

## HOW HAS BEEN THE EVALUATION OF GENERATED INFORMATION BY CELL-PHONE IN ALBANIA DURING 2010-2015?

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### ABSTRACT

During these lately years Albania has been increasing the use of mobile services in an incredible way. Some of Internet World statistics rank Albania as one of the most developed countries in the region. Mobiles are becoming the most important devices for communication. This technology not only satisfies personal needs, but it also helps the community. Information generated by mobiles includes a very wide range of services related to health, education, environment, weather, products, transactions, entertainment, politic. The interaction with Internet has matched all massive communication ways to converge in a point, mobile media. From this aspect, "the third screen" seems to have eclipsed even Web by its self. Social fragmentation is making people consume more and more the Online Media. The traditional Media is not anymore, an information monopoly. The category of youths cooperates a lot with Mobile media. The major objective and purpose of this research is connected with the evolution of generated mobile information during these 5 years in Albania. Which are the factors for favoring or precluding it further? What politics should the government follow so all can have access in using it? The research is based on accumulated statistics from different authorities and specialized monitoring. Data processing will be presented at the conclusion part.

**Keywords:** Mobiles, SIM card, broad band, penetration, population.

### EVIDENCE OF GENERATED INFORMATION PROCESS BY MOBILE PHONES

In individual aspect mobile generated information is transformed into the most important element of daily life. This device offers tremendous services for citizens. Some of the offered services I can mention are: interpersonal communication with familiars, friends, colleagues, institutions ect. Day after day it is becoming more helpful for processes like transactions, renting, exchanges, weather, informing, health, education. Smart phones guarantee access everywhere like entertainment, awareness campaigns, for spiritual purposes and even politics. Millions of people are using mobiles to memorize their personal or familiar life, their communities and share photos and videos through many social blogs and social networks like Facebook, Flicr, Twitter or web pages of traditional platforms and independent pages. Other people are using social networks as a very good form of communicating latest news about their selves or about everything around.

In a global aspect, new technologies have proven to be a very valuable way for offering news and important information for the citizens. In USA, Europe, Japan and South Korea "mobile journalists" are now equipped with GPS, tablets, smart-phones, satellite receiver which enables to send and receive photos, videos, or texts from different places in the world. In the past journalism as a "back package" was unthinkable, now it is usual.

This kind of activism has been part of many sensational episodes including here American Wars, tsunamis, natural disasters, terrorism ect. Mobile phones are mostly the only information source for many big Medias in the world. Nowadays, smart-phones testify the fact that this new

media is making a revolution in massive communication. The third screen is proving indisputable effects for citizen activism. In Albania it turns to be one of the most independent forms of massive communication. Internet and mobile informing has initialized many powerful demonstrations. In this way was started the battle towards chemical poisons.

This civic movement was as powerful as obligating government to cancel the agreement. In the same way Albanian people were organized to object the deviation of Radika and Vjosa rivers. Similar protests continued for another cause like law against smoking in public closed places. Recently are being organized many other protests to protect the environment.

In all these cases above, the instrument of organizing people was not traditional media, either government or politicians. It was just Internet and third screen. This technology is also helping in many other directions as finding and discovering cases of abuse or corruption for administration workers, deputies, ministers and other levels of govern.

Mobile media has enormous effects even at political front. Day after day, the ability of Mobile media to affect political field is becoming more visible. Sometimes, the governments try to prevent information toward people, by controlling professional media, but nowadays all citizens own a mobile device and are able get informed without traditional media.

During electoral campaign of 2008, democrats and republicans posted in Twitter, millions of information messages about their programs and candidates. In the presidential election of this year, Obama was the first candidate who incorporated text messages in his campaign. He sent a message to all his supporters to participate in the election. Hillary Clinton's campaign was supported from her mobile user army, to do 2 million of calls during weekend, before her meeting in California.

In the election of 2013 in Albania, two candidates for prime-minister, Sali Berisha and Edi Rama used a lot of social media and mobile media to send messages toward their supporters. The same phenomenon occurred at the last local election of 2015.

Mobile technology provides new ways of community activism for civic organization, political candidates, activists and normal citizens, for different concerns. The approach of civic commitment should be developed beyond election, volunteering and community services. Instead of this, the real engagement can be manifested with a common goal for collective movements to address problems or political issues based on citizen decisions. They will determine which issues are important and which are not.

### **Research question, hypothesis and study objectives**

The research question that will be clarified in the research is: What is the number of mobile users in Albania?

Hypothesis: Mobile media is the main way of communication in Albania.

### **Study Objectives**

- To evidence mobile media as an important way of massive communication in Albania
- Identify its functions and goals
- To discover the percentage of spread in population
- Find the factors which stimulate mobile media using.

## Theoretical framework

Mobility and portability of media, according to Levinson (2004), is a process when someone starts thinking about the first time writing in a tablet and not in a cave wall or in a stable monument. For many years removable devices like mobile phones and PDAs were the main sources of information and communication between portable media. Lately, smart-phones are the market leaders. Wiley & Sons. 2011. p. 140, highlight that growth of new mobile medias, as a real power in society, has been distinguished from the number of smart-phones sold comparing to personal computers in 2011.

Connected with communication Levinson has expressed that “it applies for our need to communicate”. Furthermore in his book, Levinson declares that book, radio, cameras ect are carriers of portable information. Thanks to technology, mobility and small physic parameters, those devices allow people to communicate from each part of the planet. In the other part, Smart-phones consume a lot from our daily life. The technology based in cloud, plays a very important role in million of peoples life, consequently even in Albania.

## Advantages of mobile generated information

Mobile media has superiority compared with all other massive communication ways, even Internet. The reason for this fact is because of many advantages, which are:

- Cell-phones are personal devices
- We can take them everywhere
- Mobile media is the fastest way of getting informed
- Mobile technology does offer even services, not only access
- All communication forms have converged in one point, Smart-phones.
- Cell-phones are multimedia devices
- Cell-phones enable the existence of civic journalism

## M-governance and civic commitment

One of the most promising potentials of mobile technology is its using in local level to empower citizens to become more active in their community, mostly for their problematic issues connected with community, state cases, cities or villages they live. In this manner m-governance aims to:

- better cooperation between citizens and governance
- give people the chance to report problems like vote manipulation in real time, in an easy way.

In the past, citizens have felt the distance from local government, when their complaints are finalized with no action. But, nowadays the mobile phones raise awareness for all actors. The citizen has the opportunity to identify the responsible person in administration or other institutions. In the same time, also other inhabitants can get informed about other rule breaking and all together can work against it, and solve it.

Main goal of m-governance is to know the worries of citizens in the community they live and to achieve positive results in their interest. Through 3 demands, m-governance according to Charlie Firestone (Aspen Institute 2008), can achieve a desired effect:

1. Put the consumer the first in offering government services

2. Trying to be efficient while offering services
3. Development and growth of inter-cooperation citizens-representatives

The barriers that exist while solving a problem between two main components, citizens-local governance, can be summarized in one word: bureaucratic. Even though, Firestone has outlined a new approach, called “competitive representation”, its goal should be “growth of democratic process to satisfy citizen needs, by increasing representation and stay in their own choices, while promoting government efficiency”.

### Number of mobile users during 20110-2014, in Albania

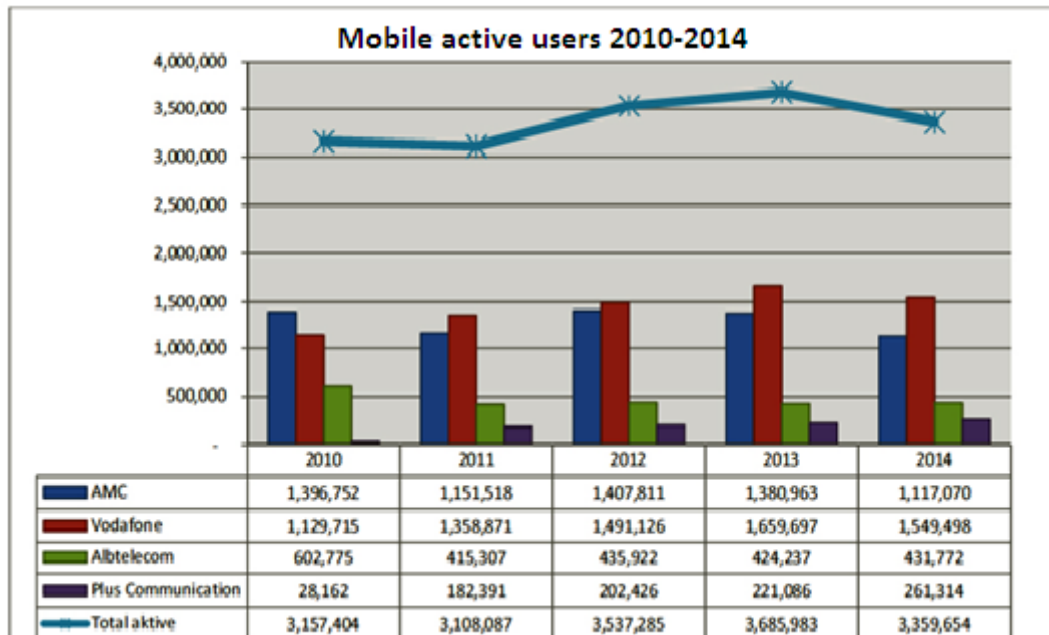
In accordance with AKEP statistics, number of mobile users can be measured and reported in two manners:

- Number of Active SIM card- which are active in the network in the end of report
- Number of “active users”, that use SIM cards that have been using services for the last 3 months.

Number of active mobile users in the end of 2014, was 3.4 million, compared with 3.7 million in the end of 2013, so e decrease of 9%. Four operators TELEKOM Albania, VODAFONE, AlbTelecom (Eagle Mobile) and Plus Communication during 2010 measured 3.157.404 user mobiles. But, during 2013 the number of users was 3.685.983. While during 2014 has a reduction around 3.359.654.

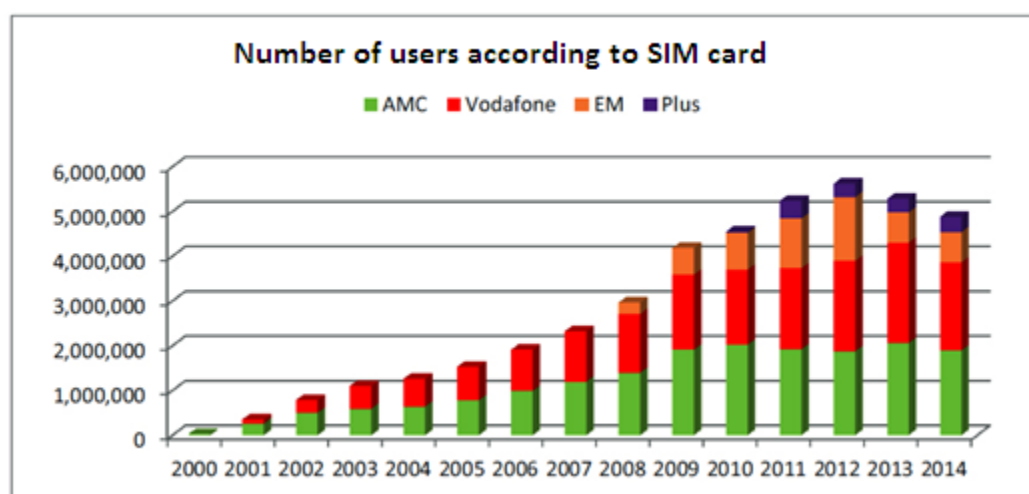
Each operator has its own politics for Active Mode of SIM card, depended from recharge.

**Table 1 and Graph: Number of mobile users during 5 years**



In the end of 2014, number of portable mobile users according to active SIM cards was 4.9 million compared with 5.3 million in the end of 2013. The reduction is explained with concentration in a company, decrease of fees, legal framework that requires the registration of the user.

In 2000, number of users was just a few. But, the curve of using has been known a maximum for 2012 with 5.6 million SIM cards in the markets. In 2013 is registered a small decrease with 5.3 SIMs. The reduction has been continued even for 2014 to 4.9 million cards.



However, comparing with the population number, results that each Albanian own 1.7 SIM Cards. (Look the table)

#### Graph nr 2 represents number of users for 4 operators

Number of active users and users of SIM cards, in the end of 2015 was 3.4 and 4.7 million. During 2015, number of active subscribers and active SIM cards, has dropped with 5% for both categories. Penetration for population in three months was 120% for active users and 167 % for SIM card users. Number of active subscribers comparing with 2014 did not changed a lot, but is increased with 1 %. Parts of the markets depended on active users is like below:

Along fourth three months of 2015 there was a reduction with 12 % of generated calls comparing with the previous 3 months. Regardless the reduction of outgoing calls level, calls towards other national networks (off net) have been increased with 15 % and calls inside network are lower with 9 %, comparing with the third 3 months of this year. Along this 3 month period, outgoing international calls were reduced with 80% and national ones were reduced with 3 % comparing with the fourth 3-month period.

During July 2015, Albania counted 3,029,278 inhabitants (or 100% of population). After processing and analyzing the above tables, results that in this period in Albania each inhabitant owns 1.12% mobile phones and each of them has 1.6% in use. (look at the table)

Population(3,029,278) inhabitants	year 2015	% of using for each inhabitant
Mobile users	3.4 million	1.12%
SIM card users	4.7 million	1.7%

Table 1, shows the percentage of mobile and SIM card users for each person that lives in Albania.

Number of subscribers that has an approach in broadband from telecom networks (3G with USB card and cell-phones) in 2014 was 1.4 million or 16% more than 2013. The using of broadband access in 3G networks is increased with 59% with USB/Modem and with 12% through mobile phones. Three operators of 3G network Vodafone, Telekom Albania and Albtelecom, have experienced a raise with 31-124 %, meanwhile using through mobile phones had big changes like 51 % raise for Vodafone and 15 for Eagle Mobile and 41% for AMC.

### Monthly average using of cellular services

The amount of minutes and SMS generated (outgoing) during one month in 2014 is increased with 11 % comparing with 2013, from one active user and 15-16 % from SIM card users. During 2014, one active cellular user has made an average about 172 outgoing minutes and has received 168 incoming call minutes, resulting in a total of 341 communication minutes and 42 SMS per month. If we refer to the number of SIM card users then we will have: 120 outgoing minutes, 117 incoming minutes or 237 minutes in total and 30 SMS in a month. AKEP finds that the real call minutes are near measures for active mobile users, because a great number of subscribers of SIM cards are seasonal (emigrants, visitors)

### Phone traffic and calls structure

Throughout 2014, outgoing calls of cellular users increased with 8 % comparing with 2013. The highest growth rate was for Albtelekom(EM) and Plus with 69% and 58%, while Vodafone and Telekom had a raise of 6% and reduction of 6 %. Along 2014 for the first time was noticed a reduction level of calls inside network, with 3 % compared with the previous year.

Call weight inside network against outgoing calls was reduced in 83% during 2014 comparing with 93% of 2013. International calls had the highest raise in 2014 and their weight was 8% comparing with 2% in 2013. The amount of calls towards other networks incremented in 2014 with 8% comparing with the previous year 2013 with 5%. For the above changes, the percentage of calls within network and toward other national networks for AMC and VODAFONE in 2014 were 93-95%, in 2013 were 95-97%. The outgoing traffic structure shows up that there is a continuity of using more and more packages with low fees for national calls and international ones. This is actually the tendency of latest years, where fees are being more moderated and affordable for the most of society.

Indicator	2012	2013	2014	Annual range %
Number of active users	3,537,285	3,685,983	3,370,970	-9%
SIM Number of users according to SIM cards	5,619,607	5,282,350	4,883,843	-8%
Total number of UMTS broadband subscribers	649,713	1,231,259	1,425,384	16%
Total number through cellular	594,308	1,119,892	1,253,485	12%
Through USB(not cellular)	55,405	111,367	177,613	59%
Outgoing calls from users (minutes)	6,053,089,264	6,769,300,966	7,301,024,035	8%
Number of generated SMSs	1,382,610,330	1,689,200,882	1,826,346,190	8%



Total volume of transmitted data with GPRS/UMTS (Gb)	796,000	2,529,549	6,269,940	148%
Incoming calls from other networks	1,046,035,623	990,247,214	1,061,412,059	7%
National incoming	290,628,294	335,122,643	596,861,301	78%
International incoming calls	755,407,329	655,124,571	464,550,758	-29%
Incoming SMSs from other networks	75,084,782	75,386,098	111,100,522	47%

**Table 2 Show the volume of different indicators from 2012-2014**

Looking at the table we can recognize a decrease of GSM service users with 8-9%. Meanwhile The indexes of phone calls and SMS have increased with 6-47%. International incoming calls have been reduced with 29%. From the other part national calls are increased with 78%, which comes from off-net traffic growth. All 3G services indicators have been increased. Number of these users is increased with 16%, while total volume of transmitted data in cellular networks (GPRS/UMTS) has increased with 148%.

### **Barriers of mobile citizens sphere**

Countries in development like ALBANIA, portable devices are more than digital communicators. Everything is connected with the mentality of technology. It should be used not only for usual things of daily routine, but also to connect people for a better life quality. The barriers have to do mostly with user's costs, closed nature of cellular networks and the less of broadband approaches into rural spaces. Price cost barriers are depended on mobile companies fees applied for calls inside network, outside network, international calls, also the cost of a SMS or MMS and limited Internet access. People of rural places do not have access in high speed services. According to specialists, there is no broadband in these places so the Internet access is very limited.

Incomes per person are still low in some places of Albania, so for some categories a mobile phone is seen as a luxury thing. WIFI technology is mostly concentrated in urban places, limited spaces. A great number of populations can't afford the price of a smart-phone, which offers a wide range of services. Futurists predict that within some years there will be no difference between PC, TV and portable devices. Global economy is going toward a convergence point where everything will be IP (Internet Protocol) based. Within 15 years, there is going to be a bigger convergence point for telecom service providers, cable service companies, ISP- Internet Service Providers and a whole industry, which will be transformed for community benefits.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

In the end of this research are achieved some conclusions. The inquiry proved the hypothesis about mobile media as the main way of communication in Albania. The research identified the fact that cell-phones are devices for a wide range of uses, not only for interpersonal communication but also for services. It helps to be informed and contribute in society informing.

The study discovered that each Albanian is a user of 1.12 mobile phones and 1.6 SIM cards. It also came to the conclusion that call and SMS fees are an important actor player in media using. Other important key actors are broadband access and cellular signal coverage.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

State needs to plan national politics for every inhabitant to have access in these services.  
Politicians and lawmakers should develop all levels of jurisdiction.  
There should be a growth of free competition.  
Budget separation should be planned in stimulating technology innovation.

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