

ONLINE NEWS USE OF PHABLETS, SMARTPHONES,
TABLETS AND PERSONAL COMPUTERS:
THE INFLUENCE OF OPINION LEADERSHIP AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Samuel M. Tham

Dean Esther Thorson, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

As technology evolves, media habits towards the news have also altered based on technological and social reasons. This study seeks to evaluate how the introduction of large screen cell phones have impacted other digital media and legacy media. In addition, social influences would be explored in the adoption of phablets for news use. Modeled after the premise of the Mobile Contingency Theory (Thorson, Shoenberger, Karaliova, Kim & Fidler, 2015), this study seeks to better understand the role of social influence on online news functions as well as the impact of online news sharing. The theoretical underpinnings of social influence will be based on the Two Step Flow of Communication (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) while the impact of phablet adoption and online news sharing can be explained by the Diffusion of Information (Rogers, 1995).