, 2012: 202). Issues of reliability and validity in interview research raise questions about the objectivity of knowledge, and whether knowledge

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6 Because I don't want to give away too much of my findings prior to the analysis, the potential discussion foreshadowed here will be picked up after the analysis summary. This discussion concerns how each of these theories (UG and Domestication) individually would have fallen short in anchoring the findings of this thesis, and to what degree they have fulfilled this together.

produced through interviews can be objective (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:242). As touched upon above in regards to the translation, this is not always easy within qualitative research. However, I have employed a *reflexive objectivity*, in the sense that I have attempted to objectively reflect on my own subjectivity (ibid). By openly discussing my challenges, strengths and weaknesses, I hope to have made the findings of this thesis more trustworthy. At least, this reflexiveness can serve as a quality indicator, as Tjora argues (2012: 202, 217). Furthermore, by asking the informants clarification questions (i.e. leading follow-up questions) during the interviews, I could confirm or disconfirm my interpretations of what they were saying. This way of making sure we were on the same page, can be termed *dialogical intersubjectivity*. “(...) the interview attains a privileged position regarding objectivity as dialogical subjectivity – the interview is a conversation and a negotiation of meaning between the researcher and his or her subjects” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:243).

“If the findings of an interview study are judged to be reasonably reliable and valid, the question remains whether the results are primarily of local interest, or whether they may be transferable to other subjects and situations” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:260-1). Tjora argues that the notion of transferability may limit the importance of the findings within qualitative research, and that generalization in some shape or form usually is a goal within social science research (2012:207-8). There are several forms of generalizing that can be applied to qualitative research (ibid:208, Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:262). In this thesis I will attempt a conceptual generalization of my findings. Tjora explains that this entails using previous research and theories to back your own findings – securing relevance beyond your own data – attaining greater validity and generalizability (2012:215). Conceptual generalization “lifts the gaze” by asking questions like: What is the big picture within these findings? Are there any overarching terms or dimensions? (ibid). The subject of generalizability in this thesis will be picked up in the conclusion.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

This study has been approved by the Data Protection Official for Research; Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) prior to the data gathering. All necessary precautions have been taken, and NSD's guidelines have been followed. When asked if they were between my given age-groups, several of the informants answered their exact age, but this was never written down, and it happened before the audio recorder had been started. Occasionally some informants would also reveal personal information that could make them identifiable, for instance what small town they were from, or where their children were studying. Information such as this was left out already in the transcription of the interviews. Because I was not interested in the informants' names or personal information, I think this may have made it easier in order to get the informants to talk freely – out-weighing the reservations they might have had with me using an audio recorder.

## 4 Analysis

Remembering the main purpose of this thesis, it is to get behind the smartphone-hype and examine what people really use their smartphones for, when they use it, and why they use what they use in their everyday life – on the basis of two different age-groups. This analysis is divided into four sections, each of them representing the largest and most reoccurring *dimensions* within the data material. The findings will continuously be viewed in light of the two theories described above, as well as relevant empirical contributions from the field. In spite of the order of the research questions, the first section is mainly related to domestication theory. As mentioned in the method chapter, the thought is that this theory will provide the reader with a more general overview of the informants' lives with the smartphone as a medium before going deeper into how they use the content – related to UG-theory.

The first section of this analysis will illustrate how the smartphone to a large degree have been domesticated by the informants. It is integrated in all spheres of their lives; family life, work life, social life, and recreational life. For some, the transition from “new” to «domesticated» technology is not a fluent one, and the last part of the domestication section will explain the challenges some have encountered. With all the different functions and purposes the smartphone can have, it is natural to assume that people use it differently and ascribe different meanings to it. The second section “Integrating the social and the useful”, examines this further when looking at how social features are being used for task-oriented purposes, the informants use of the Facebook-application being the ultimate example. The third section, “Time-killing tool”, looks at two seemingly opposite gratification incentives and finds that it is not necessarily black and white, using games and Wordfeud as examples of gray areas. Initially, as mentioned in the introduction, the focus in different use and meaning has been one determined by age, separating young adult natives from mature adult settlers. However as this analysis will show, the variable of gender is also – if not equally – influential in some aspects. This will perhaps be particularly evident in the last section “Availability, addiction, and conceptualization”. Dominated by women, especially in regard to the correlation between availability and addiction, a clear distinction in gratification incentives

materializes, and “addiction” is tied to domestication theory. At last there will be a paragraph assessing the value of UG- and domestication theory to this thesis.

## 4.1 Domesticating the Smartphone

*“Actually, I don’t think I am even aware of my own use” (13YW6).*

As mentioned in the theory chapter, the concept of domestication within media studies asks what ICT means to people, how they experience these technologies and the roles they play in their lives (Haddon, 2006:195). The smartphone is a part of our daily lives, but its use is not restricted to the home, we bring it everywhere, at all times. It is arguably an extension of us – an extra limb. A study on Finnish teens relationship to their phones found that the common term they use for mobile phones, *kännykkä* can be interpreted as meaning “an extension of the hand” (Oksman & Rautiainen, 2003:294). As with the *personal* computer (PC), the smartphone, or cell phone for that matter, in their own way extend the domestication term. They both allow for *in-house* activities *outside* the home. Whether it is writing, reading, looking at family photos, listening to music, watching the news, or playing games, these could still be considered “domestic” activities even though they are conducted on a train or during lunch break; because the activities take place through highly personal gadgets. You would not snoop around on someone else’s PC without permission, nor would you answer a co-workers phone when he or she is not present. By considering how the informants describe their average day, how they reflect on their own use, and how they picture their mobile future; this chapter will attempt to argue that the smartphone have been domesticated by many of the informants, and that this seems to be a continuing development. Furthermore, in this analysis we can begin to see the contours of how the smartphone is establishing itself as a social fact.

The domestication dimension seems applicable for all the informants in this study regardless of age and gender. For the majority of them the phone is integrated both in their private and public spheres – studying and working. A female digital native said the following:

I check Facebook in the morning, and if I have gotten any new messages or emails during the night. Then I use it throughout the day to get in touch with people at school. In the breaks I browse VG, Facebook again, and stuff like that. And if the lectures are boring I might play some games. So I pretty much use it throughout the whole day (08YW3).

A mature adult male had a similar description of his use:

My day begins around 5 am, that's when I start using it. I'll check my e-mail and stuff before going to work. I pretty much use it for everything. (...) I use it both for work, a lot for work, and then there's a lot of photos, searching and Facebook (06AM1).

All the informants use their phones for other things besides texting and calling. Even those few who did not have a smartphone had used other functions on their phones like camera, calculator, calendar, alarm, games, etc. An adult woman who did not have a smartphone explained: "I have taken some pictures with it and that is a nice function that I appreciate every now and then. (...) I have used the calculator and alarm – these are functions that come in-handly" (16AW3). During the data gathering it became clear that all the informants were used to handling digital technology. Remembering Prensky's "digital immigrants" they are new to the digital world (2001). However, I would argue that the digital immigrants of 2001 are no longer immigrants, because they have earned their digital citizenships. They have become digital settlers. Palfrey and Gasser describe digital settlers as those who were a part of the transition from the analogue to the digital era (2008:3-4). They can be sophisticated in their use of digital technologies, while still having a foot in their analogue past. I have found that though they still might "speak digital" with an accent, they are far more tech-savvy than the immigrants who are new to the digital world. I use the term digital settlers for the mature adults in this master thesis because the data material shows that for them (as well as the natives) the digital is mundane.

As for the majority of the informants who had a smartphone, the two common traits (the phones are integrated in their lives, and, they use their phones for other things besides texting and calling) are particularly evident. However, the old-fashioned features of "calling and

texting” were amongst the first several mentioned when asked how they use their smartphones during an average day. “I use it for all sorts of things actually; for calling, and sending texts, and Facebook” (11YW8). The fact that they mentioned this fairly early in the interviews could illustrate that in this evolution of use, some habits (or characteristics) die hard. And that the new features of the cell phone-era have now become the old features of the smartphone-era. It is also an important reminder not to get carried away in the «new-ness» of smartphone- and- application-hype, because the “traditional” traits are still amongst the first features mentioned. Furthermore, with the seemingly steadfast importance of these features even in competition with the internet and countless applications, it could appear as though this new and “wild” smartphone technology has been “tamed”. This will be examined further in the following paragraphs. First, I will describe how the smartphone have come to be a natural part of the informants’ “spheres of life”, including their work life, family life, social life, and recreational life. Second, there will be a paragraph examining the challenges to domestication, and what “lacks” in order to obtain a fluent use, or seamless integration. Third, there will be a paragraph on the informants’ thoughts, and plans for their smartphone-futures, and how this can relate to future domestication. Then there will be a paragraph summing up the main findings within the domestication section.

#### **4.1.1 Spheres of life**

By demonstrating how the smartphone is integrated in all spheres of the informants’ lives, and a natural part of their everyday activities, the domestication term is extended beyond the home and into the pockets and purses of it’s users. As contemporary researchers argue that the boundaries between work life and private life, and what is personal and public are disintegrating (Peters & Allouch, 2005:252, Agger, 2011), it is only natural that the domestication term follows in order to accommodate this change. Furthermore, by exemplifying how the informants harness the possibilities of the smartphone within these spheres; the contours of their “smart-life” begin to emerge.

#### **Work and school**

Both the young and the mature adults in this study talked avidly about using their smartphones *at* work and in school, as well as *for* work and school. The adults usually made a



distinction between work- and private use very early in the interview by saying “I use it both for work and private matters”. The young on the other hand, did not make this distinction. The majority of the young people interviewed were students, so it might be that they consider the student life to be a larger part of their personal life than what they would a job. With sporadic lectures where perhaps attendance is not even mandatory, I do not believe this is a far fetched assumption. Though they clearly use their smartphones many times a day and also during school hours, only one young informant spontaneously mentioned she used her smartphone to check Fronter (school related web-site) and to look up information during lectures if there was something she did not understand, or to supplement the information (01YW1). Another girl said she used her smartphone to get in touch with her friends at school and that she would use it to play games if the lectures were boring (08YW3).

The mature adults use their smartphones both in their work- and- private spheres. The men are more eager to talk about work related use, and it seems their phones are more integrated in this part of their lives than in their personal lives. “I use it a lot for work, a lot is related to work. (...) I’m online all the time” (31AM7). Agger argues that iTime removes the lines between these two spheres, commodifying downtime (2011:119). He does not see this as a break with the earlier internet era of desktops, but rather as an evolution and intensification. The findings as quoted above, might fuel such a theory.

## **Family life**

Both gender and age differences are characteristic of this topic, because mature adult women are near exclusively represented. However, it should be specified that several of the adult men mentioned using their smartphones for both work and private use, only they did not tie their private use to their families. This is the other way around for those of the women who mentioned it, because they usually talked about family in stead of work. Some adult women mentioned their children as a reason for their need to be available, or as an explanation of why they use their phone “so much” for texting or calling, or mentions that their children downloaded applications for them. “A lot of contact with the kids, yeah, that is pretty much what I do” (17AW4). “And I have a daughter who’s abroad, so I have the weather page for Yr set to the city she is at. That’s kind of exciting” (04AW1). Only one mature adult male mentioned family, and that he had downloaded a couple of game applications for his little

daughter (28AM6). It is interesting that when the women talked about their families their motives seem to be to use their smartphones to keep in touch, or connect with their children when they are physically separated. Whilst with the only male, what ties his smartphone to his child require him to *be* physically present. It could be that their children are at different stages in life however, it makes for an interesting thought. The mature adult male interviewed in the pilot study said when asked about using his smartphone to keep in touch with his children, that he “had an app for that”. This was an application that allowed him to keep track of the results from the children’s soccer-matches. By contrast, the young adults do not mention their families at all. The authors of the book *iBrain* argue that women have a more social response to technology, and that they more frequently use it to connect with friends and family (Small & Vorgan, 2008:91). The data presented in this paragraph support the conventional, social roles of women as mothers.

## **Social life**

Out of the social media applications mentioned by my informants, Facebook was by far the most frequent. According to Medienorge Facebook was the most used application in Norway by the third quarter of 2011 (2012:17). This application’s popularity is irrefutable, something that is evident also in the findings of this study. Other social media applications that were mentioned were Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Google+. The topic of Social Media is characterized by a complete representation of the digital natives that have a smartphone, and moderate representation by the digital settlers. Most of the digital settlers that used social media applications used Facebook, very few mentioned using others (those few were Twitter and LinkedIn). The strongest commonality within the group of young people who have a smartphone is that they all have the Facebook application, and they all claim to use it daily. “I use the Facebook-app several times a day. It only takes a couple of minutes, just to get an update and see what’s been happening and stuff, and then I usually log out, and a little when I’m bored” (24YW8). A study by Oulasvirta et al., on habitual smartphone use, suggests that “(...) checking behaviors emerge and are reinforced by informational «rewards» that are very quickly accessible” (2012:105). When it comes to domestication, habit could be thought to go hand-in-hand with this after a little simplification. Say the smartphone has been domesticated, just like the dishwasher or the television was domesticated. They are gadgets well integrated in our lives and routines, and we interact with them routinely – *habitually* – even. The dishwasher runs like clockwork after dinner, the television is turned on every night at 9 pm

for the evening news, and when you wake up in the morning you check your e-mail and messages on your smartphone. It is part of your everyday routine; you do not really think about it that much. The findings in this paragraph could indicate that the young natives are more focused on using social media-applications and chat-applications than the mature settlers.

## **Recreation**

Under this paragraph, I have grouped activities such as news, music, games and exercise. All of the mature adult women that have smartphones mention they use it for news consumption regularly. Most of the young men (two in this group does not have a smartphone) also consume news regularly. Roughly half of the young women and adult men mention consuming news. “I probably read a lot of newspapers when I’m on the bus and stuff” (11YW4). Most of the news consumers use their smartphones for browsing newspapers – the most popular being VG, Aftenposten and Dagbladet – only a couple of adults mentioned radio and television applications. I find it interesting that the differences in this topic occur across both age and gender groups: Mature women and young men appear to be the most avid news consumers. It makes for an interesting illustration of common ground in terms of smartphone content use between natives and settlers.

Young adults mentioned music significantly more frequently than the mature adults. Many of the young said they use their smartphones to listen to music, mentioning music-applications like Spotify, iTunes or WIMP. Some even said that their music-applications were amongst the ones they used the most. “The applications I use the most... it has to be Spotify and Facebook. Spotify at least, I use it every day” (27YM7). As with news consuming, they also listen to music outside the home, or “on the go”. When it comes to games, this topic had a notably higher representation of mature adults than young adults. Few young adults mentioned playing games on their smartphones, and most of those who did were young women. Both male and female settlers use their smartphones to play games. Examples include Angry Birds, Solitaire, and Wordfeud. Several of the female gamers, regardless of age, said that they usually played games when they were on the move and alone, or bored. Only a couple of the men did the same.

Some of the informants also said they used their smartphones during exercise. A young woman said her work-out application was amongst those she used the most because she uses it at least for an hour at a time (24YW8). An adult woman said that she always brings her smartphone when she works-out, and that she also had hiking-applications, though she did not use them that much (17AW4). A young man even managed to link the alarm feature on his smartphone to his exercise. “I work out a lot, so I have alarms on throughout the day to remind me when it is time to take my diet supplements” (27YM7).

### **Planning and organizing**

The topic “planning and organizing” is perhaps not easily regarded as a sphere, but it can be considered as everyday activities that illustrate how they use their smartphones to manage and coordinate the other spheres mentioned. Applications that came up regularly were; Navigation-applications (Google Maps, GPS), Ruter# (info/time table-application on public transportation in Oslo), alarm clock, calendar, Yr (weather application), Online bank-applications, and of course web-browser applications (Safari/Google). “Applications that I use on a regular basis would be Gmail, XE-currency, Yr and NSB” (32MA8). Tools such as these were used by nearly *all* the informants, even those who did not have a smartphone. Only one informant who did not have a smartphone did *not* mention using any of these features, however he did use the camera. The alarm clock, calendar and web-browser features are most commonly mentioned regardless of age and gender. This is a very interesting find, because such a significant similarity between the age groups within this topic indicates that the young natives are also concerned with using their smartphones for planning and organizing.

### **Conceptualizing**

A more general assessment of how the young people in this study use their smartphones can perhaps be found in the way they conceptualize their own use. Many of them use phrases like “all the time”, “a lot”, “several times”, “many times a day”, etc, when describing how they use their smartphones and applications throughout a regular day. If it is so, that they perceive their own use as frequent or “a lot”, (and such grading can be seen as very relative), who then are they comparing themselves to? Is it their peers, or their parents? Perhaps this is not even relevant, and what is more interesting is the mere fact that they *do* it. What gratification do

they *seek* to make them engage so often? Do they *obtain* the gratification they seek? If not, why the continuous engagement? There is also a tendency that male settlers use phrases like “a lot” and “many times a day” when talking about their smartphone use. Only a couple of female settlers say the same. Male settlers also use the formulation “surfing” which seems almost absent within the other groups.

When reading through all the transcribed interviews, I could not help to pick up on that the informants seem to confirm their labels of digital natives and digital settlers: The young “speak digital” fluently, whereas the mature adults have an “accent”. The young natives appear to be more aware of the technicalities; when they say they use the internet they tend to specify if it is through a web browser or internet-run application. Whereas this connection is not automatic for the settlers, who generally seem to differentiate between internet and applications, “forgetting” perhaps, that many of the applications they mention need an internet connection to function. To them the internet is “surfing”, or the web-browser. A mature adult claimed he rarely used the internet on his smartphone, not even once a day. However, he said he used his mail a lot on his smartphone, every day, and that it was synchronized to his work-mail (18MA4). Another male settler said that he tried not to use his smartphone for the internet, but when asked to include e-mails and anything internet related he said: “Oh, then it’s several times a day. Many times a day” (32MA8). This is not to say that the adults are oblivious to their internet-connectedness, but it could be an indicator that such a differentiation does not come as naturally to them as the younger generation, in turn strengthening the notion of digital natives and digital settlers. However, it can perhaps also be a sign of domestication. Because their connectedness have become a part of their taken for grantedness (see Ling, 2012). It has become so naturalized they are not even aware that they use it – they just *do*.

#### **4.1.2 Challenges to Domestication**

As the paragraphs above indicate, the smartphones is well integrated in all spheres of the users lives. However, this is not the whole story. The data material also suggests several obstacles, or challenges, that the informants struggle with. I have grouped these struggles into

three topics on what “lacks” in order to get gratification *and* domestication (keeping in mind that these are not one and the same).

In general, one third of the informants mentioned that they have, or used to have, applications that they did not use or want. This in it self could be an interesting finding, because it supports the notion of “taming the wild” within domestication theory; when two-thirds of the informants does not seem to have such experiences. This does not necessarily mean that they are technologically fluent with their smartphones, but rather that they are *everyday-fluent* with it. By this I mean that they are aware of their needs when it comes to the smartphone, *and* have found a fluent way to incorporate it into their lives. Not all the applications or features mentioned were based on negative experiences. Furthermore, having only one-third of the informants mentioning this could indicate that the other two-thirds have sufficient knowledge in regards to smartphones and applications, as if they know what they are doing. They know what they need and do not need, or will use or not use. However, another possibility is that they do not know what is out there, or that they do not want to take the risk of downloading or trying something they are not sure of, just to end up being disappointed. Interestingly, the strongest characteristic in terms of applications they have but do not use is that mature adult women outnumber the other groups combined.

### **Lack of convenience**

Some of the mature adults that had applications or functions that they never used explained this as a matter of convenience. Even the female settler who did not have a smartphone said; “But my phone have a lot of functions that I have never used. (...) It’s not *that* stone-age and old fashioned. (...) It is actually kind of a music phone, so you can listen to music, but I have not used that either because I have an iPod” (16AW3). “I try *not* to use it for the internet because it is easier on a normal computer” (32AM8). The mature adult woman did not elaborate on *why* she did not listen to music on her phone in stead of the iPod. However, the mature adult male who preferred the computer for surfing in stead of his smartphone said it was because it is easier. A couple of other mature adult women had similar stories, only their competitor was not the computer, but their iPads.

I think the iPad is better for reading mails and stuff (...). Short messages are readable on the phone, but if you are going to read attachments and documents, the phone is not ideal I think. It has a lot to do with size; you will not be able to open a full page of a document for example (19AW5).

The informants mentioned in this paragraph have an option that they find more convenient than the smartphone for certain purposes. It is interesting that the young adults are absent. Do they find similar tasks equally convenient on the smartphone, or do they just not feel the need to mention it? On the other hand, lack of convenience does not necessarily pose a threat to domestication. Because they still use their smartphones in a way that fits their lives. But in regards to the second research question; this paragraph does suggest different levels of *integration*.

### **Lack of purpose**

The few digital natives that had applications or functions that they did not use, blamed it on a lack of purpose: “I thought I was going to use most of them, actually, but I was very, like; I wasn’t going to have anything I did not use just to *have* it. You find applications for everything, right. Any situation you can think of. So a lot if it was cool in a gimmick sense” (13YW6). “I have a lot of different stuff, but I don’t use any of it. Don’t want to sit around playing games all the time. It is those that actually have any relevance for my daily life that I use on a regular basis” (26YM6). With these two youngsters one can get a sense that they were expecting more than what they got. The gratification they *sought* through the applications they acquired for their smartphones was not *obtained*. The girl says she does not want to have applications just to simply *have* them. They need to serve a purpose. The boy says he only use those with relevance for his daily life. This indicates that applications, in order to grant *gratification obtained*, must serve a repetitive use demand, maybe even incorporated in the daily routine befitting domestication theory. The Ruter-app is a good example of this, showing real-time departures of all public transportation in Oslo, it has the potential to become well integrated “app” in the “smart-life” of the traveler. Though some smartphone users might spontaneously download applications, this boy and girl illustrate that the repetitive use of an application requires more consideration and above all; purpose and relevance. This could fit with what I touched upon above, in regards to the knowledge saturation. After some trial and error, these two figured out what they needed and now they have found a way of using their smartphones that works for them. It is sort of a reversed U-G-

approach; they were hunting for *gratification obtained* before knowing what gratification they *sought*.

While initial use of a medium may come from curiosity about new things, participation in a fad, or accidental exposure, continuing use of a medium is not easily explainable without employing the concept of regards for continued use (Chae & Lee, 2011:3115).

It is apparently not a status incentive for these young adults to have the most applications, rather it is more important to have applications that serve a purpose.

### **Lack of Knowledge**

Another reason I found for why a couple of informants had applications they did not use, was one of knowledge, or rather – lack there of.

“I have gotten this horoscope thing that I don’t want. I probably clicked on something. And I have been getting some updates that I do not want. Then I don’t even know how to get rid of them, because I don’t want to update, cause I don’t want the app. So that’s that” (04AW1).

“And I have tried something called Barcode Scanner. I do not know what to use it for” (07AM2). The woman quoted above appears to be annoyed that she can not get rid of her horoscope application and that she keeps getting update-requests. With the right knowledge she could have easily avoided this, or at least, easily corrected her mistake. The same goes for the man who does not know the purpose of the Barcode Scanner. He is however, new to the smartphone world and like the two youngsters above, perhaps need some trial and error before mastering his “android skills”.

During the data gathering, I met a couple of young people who were not that interested in technological gadgets and did not have smartphones. An implicit negative remark was made by a young adult who said that his friends made fun of his old phone even though he had it by choice. “(...) they make some jokes about it, saying I should get one [smartphone]. New acquaintances that haven’t seen my phone before also comment on it. And say I have a ‘cool’



phone – being ironic” (21YM5). The young man says that he does not mind this mockery and that he part-takes in the joking. However, it is an indicator that peer pressure and bullying might be the case when it comes to the “haves” and “have-not’s” amongst the mobile youth. The digital divide in this case has been altered to a smartphone divide – or better yet – an “app-gap” separating the alternative from the mainstream (the “alternative” in this example is a loose label for those who do not have a smartphone). Furthermore, this young man’s experienced peer-mockery can be an example of how the smartphone is manifesting itself as a social fact: The external force (his peers) exerts pressure on him to acquire a smartphone, and by resisting he is “sanctioned” with mockery.

One young informant mentioned that his smartphone was not that user friendly. However this did not keep him from using the phone and applications he had on it several times a day.

I don’t think this particular model is as user friendly as for instance an iPhone or other smartphones. So even though it has Android, it’s not as easy to use it on this phone; to download new applications and use everything. It takes a long time and stuff. I don’t have the patience to wait, really (29YM8).

In terms of domestication I would still argue on the basis of our conversation, that the smartphone is well integrated in his life as he uses it for several purposes throughout the day. Though he did not explicitly say he had applications that he did not use, it is fitting to mention him here because it illustrates that domestication not necessarily is synonymous with continuous gratification. As with the dishwasher, we still get upset when it is not working properly. The above quote indicates that the informant seems to have pre-existing expectations of negative consequences (see LaRose, et al. 2001:406), such as the smartphone being slow and hard to use. This is apparently frustrating, causing him to give up downloading new applications. The fact that this young man does not have the patience to wait also indicates the immediacy in which we expect the smartphone to react to our every touch. Whether we use Wi-Fi, 3G or 4G, or features that does not even require online connection, we expect instant feedback on the commands we punch in. Symptomatic of the fast phased information age that we inhabit.

### 4.1.3 Looking forward

*“I have just entered into another world” (07AM2).*

A significant portion of the informants talked about thoughts and expectations on their future smartphone use. Both young and mature adults did this, however the only young people were those who either did not have a smartphone, or the one they had was not working properly. It could seem as though the digital natives domesticate, or “tame the wild” smartphone faster than their parent settlers. In contrast to the young, several of the adults had thoughts or plans regarding *their* mobile future, and only *one* of them did not have a smartphone. Several of the mature informants mentioned an expected increase in their smartphone use. Interestingly, in some cases it was in a context where one might interpret it to be an excuse of sorts. Because it came spontaneously as a follow up response after they had answered the question of what kinds of applications they have on their smartphones, or when questioned why they did not use a certain feature. “I am probably not the most eager user of apps... but I guess in time I’ll get more” (30AW8).

AM5: Yes, I use the calendar.

Gabi: Is it synchronized to anything?

AM5: No, unfortunately. But that is a goal.

Gabi: You say you primarily use it for texting and calling, so why do you have a *smartphone*?

AM5: Ha-ha, I was waiting for that question. Well, I mean; is it really possible to buy anything else these days? I guess it is an attempt to keep up with the development and stay current with what’s going on (22AM5).

This man makes an interesting remark when he questions if it is possible to buy anything else than a smartphone. It is still possible, but that does not get advertized by the stores and vendors. They want to show you the newest smartphone models, the best, “most popular”, for the best price, or best deal. Perhaps with time, the capitalist marketing mantra of “supply and demand” will drive out the declining demand for “old” mobiles. In fact, with more than half of the Norwegian population using smartphones, the smartphone could arguably be called the new regular phone. In turn leading to – sort of – a forced domestication where the smartphone rejects can only express their avoidance on a minimal level. When studying user resistance to new media, Miles and Thomas formulated five levels at which resistance could be expressed

(1995:272). For smartphone rejects, I believe the first level is applicable. “Using a particular **feature** of a product (e.g. reluctance to learn about sophisticated ways in which a telephone handset or video recorder can be used, while willingly employing its basic functions)” (Miles & Thomas, 1995:272. Emphasis in original). Though a development such as this might bridge the smartphone-divide, it does not necessarily bridge the “app-gap” in the literal sense, as the basic-function smartphone users could avoid the internet and applications altogether using only texting and calling. Furthermore, the quote by this informant could also indicate how the smartphone is becoming integrated in society, in his perception; eating away the demand for “old” mobiles.

Out of the four informants that did not have a smartphone only one, a young adult, had made plans to buy one. However, the others were not conclusively hostile towards the idea of one day owning a smartphone. “It might happen that I will need one, so I won’t shut that out completely. It might be, but they have to get sturdier. I mean last more than a year” (16AW3).

Every now and then, I have thought about getting a smartphone. It could be nice to have one if people around you demand that you have it for various practical reasons. But like I said, I have never really thought I would have any use for it, actually. But it could be nice to have to update myself, I just haven’t gotten that far yet (03YM2).

The smartphone skepticals quoted above, have different ideas of what it takes for them to acquire a smartphone. The mature adult woman points to physical qualities and the young native, it seems; to peer-pressure, or social demands. “When Digital Immigrants purchase a new device, they often plan to use it until it wears out” (Small & Vorgan, 2008:35). It seems this woman’s impression of smartphones being vulnerable, is a good explanation as to why she has not acquired one. A young native said that she had had her smartphone for two years and that it was “beginning to get old” (05YW2). Because of the speedy development of the smartphone industry, smartphones that were produced two years ago are (at least by this digital native) considered old and outdated. Furthermore, she used her smartphones’ age as an explanation for why some features were no longer working. As opposed to the mature adult woman, this short lifespan appeared to be common knowledge and completely natural to the young girl. The young man mentioned that he was not interested in technology and that he

had never owned a video game or computer game. When his life appears to be functioning perfectly well without it, it can be understandable that he avoids using new technology (Small & Vorgan, 2008:41). However, he is willing to “upgrade” if the situation changes and his surroundings calls for it. This could suggest that the smartphone has not become a social fact *yet*; at least this young man does not experience a need or obligation to own one.

#### **4.1.4 Domestication summary**

Overall, this section on domesticating the smartphone have shown that it is a technology well integrated in the lives of the informants, young and mature adults, men and women. However, when it comes to the differences between the groups, these seem more reflected by the lives they live, rather than technology itself. The differences within the group of mature adults are predominantly gender related, confirming social roles. Mature women’s smartphone use is to a larger degree influenced by their children; they are concerned with being available to them, and some even have applications that were downloaded by their children. The mature women also read a lot of news and play Wordfeud. The mature men rarely mention their families, they are eager to talk about their work, and their smartphone use seems to reflect this. The young adults does not have as strong gender differences as the mature adults, but seem to be focused on being social – through social media applications (mainly Facebook) – and listening to music. This part of the analysis has shown that the informants phones, whether they are smartphones or not, are well integrated in their lives, and they all use them for other purposes than texting and calling. These are two traits that could enhance each other: The more functions people utilize their phones for, the more it becomes integrated in their lives, and vice-versa. Expanding the domestication scope, the smartphone appear to be “tamed” by most of the users – they have found a pattern of use that has become a part of their everyday life and routine. For those who have not found this rhythm, or have had their rhythms challenged, most of them seem to have thoughts or plans for their future mobile use.

## 4.2 Integrating the social and the useful

*“You bring the world with you” (09AM3)*

During the initial analysis of the data material there were several examples of different informants ascribing different meanings to the same features of their smartphones. How they perceive, use, and ascribe meaning to their smartphones is as different as they are. What might initially sound like straight forward questions (i.e. “What is most important with your smartphone?”) have in my data material, revealed a complexity of answers. One of the conflicts/dimensions that kept reoccurring through the data material, was the question of what they considered *social* and *useful* smartphone use, and how this sometimes overlapped. This is not to say that being social is not useful, but it rather relates to if, or how, “social features” are being used for useful, more task-oriented purposes, like for instance organizing events through Facebook. The following section looks at how the informants use their smartphones for “socializing 2.0”, by using internet-run applications – especially social media. Then, “the Facebook example” will provide a closer look on the interplay of social and useful smartphone use. This paragraph will show that social media is not exclusively “social”, but can serve other gratifications as well. Finally, there will be a paragraph focusing on usefulness, and how the respondents put the “smart” in the *smartphone*.

### 4.2.1 Socializing 2.0?

A significant number of the informants explicitly said calling and texting were the most important features/aspects of their smartphones, with no notable differences between the age groups, or gender for that matter. When calling and texting outmatches the internet, location services and countless applications, it challenges the connection-dystopia posed by Agger (2011). Furthermore it suggests that an alternative picture exist behind the smartphone-hype: one where peoples’ minds are not locked on the online (“app”-) world. Though nearly all of these informants mentioned using one or several internet features during a regular day, their emphasis on calling and texting still indicate that “iTime” is overrated. One could think that

for someone living the iLife, calling and texting would not be the most valued features of the smartphone. Perhaps when the iTime article was written in 2011, the “ever-connectedness” was a new, scary wild beast that appeared to be eating away our personal lives at an uncontrollable rate (Agger, 2011). But now, the “ever-connectedness”-beast seems to have been tamed and domesticated.

Some of the informants made a few interesting remarks in regards to questions they were asked. During an interview with a mature adult woman who talked about using her smartphone rather pragmatically, I asked if she felt her smartphone use was mostly practical rather than social, to which she answered that if I did not count calling and texting as social, she guessed not. This was something I had not even considered, but after she mentioned it, made perfect sense. The initial focus of being social had been one of *Social 2.0* (i.e. socializing through internet-run application and features – especially social media), perhaps some of the essence that separate smartphones from older phones. During the interviews, however, this notion proved insufficient. In regards to text messaging or short message service (SMS), a distinction could be made between *micro-coordination* and *hyper-coordination* (Ling & Yttri, 2002:139-140). The first referring to a practical, or instrumental use of SMS, while the latter in means of socializing – especially for youths and young adults. A young informant I interviewed said that he did not call that often, because he felt the SMS was much easier and more convenient (02AM1). A young woman said she used it to call or text if she was meeting people, and yet another young woman said she used it to get in touch with people at school if she did not meet them right away (05YW2, 08YW3). It seems that for the informants, the distinction between the social and the instrumental (micro-coordination) is not clear cut, but blurred and fluxuating. With texting being used for micro-coordination, it’s gratification incentive could very well be of planning and organizing, or maybe even *supervising*. An adult woman said she used the text messaging a lot to keep in touch with her children throughout the day (17AW4). This sort of “remote mothering” enables the parent to be away from the home and still carry out their domestic responsibilities (Ling & Haddon, 2003:248).

A couple of young women got very focused on the use of the word *smartphone*.

The most important is the camera. It is actually why I bought it. It is also that it is easily available. Yeah, because when you asked you meant in relation to smartphones and not phones in general? Because then it would be to be able to send texts and call (11YW4).

I find this reply to be somewhat contradictory. If the word “smartphone” had been substituted with “phone” in this question, would the answer really be different? Though it would not change the fact that she has a smartphone it could change her perception of what is emphasized in this study, causing her to modify her reply to meet the “expectations”. However, she said she bought her phone *because* of the camera, leading me to believe that this should be decisive to her answer. The other girl explained what applications she used when she said “(...) because now, the focus is on it being a *smart*-phone, and not just a phone (...)” and then she went on to classify her applications into “smart” and “un-smart” categories (01YW1). Her bank- and time-table- applications as well as the radio-function were deemed smart, while Spotify, Facebook and SnapChat were deemed un-smart. This is interesting because shortly after this she described her use of SnapChat in a way that made it sound like it was very meaningful to her – smart even – at least in terms of social ties. In fact, her use of the SnapChat application to connect with friends in other parts of the country illustrates *socializing 2.0* very well. This internet-run application works in the form of a picture-chat where you take the picture (or a short video) inside, or through the app. The sender can write a message with a limited number of characters and free-draw directly onto the picture before sending. You can only view one picture or video (i.e. message) at the time for the duration of one to ten seconds, predetermined by the sender. Once it has been sent, the sender can not view the message again, and once the seconds have run out the receiver can not view it again. It is a “in the moment”- application. Unless the sender or receivers are quick to make a screen-shot, the picture or video message will be permanently out of reach. Only the date, time and sender/receiver will be visible in the chat history.

I think that to me, SnapChat is more social because it is an easy way to feel connected to those you don't have contact with all the time. And you sort of become a part of each others daily life even though I'm in Oslo and they are somewhere else. While Facebook is perhaps more to keep up with what's happening, sort of keeping current. So they are both social, but I guess the *interaction* takes place on SnapChat (01YW1).

The separation of passive and active socializing depicted here, is an interesting take on how the smartphone is being used. This is not to say that Facebook or SnapChat, texting or tweeting are active or passive features in themselves. It depends on the level of activeness the users bring into it. Furthermore, some media content might invite more, or less audience activity than others (Blumler, 1979:13), and as this section has shown, people have different perceptions of what constitutes social smartphone behavior.

#### **4.2.2 The Facebook example**

Facebook is *the* most popular application amongst the Norwegian smartphone-users (Medienorge, 2012:17); this is also evident in my data-material. The various settings and functions within the Facebook “world” makes it more than just a platform to keep in touch with friends. It has also become an arena for self representation, event planning, school and work organizing, as well as a commercial and political arena for promotion and branding. In light of this; when the informants mentioned having the Facebook application, they were asked if they used it for planning or organizing as well as a social platform. This could potentially have created an obscured correlation between the topics “social” and “tool”, because it seemed to take their focus off the social aspect and onto the organizing aspect. Especially with the young adults, most of them students, I found that they did indeed use Facebook for school related purposes but to a varying degree. A young man said there was some school stuff on Facebook, but that this was not the reason why he logged on to check all the time (10YM3).

It’s both actually [school and private use]. Right now we have a lot of papers due at school, like group assignments, so me and the others in my group have our own Facebook-group. And if we’re sharing information, it’s shared there. We don’t send messages around or call each other, cause when we’re four-five people, it’s easier that just one wrights for everyone to see. So we use it as a platform for that (08YW3).

Asking directly if they use Facebook to organize could also be problematic in the sense that it can make the informants sound more task-oriented than they really are. Since organizing is perhaps not the first one thinks of when talking about Facebook use, it could make the



informants feel a need to explain how they use it in this way. In turn, making it sound like this represent a greater part of their use than what it really does. The shift from social to instrumental use also signifies a change in gratification. Though several of the young emphasized that school organizing in it self was not the main reason for their Facebook use, it illustrate that the same applications can serve different gratifications. Furthermore, this shift can even happen *during* the engagement with the application. What might start as a social incentive (by for instance posting on a friends “wall”) can suddenly change to an instrumental incentive (by for instance organizing an event). These indications of rapid gratification shifts supports the theoretical suggestion that “personalness” and highly diverse smartphone-content make it difficult to tying a gratification to a given application. Only one mature informant said that she used Facebook frequently as a way of organizing (04AW1). She also said Facebook was a great way for her to keep in touch with her daughter, currently an exchange student on the other side of the world. On the other hand, the informant expressed her concern toward the excessive use of her adult peers. She said the constant updates of glorified and “picture-perfect” glimpses of people’s daily life not could be mentally healthy for us. And that the people who post such things probably are insecure and need confirmation. She also expressed her concern in regards to children and young people uploading hundreds of pictures, and though these were innocent enough, the thought that someone, someday could use them seemed to scare her. Even though her engagement to this topic was strong and sincere, none of the other women mentioned having the same concerns. Furthermore, none of the informants talked about personal harmful experiences on Facebook, but a young adult mentioned that she felt the smartphone could help facilitate an addiction to Facebook (11YW4).

Facebook use in terms of frequency of “checking” was very different between young and mature adult users. It was amongst the most used applications (several times a day) for the young natives, while few settlers used it every day (more had it, but few used it daily). Drawing from the study on habitual smartphone use, it could seem that some of the young informants in this study check their Facebook often, out of curiosity or boredom – made possible because their ever-connected smartphones are easily accessible – and this checking is quickly “rewarded” because they instantly find out if they have any new notifications, or if their friends have made any status updates. Though this should be highlighted as it supports a

notion of young native's leniency towards a social media use, there is also a conflict between habits and domestication theory and uses and gratifications theory. In an article by LaRose the following statement is made: "Habits is an element of uses and gratifications theory that interacts with beliefs and expectations about media alternatives to help formulate gratification sought" (LaRose et al., 2001:402). However, after a short section where a plethora of UG-research is mentioned, this conclusion arises:

So whereas habit is a predictor of behavior, it does not appear to be a gratification. Rather, we interpret habit as an indicator of deficient self-regulation within social-cognitive theory [...] and propose [...] that the symptoms of so-called Internet addictions are really indicators of habitual use stemming from ineffective self-regulation (LaRose et al., 2001:402).

The way I read this, LaRose et al., believes that habit is not a gratification but an indicator that the user lacks self control. This makes it difficult to measure gratification in relation to "checking behavior" within my study, because I did not ask about habits explicitly. Therefore, when the informants say that they "check Facebook" several times a day, this could be of many reasons not determined by habit: connection seeking, attention seeking or even information seeking. For several of the young Facebook users, their use of the application did not seem to be social in the *interaction* sense, but more similar to reading a customized online newspaper about friends and family. They log on to update, read the news, and see what's happening. The longitudinal study on the use of Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) showed that after only four to six weeks of daily use, the technology seemed to become institutionalized.

Over time, important initial gratifications, like permanent access and social interaction, appeared to be less dominant for using the new mobile communication technology and became more latent, while gratifications like fashion/status and entertainment appeared to become more manifest (Peters & Allouch, 2005:252).

Perhaps this is similar to what has happened with some people's use of Facebook. The novelty of it have faded in some way, and it is now read like a online newspaper and used as a day planner more than a platform for social interaction. The newspaper analogy could fit well with the "checking habits" I discussed in the domestication chapter. Because like reading the

newspaper or the online news, Facebook application use has perhaps also become a routine – or for some people – an automated behavioral response to, for instance, sitting alone on the bus or at a café. This is not to say the informants are not posting, and contributing with content, but it appears to be a significantly smaller part of their Facebook use. Because many of them, especially the young men, use the word “checking” indicating a passive activity as opposed to the active “posting”. However, this could also have something to do with which device they prefer to use when posting. Some might feel they have more control using a computer format of Facebook, rather than the smartphone or tablet- format.

Here, some would perhaps argue that I am stretching the communication term to some extent. Because the newspaper analogy could arguably be said not to be communication form the “reader’s” point of view. Newspapers, even to large extent online newspapers, are examples of on-way-communication. However, this study does not show if there is a possibility that the informants are clicking the “like” button, or making comments as they read their Facebook-newspapers. Commenting on someone else’s content may to them not be considered “posting”, as opposed to them posting a status-update, a picture, or directly on someone’s wall. If they do “like”, or comment as they skim through the newsfeed – it is not one-way-communication anymore. It is instant feedback – social interaction. The layers of Facebook-use illustrate the difficulty in tying a certain gratification to a given application, because the motivations for using the application are as diverse as the people using it. However, it also illustrates the integration of social and useful.

### **4.2.3 SMARTphone 2.0**

Several of the informants from both age groups held available *information*, or features and applications that require *being able to connect to the internet*, as the most important features of their smartphones. They mentioned a variety of situations where it would come in handy, if you suddenly need to buy a ticket or check your email or bank, or if you need information instantly. One digital settler said it was like always having the world with him (09AM3). The examples they gave all had a degree of immediacy, or spontaneity about them. As though the smartphone could help them deal with unforeseen situations or changing circumstances. The

immediate and omnipresent ability to be able to get the information or services they need, appears to be a form of gratification in itself. And because they emphasize this so clearly, it could seem as though they are *obtaining* this gratification with some degree of regularity. Information sought; click, click; information obtained.

The most important. (...) It kinda depends on the situation, I guess. For instance when I'm at work, the most important would be that I have maps, because I work in the home care service and I get lost all the time. But for instance when I'm at school, the most important is probably that I have access to the internet. Even if I'm in a lecture, because if there is anything I don't understand, or a certain date, I can just look it up (01YW1).

For this girl, the usefulness value is determined by the situation she is in. Both of the scenarios she mentions boils down to her connecting to the internet (perhaps also using the location service). The first example she mentions is related to her job where she drives around a lot. Navigation sought; turns on Google maps and location service; destination obtained. This quote illustrate both how "smart" the smartphone can be, *and* how it is integrated in the young woman's life. She uses what she needs when she needs it – in her "smart-life". The only comment related to internet access that was somewhat negative, came from a young man. He said he usually only connected through Wi-Fi, because the 3G would quickly run up the fee on his bill (27YM7).

Other informants spoke in more general terms about the usefulness of their smartphones. One informant mentioned how convenient it was that it served as both a laptop, mp3 player, and a notebook (14YM4). Others were less specific, saying it was important that it suited their needs (06AM1), or that it was the "whole package" that they liked, or that "just having it" was important (24YW8). Perhaps these people value the multifunctionality of the smartphone. The fact that it doubles as a phone and a laptop, combined with internet connection (Wi-Fi or 3G/4G) make the user-purpose possibilities seemingly endless. Or perhaps having a smartphone is a gratification in itself. Another quality that was mentioned a couple of times were ease of use, or userfriendliness. Interestingly, this was only mentioned by mature adults, perhaps giving support to the notion that digital settlers are not as tech-savvy as their native counterparts. For those who are not used to devices such as smartphones, user friendliness

could very well be a prerequisite for gratification, at least if they are interested in using it for anything besides calling and texting.

#### **4.2.4 Social/Useful summary**

All in all, when it came to the usefulness-value of the smartphone the informants emphasized different features. They can roughly be divided in three groups: 1, the traditional calling and texting, 2, the internet dependents, and 3, those who spoke in general terms. However, this section has shown that even though they say one thing, it does not mean they do not use it for other things as well. Nearly all of those who mentioned calling and texting used the internet on their smartphones daily. We have seen that it is indeed the young natives that spend most time on social media applications, but the Facebook-application have proven to be a “wild-card” in terms of determining gratification incentives. In terms of putting the “smart” in the smartphone, this is done by both young and mature adults. Immediate access to information has a high star for many. Furthermore, there are examples of both young and mature adults using texting to micro-coordinate. However, we will see that there can be additional gratifications that spur the use of social and useful applications and features. It is not just a gratification of social/useful in itself, but also a question of time-kill, habit, planning, availability, and even addiction. This will be analyzed further in the following sections of the analysis.

### **4.3 Time-Kill Tool**

*“It’s not just about sending texts and calling anymore; it’s just so much more to it” (13YW6)*

Here, I will look deeper into two gratifications that are seemingly even more in contrast than the social and useful incentives. These are “Tool” and “Time-Kill”. By *tool* I mean what can be reckoned as the opposite of “time-killing”. By using smartphone tools the goal is not to pass time but to *utilize* time, by harnessing the possibilities and capacities of the smartphone

for planning and organizing. Whether it is by use of calendar, timetables, bank-application, work- or task-oriented applications, email, etc. All of the informants in this study used their smartphone for either tool- or time-killing purposes, and most of them used it for both. However opposite as these incentives might seem, the data indicate a blurred distinction between them. In part because of diversity in the application content (the same application can have both pass- and utilize- time features) and in part because of the informants different perspectives and opinions. This makes it difficult to tie a specific gratification to a given application. The first paragraph will illustrate how some of the tools mentioned are being used by the informants, and also how those who did not have a smartphone manage without it. The second paragraph, “time-kill”, will show how some the features mentioned in relation to tools and usefulness, also gets mentioned in regards to killing time. Furthermore, it seems that the gratification of killing time is sought “on the go”, when people are alone in the public space – travelling with public transportation. The third paragraph “Games and Wordfeud”, will provide examples as to how the use of one feature, of apparent time-kill-purpose, also can be motivated by additional gratification incentives. And that the distinction between these can be difficult to determine.

### **4.3.1 Tools**

All of the informants said they used one or more tools on their smartphones, calendar, alarm and watch being the most common. Both women and men, young and mature adults are represented. However, in terms of tools used for work- and business-related use, most of them are mature men. There are also a couple of mature women and young adults. Only one of the informants that did not have a smartphone talked in length about planning and organizing.

If I need to use the internet and stuff, I use the computer. So I plan ahead before I go somewhere. (...) I plan quite a lot, so I feel I always bring what I need. I don't have other needs beyond that sort of. Not really. If I am going to take pictures I'll bring my camera, I won't use my phone for that (21YM5).

The young man was very eager to elaborate on how he managed his day by careful planning, and that this was the reason why he did not see the need for having a smartphone. To him the planning seemed to be something positive, at least that is how I interpret it. His opposite can

be found in a young woman that was asked to imagine a day without her smartphone (23YW7). She said not having the functions of the smartphone would make “everything” less available, and that she would have to plan a lot more. Their gratifications sought are poles apart on this matter. It seems that for this native, the thought of having to plan a lot more would limit her ability to be spontaneous. This is backed by another young woman who – in reverse - did not have a smartphone, but imagined having one. “You don’t have to plan that much ahead, you sort of take it as you go. It’s a lot of freedom” (12YW5). This is an argument that seems to elude the young man. If he is going to take pictures, he will bring his camera, and if he needs the internet he will use the computer, and this planning is why he does not need a smartphone. But active smartphone users would turn this argument around and claim that this is the whole point of having a smartphone. To be able to use features like this anytime/ anywhere. To have that “freedom”. To be spontaneous.

Since the adult men were not very talkative, sometimes a more direct approach was used. If they for instance mentioned a long list of applications that seemed to be practical, they could be asked explicitly if this was a correct perception. “I use it [smartphone] for everything. (...) I don’t think you want to know which apps I have, it’s a lot. It’s mostly practical, yes. It is” (06AM1). Another man said that most of his smartphone use was work-related and when asked how often he used all the internet-related features on his smartphone, he exclaimed: “Wow, it’s all the time” (31AM7). The two men quoted here seem to be idle candidates for living the iLife, indicating that their labor time has stretched well beyond the eight-hour work day. “To be ever-connected is the technological imperative of phones that double as computers and of laptops. Labor bleeds into life itself as one cannot risk being offline for long” (Agger, 2011:124). However, what these men valued most about their smartphones was the qualities of the smartphone in general – not work-specific content. “That it is fast, and it works for what I use it for” (06AM1). Perhaps, even though they occasionally find themselves in iTime, they could be living the “smart-life”.

An adult woman said that she appreciated the digital post-its that she could add to her calendar on her smartphone. She kept walking out on the physical post-its, but having them on her smartphone made it easy to remember everything from appointments to the hair

dresser, to kids that needed to be picked up. This woman was also the only settler that talked about using Facebook for organizing. She said she did not have the mental capacity to keep up with everything, being an active dancer, attending and giving private classes, so she used Facebook to organize (04AW1).

Several of the young adults mentioned that navigation tools such as Google Maps and GPS were functions that they appreciated. “If you’re in a new city, navigation is really important. Walkability, so that I can put in an address and it would – you know – guide me to that address. Step-by-step navigation” (02YM1). Some of those who mentioned navigation were most likely not from the Oslo-area, though they currently resided in the city<sup>7</sup>. Therefore it is likely that navigation-applications would be especially relevant for them. One young girl said she drives around a lot in her work in the home-care service, and that she would get lost all the time if it was not for the map-function on her smartphone (01YW1). Even the only adult informant that did not have a smartphone implicitly mentioned that it could be convenient. However, her immediate answer was «never», when asked if she had ever in a situation where she thought that it could be an advantage to have a smartphone. “Never. No... And if there have ever been one, maybe like; when this or that train leaving, I have been with someone who has one and can look it up right away” (16AW3). She modified her spontaneous response, after taking a few seconds to think it over. The young girl that did not have a smartphone (she had one a year and a half ago), needed no time to think. She said she missed maps, being able to listen to music at any time, and taking pictures (12YW5).

### **4.3.2 Time killing**

Roughly one third of the informants talked about using their smartphones to kill time. However, a couple of them also explicitly said that this was something that they avoided. Most of the time-killers are young women, and the most frequently mentioned activity for this purpose was games. Though it should be mentioned that talking about playing games does not automatically mean that they themselves view it as time killing. For some it might be an

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<sup>7</sup> I say this with certainty, either because they explicitly told me they were not from Oslo or because they spoke a dialect from another part of Norway.



activity they look forward to. In fact, though most of the time killers in this study were young, most of the smartphone-gamers were mature adults. It is only regarded as time kill when they use phrases like “when I am bored”, “when I don’t have anything to do”, “passing time”, “killing time”, etc. Games are not the only way to kill time with the smartphone. The young woman who divided her applications into smart- and- un-smart categories said after mentioning the un-smart (Spotify, Facebook and SnapChat) that hers bears the markings of time killing-use (01YW1). Interesting, considering how warmly she spoke of SnapChat in regards to socializing shortly after.

Another young woman said “When I use the internet and Facebook on the smartphone I’m usually on the bus or at a cafe. Those periods of the day where you’re alone and a little bored perhaps, then I use it” (11YW4). Mentioning the internet as a way to kill time is in sharp contrast to the informants who hold this feature and access to information as most important. It is a good illustration of the different meanings they ascribe to the same features of their phones. However, the possible connection between feature and device – feature and location, should be emphasized here as it could distort the data in relation to this topic. This is because the gratification incentives of use might be different when using the internet through the smartphone on the bus, as opposed to at home on the computer. When the young woman says she uses the internet through her smartphone when she is alone and bored on the bus (11YW4), and this is interpreted as time kill, it does not mean this is her motivation when she uses the internet in other situations. In fact, to be alone and bored are often explicitly mentioned as catalysis for playing games, or to use social media applications frequently. The most used example of situations where they find themselves alone or bored is when they are waiting for, or traveling with, public transportation. In relation to UG theory one could suggest according to this, that young females have a stronger need to obtain the gratification of passing time with their smartphones than the other groups. They seek this gratification through surfing the web, using their social media applications, or playing games. Another gratification that could affect the use of smartphones within the time-killing topic is status incentives, for instance to seem important or busy (see LaRose et al. 2001:399-400). Perhaps along the lines of: You don’t want the other people on the bus to think that you don’t have any friends. This could arguably be even more important for youth and young adults because

they are at a stage of early adulthood, and independence and making new friends is an important part of this transition.

When the mature adults talked about killing time with the smartphone, their examples were also tied to public transportation. A mature man said that he used his smartphone both for utilizing- and- passing time. The latter could for instance be when he was waiting for the subway (28AM6). But he also claimed to have a rational approach to this type of use; it did not seem to be an activity he would engage in at any time. One application he mentioned using a lot, not related to time-killing appeared to be educational or business-related (iTunesU). Perhaps a kind that requires focus, not easy to find on a busy subway station. A mature woman said she would play Solitaire on the train if she was bored and did not have anything to read (30AW8). Differing from the young women, it was apparently not enough to be bored, she also needed to lack reading material, in order to turn to her smartphone for diversion.

### **4.3.3 Games and Wordfeud**

In a little over a decade, mobile gaming has been established as a significant part of contemporary gaming cultures. It has not proved as lucrative as hoped, but in various forms it is firmly established as a central part of cell phone culture – whether as embedded games on a handset, downloadable games from a portal or premium rate number, or apps (Goggin, 2011:114).

Both young and mature adults mentioned playing games on their smartphones. The games varied from Wordfeud to Angry Birds, and Sudoku to flight simulation. It is interesting that the majority of the smartphone “gamers” in my study are adults, especially considering that young women were those who mostly used it for killing time. But does this mean that the adult gamers do not consider it time kill? Most of the mature males did not elaborate on why or how they played on their phones. However one man said he would play his flight simulation game if he had spare time, and that he liked to fly (09AM3). This indicates that his enjoyment of the game might go beyond entertainment, stretching to excitement, challenge mastering, and pleasure.

Almost exclusively mentioned by the adult women was the social game application Wordfeud. “At the moment I use Wordfeud every day. It is a game, but right now it’s kind of *hip*” (20AW6). Here it sounds like the woman feels the need to excuse her own behavior implying that – though it is a game - she can play it because everybody else is apparently playing it. Digital games have largely been considered as the domain of males, especially young males, and not socially accepted amongst older players (De Schutter, 2011:158). A market study for International Game Developer Association (IGDA) shows that the audience demographic of “casual” gamers is skewed towards older people (35+), especially women (Wallace & Robbins, 2006:9). Casual gamers are defined as: “Gamers who play games for enjoyment and relaxation rather than games with steep learning curves or requiring high levels of commitment or involvement” (ibid). A study on adults and older peoples gaming habits show that the most reported means for uses and gratification was “challenge” (De Schutter, 2011:163). Wordfeud is a game that fits these descriptions: easy to learn, does not require high levels of commitment, but still gives the users a challenge.

In regards to the first assumption, I believe the application Wordfeud begs an important question: Could it be argued that Wordfeud is a type of social application? Because you can play with friends or family, and though you are not physically together there is an in-game chat function allowing you to communicate in real-time through Wi-Fi or 3G. Perhaps it could be argued that Wordfeud is an online game that brings spatially removed people close together and focused in the same virtual space? If this is the case and Wordfeud is to be considered a social application: the “social 2.0-ness” of the settlers’ smartphone use suddenly gained a huge step on the young’s. Returning to De Schutter, the older audience in his study state that they are solitary players who rarely or never play with others (2011:163). However, with Wordfeud this is a necessity to even play the game. You have to beat that someone you are playing with, friend or random. Furthermore, I would argue that with the explosion in smartphone use – and the popularity of games like Wordfeud and Angry Birds – digital games have become increasingly accepted as an activity for mature adults. Perhaps Wordfeud (in a positivistic way) could represent a **quadruple gratification**: Time-kill, challenge, entertainment *and* social. The Wordfeud example illustrates the difficulty in pin-pointing the

exact motivation/ gratification sought. And even if it is found – gratification *obtained* could be something else.

#### 4.3.4 Time-kill tool summary

The most general findings within the topic of tool and time-kill, is that nearly all the informants use their smartphones for one or several tools, and that several also use it to kill time. Though time-killing seem to be an activity favored by the natives – especially women, playing games, without linking it to time-killing, was mostly done by the digital settlers. However, time-killing for the natives also included Facebook and the internet. While planning and organizing has a broad appeal, it gets skewed towards adult men when including work and business related use. However, the Wordfeud example illustrate that even the distinction between two seemingly opposite gratification incentives, are not necessarily clear-cut, and easy to determine. The techno-social, device-bundling smartphone, makes for a highly complex use, difficult to dissect.

### 4.4 Availability, addiction, and conceptualization

*“I feel there is a lot of this ‘social multitasking’.*

*They talk to each other **while** they are on Facebook” (21YM5).*

The data material in this section is dominated by female informants of both age groups, with only a few males. We will see that there is a clear distinction between the age groups and gender in regards to availability and addiction concerns, and that these two concepts in some cases overlap. There will also be a paragraph about the informants’ conceptualization of other smartphone users, also including the reflections of those informants who did not have a smartphone. These topics and concepts are important to include because they intertwine with

the users' gratifications as well as with domestication theory. First there will be a paragraph about *availability* emphasizing gender differences. Second, a paragraph about *availability-addiction*, shifting the focus from gender to age. In the third paragraph, *addiction* is discussed and tied to domestication theory. In the fourth paragraph the respondents' conceptualization about "*the others*" will show how smartphone resisters are affected by their smartphone using peers. And how the smartphone users compare, or distance themselves from other smartphone users.

#### 4.4.1 Availability

Within this topic the focus is on gender differences between the mature adults. Though few of them spoke explicitly about this, the distinction between what "types" of availability they emphasized was made very clear. Two mature men said that having information easily available through their smartphones, was most important to them (09AM3 & 28AM6). An adult woman said that the most important for her was to be available to her family. She had three children and her smartphone use consisted of a lot of texting and phone calls (04AW1). Another woman, though she did not have a smartphone, said that being available and able to reach others was most important. However, she was very clear on her separation of "off" time and "on" time, and which *others* was allowed to disturb her "off"-time.

Sometimes you just don't want to be available. I am pretty good at that, but when I want to be reached it's important that people are able to reach me. The only person I'm really aware of should be able to reach me, is actually my daughter. And maybe also my mother, sometimes. But to be "ready" and all the time be "on" - online - it's got to be very stressful (16AW3).

These informants illustrate that labeling availability a gratification could be troublesome if not the availability "type" is pointed out. The availability types represented in this study could be "having availability" and "being available". The men's gratification is *having* the internet and information available, and for the women it is *being* available for their families/children. It is the contours of a gendered separation of gratification incentives; *instrumental* versus *intrinsic* (Peters & Allouch, 2005:241). One of the men said he had games on his phone for his daughter, still he did not connect his family and availability. The other man however, did not

talk about having a family so it is not certain if he helps support the gender roles by emphasizing instrumental use in spite of having a family. Looking beyond the explicit formulation of *availability* and to the informants most valued features; I find that while more mature men than women said the internet, more mature women than men said calling and texting. However, this raises some new issues because as already touched upon; the internet can be used intrinsically. With the mature males this does not seem to be the case. Even those two that said access to email (counted as internet) was most important, also said they used it for work (18AM4 & 31AM7). On the other hand, studies on email use and work have shown that it is also used to pass time, for entertainment and diversion between the co-workers (Charney & Greenberg, 2002:381-382). Again, the complexity of determining gratification materializes, something that has been repeatedly evident throughout the analysis. The differences depicted in this paragraph is not only tied to gender. As the next sections indicate, they also seem to be bound by age.

#### **4.4.2 Availability-addiction?**

When it comes to talking about feeling addicted to the smartphone or certain features of the smartphone these few were women. The interesting aspect here is how *availability* correlates with *addiction*. It seems as though they are addicted to availability. Especially the young women, there was only one such correlation with the mature adults.

I always have it with me. No matter what. Around the clock. It is on the night stand. It is almost a little scary being so available, it is completely wrong that you always have to be. It's next to me by the bathtub. (...) It is scary how addicted you become to it, really (17AW4).

This adult share a gratification sought with the woman quoted above, primarily being available for their children and families, but they are poles apart when it comes to iTime intrusion. The negative word “intrusion” is used because it seems that these two women experience it as such. The resisting woman talks about stress, and this woman mentions the word “scary” more than once. She says that having to be available all the time is wrong, but it is she who makes herself available even bringing her phone with her to take a bath. By phrasing her sentence this way she makes it sound like it something beyond her control, as if

being available all the time was an obligation forced on her. Where this perceived obligation is coming from is hard to say. She says it is scary without mentioning doing anything about it. Perhaps it could be interpreted as a slightly extreme version of the “Katz principle”: by not being available for her children, she becomes *their* problem, and she wants to avoid this at any cost.

A young woman said she used her smartphone all the time for several purposes and that she became very addicted to it (23YW7). When asked if there was anything in particular she became addicted to, she said it was the fact that she was available all the time in all sorts of ways. However, she explained this with information seeking; every answer being just three clicks away. Another young woman said she valued the incredible availability of always having the internet, before exclaiming “But you probably won’t realize how addicted you are to it until you don’t have it” (13YW6). At the time of the interview, the screen on this young woman’s smartphone had recently been shattered and because she did not have internet at home, she was forced to bring her computer to a café. When asked if she would have used the 3G connection on her phone at home in stead had her smartphone worked, she said yes. Interestingly, the young availability-addicts did not appear to be as bothered by their “addiction” as the mature adult. Perhaps the digital natives have come to terms with what – to them – could seem as a natural side effect of smartphone use. Furthermore, it is interesting to see that the young women share the availability type of the mature men. It is about *having something* available to them. Whilst for the availability addicted mature woman, it is about *being* available for *someone*, her children. Neither of the young women in this study said anything about having children of their own. But it would be interesting to know if their thoughts on availability would have differed if they did, or if it will change if they one day get children of their own.

#### **4.4.3 Addiction**

The realization that you don’t know what you have until it’s gone, also struck another one of the informants:

I sent my phone to be repaired just last week, and I felt... I didn't even know what I was doing without it, sort of. Yes, I got [a replacement phone] one of those old phones, I mean it was a touch-phone as well, but it wasn't the same at all. And like people say, that you get addicted, I didn't see that at first – before I got an iPhone – but now I understand that people really mean it. That it is true. (24YW8).

As with the availability addicts above, this girl did also seem casual when disclosing this information. In fact she giggled several times in between the sentences in this quote, indicating that she did not worry about it at all, that it was normal. A mature woman said that she was not completely addicted, but that forgetting it was an inconvenience because she did not remember any phone numbers by heart. A while back there was an interesting article in one of the largest newspapers in Norway that touched upon the subject of smartphone-addiction (Aftenposten, 18.02.2012). The article was fittingly called “Lights on, nobody home” (own translation), arguing that the smartphone makes us more distant than available. According to the article, researchers in Bergen are conducting a study on Facebook addiction. The doctor of psychology running the study said it is reasonable to assume that an increase in availability (which the smartphone provides) leads to an increase in consumption, thus creating an increase in addicts. One of my young respondents seemed to support this theory by saying she feels that one does get a little addicted to Facebook when having a smartphone (11YW4). Then again, she claimed not to use her smartphone that much, and that she mostly appreciated the traditional features. Again, the notion of “addiction” is normalized, or at least made less serious by contradictory statements.

For the women that mentioned feeling addicted to their smartphones or certain features on their smartphones, it can be presumed that these features represented an *obtained* gratification as well as *sought* gratification at some point. By obtaining gratification they continue the use, and for some individuals this could be transferred to behavioral addiction (Chae & Lee, 2011:3115). The concepts of *habit* and *addiction* appear to be somewhat intertwined in the UG literature on internet and other media use. Some social-cognitive theorists argue that “(...) the symptoms of so-called Internet addictions are really indicators of habitual use stemming from ineffective self-regulation” (LaRose et al., 2001:402). Though it sounds like these authors dismiss internet addiction as a legitimate disease and I would differ if this is the case, I find that their take to some extent could be fitting within this study. As already mentioned, neither of the “addicts” in this study expressed a desire to change their behavioral pattern, and



few appeared to be concerned about their own use. Addicted mobile phone users have been described to “(...) always have their device on, always carry and use it, and experience economic and social difficulties due to excessive use” (Roos, in Chae & Lee, 2011:3115). Though the first part of this quote is highly applicable, the data material in this study does not uncover examples of economic and social difficulties. Therefore, a combination of these two explanations could prove more fruitful. For instance that those in this study who claim addiction – or a perceived addiction – have symptoms that are actually indicators of habitual use, because their smartphones are always on, they carry it everywhere and use it frequently. It could appear, in this context, that “addiction” has been demoted to excessive use.

Comparing how they explain their “addiction” with how they use their smartphones through an average day, I find that what they are “addicted” to, especially the availability addicts, are functions that allow them to manage their everyday life. Perhaps they feel addicted to it because they have domesticated their smartphones into all the spheres of their lives? This could in turn indicate hold to the theoretical suggestion of a positive correlation between domestication and perceived frequency of use. Even the mature woman who seemed to be most worried about this topic (17AW4) depersonalized her own perception of addictiveness by talking about it in a second-person narrative. “It is scary how addicted *you* get”, not “it is scary how addicted *I am*”. Similar ways of talking, and condemning other peoples’ use was found in the study by Hartmann (2005:153). Further, when the young “addicts” talked about it, it was more in a “matter-of-fact” manner, and not one of sincere concern. The absence of available “iLife-men” within the addiction-topics is another interesting aspect. Because some of them seemed to be as – if not addicted then at least – dependent on their smartphones as the perceived addicted women. Using it “all the time” and the internet “several times a day”. This could support the notion of excessive use; when they don’t even think to mention addiction in the context of such a frequent use, perhaps such frequent use is becoming normal.

#### **4.4.4 “The others” - confirmation and conceptualization**

This section is about how the informants – both those who had and did not have smartphones – talked about other smartphone users; how they compare themselves to others, relate to, or

distance themselves from them. Turning this around, *what* they say about the others could indicate how they themselves want to be perceived. The data material for this topic is slightly skewed, because most of the informants that made comments or reflections on how other people use their smartphones were women. None of them were mature adult men, and the only young men that touched upon this were the two who did not have a smartphone.

I think it is a lot of phone use amongst my friends. I feel there is a lot of this “social multitasking”. They talk to each other *while* they are on Facebook. It does not bother me that much, but I have thought about it. I have. But this is how it is developing, so there is not much you can do about it (21YM5).

This young man did not have a smartphone, and perhaps this distance can provide an outsiders perspective on how he experience smartphone use. He said that he was one of the few in his circle of friends that did not have one. But though this should separate him from a perceived iTime, he is in stead forcibly placed in it when his friends are continuously “on”. He does not seek any other gratification with his “old” phone, than to text and call. However, with his peers this becomes a conflict of interests, where their gratification seeking collides with his, and wins. “iTime oozes everywhere, driving out downtime” (Agger, 2011:121). The young man had capitulated, because this is how the times are changing.

I for my part think it has gone a little out of control. That you have to be so damn-. Like, if you do not answer the phone or let people hear back from you in a couple of hours, some get all; “what’s going on” and “why are you not answering” (16AW3).

It becomes clear through this quote that she does not care much for this “availability demand”. She does not have a smartphone, so availability for her is through texting and calling, not emails and social media like it might be for others. While the young man above had come to terms with this development, it seems upsetting to the adult woman. To say “it has gone a little out of control” is a testament to this. Furthermore it indicates that (as well with the young man) it is the “others” that obstruct their gratification from mobile devices. It is not enough that they themselves silence their phones when they experience that the people surrounding them are buzzing around in iTime. For the adult woman this is manifested in a perceived demand to be available – forced on her by her peers. She just wants to be available

to her daughter, not to everyone – all the time. It seems that these two informants need to swallow the whole “iCace”; they can not have just one piece. I would not go as far as to argue that the perceived world of two informants that does not have smartphones suggests in favour of the hype. For that I rely on the experience of smartphone users. However, it is an interesting example of how the smartphone as a social fact seems to be emerging; by resisting to adapt they are placing themselves outside – what is arguably – a “new normal” way of interaction, and this is met by social sanctions.

Most of the informants who had smartphones and talked about others were young women. There seem to be two reasons for why they brought it up; either it was to distance themselves from other smartphone users, or it was to excuse how they experience their own use. One girl said that a lot of people freak out completely if they do not have it with them (01YW1). However, *she* was not one of those people, and she distanced herself from them even though she also said that she brings hers everywhere and uses it frequently. She pulls herself “out of the hype”, so to speak, because she is not enslaved to her phone. Furthermore, the gratification she seeks and obtains with her smartphone, is not something she is completely dependent on, she said.

A mature woman mentioned earlier said she was concerned about the hundreds of pictures her children posted on Facebook, and that these could get misused. The conflict of gratification interests is not as clear in this case, I would argue. Because the concern she feels is not forced on her in the same way, but an inherent catch of being a parent. She then went on to talk about how people disclose themselves on Facebook by painting glorified images of their lives. Here she touches upon status incentives people might have for posting on Facebook (e.g. to seem cool or “perfect”). This was rarely asked explicitly about and therefore I will not elaborate much on the subject. However, in this case it is the status incentives of others that cause her concern. If she desperately wanted to avoid this she could just delete her Facebook account, therefore one could argue that the gratifications she *obtains* from the Facebook-application, outweighs the disadvantages. Though only a couple of informants voiced concerns, they talked in length about it. They were both mature adult women. This somewhat fit the concept of digital natives and digital settlers, where the natives – born into a digital world – often are

the first to spur the saturation of new social technologies. “This [iTime] starts with the young, who are inseparable from their phones, and has now spread to their parents. (...) As ever, our kids are out in front of social change” (Agger, 2011:119). The concerns that the women talk about in some ways reflect their own mobile contexts. The woman who has a smartphone is concerned about Facebook and invasion of privacy. The woman who does not have a smartphone is concerned about a perceived constant demand to be available. What I have seen from the data in this topic, is that it is the informants’ peers – “the others” – that potentially challenge their gratification obtained when their gratification incentives collide.

#### **4.4.5 Availability and Addiction Summary**

In this section we have seen that the gratification sought from availability is the same for mature adult men and young women, whilst that of mature women is different. The mature women primarily seek availability in regard to *being* available for their families, and the others want to *have* functions available to them. This finding support social roles of society. In terms of addiction I would argue that though some informants say they feel addicted to their smartphone, or otherwise talk about perceived addiction in second person, there are no clear indications in this data material that they really are addicts in the clinical sense of the word (that it strains their social and economic situations). Their use of the word addiction, appear to be normalized and in a “matter-of-fact” tone, especially when it is their own addiction they are referring to – in fact painting a picture of excessive use. In regard to their conceptualization of the “others”, I have found that the ones that do not have a smartphone occasionally find themselves pulled into iTime by their smartphone-using peers, and that this can give them negative experiences of smartphone use without even owning one. Furthermore, the concerns voiced about “the others” smartphone use seem to reflect the mobile context of those voicing it. For a woman who did not have a smartphone it was a perceived need to always be available, and for a smartphone using woman it was concerns about over-sharing on Facebook.

## 4.5 Analysis Summary

In regards to domestication theory, I have found that the smartphone is well integrated in all the spheres of the informants' lives. For many of them, young and mature adults, it has become a handy and portable, multi-purpose device. Qualities that I believe have helped it gain access into the different spheres. With its internet connection and application markets, the possible purposes it can serve are seemingly endless. The smartphone users appear to have harnessed – or be well on their way of harnessing – the possibilities they want in their “smart-lives”. The smartphone helps them in managing their day-to-day activities, finds information they need, keeps them in touch with friends and family, helps pay the bills, it can be used for getting work done, entertainment, diversion, even to exercise and work-out. Furthermore, the smartphone is a bundled medium. It is both phone, radio, television, internet, newspaper, text and picture – essentially *all* media in *one* medium – and this for one, makes the pin-pointing of gratification sought and obtained very complex. Also, it can explain the notion of seemingly excessive use; the avid smartphone user now has a device with the potential to substitute many other devices. Borrowing phrases from the informants; they don't need to bring their laptops or notebooks everywhere. They have the world with them – in their pockets and purses. It is only natural to assume that a multi-purpose device is used more frequently than a single-purpose device, especially when the multi-purpose device always is within reach. A digital settler explained this phenomenon very well:

I am using my smartphone more and more because I have learned *how* to. In the beginning it was just a phone, but after a while you become more skilled. And then you find out that you need fewer gadgets. You can get by with *one* (30AW8).

Tying a certain gratification to a certain function or application proved difficult even when pairing the seemingly different gratifications “social” and “useful”, and the likely opposing “tool” and “time-kill”. They overlap in-between as well as across from each other, and the examples of Facebook and Wordfeud could in fact apply to all of them. “Tool” was the easiest incentive to determine, and though it correlated with “useful”, “useful” was not as easy to place. Furthermore, both of these incentives correlated with availability, and also

availability-addiction. In terms of distinctions and commonalities between the age-groups and genders, the clearest findings in terms of *what* they use their smartphones for, is pretty much in line with conventional social roles. In broad strokes; mature women's use is to a larger degree directed towards their families whilst mature men's is more work-related. They fulfill their "adult" roles. The digital natives share a frequent use of social media, and music-applications, to a significantly larger degree than their parent generation – fulfilling their "youngster" roles. However, in terms of "tech-savvyness" this analysis has shown that the mature settlers are well on their way in closing the "app-gap" on their digital natives. And it will be interesting to see how the lay of the land will be in this respect, already in a couple of years.

## 4.6 Assessment of the theories

Since there does not seem to be any previous research within the field of media studies combining UG- and domestication theory, an assessment of their relevance for this purpose is necessary. During this paragraph the suggestions of what the theory could help yield will be presented and evaluated followed by a brief reflection on what this thesis might result in, had I only focused on one of the theories over the other.

Uses and Gratification theory is linked to this study's first research question: *What do people use their smartphones for – which features and applications; why do they use what they use, and when do they use it?* On the basis of the UG-theory as presented in the theory chapter I made a suggestion that it could be difficult to tie a gratification to a given application because of the highly diverse smartphone content available, and the "personalness" of individual use. This has been confirmed several times during this analysis. However; as we will see in the conclusion this does not mean that the research question is left without an answer. Previous research and the examples of similar findings in this thesis (see 2.2.2 Relevant UG-studies) have shown that UG-theory is applicable in investigating smartphones. Had this been the only theoretical approach used for the purpose of this study, the focus would be skewed towards smartphone *content*, the where and when of this use, and the comparison of natives and

settlers, men and women. It would, as the first stage of the analysis indicated (see 3.3.3 the data analysis), be detailed. The UG-approach has provided good insight as to the most popular features and applications of the informants. I have learned a lot about why they use what they use, and when and where they use it, also about similarities and differences across age-groups and gender. This alone could also have made for an interesting master thesis, but I believe UG-theory in it self would not be ideal in order to get behind the hype. In broad strokes; to say people use their smartphones for all sorts of purposes, anywhere/anytime sounds pretty similar to the Agger-dystopia (Agger, 2011). I needed the bigger picture. Furthermore, I wanted to be able to discuss the relationship between people and the smartphone as a *medium* – how it fits into their lives.

The theoretical anchoring for this purpose was found in domestication theory, linked to the second research question: *How – and to what extent – have the smartphones been integrated into the lives of the users?* On the basis of the explanation of domestication theory in the theory chapter, I anticipated that I might find a positive correlation between domestication and perceived high frequency of smartphone use. This has been confirmed during this analysis. However, it is not the whole truth because even those who did not express a frequent use seemed to have domesticated their smartphones – in this manner; toning down the smartphone-hype. It was during the questions of the *content* that their integration of the *medium* became evident. Therefore, had the sole focus of this thesis been one of domestication, this finding might have been lost. On the other hand, speculations on the outcome using only domestication theory is of no use, as it was brought in *after* the data gathering. What *is* of use is the knowledge that a combination of these theories has proven very fruitful. A deeper dive into just *what* this has yielded is next.

## 5 Conclusion

This conclusion will bring together the main findings from the analysis with the concepts of the theory chapter, providing answers to the research questions. The curiosity as to whether the young natives are more focused on using social media-applications and chat-applications than the mature settlers; and whether the mature settlers are more focused on planning and organizing than the young natives – will also be answered. Then there will be an explanation of this thesis' title; the smart-life. The conclusion will end in a paragraph suggesting a conceptual generalization of the findings, and presenting suggestions for further research.

Remembering the main purpose of this thesis; it is to get behind the smartphone-hype and examine what people really use their smartphones for, when they use it, and why they use what they use in their everyday life – on the basis of young and mature adults; men and women.

*RQ 1: What do people use their smartphones for – which features and applications; why do they use what they use, and when do they use it?*

Breaking down the research question, this study has found that *what* people use their smartphones for is very variable, but that some features and applications stand out as popular amongst the informants. Common amongst the fixed features and applications were; calling and texting, alarm, web-browser, maps, email, and calendar. Common amongst the downloadable applications were; Facebook, news-applications, weather-applications, music-applications, Wordfeud, public transport-applications, and bank-applications. When it comes to this smartphone content, the study has shown that it is difficult to make a common connection as to *why* people use certain features or applications. One tendency that can shed light on both *why* and *when* is the incentive of time-killing; it was mainly used when the informants was waiting for – or travelling with – public transportation, and they often turned to game-applications for this purpose. However, some of the digital natives also mentioned



using the Facebook-application and the internet to kill time. Frankly, the most describing answer to *when* they use their smartphones is that there is no conclusive answer; other than that they use it *whenever* and wherever. In fact, a quick answer to this research question could be: People use all sorts of features and applications, for all sorts of purposes, anytime/anywhere. But this is hardly a sufficient answer. Though it might appear true it is only part of the truth – or a version of the truth – and taken out of context it turns misleading. The reason I even mention it is because it illustrates how easy it is to get caught up in the hype. Because the hype is catchy. The fact that we can use our smartphones whenever and wherever should not automatically entail constant connectedness.

In regards to the young and mature adult's smartphone use, the findings maintain that there is no longer any hold to the notion of digital immigrants, and that it is now one of digital settlers. Though they still speak digital with an accent, the mature adults of this study are working hard in closing the “app-gap” on the young natives. All settlers use their smartphones beyond the confines of fixed features like texting and calling. Several even hold access to the internet and information as the most valued features. Even the few mature adults that said they were new to the smartphone mentioned that they were learning more and more by trying new features and “apps”. In fact, the few but out-spoken smartphone “resisters” were two young males. This leads to an interesting thought; because though they by definition are digital natives, they might speak “droid” with an accent.

In regards to the natives and settlers use of social media applications and chat-applications, this study supports that they young are indeed more eager users than their parent generation. Most commonly used is the Facebook-application – to which several natives display a habitual use of frequent checking. The most mentioned incentives for using the Facebook-application were; to get an update on friends, curiosity, to kill time, and for school purposes. There was not as much talk of chat-applications as anticipated. Using their smartphones to listen to music on the other hand, was a feature significantly skewed towards the young. When it comes to using the smartphone for planning and organizing; this study has found that both natives and settlers seem invested in this. We have seen that all the informants use “tools” on their smartphones during their average day, and that the young adults also micro-

coordinate. However, by including work-related use the settlers seem to be *more* focused on it than the natives – though the natives also express appreciation for these tools. Including work-related use can arguably be done because work conducted through the smartphone can be a vital part in the management of ones days. The informants that spoke about daily and frequent work-related use were nearly exclusively male settlers.

RQ. 2: *How – and to what extent – have the smartphones been integrated into the lives of the users?*

By using the smartphone in a way that fits into their lives, the smartphone has been well integrated into the lives of the vast majority of the informants.

The findings in the analysis suggest an outline of three “levels” of smartphone integration. The first and lowest level consist of those few I encountered who were new to the smartphone-world – still in the “trial and error”-phase, but with positive outlooks on their mobile futures. The second level is where we find the vast majority of the informants; those who appear to be living what I call the “smart-life”. The smart-life is not to be confused with Agger’s techno-dystopian iLife (Agger, 2011). The smart-life is what most smartphone-owners try to attain; fitting the smartphone into our lives in a way that works for us, and where the sum of advantages of having it continuously out-weighs whatever challenges and disadvantages the user experiences. How one chooses to live the smart-life is of course highly individual, but it does not entail constant connectedness, nor that you have to use every smartphone tool available. You use what you want/need when you want/need it; whether it is to kill time on the bus, or pay a bill before you get out of bed. The smart-life is not the same as domestication, but domestication is a prerequisite of the smart-life. Once the smartphone *medium* has been adopted and domesticated, it is still a question of sporadic integration or resistance to new *content* (i.e. applications). The third level of integration in this study is one where the frequency of their own use seems to upset the informants. A few informants described a perceived addiction to their smartphones. However, it appeared to mostly upset one mature adult woman who could not seem to be away from it at all. On the basis of the

discussion in the analysis, on the other hand, this “addiction” was demoted to excessive use because no clues indicated that it was negatively affecting their social and financial situations.

An example of the struggle between gratification seeking and domestication was found in the analysis. In a form of “uses and domestication-process”, a couple of young natives “tamed” their smartphones by engaging in a backward UG-approach; they were looking for gratification *obtained* before knowing what gratification they *sought*. This is perhaps not unheard of when it comes to the digital natives; they don’t read the manual, they just jump in and learn as they go (Prensky, 2001:3). They might download plenty of applications, but only those that serve a purpose in their daily life get to stay. In this respect – and getting behind the hype; the findings of this thesis illustrate a challenge to claims celebrating the revolutionary nature of technology, as well as the discourse of ever-connectedness. iLife is not as clear cut as Agger claims (2011), because the informants – both young and mature – embrace the smartphone in some ways, but at other moments they are critical towards it; controlling the place it has in their lives. Furthermore, this study has shown that a far-reaching domestication of the smartphone into everyday life co-exists with the distancing of certain kinds of use – mainly “addiction” or excessive use. And that this distancing is both expressed in a third-person *and* second-person narrative. These findings are supported by the findings of the Hartmann study (2005:141,145,153). Even the mature adult woman who was scared of this “addiction”, talked about it in a distancing second-person narrative.

The importance of gender and smartphone use was thought not to be as important as that of age. An interesting finding in this study is how social roles are confirmed even in the setting of the new smart-life. It is fascinating how quickly technology evolves, compared to how slowly social roles follow. Still; it is the women that talk about their children and the men that talk about their work, even though women also work and men also have children. The social roles become particularly evident when there is talk of availability; the mature adult women (i.e. the mothers) are concerned with *being* available (to their children), whilst the male settlers and the digital natives are concerned with *having* availability (to the internet/applications).

In relation to the book *Taken for Grantedness* (Ling, 2012); a lot of the arguments on mobile phone use – especially the social implications and theories – are tied to *mobile* phones, not *smartphones*. Ling’s repeated notion of “taken for grantedness” is overtly focused on the old mobile features such as time-telling, calling and texting, providing little space for the discussion of the multifunction features of the *smartphone* (ibid). One might argue that the old features of the new smartphone can be taken for granted, and that this to a certain degree makes for a *transferrable* notion. Though this study has little grounds for discussing whether certain smartphone *content* is taken for granted – the smartphone as a *medium* in some ways seems to be. Because it appears that owning one is normal. This is evident by the way the informants talk about smartphones, and also by the vast majority of those interviewed that had a smartphone. One mature adult even questioned if it was possible to buy cell-phones that were not smartphones these days. A young informant mentioned how his friends made fun of his “old-fashioned” phone. Put together; this can suggest that smartphones in Norway are becoming a social fact. We are starting to assume them of each other. Furthermore, applying the “Katz principle” to a smartphone context, it dictates that if *they* do not have smartphones, it becomes *our* problem. This can illustrate how having a smartphone can be considered a gratification in itself. Because by having one, you abide by the social norm; you won’t cause any potential problems for your peers; you will not cause a “jam” in the interactive flow of data traffic.

## 5.1 Generalization and further research

Rounding off this conclusion, I will attempt a conceptual generalization of my findings and make suggestions for further research. Drawing from the theories presented in the theory chapter, and on the statistical data presented in the introduction, and by having pointed to similar findings in previous research; a conceptual generalization can be both reasonable and valuable.

The findings of this thesis indicate that the smartphone has been well integrated by the digital natives and settlers in Norway. It is mundane, and a natural part of all spheres of their lives,

but this does not entail a blind and constant connectedness, as this smartphone-hype has been refuted. There are many similarities between the natives' and settlers' smartphone use; however the young natives are significantly more concerned about using social media applications. Social roles become manifested in the mothers' need to be available to their children, and the mature men's talk about work. Furthermore, the smartphone is becoming a social fact in that we expect others to have one, and those who do not are met with social sanctions. In 2012 Rich Ling argued that the mobile phone is becoming part of our "taken for grantedness" (2012). In 2013 I argue that the *mobile* phone is outdated in the Norwegian context, and that – only a year later – we can start to discuss whether the *smartphone* is becoming taken for granted.

Future research on mobile communication technologies is encouraged to try the mixing of UG- and domestication theory. Further research on peoples smartphone use should place more focus on what the smart-life entails of restructuring and change in peoples lives, and how this is perceived. It would also be interesting to investigate the smartphone use of those outside the age-groups of this study. A comparative study of smartphone users and smartphones resisters in the same age-group can also be interesting. As rapidly as time flies and technology develops – it could very well be that the digital natives of today are the "android immigrants" of tomorrow.



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# Appendix

## Written information given to the informants



**UNIVERSITETET I OSLO**  
DET HUMANISTISKE FAKULTET

### Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon

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### Forespørsel om å delta i intervju i forbindelse med en masteroppgave

Jeg (Gabi Høium Hurlen) er masterstudent ved Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon ved Universitetet i Oslo. Jeg skriver en masteroppgave om hvordan ungdom og voksne bruker smarttelefoner. Jeg ønsker å finne ut mer om hvordan de bruker smarttelefonen både som telefon og som en multimedieplattform gjennom applikasjoner, hva som er det viktigste for dem med smarttelefonen, og hvordan de bruker den gjennom en vanlig dag.

For å finne ut mer om dette ønsker jeg å gjennomføre noen spontane, fokuserte intervjuer med ungdom og voksne. Spørsmålene vil dreie seg om hvordan de bruker smarttelefonen sin til vanlig, om de har applikasjoner, hvilke applikasjoner de har, hvor ofte de bruker disse applikasjonene, og hva som er det viktigste for dem med smarttelefonen.

Jeg vil bruke båndopptaker og ta notater mens vi snakker sammen. Intervjuene vil ta omtrent ti minutter. Opplysningene vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og ingen enkeltpersoner vil kunne gjenkjennes i den ferdige oppgaven. Opplysningene anonymiseres og opptakene slettes når intervjuene er bearbeidet, innen utgangen av 2013.

Det er frivillig å være med og du har mulighet til å trekke deg når som helst underveis, uten å måtte begrunne dette nærmere.

Hvis det er noe du lurer på kan du ringe meg på 91142637, eller sende en e-post til [ighurlen@student.media.uio.no](mailto:ighurlen@student.media.uio.no).

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste A/S.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Gabi Høium Hurlen  
Masterstudent

Tanja Storsul  
Ansvarlig veileder

