
MOBILE 2.0 Android vs. iPhone vs. Blackberry users

By John Ginovsky

Mobile banking today is where online banking was about ten years ago, but its development is accelerating rapidly. BBVA Compass, as part of its long-term strategy, committed itself to bring mobile banking application deployment completely in-house. It has rolled out updated apps for Android, iPhone, iPad, and Blackberry devices. Along the way, the bank has gained invaluable insights from both the provision of the service and from the feedback of its customers.

In this second of two parts, Tech Topics talked with Alex Carriles, executive vice-president of Mobile Strategy and Retail Innovation at BBVA Compass.

Tech Topics: Who are your mobile banking customers?

Alex Carriles: Our audience is all over the place. It's truly becoming a universal tool. It's popular with the 25-40-year old range, but, across the board, it's pretty well accepted.

TT: How about small business? Do you see any pickup, or potential pickup, among commercial customers?

Carriles: Oh, absolutely. For our small- and intermediate business customers, they use the same platform as our consumer accounts. I have to admit, though, we don't yet have specific functionality for small business. But that is going to be one of our goals for next year. We'll focus heavily on services for small- and mid-sized businesses.

TT: You have apps for Android, iPhone, Blackberry devices. Are there different customer experiences with each? Are there different customer demands with each of the different devices?

Carriles: You'd be surprised at how different the users are. You can see from the way they use the apps. It's really interesting and funny at the same time. You start with the way customers judge the apps. When we had our version 1.0 of the apps, all of them had exactly the same functionality and they had the same features and the same look and feel.

The iPhone users rated our app the worst. Why? Because they are used to seeing some of the best apps out there. So we were compared with the best of the best. The iPhone user is extremely demanding. That forces you to become better.

Then you have the Android users which, although a lot less demanding, they are a lot more technically savvy. They complain less about technical things because they know how to fix them, like issues with logging in. You have to follow a process, in the early generation, of going to online banking, registering, and coming back, and blah, blah, blah. The iPhone users were having a hard time with that. The Android users were okay with the process, so they had no issues.

The iPad users, they were in general very happy, very happy, about having an app, especially when there were few iPad apps for banking.

The happiest people of all were the Blackberry users. They were just thrilled that we had that app for them. Nobody else cared for them. They were raving about the app even though it was really nothing to write home about. These guys were thrilled.

TT: That seems like a good commentary on how things are shaking out.

Carriles: You look at usage, for example. It's really interesting the fact that although the Android users were really happy, they didn't use the app that much. They represent nearly 20% of our downloads, but they only represent under 2% of actual usage. Compare that with iPad users, they represent approximately 5% of downloads, but close to 23% of total usage. It is really, really interesting.

Read Part 1

About the Author

John Ginovsky is contributing editor of ABA Banking Journal and editor of the publication's TechTopics e-newsletter. For more than two decades he has written about the commercial banking industry. In particular, he's specialized in the technological side of banking and how it relates to the actual business of banking. He previously was senior editor for Community Banker magazine (which merged with ABA Banking Journal) and was a staff writer for ABA's Bankers News. You can email him at jginovsky@sbpub.com

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