



DIAPERS TO DIPLOMAS: What's on the Minds of New Parents

WRITTEN BY
Jordan Rost
Brad Johnsmeyer
Allison Mooney

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THE **RUNDOWN**

What can you expect when you're expecting? Many people turn to the web to find out. According to a recent survey, new and expecting parents do twice as many searches as non-parents do. With both Mother's Day and Father's Day on the way, we looked into the data to see what we could learn about today's new moms and dads. We found them to be conscious consumers who don't cringe at cloth diapers. Health is their biggest concern, but believe it or not, college planning is right up there. And they heavily rely on mobile devices for more than you might think.

Are your consumers expecting? Expect them to do more searching, most often on mobile

New parents have a lot of questions: What to expect? What to do? What to buy? Today's generation of moms and dads are turning to the web for answers. According to a survey conducted through Google Consumer Surveys in April, new and expecting parents perform twice as many searches non-parents. Often, they're searching on smartphones. In fact, more than half (56%) of searches related to maternity on Google are now done on mobile.

It's a significant, growing trend:

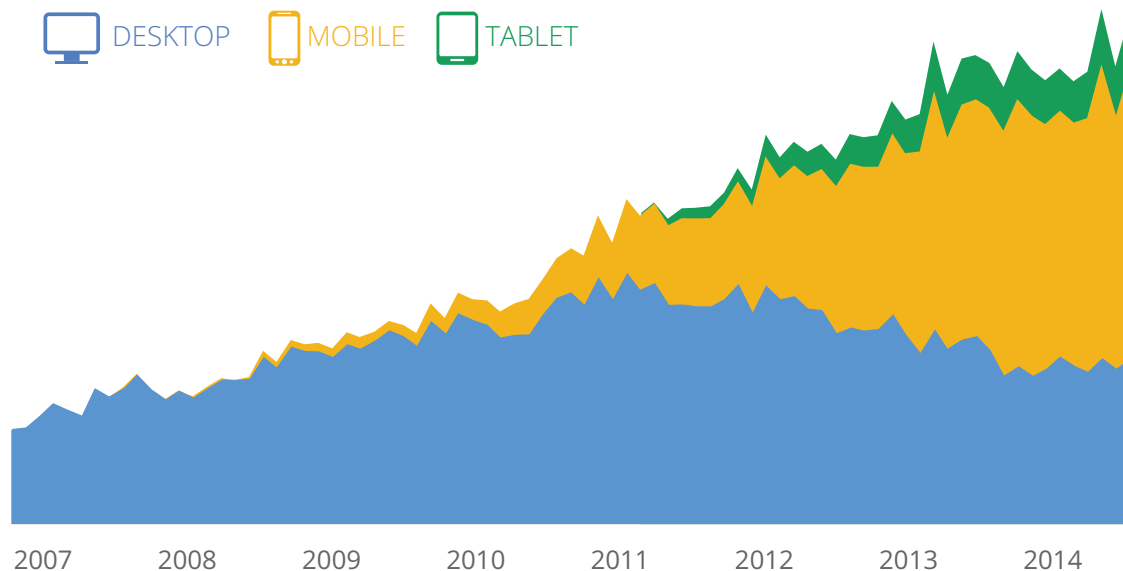
- New and expecting parents are 2.7x more likely than non-parents to use a smartphone as their primary device (Google Consumer Surveys).
- Mobile searches related to babies and parenting have grown 25% since 2013 (Google Data).
- Searches about baby development were 72% mobile in Q1 of this year (Google Data).

We've been seeing mobile use grow across the board, but it's particularly pronounced among new parents. Why? Perhaps they're constantly seeking answers to new questions, and mobile lets them do so right in the moment. They can also use their device with one hand, baby in the other.

It makes sense that content and campaigns should look great on mobile, then, and not just as a subset. Parents are looking for *many* types of information on mobile devices. In fact, views of parenting videos on YouTube were up 329% on mobile this year. It seems that the most convenient screen wins, regardless of size.

Another factor in new parents' mobile use is their age. They're more likely to belong to the younger millennial generation that has grown up with phones in hand. Indeed, our survey showed that youth *plus* parenthood is a digital double whammy: Young parents (ages 18–34) search 54% more than older parents. Young mothers use smartphones as their primary device most often (more than fathers and older moms). But millennial dads actually did the most searches overall, so don't discount them as consumers.

Overall Growth in Searches by Device in the *Maternity and New Parent* Category



Source: Google Data, July 2007–March 2014, Indexed Search Query Volume, United States.

Reusing and renting, parents are now more conscious consumers

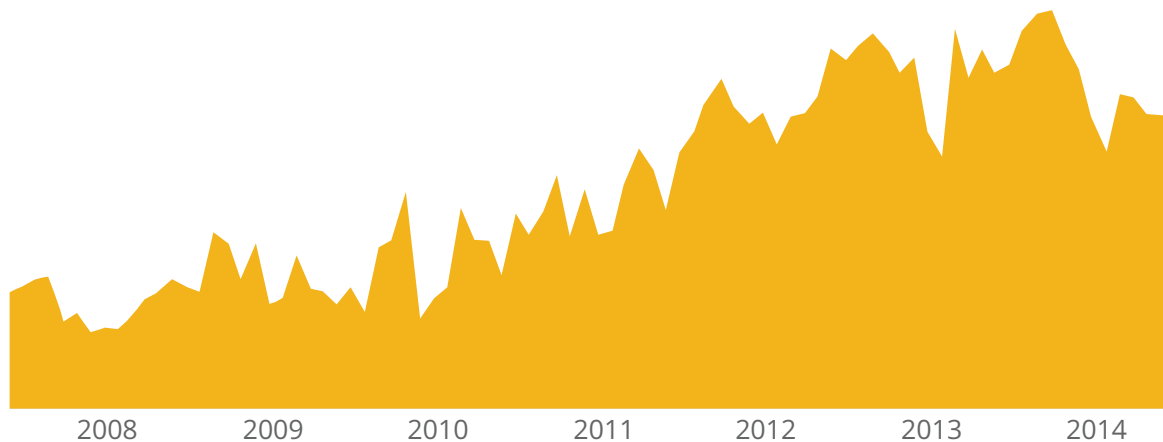
So parents are doing a lot of searches, but what are they searching for? Not surprisingly, clothing queries were among the top commercial searches. The types of queries change depending on the stage of parenthood, though. When searching for maternity clothes, searches for “when to buy” and “where to buy” are most popular. Once the baby comes (and they presumably have less time and money to shop), parents want to make the most of what they have. This is when we see searches for how to “clean” or “reuse” baby clothes.

Having a baby can be an expensive proposition in a number of different ways, and we see parents searching for good value across the board. Marketers looking to appeal to new parents might want to focus on providing economical, eco-conscious solutions. Along these lines, searches for “cloth diapers” have been on the rise, growing 218% since 2007. They are most popular in the cities you might expect (Portland, Denver and Seattle) and a couple you may not (Atlanta and Dallas). Most searches happen in the summer months,

when most babies are born in the United States—an insight that can be applied to any new baby product, really, not just cloth diapers.

We've also seen increased demand for conservation and value beyond obvious categories like clothing. For example, Google searches for "stroller rental" have grown 291% since 2007. It's clear that today's parents are focusing on saving more and wasting less in everything they do.

Searches for "Cloth Diapers" in the *Home & Garden* Category



Source: Google Data, April 2007 - April 2014, Indexed Search Query Volume, United States.

Planning for school starts during pregnancy, trumped by more immediate concerns when baby comes

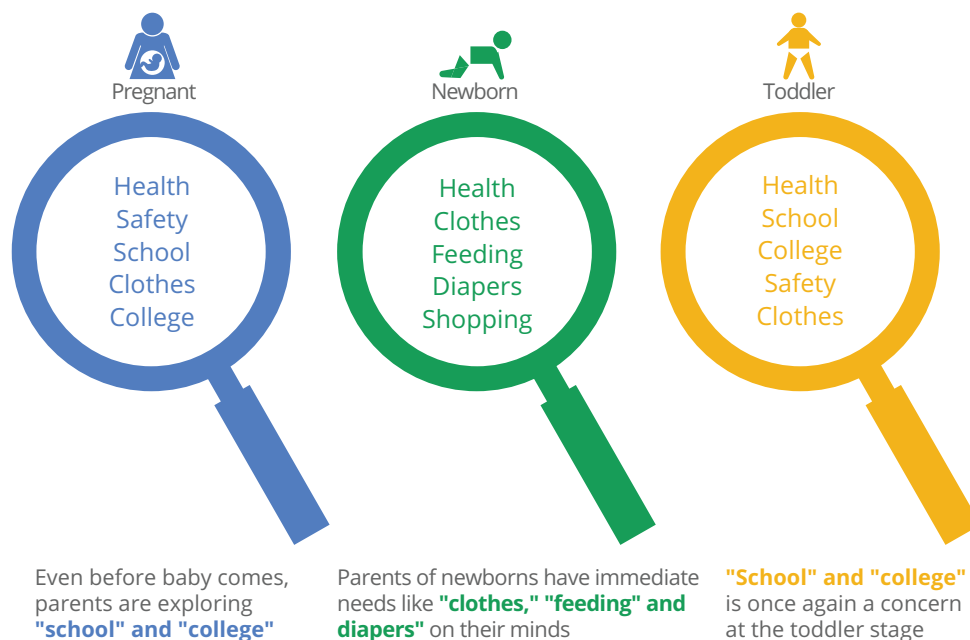
Parents aren't just concerned with saving money on consumer goods. They're also saving for college, even before the baby comes. When people search for "pregnant," they are also searching for "school" and "college" surprisingly often. During pregnancy, it seems that future parents are actively learning and planning ahead.

It's interesting and revealing to see how concerns vary by stage. Once the baby comes, interests shift to the here and now. When people search for "newborn," searches for college and school subside and more immediate needs like "clothes," "feeding" and "diapers" rise to the top. But when people search for "toddler," concerns change once

again; “school” and “college” become top of mind. According to Google data, parents who are searching for preschools are 41x more likely to search about college savings than the average. This was backed up by our survey, which showed that “my child’s education” was one of the main concern of parents with toddlers.

Universally (and unsurprisingly), “health” is the top concern, but we can even see differences there depending on stage. Expecting and new parents are especially interested in “weight,” whereas “fever” is the top concern at the toddler phase. Brands have the opportunity to address these concerns, but as you can see, a nuanced approach is required. The more tailored and timely their messages, the better they’ll serve consumers.

Parenting searches related to health trump all others, but we see specific differences by stage.



Source: Google Data, Jan - April 2014, Search Interest Share, United States.

Having a baby is a major life moment that changes consumers' interests, influences and habits. Data gives us a bigger window into these changes. Through searches and surveys, we can see the increasing reliance on the web and mobile, a clear interest in conservation and value, and the shifting landscape of concerns—from baby health to college savings. Looking to reach consumers in these big moments that matter? Keep [looking at the data](#).



Jordan Rost
Analytical Insights Marketing, Google



Brad Johnsmeyer
Analytical Insights Marketing, Google



Allison Mooney
Head of Trends & Insights, Google
