

Users Of Smaller Social Sites Share, Consume More Content

Contributed by eMarketer
Thursday, 16 August 2012

Facebook isn't the preferred social site for either sharing or consuming

Consumers in the US are now on a variety of social networks, and while Facebook is still the most popular in terms of user numbers, other sites are more popular for sharing content and others still for reading and viewing, without necessarily sharing.

Nearly seven in 10 US users of LinkedIn said they used the site for observing without actively posting content, while just 10% used it to share photos or status updates—the lowest share for any social network—according to a July 2012 survey from MyLife, conducted by Harris Interactive.

Meanwhile, foursquare was the top site for actively sharing content: 44% of foursquare users posted a photo or status update, while 34% said they used foursquare just for observing. Among Facebook users, 37% used the site to consume content, while 17% shared content.

Facebook's position on both lists is interesting, but makes sense in context of the study. MyLife asked users if they used the sites for observing or sharing—one or the other—while many Facebook users are typically on the site for both purposes. Additionally, the sheer number of people on Facebook means many are probably less interested in frequent sharing: Not everyone is a content creator.

The intended purposes of LinkedIn and foursquare also explain their top positions on the list. Most users go on LinkedIn to look at other users' profiles and learn about their job experiences—observation. Some users do update their pages or post links, but the main purpose of the site is to be able to read and consume professional information about other people.

foursquare, on the other hand, is all about sharing users' current location. Users rarely log on to simply browse where other people have checked in. More often, they are checking in themselves first, and then perhaps posting photos, looking around at what others are doing, or using the Explore tab to find new places to visit.

Facebook's prominence was on display in Q2 2012 data from social login platform Janrain. When asked about the primary social network used to share content, 53% of social network users worldwide said Facebook, 41% said Twitter and only 4% said LinkedIn. This is about the same as in Q1 2012, when 54% used Facebook to share content, while 39% used Twitter, and 3% used LinkedIn.

Facebook still holds a prominent place when it comes to how users share and consume content, but the MyLife data also shows that sites which fulfill a niche role may be more popular for specific social activities.

15 August 2012