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Increased use of Mobile Messaging Services lead to decreased use of Mobile Voice Services and Impact U.S. Consumer Handset Purchase Decisions

New iGR studies show impact on mobile voice from SMS, MMS, mobile email and IM services across U.S. demographics, especially the young

AUSTIN, Texas, December 12th, 2011 – Mobile messaging services, including SMS, MMS, IM and mobile email, are in widespread use across the U.S., especially with the increased proliferation of smartphones and access to the Internet while on the go. While email has traditionally been the messaging service of choice for mobile consumers and business users, SMS, MMS and IM are preferred over mobile email by younger U.S. mobile users. Similarly, *iGR* found that most parents with children over the age of 4 indicated that their children used both SMS and MMS messaging on their own mobile phones.

iGR's new research studies, *Messaging: The U.S. Consumer Perspective* and *Messaging: The Rural U.S. Consumer Perspective* discuss U.S. consumers' use of mobile messaging, the type of content sent via SMS, use of social networking, messaging services, and the influence of messaging on mobile voice services and future mobile purchasing decisions. *iGR's* new studies show the results of *iGR's* latest consumer messaging primary research survey. The survey included questions on the use of SMS, MMS, IM and mobile email, use of social networking messaging services, impact of messaging on mobile and landline voice services, consumers' experiences with mobile messaging, and the importance of mobile messaging on consumers' handset purchase decision. *Messaging: The U.S. Consumer Perspective* is published as part of *iGR's* Wireless and Mobile Landscape research subscription service. The second study, *Messaging: The Rural U.S. Consumer Perspective* is published as part of *iGR's* Rural Markets research subscription service and presents primary research data specific to U.S. rural markets.

"The use of mobile messaging services has been growing for the last two decades. Such services are now seen by consumers across all age groups as a critical part of their mobile experience and in some cases, more important than the mobile voice experience," says Sarah Thoman, *iGR's* research analyst who was responsible for the new studies. "And when it comes to

choosing a new mobile handset or smartphone, more subscribers are likely to consider the messaging capabilities of the device than the cost of the voice rate plan or the overall cost of the handset. This is a critical development for the mobile industry and shows that mobile messaging is no longer an optional or nice-to-have feature.”

iGR's new mobile messaging studies also found that:

- The use of mobile messaging, particularly text (SMS), multimedia messaging (MMS), and messages sent over social networks and instant messaging (IM), is continuing on an upward climb in the U.S.
- Rural users in the U.S. were more likely to report higher use of SMS messaging, whereas suburban users appeared more likely to use SMS messaging and MMS messaging, and urban users were more likely to use IM, email, social networking, video chat, and messaging apps. Thus, urban users showed the greatest variety of messaging activity.
- U.S. consumers now use mobile messaging to communicate a wide range of events. For example, rural users were more likely to send a SMS message to announce a new child, communicate the death of a friend or family member, or to announce a graduation. These use patterns indicate that consumers are substituting messaging functions for tasks that would have previously been accomplished through voice calls.
- *iGR* found that irrespective of U.S. location, most parents with children over the age of 4 indicated that their children used both SMS and MMS messaging on their own mobile phones.
- While SMS messaging and email are the two most employed forms of mobile communication on a daily basis across U.S. users, rural and urban users appeared to send more mobile email, on average, than SMS.
- Facebook remains the social networking tool of choice among all U.S. mobile users. Yet, over 73 percent of users who access social networks from their mobile phone said they accessed Twitter at least twice a day or more in the last month from their mobile phone.
- *iGR* discovered that messaging services are becoming increasingly influential in the handset purchasing decision, particularly for suburban and urban users in the U.S. who indicated messaging services were more influential in the purchase of their current mobile phone than either the cost of mobile voice rate plans or the overall handset cost.
- *iGR* also found that rural U.S. consumers who reported utilizing both voice and messaging services on their mobile device, were 40 percent less likely to place or receive mobile voice calls. Fewer users also reported calling landline telephones.

For details on how to obtain the new report, please contact Amanda Louie, *iGR*'s Director of Strategic Development, at (512) 544-1701 or by email at amandal@iGR-inc.com.

About *iGR*

iGR is a market strategy consultancy focused on the wireless and mobile communications industry. Founded by Iain Gillott, one of the wireless industry's leading analysts, in late 2000 as *iGillottResearch*, *iGR* is now entering its twelfth year of operation. *iGR* continuously researches emerging and existent technologies, technology industries, and consumer markets. We use our detailed research to offer a range of services to help companies improve their position in the marketplace, clearly define their future direction, and ultimately improve their bottom line.

iGR researches a range of wireless and mobile products and technologies, including: smartphones; tablets; mobile applications; bandwidth demand and use; small cell architectures; DAS; LTE; WiMAX; VoLTE; IMS; NFC; GSM/GPRS/UMTS/HSPA; CDMA 1x/EV-DO; iDEN; SIP; macro-, pico- and femtocells; mobile backhaul; WiFi and WiFi offload; and SIM and UICC. *iGR* is a member of the Rural Cellular Association.

A more complete profile of the company can be found at www.iGR-inc.com.