INTRODUCTION
Recently, there has been widespread growth of mobile shopping and buying, termed mCommerce. With this comes a need to understand user’s routines and social behaviors in mCommerce activities so we can understand how to design for the mobile space.

To address this, we conducted a diary and interview study with regular mobile device users to explore their mobile shopping activities and behaviours. Our results describe a variety of usage patterns including spontaneous purchasing and routine shopping where people gravitate to their mobile device even if a computer is nearby.

We found that the timing of mobile shopping and purchasing fell into three broad categories. People either shopped spontaneously when the need arose, as a habit or routine, or during fixed time intervals based on schedules.

FINDINGS
First, nearly half of our participants (8 of 17) were highly spontaneous in their shopping habits. In these cases, participants’ shopping and purchasing activities were a response to their external environment and other activities. This included triggers from activities both on and off their mobile device. For example, participants were already out shopping in person and needed to compare prices on products, they were told that new software updates were available for their device, or they completed certain activities, such as reading a book, which prompted them to shop for and download a new book to read. Because participants carried their mobile device with them nearly all the time and most had constant Internet connectivity, they were able to act on these stimuli in the moment, regardless of their location or time of day.

Just under half of our participants (6 out of 17) were much more routine in their shopping activities. Routines certainly varied across participants, but the fact that shopping activities occurred in a consistent and repeating pattern was somewhat surprising. That is, participants had a specific time and place where they shopped on their mobile device, they looked for a specific type of item or specific stores’ items, and the behavior repeated regularly.

We also saw that while not necessarily routine, three participants had fixed time intervals when they would shop. That is, they would shop at a certain time, yet they wouldn’t do this on a consistent basis and they weren’t looking for specific items. These instances were also not spontaneous in nature.

Participants used their mobile devices for a large variety of mCommerce activities. This was dominated by shopping without purchase, followed by the acquisition of software for their mobile device (e.g., apps), and then the purchase of ‘real world’ items. Some people performed certain activities more than others, yet we did not notice any broad trends related to specific participant demographics. Thus, our results focus on practices across all participants.

28 of 161 (17%) entries related to the actual purchase of a ‘real world’ item (e.g., not software for the device) from a company. Participants bought a variety of products including 3 instances of movie ticket purchases, 4 instances of food purchases, 2 instances of jewelry purchases and a variety of one-off purchases such as shoes, yoga, flowers, ebooks, books, clothing, and sports event tickets. 17 participants logged in to a previously created account to make a purchase; this included using Amazon and eBay apps, along with apps made by Social Couponing sites and local food stores.