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College Students Prefer Practical Cell Phones Over High-Tech Ones

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DURHAM, N.H. -- When it comes to cell phone usage at the University of New Hampshire, practicality is in and high tech is out.

That's the overall message from a survey of 707 undergraduate students conducted by their peers in a marketing research class at the UNH Whittemore School of Business and Economics. When asked about the top three uses for their cell phone, 91 percent said talking, 87 percent said text messaging and 80 percent said alarm clock.

"UNH students want pragmatic and practical feature on their cell phones. Students use their cell phones to make phone calls, text message, and as an alarm clock. Features such as music, global positioning satellite (GPS), email, and video messaging were among the lowest used features on current cell phones, and the research indicates that this isn't changing anytime soon," said Chuck Martin, adjunct professor of marketing at UNH who taught the marketing research class.

Regarding cell phones of the future, 68 percent of students said the top feature they would like is longer battery life, while 58 percent said they want it to be waterproof. The features that the fewest number of students want are video surveillance (2 percent), video projection (1 percent) and video editing (1 percent).

However, price is a major stumbling block for students. While the majority of students want a longer-lasting battery life, they are not willing to pay a high price. Eighty-six percent of students said that price is the top reason for not purchasing cell phones in the future.

Other interesting results include:

- First-year students are more likely to use their phone as a camera while seniors are more likely to use it as a calculator: 63 percent of first-year students use the camera feature regularly, compared with 51 percent of seniors. In contrast, 61 percent of seniors use the calculator feature regularly, compared with 51 percent of first-year students.

- Students at the College of Engineering and Physical Science (CEPS) are significantly less interested in voice-to-text capabilities compared with their peers in other schools. Only 8 percent of CEPS students are interested in the feature, compared with an
average 20 percent of respondents from other schools.

- Business school students were the most interested in the future feature of voice to text. They were the only school to have more than 50 percent of respondents interested in the feature.