



Acércame
No Más Distancia

Introduction:

Hispanics in the United States have strong ties to their home countries. About one third of the hispanic population is foreign born¹ and many are first or second generation. Due to the physical distance, they may not be in contact with their family at home as much as they would like. We know that family is very important to the hispanic population²; therefore, we intend to develop an app that keeps hispanic families close like there is no distance at all.

STATISTICAL PORTRAIT OF HISPANICS IN THE UNITED STATES, 2012 Population, by Race and Ethnicity: 2000 and 2012

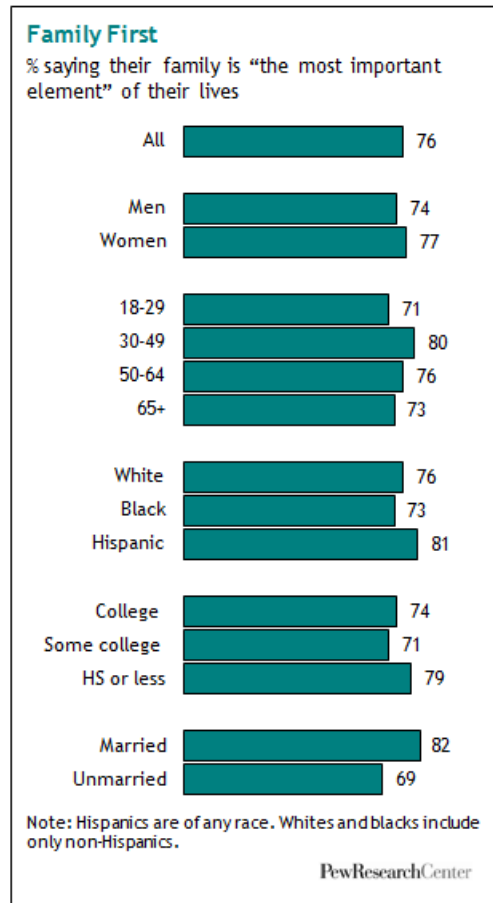
Universe: 2000 and 2012 resident population

	2012 population	2000 population	Percent, 2012	Percent, 2000
Hispanic	52,932,483	35,204,480	16.9	12.5
Native born	34,118,237	21,072,230	10.9	7.5
Foreign born	18,814,246	14,132,250	6.0	5.0
White alone, not Hispanic	197,275,734	194,527,123	62.8	69.1
Black alone, not Hispanic	38,535,707	33,706,554	12.3	12.0
Asian alone, not Hispanic	15,331,196	10,088,521	4.9	3.6
Other, not Hispanic	9,838,920	7,895,228	3.1	2.8
Total	313,914,040	281,421,906	100.0	100.0

Note: "Other, not Hispanic" includes persons reporting single races not listed separately and persons reporting more than one race.

Source: Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project tabulations of 2000 Census (5% IPUMS) and 2012 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PewResearchCenter



¹Statistical Portrait of Hispanics In The United States, 2012. (2012). *Pew Research Center*. http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2014/04/FINAL_Statistical-Portrait-of-Hispanics-in-the-United-States-2012.pdf

²Family. (2010). *Pew Research Center*. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/11/18/iv-family/>

Situation Analysis:

To gain a better perspective of the how the Acércame app compares to other mobile apps in the market, we chose to do a SWOT analysis.

Strengths:

- Hispanics are continually keeping in touch with their families in their home countries
- Hispanics preferred online method using mobile devices over a desktop. “More Hispanics own an iPhone than the general population (27 percent vs. 20 percent), an Android (34 percent vs. 26 percent), or an iPad tablet (21 percent vs. 16 percent)”³
- 92% of Latinos are now avid mobile phone users, while 61% own smartphones⁴
- Hispanics are already using social networking sites. “Two-thirds (68%) of Latino internet users say they use Facebook, Twitter or other social networking sites, according to the Pew Hispanic Center survey”⁵

Weaknesses

- The family members in the home country may not have access to the app via internet and mobile devices
- The generational gap may come into play. Those families in the home country are more likely to be older where the internet and mobile device usage is not high

³Srouginis, K. (2012, October 10). Hispanic Consumers & Digital Media. Retrieved April 26, 2015, from <http://www.iab.net/media/file/Hispanic-Digital-Consumer.pdf>

⁴ Designing a Culturally Appropriate Visually Enhanced Low-Text Mobile App Promoting Physical Activity for Latinos: A Qualitative Study. (2015). *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*.

<https://d21.depaul.edu/d21/le/content/350224/viewContent/2508139/View>

⁵Social Networking. (2013). *Pew Research Center*.

<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2013/03/07/vi-social-networking/>

- Internet usage in Latin America was 10.6% compared to 89.4% of the rest of the world in 2013⁶

Opportunities:

- There are no other apps that specifically promote families, especially Hispanic families, staying in touch
- We can develop one app that allows you to have a English or Spanish interface
- Perhaps develop partnerships with other organizations that promote contact between Hispanic families living in America and their home countries
- Could gain sponsorships from other organizations/corporations to gain momentum for publicity and possibly setting up Cércame stations at public centers for those who do not have access to personal computers/internet

Threats:

- Social media sites, such as facebook, are already successful in connecting people across the world
 - A majority of Latinos use facebook (73%)⁷
- Other video apps, such as skype, are already successful with connecting people
- There are other Spanish only social media sites, such as Migente.com
 - However, its phone app is only rated a 2.5/5 stars according to the Apple App Store
 - Also, its focus is meeting new people, while our app would intend to keep already connected people close

⁶ Internet Users In Latin America. (2014). *Internet World Stats*.
<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats10.htm>

⁷Social Media Preferences Vary By Race and Ethnicity. (2015). *Pew Research Center*. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/02/03/social-media-preferences-vary-by-race-and-ethnicity/>

Research Problem:

We intend to find out what type of communication is used to keep in contact between Latinos living in the United States and their family from home countries. We will also investigate whether Latinos would use an app to stay in touch with family from their home countries. Through research we will understand what makes an app successful, especially for communication. Using all of this research, we will develop an app allowing hispanics to stay close to their families back at home despite the long distances.

Research Methods:

Secondary Research:

Building a Successful Social Media App:

According to Taulli (2012), the four major keys to building a successful social network are to start at the right place, create something valuable that gains the consumers trust, allow for expansion, and enable sharing for the consumer.⁸

Larizadeh (2013) also educates its readers on how to create a successful mobile application. The first is to create a great product. The best apps only have one function, but that function is perfected. It is also well designed, visually and for the user experience. It must be built in virality, meaning that it encourages other users. An app entrepreneur must never forget about Android, considering it is now the dominant platform. Considering smaller markets allows for success. Sometimes it is easier to start in smaller markets, like Latin America. Marketing is key for a successful app; people have to know about it before using it. Track and measure everything is another must. By doing so, it allows for app improvement and growth. The last bit of advice Larizadeh (2013) gave was to make it free.⁹

Mobile Apps and the Internet in Latin America

Another component for a successful social media app is to make sure that the app is widely penetrated by its users. In some parts of Latin America that could be hard to do there as there are some limitations in accessing technology like the internet. Fortunately that digital divide is shrinking. Mexico is considered one of the fastest growing telecom landscapes in Latin America due to its large youthful audience that uses web-based products such as social media, mobile messaging and online video. According to Euromonitor International (2015), Mexico holds the second-largest telecom market by revenues in Latin America, only behind Brazil.¹⁰

Also, in countries like Mexico, the government is making an effort to offer better access to the internet and mobile phone service. The Mexican government announced the launch of a US\$10.0 billion national broadband Internet project in mid-2014 that is expected to offer a competitive open network for smaller providers. The project is part of a wider plan of universal access, which is to be achieved by expanding network coverage, fostering competition and ensuring that the constitutional reform of the telecoms sector is ongoing (Euromonitor

⁸ Taulli, T. (2012). *Four Keys to Building a Successful Social Network*. Forbes.
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/tomtaulli/2012/02/22/four-keys-to-building-a-successful-social-network/>.

⁹ Larizadeh, A. (2013). *Eight Tips For A Successful App*. Forbes.
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/avidlarizadeh/2013/07/19/eight-tips-for-a-successful-app/>

¹⁰ Euromonitor International. (2015). *Technology, Communications and Media: Mexico*. Passport

International, 2015).¹¹ Mobile phone service is becoming more affordable, as well, declining since 2013. This is in hopes of driving mobile internet service and opening up opportunities like mobile apps.

Interviews (Qualitative Primary Research):

Individual interviews were selected to conduct qualitative primary research. This method was chosen to gain a more in-depth insight of how Latinos living in America currently communicate with their family back in their home countries. The individuals that were recruited were family, friends and classmates that we identified as Latinos and had family that they communicated with in their home countries.

Participants:

- Hispanics living in the United States with family in their home country
- 15-40 years old

Interview Guideline Questions:

- What mobile apps do you use?
 - What do you enjoy about these apps?
 - What would you change about these apps?
- What websites do you use?
 - What do you enjoy about these websites?
 - What would you change about these websites?
- Do you prefer English or Spanish websites?
 - Why or why not?
- Do you prefer English or Spanish mobile apps?
 - Why or why not?
- How often do you communicate with your family back at home?
- What is your ideal amount of communication with your family? 1x a week? 2-3x a week? Daily?
- When communicating with your family from your home country what type of information are you sharing?
- When you communicate with your family from your home country, do you speak with one person or a group of people?
- What mediums do you use when communicating at home with your family?
Written letters? Phone? Email? Video? Social Media?
 - What are reasons why you would not use a mobile app?
 - What are reasons why you would not use a social media website?
 - What are reasons why your family in your home country would not use an app via mobile phone/internet?

¹¹ Euromonitor International. (2015). *Technology, Communications and Media: Mexico*. Passport

- What could be improved with apps, such as Skype, when communicating with family back at home?
- Please describe a typical situation in which you are communicating or attempting to communicate with family in your home country.
- What are some difficulties you face when trying to communicate with your family in your home country?
- Are there any limitations that your family has when trying to communicate with you? If so, what are they?
- If you had an ideal way of communicating with family back at home, what would it be?
- Are there any new things that you would communicate with family back at home if your ideal way of communicating was created?

Survey (Quantitative Primary Research):

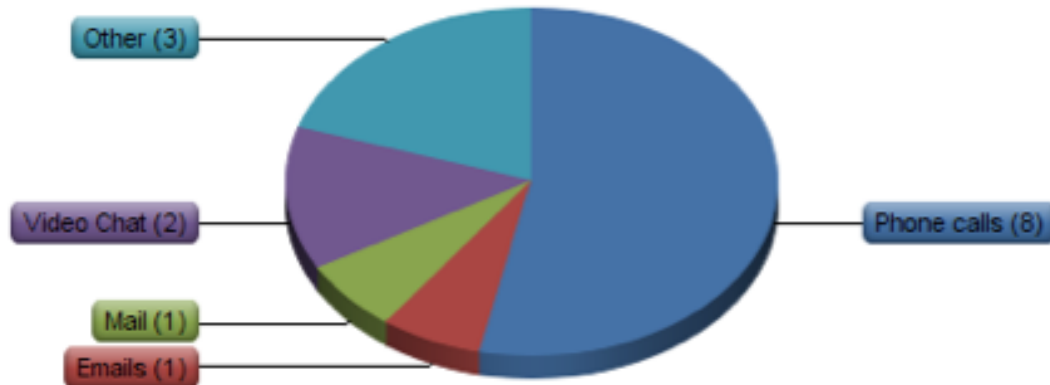
Questionnaire:

- Are you Latino?
- Do you have family living in your home country that you communicate with?
- Do you own a smartphone?
- Do you own a laptop/desktop?
- Do you have internet service?
- How often do you communicate with your family in your home country?
- How do you prefer to communicate with your family?
- What do you use to video chat?
- Does your family in your home country have a smartphone?
- Does your family in your home country have a laptop/desktop?
- Does your family in your home country have internet access in their home?
- Does your family in your home country speak English or Spanish? Both?
- When communicating with your family do you use Spanish or English? Both?
- Do you prefer to use apps in Spanish or English? Both?

Research Findings:

Phone & Video:

Phone and video calls are the most used mediums among Latinos communicating with family in Spanish speaking countries. When asked in a survey, “How do you prefer to communicate with your family? Click all that apply.” Respondents answered “phone calls” and “video chat”.



Those that answered “other” said they used text messaging and facebook to communicate. Those that answered video chat were given a follow-up question asking with what medium do they video chat. They both responded they used the phone. One interviewee explains why those are the best means of communication:

“You have the ability of the Skype now, which is a lot better because there are babies that are newborn and new people in the family, and you get to meet them. The phone is a lot easier. You just click the phone and talk to them.”

Most interviewees noted that they use voice calls, video and social media when trying to communicate with family back at home. Overall, voice calls and video chat were the most convenient and efficient ways to communicate with family back at home.

Bad Connection:

Since most communication is via phone and video, Latinos are dependent upon the internet and cellphone service to keep in contact with family. Many times, there are difficulties staying connected, literally, due to poor internet connections. One interviewee explains that in the middle of the conversation, a connection will fail and the video will cut out or the call will be dropped, interrupting the

communication. Most interviewees explained that they use Skype for video calling. They expressed that there are some problems with Skype. Skype sometimes has sound trouble, disconnections, and poor video quality. One interviewee stated, “the connection is bad unless you buy the service, it doesn’t work well”. Another interviewees’ views on Skype are:

“Sometimes the computer or camera is messed up. If they could have a higher resolution and not freeze I would like that”.

For the families that live in a very rural small town they experience more problems. One interviewee stated that he experiences a bad signal when it is very rainy or windy where his family is. Also, the day or time of year play an important role when trying to communicate with your family back home. One interviewee explains that a failed called may happen especially during a holiday. She states, “so many people are calling that you can’t get through.”

Money:

When communicating with family in Spanish speaking countries, a major issue is money. Most Latinos living in America contact the families in their home countries because it is too expensive vice versa. Technology, phone service, and internet are all luxuries in many Spanish speaking towns and countries, meaning they may not afford them from month to month. One interviewee explains this concept in more detail:

“You know money wise, you prefer to feed your children than buying them the internet. Pretty much people are getting the internet, the wireless too. We hear a lot of other people have that already. But if you come to ‘okay I have only \$10, what am I gonna spend it on?’ You’re gonna cut down the internet. It’s most like technology is not necessary for them yet. Most of the teenagers, you see them carry a phone, but it’s like prepaid minutes, most of them. You don’t see contracts there. You don’t see people with contracts for phones. If you have \$10, that’s all you can spend that month. You’re not about to get a contract and pay every month. Because you may need money for some other things. Well if I don’t have enough money for the month, well I don’t buy a card, a prepaid card, for this month. And I spend my money on whatever else is necessary.”

Another interviewee states how the lack of money changes the dynamic of communicating with your family. She states, “Generally, they want you to call them because they don’t have money for a calling card to call you. So, it’s more for them to call you.”

Lack of Technology:

Due to a lack of money in certain areas, technology consumption is a lot less in Spanish speaking countries than in America. One interviewees’ family member has no reception, no internet connection or phone service where he lives. Some families may not have a smartphone or a computer with internet in the house; therefore, they may have to travel to communicate with their families. One interviewee describes this situation:

“Not everyone has internet at the house. You know what they have over there? There’s like a little house on the corner you can rent computers. And you go to that place and use their internet.”

Another encounter of how someone has to access the internet or phone is described as:

“You see my parents don’t have the internet or phone. They have to go to my niece house which is in the same town to use the internet and make or receive phone calls.”

Even the phone may not be accessible for simple voice calls. Another interviewee explains why:

“Sometimes people, you can believe this or not. But sometimes people, you may call to them in the morning, and they have phone service, and in the afternoon they may not have phone service. Because if you don’t pay the phone bill when it’s due you are out of phone. It sounds kind of weird but its true.”

Even though phone calls, texts, and messages are appreciated, having that face-to-face communication is very much treasured and valued. Most of the interviewees responded that video means, such as Skype, as being an ideal way of communicating with family back home. One interviewee even offers suggestions to make that experience better. She offers:

“It would be nice to have programs that have multiple screens for more people to talk on Skype. You can get more people involved in the conversation and talk more frequently.”

Age Differences:

Technology:

The kids and young adults are more understanding of the technology. They are the ones that use the internet and video calls for communication. The older generations rely on voice phone calls because that is what they know how to use. An adult interviewee explains her views on the internet in her home country:

“For young kids, it’s a little easier. You know to just communicate with everybody with all the apps you may have on the internet. But for an adult its a little different because we are a little behind in with the technology. And it’s a little harder. Pretty much the only thing they know is the phone. I don’t consider myself a technology person either. You know, a phone to me is, pick up the phone and call and that’s it.”

In the survey, cross-tabulations showed that age was not dependent on medium preference.

		How old are you?					Total
		Younger than 18	18-25	26-35	36-55	55 or older	
How do you prefer to communicate with your family? Click all that apply.	Phone calls	1	4	2	1	0	8
	Emails	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Mail	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Video Chat	1	0	0	1	0	2
	Other	0	1	2	0	0	3
	Total	1	4	3	2	0	10

However, this could be due to the fact that communication is across generations; therefore, the phone must be used or children or young adults must be around to use video.

Language:

Many young adults and teens prefer to use English if it is their first language. When communicating back at home they will use both English and Spanish but prefer to use English. English is especially preferred among young adults and teens when using mobile applications or websites. This is confirmed through another cross-tabulation.

		How old are you?					Total
		Younger than 18	18-25	26-35	36-55	55 or older	
What language do you prefer to use for phone/computer apps?	Spanish	0	0	0	1	0	1
	English	0	4	1	1	0	6
	Either Spanish or English	1	0	2	0	0	3
	Neither Spanish nor English	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	1	4	3	2	0	10

When asked why or why not either language, most of the interviewees responded because either one was their first language. One interviewee whose first language is Spanish and is in the 36-55 age range talks more about this:

“...sometimes you just want to use your own language, but I can do both. Spanish is my first language. So, I’d rather use Spanish and there are some English words that I don’t know.

Another interesting find is a young adult, aged 26-35, whose first language is English expresses interest in some apps and websites having a translation function to change between English and Spanish in hopes to communicate with her family better. She explains further:

“Facebook should change between English and Spanish. Maybe if there was a translation function on Skype for those of us that don’t speak Spanish so well, that would be cool to have because like I don’t speak it so well but I still want to talk to my family. If trying to speak Spanish it can difficult trying to get your message across.”

Potential Closer Relationships:

Since communication is limited between families separated by distance, newer generations may not form strong relationships with their family members in the opposite country. One member explained that she doesn’t communicate often with her family in Mexico because she is not close with them. She feels that if there was a better way to communicate more often, she could form a stronger relationship. Then the conversations would be longer, rather than 15 minutes, allowing for more in-depth conversations with each member allowing for relationships to build.

Schedules:

Another common issue when communicating with family living in a home country is that the schedules do not line up. One interviewee explains this for better understanding:

“Sometimes it’s just hard to get together. Because everybody is...
We... normal schedule to people are 6am to 1 or 2 or 5 or 6 at the latest,
but over there most people don’t end their work until 9 o’clock at night.”

Due to this issue, the family cannot connect, and they will have to try again at a later time. This could become costly since international phone calls can be expensive, especially in the home countries.

Research Insights:

We found that many Latinos enjoy communicating with family from their home country via voice calls and video chat. Therefore, Acércame must include voice calling and video chat features. However, most current communications issues result from a poor connection, meaning the video cuts out or the call drops. For Acércame, all features must be clear and reliable.

This app would be favorable with a younger audience, since the younger generations are more technologically advanced. However, we must reach older generations. To ensure that older generations can learn to use the app, its features must be simple, organized, and easily understood. Also, since the younger generations speak mostly English, the language within Acércame must be English. Since we are still trying to reach the older generations, the app must be able to change between English and Spanish easily and accurately.

Due to scheduling issues, there must be a feature in which you can leave a message--video, voice, or text. This allows the family members to be in the moment in which the other family member was trying to reach them. It is also more cost effective than calling back and more convenient than trying to video chat back.

Unfortunately, access to technology and the internet in Spanish speaking countries is not as common as it is in the United States. We would have to develop ideas to help ensure access to Acércame in home countries.

Research Conclusions:

Acércame will be most successful if its features are clear and reliable, meaning no dropped calls or choppy voice chats. The languages should be switched easily to and from Spanish appealing older and newer generations. Simplicity and organization is key for all generations to understand the apps functions. Features must include video, voice, and text, as well as an option to leave messages.

Due to a lack of time and funding, research was cut short. To gain even more concrete support and sound research, our survey should have been taken by at least 100 people, and interviews should have taken place until we stopped learning new information. However, each component of our research supported the other; therefore, the evidence we gained was significant.

Integrated Communication Plan:

Goal:

To gain awareness of Acércame and to increase usage among young Latino adults.

Objective:

To have 1,500 downloads in the first three months.

Strategy:

To persuade young Latino adults that Acércame is the best product for communication with family in their native country by allowing them to use the product first hand.

Tactics:

- “Smartphone for your family.” The first 100 people to download the app will get a free smartphone with a month free of international service for their family back home.
 - Create a sponsorship/partnership with Walmart. Walmart’s StraightTalk is a no contract wireless plan, that is popular among the Latino markets. Partnering with them would be free publicity for both services. We plan to have Walmart donate a month’s worth of international service for constant access to the app for families in Spanish speaking countries.
 - Create a sponsorship/partnership with Apple. Apple is a popular item among Latinos. We plan to have Apple donate iPhones for constant access to the app for families in Spanish speaking countries.
 - Create a sponsorship/partnership with the local government’s Broadband Commission administrator supporting the National Broadband Policy. This policy will help support our efforts in making sure that broadband technology is available, affordable and accessible.
- Advertisement among social media (facebook, twitter, instagram, etc...). We are appealing to a younger audience, and they avid social media users.

Sources:

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