

Social Media... People Are Talking... What Are They Saying?

First of all, what are **YOU** saying about social media? “What is it? Is it for real or a fad? Should I use it and how do I use it? Can someone help us get started? What is my return on investment?” Answering those questions is a tall order, and you’re going to need some professional advice! Meanwhile here are a few interesting thoughts.

Here’s what Erik Qualman, author of *Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business*, has to say about social media: “With social media it’s not a choice whether you do social media, the choice is how well you do it.” This international speaker has been interviewed by BusinessWeek, The New York Times, CNET, San Francisco Chronicle, Mashable, USA Today, Forbes, CBS Nightly News, and The Huffington Post, and is the video producer of “ Social Media Revolution ,” and “ Social Media ROI .” These eye opening videos are well worth the few minutes it takes to view them. Click (or go to YouTube) to see some amazing statistics!

Who’s really using social networking? More people than you might think! Here’s a little statistical information on that.

% Usage of Social Networks	
Generation	% in 2009
Millennials (14-26)	77%
Generation X (27-43)	61%
Boomers (44-62)	46%
Matures (63-75)	36%

Deloitte to eMarketer, December 2009.

Average Age of Site Users	
Network	Ave. Age
LinkedIn	44
Twitter	39
Facebook	38
MySpace	31
Bebo	28

Site demographics for United States from Google Ad Planner.

LinkedIn counts! Many folks who don’t consider themselves social networkers actually are through LinkedIn, the professional network. This site has continued to reinforce its mission of connecting professionals to each other at a time when many networking sites are expanding their focus and going after more types of users. In LinkedIn’s case this focus has led to continued solid growth as reported in September, 2009, when the company exceeded over 50 million users worldwide.

The Center for Marketing Research at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth has conducted a study that looks at the usage of social media among **Inc.** 500 companies. Here’s what they have to say: The 2009 results confirm that America’s fastest growing private companies adopt social media marketing initiatives at much higher rates than other companies. 91 percent of the surveyed companies reported that they use at least one social media tool, compared with 77 percent of companies surveyed in 2008. Reported by Inc.com.

What are the users of various networks looking for? Chitika, an online advertising network says that Twitterers mostly consume news, MySpace users want games and entertainment, Facebookers are into both news and community, and Digg’s audience has a mixed bag of interests. What’s most interesting is that nearly half the traffic (47%) that Twitter generates falls into the news category. In fact, Twitter users’ interest in the news genre surpasses that of Facebook users by nearly 20%, which would appear to make it the number-one social network for newsies. Another interesting tidbit is that MySpace users have no interest in news whatsoever. Instead that corner of the web splits its interests between video games (28%) and celebrity and entertainment content (23%). If anything, this data points to the varied interests behind our current obsession with popular social networks. It’s important information for marketers, advertisers and brands hoping to appropriately leverage each site.

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Social Media cont'd...

And talk about dilemmas – the hiring and jobseeking world has issues to resolve in the use of social media. Teena Rose, book author, former columnist, professional 10-year writing veteran and careerist says: the next few years are certainly gray, uncharted waters for jobseekers. The issue of whether a person's personal life and involvement online should have any place in the hiring realm is definitely a topic that will be battled over for years — maybe even decades. Some might unexpectedly find themselves entangled in lawsuits, as privacy experts grow increasingly concerned that disqualifying a candidate based on information gained online can introduce certain forms of discrimination into the hiring process. [Click here](#) to read what an HR firm has to say about specific issues surrounding the use of social networks in recruiting.

Social network specialists had the following comments when asked to complete the sentence, For social media marketers, 2010 will be the year that....

...social media is on every company's radar screen. It's no longer the new, bright and shiny thing; instead, companies of all shapes and sizes begin to pay attention to it (I'm looking at you, B2B).

...ROI is beaten into the equation. Up until this point there's been a lot of "testing" and "trying" and "feeling what works", but in 2010 it's going to be all about proving that return on investment. That means creating your social media plan from the start, investing in tools that can help quantify what you're doing, and picking and choosing where you can afford to spend your time.

...we all realize that social media marketing is only one tool, and it should be used with other marketing tools, not instead of them.

...they realize that you don't "use" social media, you "engage" it. I see many marketers that simply push out content on social media platforms and expect them to be successful. They'll realize it's about the dialogues, not the monologues.

...valuable, relevant and compelling content becomes the center of their social media strategy.

...we stop talking about adopting social media and start talking about implementation.

And finally, for those of you who are well on your way with social media, who count on it daily (are possibly addicted), and who live in fear of a prolonged disconnect, here are few helpful tips in case you lose your connection: **1. Speak Slowly at First.** Do not try to engage in full-fledged conversations with other off-line humans right away. Speak in simple sentences like "Net's out" and "I can't get online." Use abbreviations such as LOL and OMG. **2. Avoid Eye Contact.** The site of a non-pixelated human face can be disconcerting. Do not look directly at other people until you feel comfortable. **3. Get back online as soon as possible!** Thanks for the advice, Mashable.com.