

College Students Say Facebook Is The Only Social Networking Site That Really Matters

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Research among college students suggests Facebook is here to stay and fast becoming more than just a social networking site, but a new mass medium. A

Facebook is not only the overwhelming favorite social networking site (SNS) among college students; it may rapidly become the only SNS that matters, according to research by Anderson Analytics.

Among seven leading social networking sites ranked by college students in the Anderson Analytics 2009-2010 GenX2Z American College Student Survey conducted this fall, Facebook was viewed as "cool" by a whopping 82% of males and 90% of females.

All other SNSs were deemed "lame" by significant percentages of both male and female collegiate users. In particular, MySpace "the granddaddy of SNSs" was considered "lame" by the largest portion of college students (31%).

These results seem to buck conventional wisdom, given Facebook's increasing popularity among the older adult population, including the parents and even the grandparents of college students.

"Once a trend goes mainstream, it often gradually loses its 'cool' factor among young people, and they move on to the 'big thing,'" said Tom H.C. Anderson, managing partner of Anderson Analytics. "Our data indicate this is not the case for Facebook."

"In fact," said Anderson, "while the media have been predicting its decline, Facebook's staying power among the 18-25 age demographic suggests that a social networking shake-out may have occurred, and as the dust settles, it looks like Facebook is the hands-down winner."

Facebook not only topped the SNS landscape; it even overtook Google as the number one most popular website among both genders of college students surveyed.

In an equally important development, the Anderson Analytics study found college students of both genders are participating less in blogs and discussion boards than in previous years (down 5% and 8% vs. 2008, respectively).

These results bode well for microblogging sites like Twitter, whose growth has flattened over the past few months.

"Facebook's ubiquity will probably have a positive effect on Twitter," said Anderson. "With its increasing variety of applications and flexibility, Facebook is delivering one-stop shopping in an otherwise hyper-fragmented digital universe."

"Users can perform multiple activities from one destination," Anderson continued. "Facebook is becoming more of a hub than just a social networking site" "almost a mass medium unto itself."

Anderson predicts Facebook will also eventually make greater use of streaming media, specifically TV shows and movies.

"Seventy percent of college students in our survey said they had watched either an entire television episode or full-length movie online," said Anderson. "And for the first time since we started conducting the study in 2005, a streaming media website "Hulu.com" ranked among students' ten most popular websites."

"There is already a Hulu widget on Facebook, and there are also personal pages for popular television characters," he said. "For example, Family Guy topped the list of favorite TV shows among college-aged males in our survey, and more than 800,000 users have joined the fan page for the show's character "Brian the dog". It's a natural fit."

The Anderson Analytics study also revealed an interesting possible correlation between Facebook fan page members and the popularity of certain brands with college students.

For example, Coca-Cola and McDonald's ranked first in their categories between both genders surveyed. Both brands also had substantially more Facebook fans for their pages versus their respective number-two competitors.

Strikingly, Coke Facebook fans outnumbered Pepsi fans by approximately 20 to one!

"Given the accelerated pace of technological advancement and changes in the way we communicate, it's impossible to

predict the future," Anderson concluded. "But if the preferences of today's college students are any indication, Facebook is here to stay. It is unlikely any of the current players will be able to challenge Facebook."

About the Anderson Analytics GenX2Z American College Student Survey

The GenX2Z American College Student Survey is an annual survey conducted online among 1000 students at colleges across the U.S. during the fall semester since 2005.

The study captures a broad snapshot of college students' preferences, attitudes, and behaviors across a spectrum of media and market topics.

Close-ended rating questions and short, open-ended questions gauge unaided top-of-mind awareness, and advanced text extraction and analysis techniques are used to quantify open-ended answers.

The findings reported in this release are based on the most recent study conducted in the fall semester 2009. The sample provides a confidence level of +/-3.1% at the 95% confidence level.

About Anderson Analytics

More than market research, Anderson Analytics is the first next generation marketing research consultancy to combine new technologies—such as link analysis, and data and text mining—with traditional market research.

Anderson Analytics helps clients gain "The Information Advantage" by combining the efficiencies and business experience found in large research firms with rigorous methodological understanding from academia and the creativity found only in smaller firms.

For more information, please visit <http://www.andersonanalytics.com>.

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