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## **Synovate PAX survey reveals the power of Asian's affluent during the downturn**

SINGAPORE – Leading global market intelligence company Synovate today released the 2009 PAX survey findings, revealing that affluent consumers across Asia Pacific continued to spend during the recession.

Data shows a steady increase in ownership of products such as digital still cameras, laptop/ notebook computers as well as LCD/ Plasma TVs across the region. Moreover, affluent consumers who use the Internet own more products than non-users.

In its thirteenth year, Synovate PAX is the region's most comprehensive study of elite adults, tracking media and digital consumption, prosperity, and influence across 11 markets from Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, to Australia. The survey is conducted year-round and Synovate spoke with 20,245 affluent consumers in Asia Pacific to get the 2009 results.

Comments Steve Garton, Executive Director of Media at Synovate: "The PAX 2009 results show that this affluent group is more important than ever for many marketers. This is a core audience group with money on hand and is willing to spend despite the condition of the economy."

### **Good versus bad times**

Across the region, ownership of laptop/notebook computers by elites jumped from 40.8% last year (up to Q2 2008) to 48% this year (up to Q2 2009). Purchase intention over the next 12 months also held at around 12%.

Results also show that an increasing number of affluent PAX consumers now own a digital still camera: from 58.7% last year, to 63.5% owning one this year.



A new question added in PAX 2009 gauges the popularity of High Definition TVs or HDTV by asking affluent consumers their intention to purchase one over the next 12 months. Close to 6% of elites in Singapore indicated they want to buy one. Currently 31.8% of Singapore's affluent own an HDTV.

LCD/ plasma TVs have become more prevalent across Asia Pacific, from 32.2% of elites owning one last year to currently 36.5% of the group. What's more, 11.8% across the region would like to buy a LCD/ plasma TV in the next 12 months. Fifty seven percent of Singapore elites own a LCD/ plasma TV, with 9.5% wanting to purchase one in the next 12 months.

### **Continuing to seek luxury**

Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong have seen more elites owning designer clothes and leather goods (US\$1000+ per item) over the past year.

Says Clare Lui, Synovate's Research Director in Hong Kong: "It is obvious that affluent consumers do not want to give up their quality of life. The top places with the highest increase of designer clothes and leather goods ownership can be seen in Singapore, from 4.8% of ownership last year to 11.3% this year, followed by Taipei, from 8% to 9.6%, then Hong Kong, from 15.8% to 17%."

In terms of the market that shows the most intention to purchase luxury goods (US\$1000+ per item) in the next 12 months, elites in Manila top the charts, such as for designer clothes and leather goods (8.7% Manila elites vs. regional average of 3.3%), designer footwear (7.1% vs. regional average of 2.3%), jewellery (10.5% vs. average 5.2%), and luxury watches (8.6% vs. average 4.2 %.)

Ownership of private cars held steady at around 73% across the region. Singapore showed the highest jump, from 60.8% last year to 67.1% this year.

### **Smartphones on the rise**

Sixty three percent of those surveyed in PAX 2009 own a mobile phone with Internet access and camera functions while 10.4% have a hybrid/ PDA phone. The figures were up from last year's 59.7% for mobile phones with Internet access and camera functions, and 8% for hybrid mobiles.

What about purchase intentions over the next 12 months for mobile phones with Internet access and camera functions? Taipei sees the most increase from 9.4% of elites who wanted to buy one last year, to 14.2% this year. In Singapore, 6.9% indicated intention to purchase in Q2 2008, to 9.6% in Q2 2009.



Top markets with an intention to purchase a hybrid/ PDA phone in the future are Taiwan (9.6% of elites like one), Kuala Lumpur (8.7%), Bangkok (8.4%), Manila (8.1%), and Hong Kong (6%).

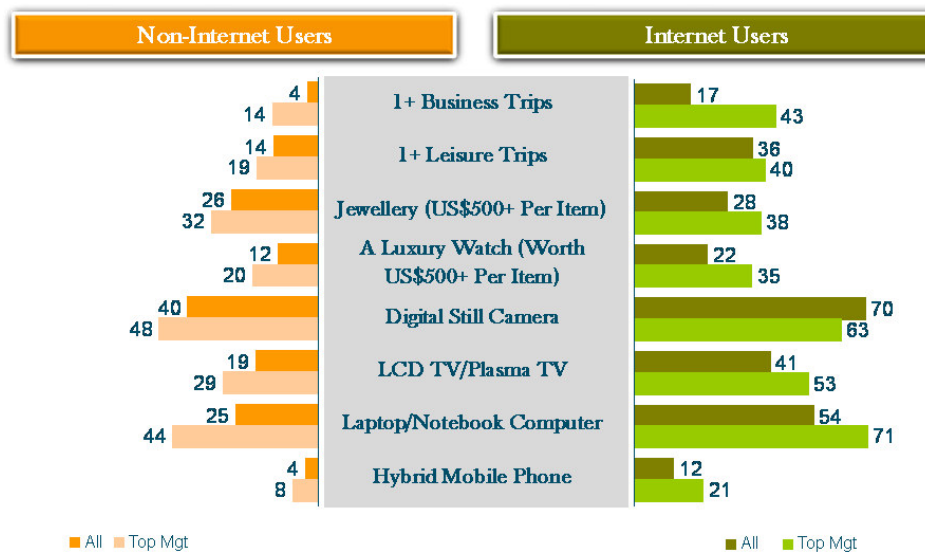
PAX Digital Life, which studies affluent consumers' digital habits, revealed that when smart mobile device owners go online, 73.6% of the time is through PC or laptop access, while the rest of the time (26.4%) is through mobile and smartphone access.

Across the region, smartphones are mostly used on weekends when elites are out of office or at home. Eighteen percent of the time using Smartphones is during work, 27% is at home, and 55% is at other places.

### Internet users own more products

Across the region, it is found that elites who use the Internet own more products. For example, 22% more Internet savvy elites go on one or more leisure trips compared to non-Internet using elites (36% vs. 14%), 10% more have a luxury watch (22% vs. 12%), 30% more own a digital still camera (70% vs. 40%), and 22% more have a LCD/ plasma TV (41% vs. 19%). The figure below shows the comparison of additional product categories.

Product ownership between users and non-users of the Internet



Source: PAX Q3 2008 to Q2 2009; 10 markets excluding Tokyo.



### **Traditional media to *mainstream* media**

“Marketers have to start thinking about mainstream media,” adds Garton. “Television, as we have said last year, has already escaped the box and the living room. PAX 2009 findings show that 7% of elites have watched a TV programme via mobile in the past 30 days.

“As for print, people are still consuming it, but in different ways. Thirty seven percent of time spent reading publications is done online in a typical week.”

Affluent consumers are also shown to be engaged with social networking sites. Sixty-three percent of elite respondents are users and have visited a social networking site in the past 30 days.

*For more information on PAX 2009 results, please refer to facts sheet attached.*

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### **About Synovate**

Synovate, the market research arm of Aegis Group plc, generates consumer insights that drive competitive marketing solutions. The network provides clients with cohesive global support and a comprehensive suite of research solutions. Synovate employs over 6,400 staff across 61 countries. More information on Synovate can be found at [www.synovate.com](http://www.synovate.com).