



Media Multitasking

Report on findings of analysis of our Digital Day
research

Research Document

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About this document

This document provides additional analysis of the findings from the Digital Day 2014 consumer research, using the data from the adults' study. It focusses on simultaneous consumption of media and communications services ('Media multitasking').

Key findings from the adults' study were published in August 2014 as part of our *Communications Market Report 2014*.

This report is part of a series of in-depth reports looking at particular groups within the data sets collected in the main study.

The Communications Act 2003 placed a responsibility on Ofcom to promote, and to carry out research into media literacy. This report contributes to Ofcom's work in this area. The study also supports Ofcom's regulatory goal to research markets constantly and to remain at the forefront of technological understanding.

Introduction

People have more flexibility and choice than ever before in the media content they access, and how and when they use communications services. This is a result of rapid expansion in the range of devices, services and media content now available, and the speed of their adoption.

While Ofcom makes use of a wide range of industry research that allows us to understand how people consume broadcast media and how they use websites, there is little current insight into how people use media and communications services and devices *together*, and how these form a central part of their daily life.

Therefore, in March-April 2014, Ofcom conducted an in-depth study on UK adults' and children's total media and communications activities, to provide an overview of the role of media and communications in people's lives. The research provides a snapshot of people's media and communications behaviour over a seven-day period, exploring when and how people use services and devices throughout the day, covering both personal and business use, in- and out-of-home use. Key findings from the adults' study were published in August 2014 as part of our *Communications Market Report 2014*. Additional data, focusing on the findings among those participants aged 65 and over, were published alongside the *Consumer Experience Report* in January 2015. This report, which looks at media multitasking, is part of a series of in-depth reports looking at particular groups within the data sets collected in the main study¹.

Methodology

A nationally representative sample of 1,644 UK adults aged 16+ participated in the main Digital Day study in March-April 2014, completing seven-day media diaries.

The survey recorded when participants undertook any of the media and communications activities listed in Figure 1 and what device they were using, including any concurrent use, over seven days. Figure 1 defines the aggregate media categories used throughout the report. In addition to the main activity types (e.g. watching, listening, communicating), these

¹ Other short reports are available on the Ofcom website here:
<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/other/cross-media/digital-day/2014/>

have been divided into grouped activities (e.g. ‘watching’ activities comprise TV or films on a TV set, TV or films on another device and other video including short clips). Participants recorded all their media behaviour in a paper diary, and these data were captured on a daily basis online or by telephone.

Figure 1 Media consumption activities

Activity types	Grouped activities	Activities
Watching	TV or films on a TV set	Live TV, Recorded TV, On-demand / catch-up TV or films (free), Downloaded or streamed TV or films (paid-for) , TV or films on DVD, Blu-ray, VHS video
	TV or films on another device	Live TV, Recorded TV, On-demand / catch-up TV or films (free), Downloaded or streamed TV or films (paid-for) , TV or films on DVD, Blu-ray, VHS video
	Other video (short clips)	Short online video clips
Listening	Radio on radio set	Radio (at the time of broadcast), On-demand/‘Listen again’ radio programmes or podcasts
	Radio on another device	Radio (at the time of broadcast), On-demand/‘Listen again’ radio programmes or podcasts
	Other audio	Personal digital music or audio collection , Streamed online music, Personal music collection on CD, Vinyl record or cassette tapes, Music videos (background listening)
Communicating	Voice communications	By phone call, By video calls
	Text communications	Through a Social Networking site (<u>excluding checking updates</u>), Instant Messaging, email (reading or writing), Text message, Photo or video messages (viewing or sending) or Snapchat
Playing	Games	Games (on an electronic device)
Read/ browsed/ used	Print media	A newspaper/article (printed or online/digital including apps), A magazine /article (printed or online/digital including apps), A book (printed or eBook)
	Other Internet media	A newspaper/article (printed or online/digital including apps), A magazine /article (printed or online/digital including apps), Other online news (not through a newspaper site), Sports news /updates (not through a newspaper site), Online shopping or ticketing site/ app, Other websites or apps - including online banking, checking updates on social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) etc.
	Other non-internet media	A book (printed or eBook), Other activities such as creating office documents/spreadsheets, creating or editing videos/music/audio etc. or other apps or software/programs

Terminology

The analysis examines a range of media behaviours. The terminology is defined below.

Media consumption

This refers not only to viewing and listening, but to all text and voice communications, and the consumption of print media

Weekly reach

The proportion of participants who took part in a particular activity, or used a particular device, at any point across the week

Volume

Average minutes of an activity or use of a device per day

Media multitasking / simultaneous media consumption

Media consumed while doing another media activity at the same time. Calculated minute-by-minute across the diary week, where at least two activity records overlap.e.g. texting while watching television

Solus media consumption

Media consumed while doing no other media activity

Activity multitasking

Any media and communications activity records that overlap with another one, at any minute in time (over the diary week)

Device multitasking

Any device (part of media and comms activity) records that overlap with another one, at any minute in time (over the diary week)

Key points



Media & communication multitasking activities

Most popular multitasking combinations in terms of reach

Watching & Communicating	84%
Watching & reading/ browsing/ using	83%
Communicating & reading/ browsing/ using	77%

Most popular multitasking combinations in terms of time spent per day



- **Media multitasking is undertaken by almost every person.** Almost every adult (99%) in the Digital Day study recorded conducting two or more media activities at the same time at some point during the week. Adults spent an average of 2 hours 3 minutes per day simultaneously consuming two or more media services.
- **Watching live TV while undertaking other media activities features prominently in the top ten multitasking combinations.** However, in terms of time spent multitasking simultaneously engaging in 'email' and 'voice calls' was the most popular combination with respondents on average spending 1 hour and 40 minutes per day across the week.
- **Text communication is the most likely activity to be conducted simultaneously with another media or communication activity.** In contrast, listening to 'radio on a radio set' is the least likely activity to be carried out simultaneously (20%) this is partly because almost half of all radio listening is conducted whilst travelling.

- **At least half of the time spent using smartphones (56%), laptops (54%) and tablets (52%) involves consuming more than one media.** Smartphones and landlines (58%) were the devices most likely to be used while engaging in media multitasking.
- **A fifth of all media and communication time is spent media multitasking, rising to a third among 16-24 year olds.** The proportion of time spent media multitasking decreases with age.

Media multitasking among adults

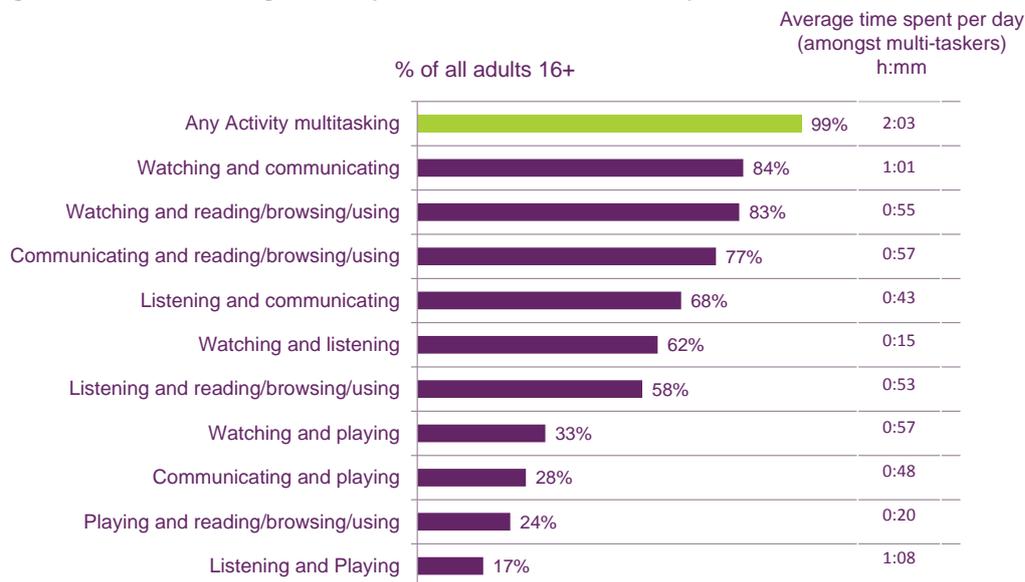
Media multitasking is undertaken by almost every UK adult

Almost every adult (99%) in the Digital Day study recorded carrying out two or more media activities at the same time (simultaneous) at some point during the week. This simultaneous activity amounted to an average time of 2 hours 3 minutes per day.

Looking in more detail at what activities adults carried out simultaneously most often, 'watching and communicating' (all types) was the most commonly-undertaken combination. Over eight in ten (84%) adults recorded this during the week, accounting for an average of 1 hour 1 minute per day. Similarly, 'reading/ browsing/ using' activities were undertaken in conjunction with 'watching' activities by 83% of adults throughout the week.

The least popular multitasking combination recorded was 'listening and playing', with less than a fifth (17%) of adults having done this during the week.

Figure 2 Multitasking activity combinations: weekly reach



Source: Digital Day seven-day diary

Base: Weekly reach: All adults aged 16+ (1644), Average time spent: All activity record minutes (5930358)

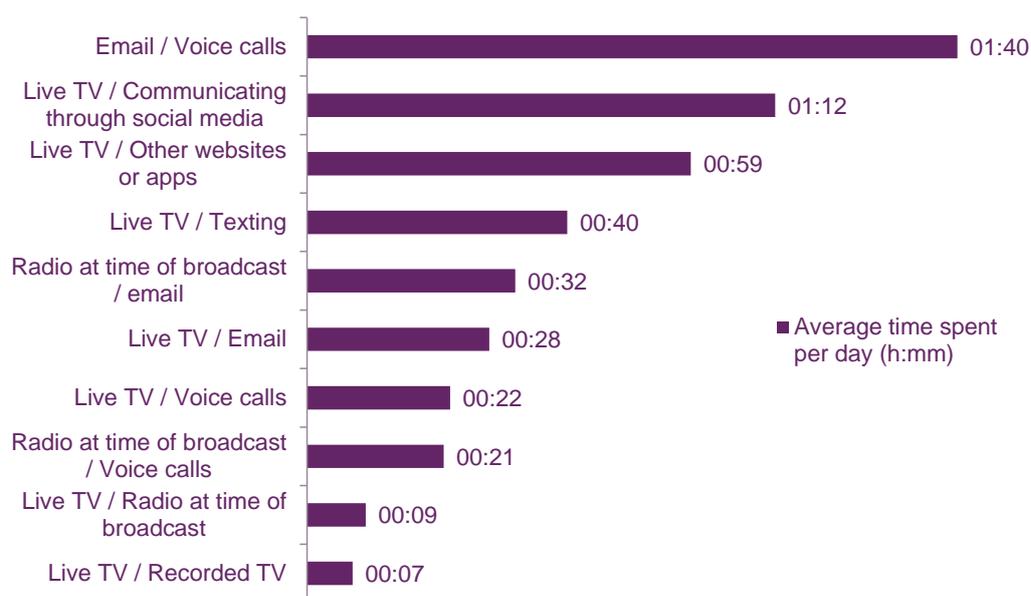
Watching live TV while undertaking other media activities features prominently in the top ten multitasking combinations

Figure 3 below shows the top ten multitasking combinations by the average time spent per day combining activities.

In terms of time spent multitasking 'email/ voice calls' was the most popular combination with respondents on average spending 1 hour and 40 minutes per day across the week. Watching 'live TV' while also 'communicating through social media' was the second highest recorded multitasking combination with an average of 1 hour 12 minutes per day. Younger people spent longer engaging in this form of multitasking than older people.

However, watching 'live TV' with another media activity dominates, making up seven of the top ten multitasking combinations.

Figure 3 Top ten multitasking combinations of activities (weekly reach)



Source: Digital Day seven-day diary

Base: Weekly reach: All adults aged 16+ (1644), Average time spent: All activity record minutes (5930358)

Text communication was most likely to be conducted at the same time as another activity

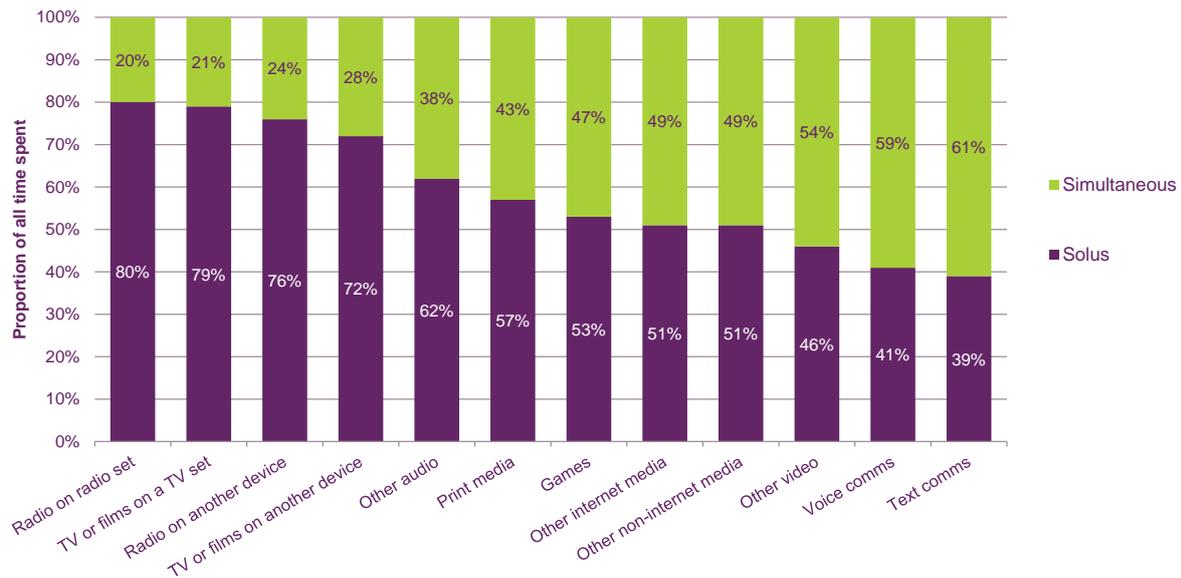
Figure 4 shows the proportion of overall media consumption attributed to either solus or simultaneous activities, by activity groups². ‘Text communication’ was the most likely type of activity to be carried out at the same time as another one (61%), followed closely by ‘voice communication’ (59%).

In contrast, listening to ‘radio on a radio set’ was the least likely activity to be carried out simultaneously (20%). As reported in Ofcom’s Communication Market Report³ this can partly be explained by the fact that 47% of time spent listening to the radio is while travelling.

² Activity groups are aggregated activities of a similar nature, for example voice communication is a combination of land line and mobile usage

³ Figure 1.36 http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/cmr14/2014_UK_CMV.pdf

Figure 4 Proportion of solus and simultaneous media consumption, by activity groups



Source: Digital Day seven-day diary

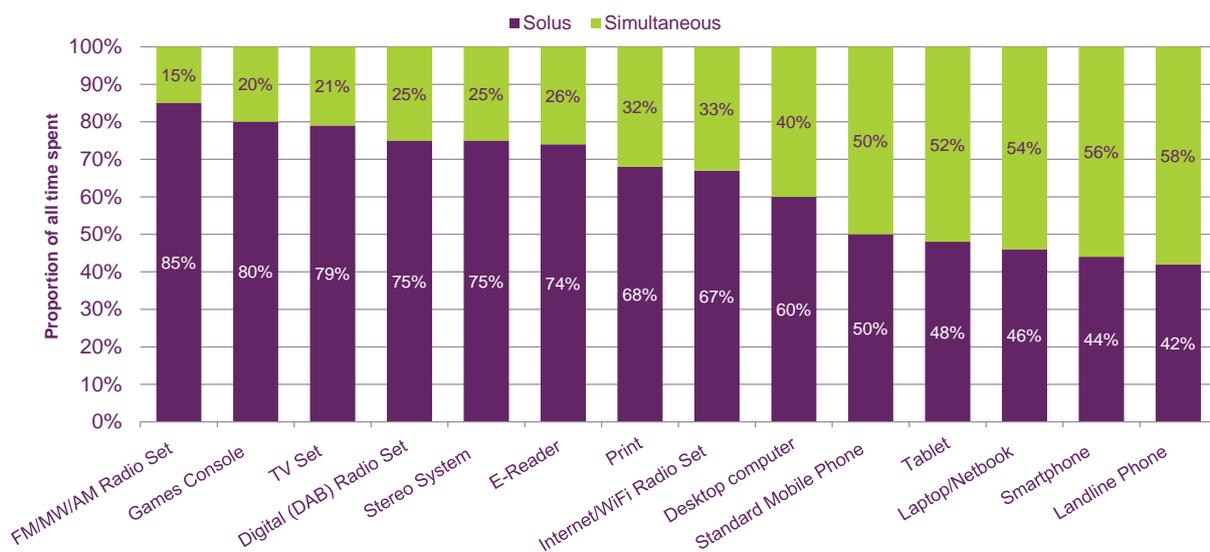
Base: All activity record minutes for adults aged 16+ (5930358)

At least half of the time spent using phones, laptops and tablets was combined with another activity

Figure 5 below shows the proportion of the overall time spent on media devices attributed to solus and simultaneous activity. At least half the time spent using phones, laptops and tablets was recorded as simultaneous activity.

In comparison, less than a quarter of the time spent using ‘radio sets’ (analogue and DAB), ‘games consoles’ and ‘TV sets’ was recorded as simultaneous activity.

Figure 5 Proportion of solus and simultaneous media consumption, by device



Source: Digital Day seven-day diary

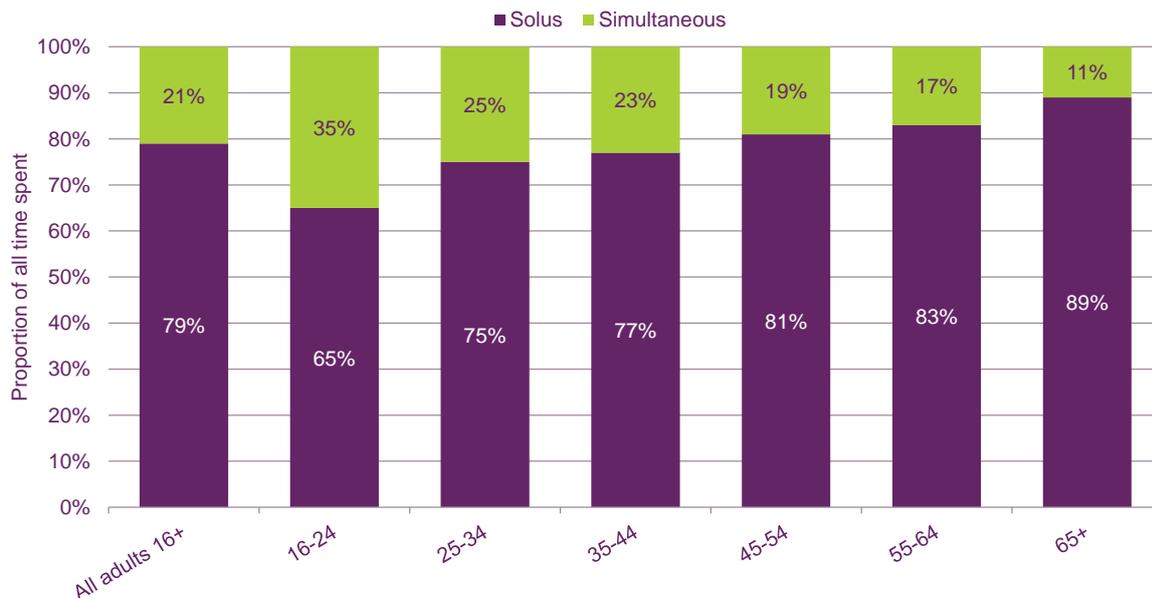
Base: All activity record minutes for adults aged 16+ (5930358)

Media multitasking, by demographics

A fifth of all media and communication time is spent media multitasking, rising to a third among 16-24 year olds

Figure 6 below shows the proportion of solus and simultaneous activity by age. On average, a fifth (21%) of all media and communications time was spent media multitasking. However, the proportion of time spent doing this decreased with age: it took up 35% of the total media time for 16-24 year olds, compared to 11% for those aged 65+.

Figure 6 Proportion of solus and simultaneous minutes, by age group



Source: Digital Day seven-day diary

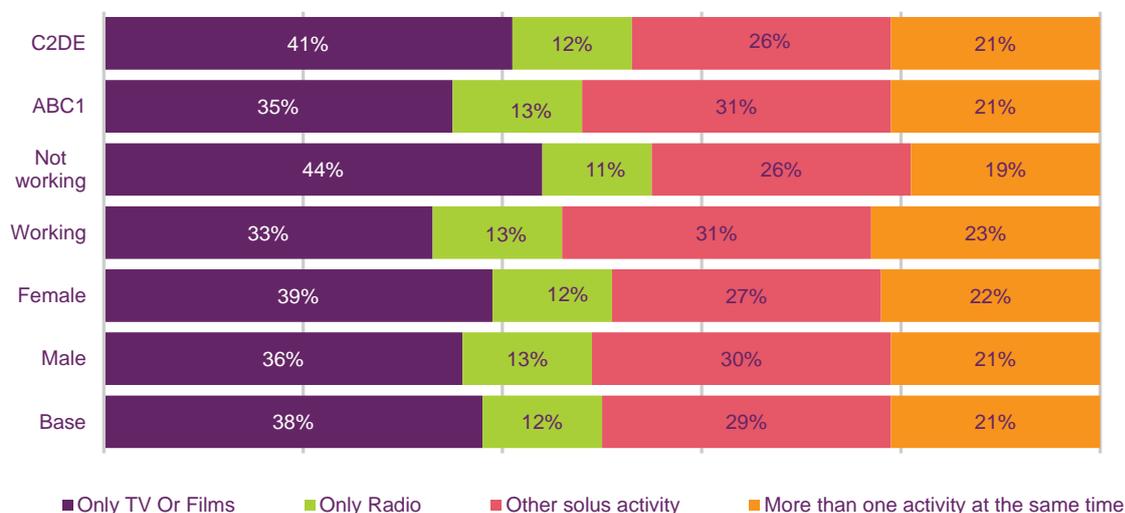
Base: All activity record minutes for adults aged 16+ (5930358)

Working adults spend significantly less time than non-working adults watching 'only TV or films'

Nearly a quarter (23%) of time spent engaged in media and communication activities by working adults was done simultaneously with other media activities, compared to 19% for non-working adults. Working adults spent a smaller proportion of their time watching 'only TV or films' than those not in work. (33% vs 44%).

Comparing by socio-economic group, ABC1s were less likely than C2DEs to watch 'only TV or films' (35% vs 41%)

Figure 7 Proportion of all media and communications minutes, by individual solus activities (grouped) and all simultaneous activities, by gender, working status and socio-economic group



Source: Digital Day seven-day diary

Base: All activity record minutes for adults aged 16+ (5930358), Male (2697729), Female (3232629), Working (3556104), Not working (2374254), ABC1 (3682050), C2DE (2248308)

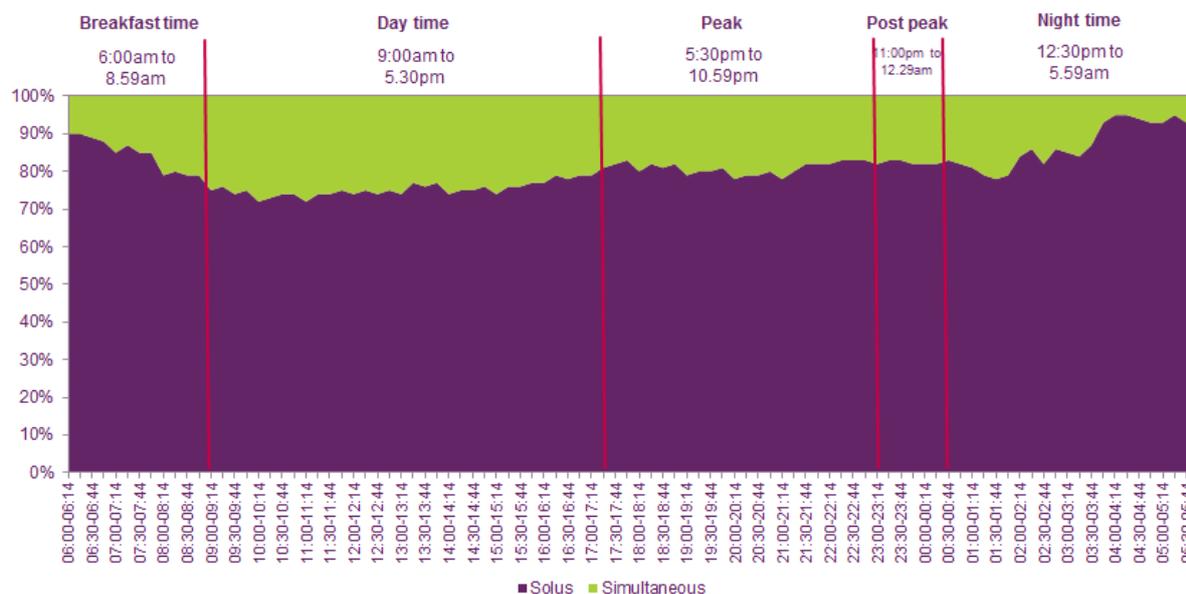
Media multitasking across the day

Media multitasking was generally higher during daylight hours, when engaging in communication activities was more prominent

Figure 8 shows solus and simultaneous activities throughout the day in 15-minute slots. It highlights that multitasking increases during breakfast time, reaches its peak around 10am and then is relatively steady until evening, when it becomes more and more solus during the course of the night (when the volume of media and communications activity becomes low in general)⁴.

⁴ Note: the base sizes (i.e. records of media and communication activity) during the early hours tend to be low, so must be treated with caution.

Figure 8 Solus and simultaneous activities throughout the day: 15-minute slots



Source: Digital Day seven-day diary

Base: All activity records for adults aged 16+ (5930358) - data aggregated to 15-min slots

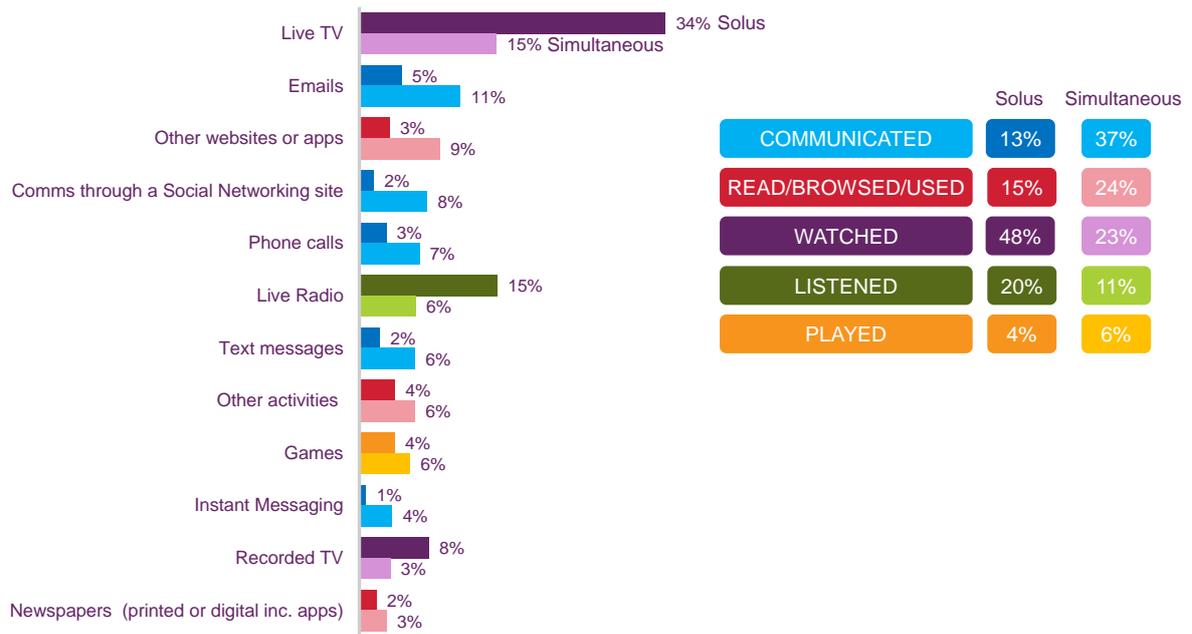
Live TV accounts for the highest proportion of both total solus and simultaneous media time

Figure 9 shows the share of both solus and simultaneous minutes by media activity. 'Live TV' was recorded as having a 15% share of simultaneous usage.

However, when 'live TV' is combined with other types of televisual consumption (live and recorded TV), 'watched' activities ranked only third compared to the other wider groupings (as displayed on the chart), accounted for 23% of total time spent multitasking.

In contrast 'communicated activities' (email, communications through a social networking site, phone calls, text messages and instant messages), when combined together, had the highest share simultaneous usage and accounted for 37% of the time spent conducting simultaneous activities.

Figure 9 Activity share of total solus and simultaneous media and comms minutes



Source: Digital Day seven-day diary

Base: All activity record minutes for adults aged 16+ (5930358)

Note: Only activities of 2% share or above are charted