

Online Social Networking Doubles in Two Years

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Larry Bodine

Nearly half -- 48% -- of Americans age 12 and older are now members of at least one social network, according to a new national survey from Arbitron and Edison Research -- see <http://bit.ly/cXI1PD>. This is about double the level from two years ago (24 percent in 2008), according to the survey titled "The Infinite Dial 2010: Digital Platforms and the Future of Radio."

"Social networking has become a part of mainstream media behavior," said Tom Webster, VP of strategy and marketing at Edison Research.

And it's not just the kids who have personal profile pages. Almost two-thirds of those in the 25 to 34 age group -- 65% -- and half of those 35 to 44 -- 51% -- also now have personal profile pages.

The study also shows that 30% of Americans age 12 and older who have a profile on at least one social networking Web site **use those sites "several times a day,"** compared with only 18% one year ago.

"The use of social networking sites has expanded beyond younger consumers, with substantial numbers of Americans over the age of 35 now using social media," said Bill Rose, SVP of marketing at Arbitron.



Tom Webster

From late January, Arbitron conducted telephone interviews with 1,753 persons to investigate Americans' use of digital platforms and new media.

For the first time since Arbitron began conducting such research, more Americans said the Internet was "most essential" to their lives when given a choice along with television, radio, and newspapers:

- 42% chose the Internet as "most essential"
- 37% selected television
- 14% chose radio
- 5% cited newspapers

Television still leads among those over the age of 45, Internet dominates among younger persons age 12 to 44.

Wi-Fi and Texting Widespread

Meanwhile, more than **six in ten households with Internet access have a Wi-Fi network at home**, more easily enabling the consumption of digital media in any room of their home, as more and more devices feature built-in Wi-Fi such as the new Apple iPad and Google Android.

Also of note, **texting has become a daily activity for nearly half -- 45% -- of all mobile phone owners:**

- 75% of teens and 76% those age 18 to 24 text multiple times a day
- 63% of those 25 to 34 text daily
- 42% of those 35 to 44 text daily
- 37% of those 45 to 54 text daily

Growth of residential broadband has leveled off, with 84 percent of homes with Internet access having broadband connections. The slower growth of residential broadband is associated with little year over year change in weekly usage of online radio (17 percent) and online video (29 percent). The study suggests that expanded use of use of mobile devices and in-car Internet may spark the next wave of growth.

For more on this topic, call:

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