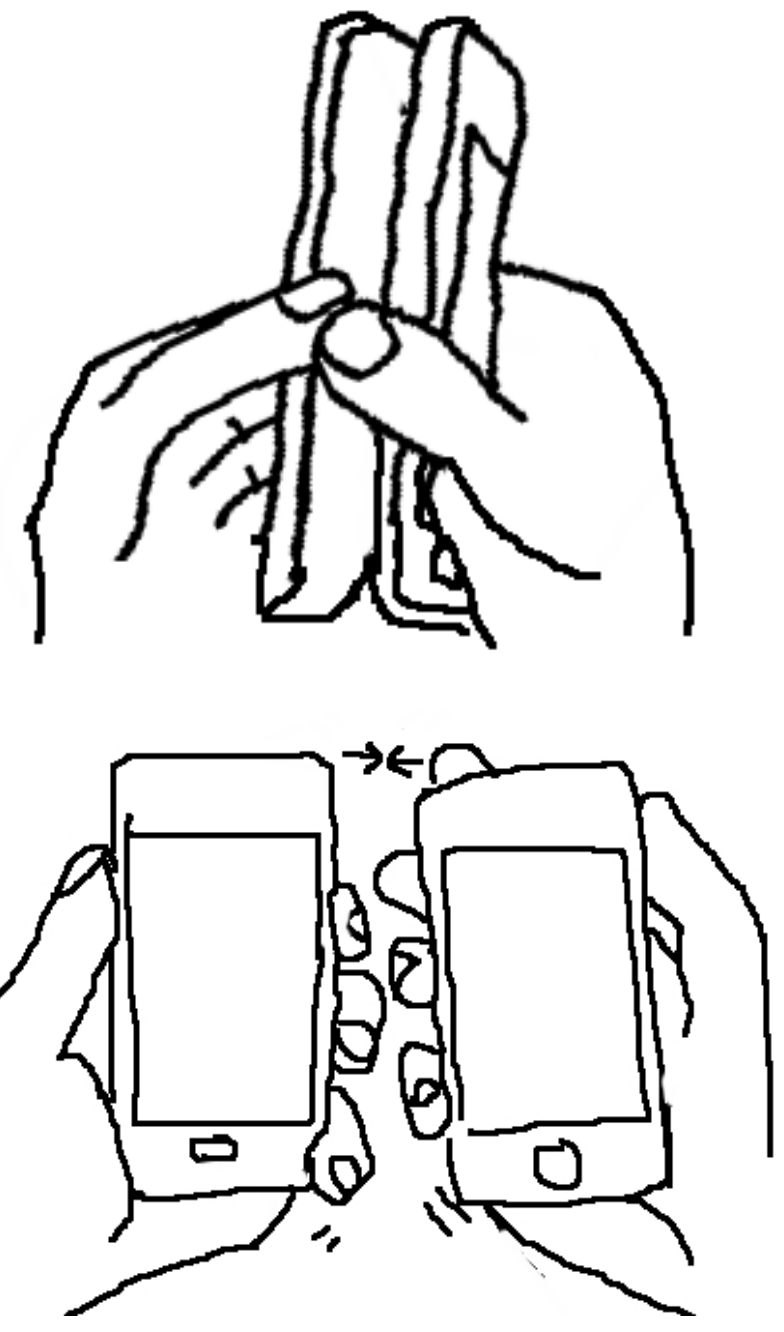


People Don't Bump: Sharing Around Mobile Phones in Close Proximity

Afshan Kirmani and Rowanne Fleck
UCL Interaction Centre, University College London

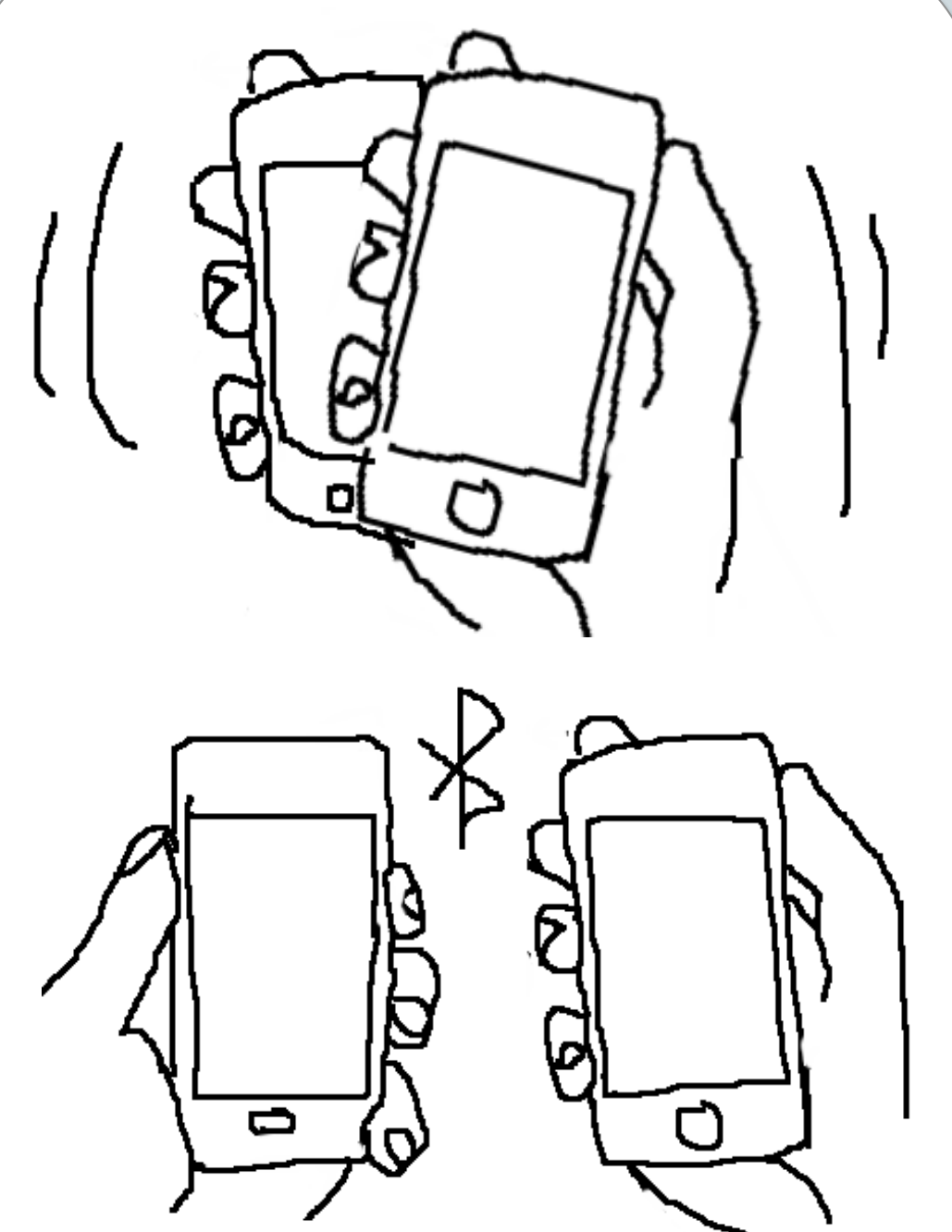


A large body of mobile phone sharing research focuses on creating new interaction techniques for sharing and considers the usability of such applications and features whilst ignoring the context of their use, their adoption or appropriation. Therefore it is not known whether these technologies are used in practice or whether they really meet people's sharing needs. The aim of this research was to understand current real-world user sharing practices around mobile smart phones from a diary study of 63 participants.



Technologies for Sharing with Phones in Close Proximity

Technologies are being developed for sharing photos and other media either one-to-one, to a group or in large group situations like spectator events. Interaction techniques include: holding two devices together, shaking them, bumping them, tapping to sync and picking and dropping from one device to another. But what are people actually using? How do they really share when face-to-face with each other?



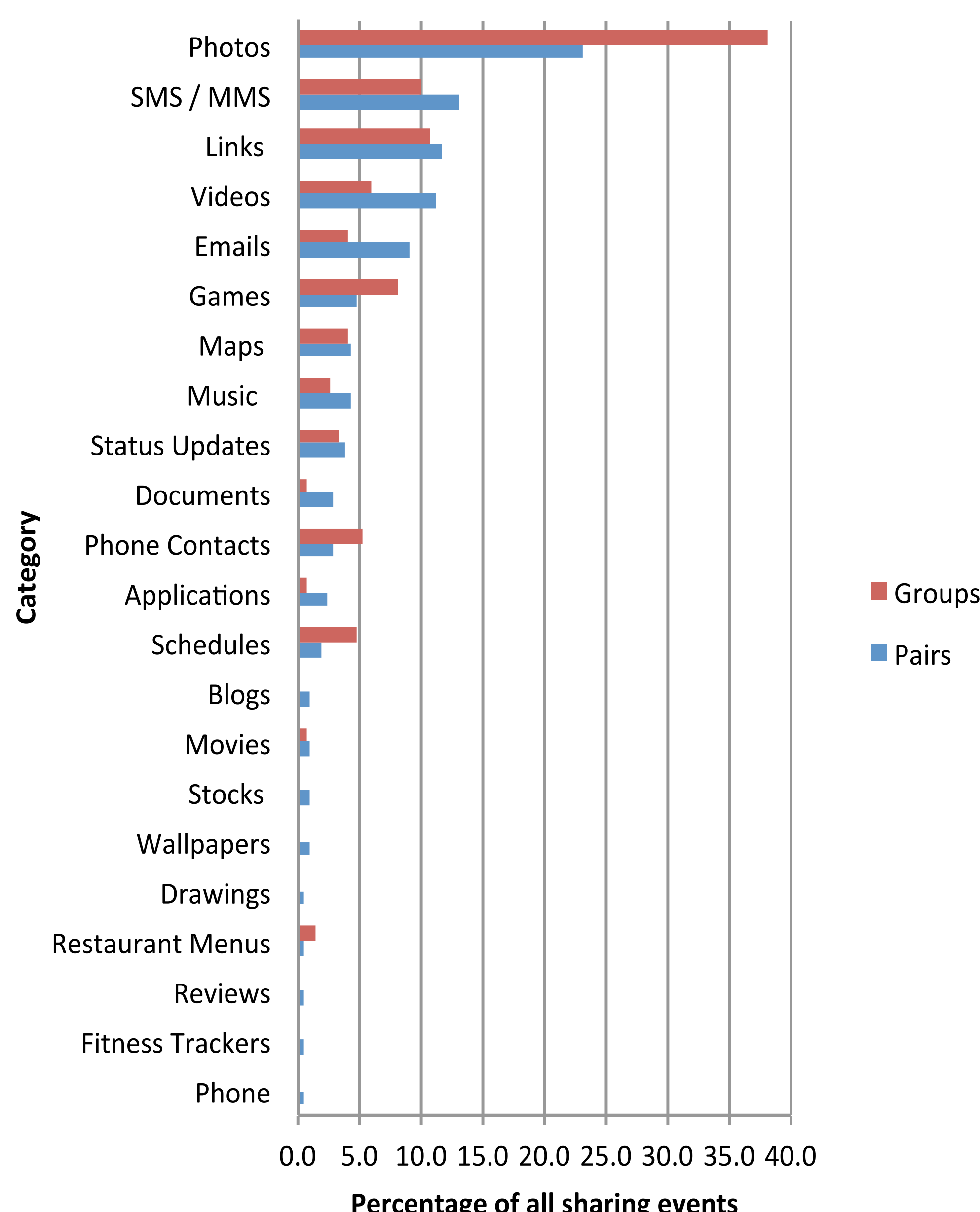
Method

Sixty-three smart-phone users in the London area were recruited to take part in a one week diary study to find out what they shared when face-to-face (f2f) or in close-proximity to those they were sharing with. Text messages and emails were sent to participants each day to remind them to report what they shared, with whom, how, why when and where.

Findings

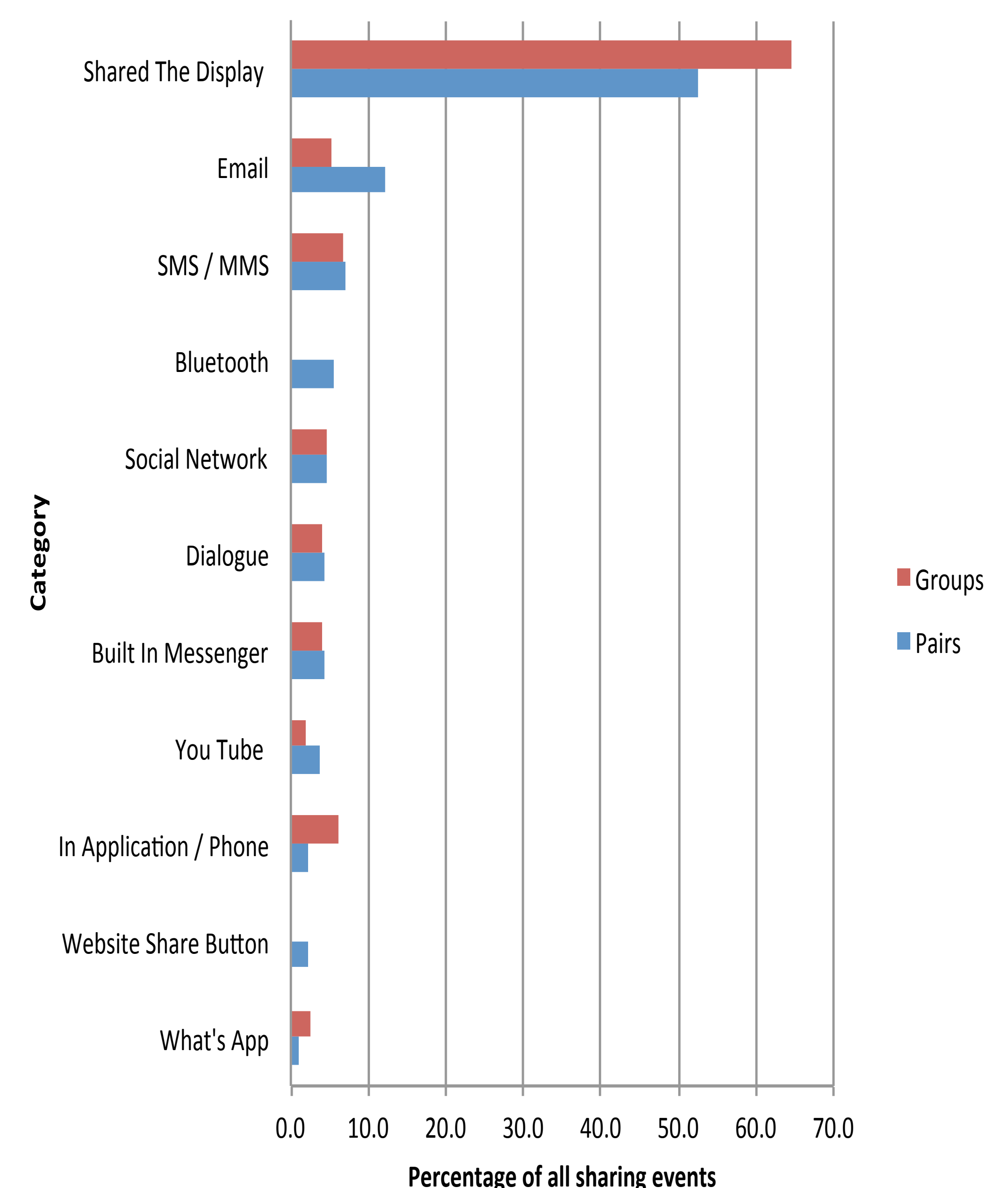
Over the course of the week, a total of 363 f2f sharing events were recorded (a mean of 5.7 per participant) with a total of 213 events that involved sharing between pairs, and 150 to a group.

Sharing Categories



- **People don't bump:** None of our participants reported using any of the fun or novel techniques available for sharing in close proximity.
- **People often share when in groups or with more than one person at a time.** 41% of the sharing events we recorded involved sharing with more than one other person at a time, and often included people who were remote.
- **People do a lot of showing.** 58% of f2f sharing events we recorded involved either showing or sharing orally without any transfer of information from one device to another or via a social network.
- **Showing often leads to or precedes file transfer.**

Sharing Mechanisms



Discussion and Conclusions

Many factors played a role in influencing our participants to share in the way they did, which will be different to participants with access to different technology and infrastructure in different parts of the country or world. Some of the reasons why our participants didn't make use of specifically f2f sharing mechanisms might be that they were not available to them, not suitable for sharing to more than one person at a time or with someone f2f and remote simultaneously, they were not as quick and easy as showing or telling or they did not support showing without giving. These findings should be considered by designers of mobile phone sharing mechanisms. We also suggest that mechanisms which initially augment showing and telling, and *then* provide follow-up file sharing, could be successful.