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## Tech Tops in Creating Emotional Connection

But Consumers Are Fickle When It Comes to Showing Long-Term Brand Love, Say 2011 Leap Index Results

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When it comes to brand love, consumers are notoriously fickle -- particularly when it comes to technology.

That's apparent when combing New Media Metrics' Leap Index, which measures emotional attachment to brands to predict purchase behavior. This year's index shows some big swings in the sector: Android, which didn't even make the list last year, zoomed to ninth-most-attached brand. The iPod and iPhone hovered at No. 1 and No. 2, respectively, and iPad, a no-show among the top 50 last year, now sits comfortably at No. 11. **Apple** rose to No. 7 from 13th place and would probably have climbed further if the index had been compiled after founder Steve Jobs died. Altogether, Apple and its brands occupy four of the top 12 slots in the index.

The biggest tech loser was Research in Motion's BlackBerry, which sank to No. 37 from No. 14, and that was before last week's reports of widespread outages which are likely to erode attachment further. A star player last year, Nintendo's Wii also lost a lot of momentum, dropping to No. 25 from No. 6 last year while Microsoft's Xbox fell to No. 13 from fourth place.

Among other notable findings: Toyota's massive recall did not seem to dent its bond with consumers, and in fact it moved up the rankings from No. 36 to 31. Instead, it was Honda that plunged from No. 7 to 20th place on this year's index. Ford, despite its improved product reputation and sheen from not accepting the government's auto bailout, slipped to 33rd from 27th last year. The big gainers among autos were imports, including Audi (up to No. 10 from No. 23); BMW (No. 12, up from 26); and Mercedes (No. 15, up from No. 19).

In air travel, "peanuts" airline Southwest climbed to No. 28 from 55th place last year. Perhaps reflective of a widespread lack of branding in the space, Southwest was the only airline to make the top 50. Walmart, which suffered a bit of an identity crisis when it raised prices and eliminated "Action Alley" before later reversing course, dropped 10 places to No. 32.

TOP 100 BRANDS		2011	% CHANGE
1	iPod →	63.8%	+3.74%
2	iPhone	59.9%	+4.54%
3	Google Search	55.7%	+10.08%
4	Disney Parks	55.5%	-0.72%
5	Google	55.4%	+11.92%
6	Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, etc.)	53.8%	+4.06%
7	Apple	53.7%	+9.37%
8	Sony Play Station →	52.3%	+2.55%
9	Android (Phones with Google Software)	52.0%	N/A
10	Audi	51.5%	+17.58%
11	iPad	51.3%	+0.79%
12	BMW →	51.2%	+17.70%
13	Xbox	50.8%	-2.12%
14	Acura	50.5%	N/A
15	Mercedes-Benz	50.0%	+10.86%
16	Microsoft Windows →	49.8%	+7.56%
17	Lexus	49.2%	-2.77%
18	Infiniti	47.6%	N/A
19	Microsoft	47.6%	+7.69%
20	Honda →	47.5%	-6.86%
21	Chevy	45.6%	+7.80%
22	Disney Cruise Lines	45.6%	N/A
23	Always →	44.9%	-1.97%
24	United States Postal Service (USPS)	44.9%	-5.47%
25	Nintendo Wii	44.7%	-12.70%