

New study shows Americans' blogging behaviour

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30 August 2007 - According to a recent Synovate/Marketing Daily survey, 8 out of 10 Americans know what a blog is and almost half have visited blogs.

The study, conducted online with 1,000 adults in the US using Synovate eNation from July 30 to August 1, shows that blogging has entered the mainstream.

"Eight percent of Americans currently have their own blog," said Tom Mularz, senior vice president at Synovate. "This is surprising given that a few years ago hardly anyone knew what a blog was."

Loyalty to specific blogs is also fairly strong with 46% of blog readers saying that they visit the same blogs regularly versus 54% who instead usually surf for new and different ones.

Awareness and usage of blogs, along with people penning their own, strongly correlates to age, with younger people being much more active. Nearly 90% of those aged 25 to 34 know what a blog is, compared to just 65% of those aged 65 and over. Similarly, 78% of those aged 18 to 24 who are aware of blogs say they have visited a blog, compared to only 45% of older Americans.

Also, more women than men are bloggers, with 20% of American women who have visited blogs having their own versus 14 % of men.

As blogs have gained in popularity, so has the frequency with which they're read. Though the majority of blog readers (39%) view them less than once a month, another 28% visit them monthly, 15% visit them daily and 5% read them several times a day.

Of course, while blog usage continues to grow, so does their attractiveness as a potential marketing tool. In fact, 43% of blog visitors indicated that they had noticed advertisements on blog websites, rising to 61% among those aged 18 to 24. Almost one-third of consumers have clicked on an ad while reading a blog.

But even though consumers are spending more time with blogs, they aren't necessarily replacing other media. Only 13% of blog readers say they spend less time with other forms of media (newspapers, television, radio) since they've started following blogs.

"Because anyone can start one anytime, blogs are not necessarily seen as legitimate information sources despite the fact that some bloggers are experts in their area," said Mularz. "However, as their prominence and influence continues to rise, this could certainly change."

When asked about the types of information they get from blogs, 65% said they get opinions, while 39% get news and 38% get entertainment. About 1 in 3 people read gossip on blog websites while only 2% use blogs to catch up on news about family and friends.

The main reason people read blogs? Almost half of those surveyed say it's because they find blogs entertaining, and another 26% read them to learn about specific hobbies or other areas they're interested in. Only 15% of blog readers say they do so for news, indicating that the more traditional forms of news consumption still have a stronghold.

Among those who said they have never read a blog, the main reason cited was that they're "just not interested". Another 15% said that they don't care about the opinions and ideas typically expressed in blogs.

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