

Online Hispanics Make Time For Social Networks

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Hispanics are active social networkers, but guarded about what they share

Although Hispanics overall post lower-than-average social networking penetration, online US Hispanics are social mavens.

For them, the sites occupy an outsized place in their digital lives, according to a new eMarketer report, "US Hispanics and Social Networking: A Digital Space They Make Their Own." In an Anglocentric online universe that pays comparatively little heed to Hispanic interests, social networks provide a congenial space.

eMarketer estimates that 68.5% of Hispanic internet users will go to social sites from any device at least once a month this year. That's several percentage points higher than the figure for all internet users.

As important as the sheer number of Hispanics on social networks is, the prominence of those networks in their overall digital usage may be even more telling. Polling by comScore in March 2012 for a Terra Networks report found online Hispanics averaging 4.0 hours per week on social networks, vs. 3.7 hours for online non-Hispanics.

Online Hispanics' above-average time spent social networking is particularly striking when one adds a bit of context: The same study found them spending nearly three hours less per week than non-Hispanics using the internet across all screens (8.7 hours vs. 11.6). Putting all of these numbers together, it's evident that social networking plays an outsized role in Hispanics' overall digital lives.

While employing social networks for an array of purposes, Hispanics are not indiscriminate about what they're willing to post there. A uSamp survey in February 2012 asked what types of information respondents were "willing to share in a social media setting."

Hispanics were markedly more guarded about sharing occupation, personal photos and other things that are common currency on social sites. Still, two-thirds said they were willing to share "race/ethnicity" on social sites, a factor that could make it easier for marketers to target them with Hispanic-specific content.

The full report, "US Hispanics and Social Networking: A Digital Space They Make Their Own," also answers these key questions:

- How many Hispanics use social networks, and how much do they use them?
- How do issues of acculturation and language affect the ways in which Hispanics use social networks?
- How willing are Hispanics to interact with brands via social networks? And what sorts of interaction do they prefer?

2 November 2012