

Facebook's Diversification Drives Continued Growth

Contributed by eMarketer
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Site evolves into all-purpose web destination for messaging, video-sharing, gaming and more

Facebook, the largest social network in the US as well as the world, has been adding members at a rapid clip for the past two years.

While that growth will moderate now that the social network is reaching a saturation point among many age groups, it will continue to gain audience for the foreseeable future.

eMarketer estimates that 132.5 million people in the US will be users of Facebook this year; by 2013, that number will increase to 152.1 million.

“Facebook’s recent successes” and its future prospects “are intrinsically connected with the site’s diversification,” Verna, eMarketer senior analyst and author of the new report, “Facebook Users: The Juggernaut Rolls On.”

“What started out as a pure-play social network has evolved into an all-purpose destination that is beginning to replace email, instant messaging, video sharing, gaming and other activities that were otherwise scattered across unconnected venues.”

This growth will be driven primarily by increased Facebook use among older boomers and seniors. At the same time, teens and young adults will remain the site’s most active and engaged age groups.

Compared with other age groups, they show extremely high penetration rates, spend more time on the site and have more friends in their networks.

The 18-to-44 age segment represents the largest demographic slice, 56.7% of Facebook users, and is a key target for marketers.

“With so many options to promote their brands on Facebook and its partner sites, marketers have little choice but to formulate a cohesive social media strategy,” said Verna.

“Whether they advertise on Facebook, seed viral content on the site, build their digital presence through branded pages, use the “like” button in their own content or mine data from users’ newsfeeds, marketers have a wealth of methods for monetizing the massive Facebook audience.”

The full report, “Facebook Users: The Juggernaut Rolls On” also answers these key questions:

* How many people in the US are using Facebook?

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* What percentage of social network users are on Facebook?

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* Which demographic groups will drive Facebook’s growth?

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* How have Facebook features such as messaging, video-sharing, gaming and the “like” button enhanced its platform?

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