

The State of Things Talking Points

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Note: These "talking points" were prepared for my appearance on the public radio show "The State of Things." I wanted to have my facts straight on Facebook adoption, growth, and performance compared to other sites. This document represents a collection of facts and figures; almost all of these sources are attributed. Note: some, especially self-reports and blog posts should be taken with a grain of salt, as they are not externally verified. Information that comes from the Pew Internet and American Life foundation is of sound methodology (RDD, National sample). I am sharing this as a resource for other people who are talking about/researching SNS adoption. This document was "current" as of 5/20/2009.

Facebook Adoption

- Current Projections **225 million active users** (AllFacebook.com¹).
- Facebook self-reports² **200 million active users, 100 million log on each day**.
- Fastest growing demographic is people **35 years and older** (FB self-report³).

Facebook Users by Age Group (As of March 25, 2009, via InsideFacebook⁴)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Percent</i>
13-17	11%
18-25	35%
26-34	24%
35-44	17%
45-54	8%
55-65	5%

- "In the last 60 days alone (March 25, 2009), the number of **people over 35 has nearly doubled**"⁵.

¹ <http://www.allfacebook.com/2009/05/facebook-user-count/>

² <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>

³ <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>

⁴ <http://www.insidefacebook.com/2009/03/25/number-of-us-facebook-users-over-35-nearly-doubles-in-last-60-days/>

⁵ <http://www.insidefacebook.com/2009/03/25/number-of-us-facebook-users-over-35-nearly-doubles-in-last-60-days/>

- "The fastest growing demographic on Facebook is still **women over 55** - there are now nearly 1.5 million of them active on Facebook each month."⁶
 - "Today, **over three fourths of Facebook's US traffic comes from people over 25**: 28% are 35-34, 23% are 35-44, 18% are 45-54, and 7% are over 55. Clearly, Facebook is catching on amongst people in their 30's, 40's, and 50's in the US."⁷
 - "Nearly a third of Facebook users are between the ages of 35 and 54, according to Comscore."⁸
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Facebook vs. Myspace

According to Compete.com⁹, as of April 2009:

- Facebook has **104M unique visitors**, 249% growth in 2009
- Myspace has **55M unique visitors**, -8% growth in 2009
- Friendster has **1.2M unique visitors**, -15% growth in 2009

Other reports:

- NYT reports¹⁰ "MySpace draws **130 million users globally** each month and is said to be profitable."
- NYT reports¹¹ "Compared with the overall online population in the United States, [Myspace] draws **disproportionate numbers of teenagers, twentysomethings and people whose household income is less than \$25,000 a year**, according to the measurement firm comScore. The Facebook audience tends to be more affluent, making it a more appealing space for higher-end advertisers."
- "Facebook leads MySpace in US social networking traffic **in all income brackets over \$60,000/year**."¹²
- Slate reports¹³ "According to comScore, **Friendster** had roughly 30 million unique visitors in December 2008. More than **28 million of those visitors came from Asia**."

⁶ <http://www.insidefacebook.com/2009/03/25/number-of-us-facebook-users-over-35-nearly-doubles-in-last-60-days/>

⁷ <http://www.insidefacebook.com/2009/02/11/facebook-growing-amongst-older-wealthier-americans/>

⁸ <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09032/946191-85.stm>

⁹ <http://siteanalytics.compete.com/facebook.com+myspace.com+friendster.com/>

¹⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/04/technology/companies/04myspace.html>

¹¹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/04/technology/companies/04myspace.html>

¹² <http://www.insidefacebook.com/2009/02/11/facebook-growing-amongst-older-wealthier-americans/>

¹³ <http://www.slate.com/id/2212833/pagenum/all/>

*Facebook and International Growth*¹⁴

- **70 percent** of Facebook users are **outside the United States** (60 Million US users, 140 Million international users).
- **40 percent** of FB users **don't speak English**; available in 43 languages; volunteers translate.

*Facebook History*¹⁵

- Founded in 2004, launched for Harvard students. Rapidly expanded to other colleges.
- Opened to high school students in September 2005.
- In May 2006 Facebook opened to work networks.
- In September 2006, Facebook opened to everyone.
- September 2006, News Feed introduced
- November 2007, Facebook Beacon
- Feb 2009, Facebook terms of service debacle.
- March 2009, Facebook now allows people to open their profiles to "everyone"
- Mark Zuckerberg wants to "make the world a more open place."

The Facebook-GPA Study

- Karpinski's study used a **small, non-representative sample** to draw potentially spurious conclusions (Other explanatory factors were not modeled or controlled).
- **A meta-analysis of three representative samples** found that the relation between social network use and academic achievement was **mixed**¹⁶.

¹⁴ All data from <http://gigaom.com/2009/03/11/it-is-truly-a-planet-facebook/>. This is based on self-reports from Ghassan Haddad, director of Facebook localization, reported by Om Malik.

¹⁵ <http://www.crunchbase.com/company/facebook>

¹⁶ "Two of our analyses suggest that Facebook users were no more or less likely to get good grades than non-users. The third study found evidence that Facebook use was slightly more common among individuals with higher grades." from Pasek, J., More, E., and

General Statistics/Adult Users

- Age Ranges and use of SNS

<i>Age</i>	<i>Percent using SNS¹⁷</i>	<i>Percent w/ Profile¹⁸</i>
12-17	65% (+/- 4%)	n/a
18-32	67% (+/- 3%)	75% (18-24), 57% (25-34)
33-44	36% (+/- 3%)	30% (35-44)
45-54	20% (+/- 3%)	19%
55-63	9% (+/- 3%)	10%
64-72	11% (+/- 3%)	7% (65+)
73+	4% (+/- 3%)	n/a

Source: Pew IAL "Generations Online in 2009"¹⁹

- "The share of adult internet users who have a profile on an online social network site has more than **quadrupled in the past four years** -- from 8% in 2005 to 35% now." (January, 2009), Pew IAL "Adults and Social Network Websites"²⁰
- Adult use: **89%** of adult users use SNS to **keep up with friends**; **57%** use SNS to **make plans with friends**; **60%** of adult users **restrict access to profiles**; 58% restrict access to content within their profile. (January, 2009), Pew IAL "Adults and Social Network Websites"²¹
- Adult SNS users tend to **skew younger**, have **lower household incomes**, be located in an urban setting, and be African American or Hispanic.²²
- 37% of adult SNS users visit the site every day, 75% of adult SNS users visit the site weekly.²³
- Use of social networking is high withing non-traditional households: "31% of single parents, 37% of those in multi-adult households, and nearly half (48%) of those in mixed multi-adult/child households have a profile on a social networking site."²⁴

Hargittai, E. (2009). Facebook and academic performance: Reconciling a media sensation with data. *First Monday*, 14(5), <http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2504/2187>.

¹⁷ <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Generations-Online-in-2009.aspx>

¹⁸ <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Adults-and-Social-Network-Websites.aspx>

¹⁹ <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Generations-Online-in-2009.aspx>

²⁰ <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Adults-and-Social-Network-Websites.aspx>

²¹ <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Adults-and-Social-Network-Websites.aspx>

²² <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Adults-and-Social-Network-Websites.aspx>

²³ <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Adults-and-Social-Network-Websites.aspx>

²⁴ <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2008/Networked-Families.aspx>

My Research

- 2006 Longitudinal Study (of Fall 2005): Found that the average freshman **adds 65 friends** over the first semester; On day one **85% of freshman had profiles**, by the end of the semester **94%** had Facebook accounts; **3-5% protected their accounts**²⁵.
- In 2007, I found that "**19% of undergraduates protect their account from other undergraduates**, 24% percent of them protect their profiles from grad students, 27% of them protect their profiles from faculty, and 29% percent protect their profile from staff. (~24% privacy)"²⁶
- In a 2008 survey of undergraduates at UNC, we found that:
 - 96% have a Facebook profile.
 - 80% of undergraduates have "changed the default Facebook privacy settings to give yourself enhanced privacy in Facebook"
 - 55% have friends-only profiles, and only 20% have open profiles.
 - Most use 1-3 SNS (94%)
 - 95% use their real name/identity, and most agree
 - Average undergrad has 465 friends
 - They spend almost an hour a day (51 minutes) on Facebook

These numbers are from a survey conducted in July/August of 2008. List-based SRS, email solicitation, 10% response rate, 494 total respondents. Margin of error +/- 3%.

²⁵ <http://chimprawk.blogspot.com/2006/01/student-life-on-facebook.html>

²⁶ http://chimprawk.blogspot.com/2007/01/youre-not-my-friend-new-look-at_31.html

Random Facts

- We now spend **more time on social networks than we do on email** - Nielsen Study reported in the New York Times²⁷.
- The Facebook governance vote drew **665k votes**, 73% voting for the new documents. Requires **30% overall response** for vote to be binding²⁸.
- Facebook may soon start awarding "**Facebook Credits**" to users for activity in the site. These credits will be used to purchase or give gifts. (The Flight Pad²⁹)
- Obama administration high-ranking dossier: "The application also asks applicants to **“please list all aliases or ‘handles’ you have used to communicate on the Internet.”**"³⁰
- Facebook took an investment of **240MM** from Microsoft at a valuation of **15BN in October, 2007.**³¹
- Other valuations: Initial investment, **500k**; 2004 Accel Partners, **12.7MM@100MM**; 2005 Greylock Partners, **25MM@525MM**³².
- Techcrunch reported that Facebook has recently turned down an investment of **200MM@8BN (and 6BN)**³³. **2008 revenue of 280MM**. Claims **2009 revenue of 550MM**.
- Facebook ads are like "hanging out at a party and interrupting conversations to hawk merchandise" and to make money on Facebook requires marketers to "invent a new kind of advertising." (Dan Lyons, Newsweek³⁴)
- Facebook insists it isn't a "social networking site" - from Techcrunch: "Please note that Facebook accounts are meant for authentic usage only. This means that **we expect accounts to reflect mainly “real-world” contacts** (i.e. your family, schoolmates, co-workers, etc.), rather than mainly “internet-only” contacts. As stated on our home page, **Facebook is a social utility that connects you with the people around you, not a “social networking site”**. It is meant to help reinforce pre-existing social connections, not build large groups of new ones. If this is in direct contrast to what you expected as legitimate Facebook usage, I apologize for any confusion. This is simply the intention behind the site."³⁵

²⁷ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/18/technology/internet/18drill.html>

²⁸ <http://blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=79146552130>

²⁹ <http://www.theflightpad.com/post/The-Evolution-of-Virtual-Currency.aspx>

³⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/13/us/politics/13apply.html>

³¹ <http://www.techcrunch.com/2007/10/24/facebook-takes-the-microsoft-money-and-runs/>

³² <http://www.crunchbase.com/company/facebook>

³³ <http://www.techcrunch.com/2009/05/19/facebook-turns-down-8-billion-valuation-term-sheet-claims-2009-revenues-to-be-550-million/>

³⁴ <http://www.newsweek.com/id/163120>

³⁵ <http://www.techcrunch.com/2008/09/15/facebook-isnt-a-social-network-and-dont-try-to-make-new-friends-there/>

Research on SNS

- Research on SNS explores issues like privacy, identity, dynamics, and the effects of SNS use (social capital, social support)
- My research looks at how populations use **SNS as a resource during periods of transition**. I look at how they use the SNS to make sense of their world and to acquire social support. I hope to look at how SNS can make transitions easier for marginalized and underserved populations.
- NSF has recently unveiled a 15MM program called "**Social-Computational Systems**" designed to "maintain U.S. leadership in this area (SNS, etc).³⁶
- **iParticipate** program looks at how SNS can "unite far-flung participants to help track disease outbreaks, revolutionize neighborhood-watch programs, encourage energy conservation, and serve other civic and community goals"³⁷

³⁶ <http://chronicle.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/daily/2009/05/17280n.htm?rss>

³⁷ <http://chronicle.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/daily/2009/05/17280n.htm?rss>

- **Facebook Figures**³⁸

Statistics		Company
General Growth	<p>More than 200 million active users</p> <p>More than 100 million users log on to Facebook at least once each day</p> <p>More than two-thirds of Facebook users are outside of college</p> <p>The fastest growing demographic is those 35 years old and older</p>	<p>Factsheet</p> <p>Statistics</p> <p>Timeline</p> <p>Executives</p> <p>Founder Bios</p> <p>Platform</p> <p>B-Roll</p> <p>Product</p> <p>Press Releases & Announcements</p>
User Engagement	<p>Average user has 120 friends on the site</p> <p>More than 3.5 billion minutes are spent on Facebook each day (worldwide)</p> <p>More than 20 million users update their statuses at least once each day</p> <p>More than 4 million users become fans of Pages each day</p>	<p>Contacts</p> <p>Images</p> <p>Speaker Requests</p> <p>Interview Requests</p> <p>Your Stories</p>
Applications	<p>More than 850 million photos uploaded to the site each month</p> <p>More than 8 million videos uploaded each month</p> <p>More than 1 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photos, etc.) shared each week</p> <p>More than 2.5 million events created each month</p> <p>More than 25 million active user groups exist on the site</p>	
International Growth	<p>More than 40 translations available on the site, with more than 50 in development</p> <p>About 70% of Facebook users are outside the United States</p>	
Platform	<p>More than 660,000 developers and entrepreneurs from more than 180 countries</p> <p>Every month, more than 70% of Facebook users engage with Platform applications</p> <p>More than 52,000 applications currently available in the Facebook Application Directory</p> <p>More than 5,000 applications have 10,000 or more monthly active users</p> <p>More than 8,000 websites have implemented Facebook</p>	

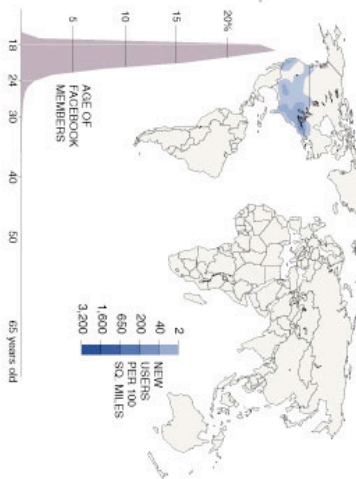
³⁸ <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>

Facebook growth over the years³⁹

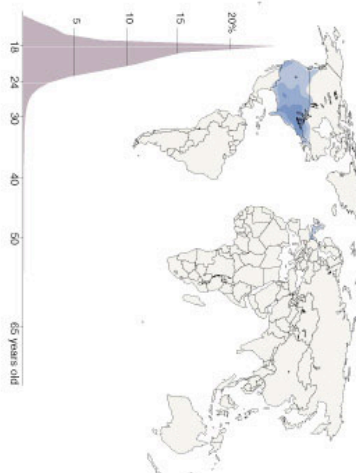
The Road to 200 Million

Facebook began as a private network for colleges and universities, but has grown into an international social networking site with almost 200 million members. Lee Byron, a member of Facebook's data team, created maps and network diagrams that show the site's expansion and use.

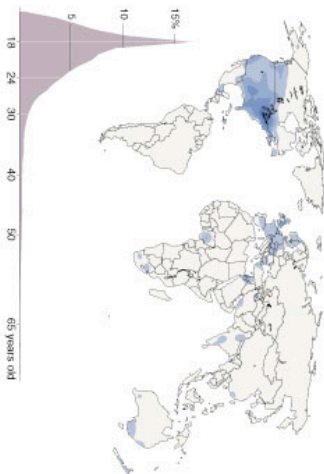
February 2004 to January 2005 Facebook begins at Harvard, and expands to a few universities at a time.



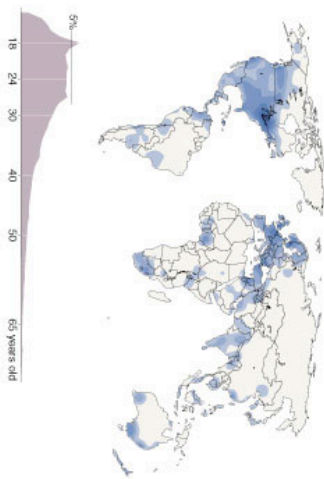
February 2005 to January 2006 Facebook expands to include most American colleges and high schools.



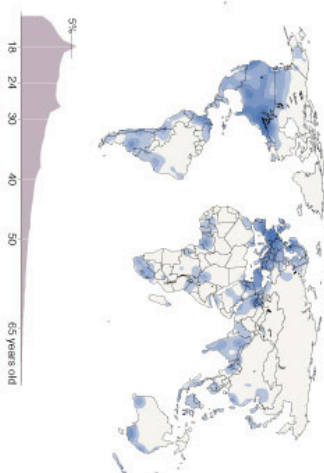
February 2006 to January 2007 Facebook opens registration to allow anyone to join, which brings in older members.



February 2007 to January 2008 Facebook reaches 50 million users, with Canada and Britain growing fastest.

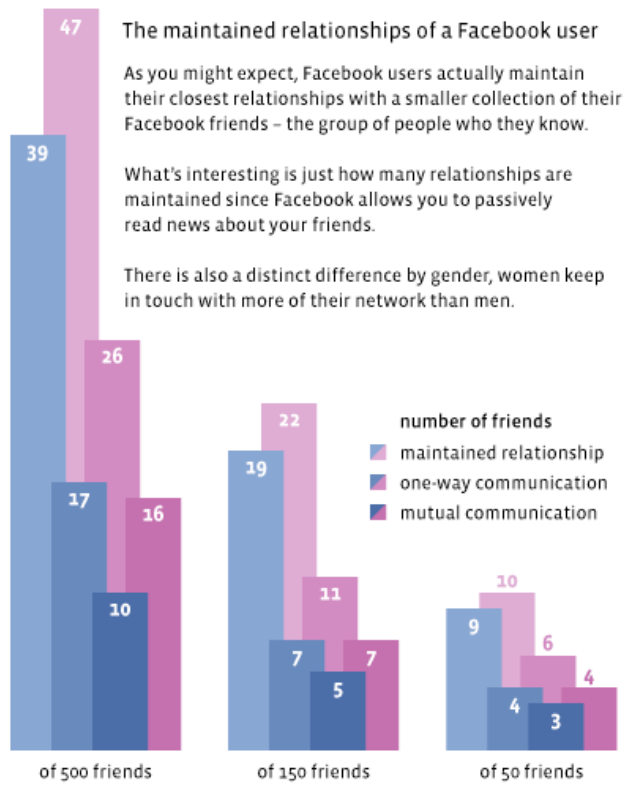


February 2008 to January 2009 Facebook is translated into more than 40 languages. The fastest-growing group of members is people over 35.

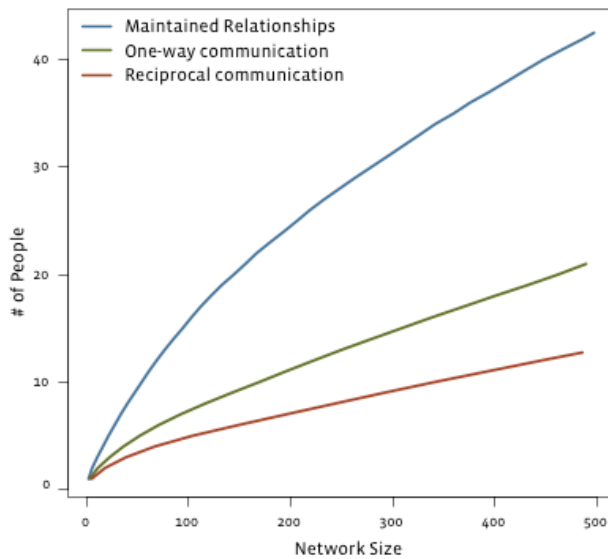


³⁹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/29/technology/internet/29face.html>

Facebook Maintained Relationships⁴⁰

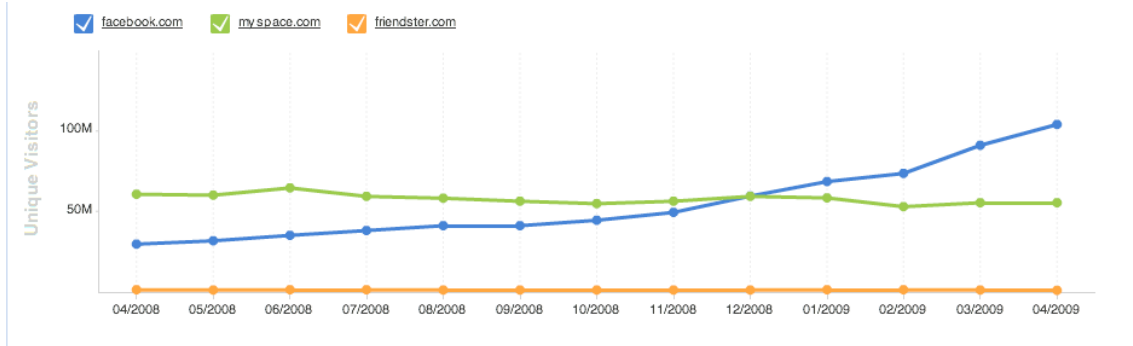


Active Network Sizes



⁴⁰ <http://overstated.net/2009/03/09/maintained-relationships-on-facebook>

Facebook vs. Myspace vs. Friendster⁴¹



Monthly Normalized Metrics April 2009			
	Unique Visitors	Monthly Change	Yearly Change
facebook.com Social Networking > Personal	104,125,466	+14.36%	+249.70%
Top Search Terms (580,578 Terms): facebook, facebook login, facebook.com, www.facebook.com, face book	Top Referral Sites (333,082 Sites): yahoo.com, google.com, live.com, myspace.com, usatoday.com	Top Destination Sites (312,721 Sites): google.com, live.com, yahoo.com, myspace.com, rockyou.com	Top Tags: social, social-networking, compete-250, friends, application
myspace.com Social Networking > Personal	55,559,317	-0.06%	-8.61%
Top Search Terms (513,211 Terms): myspace, myspace.com, my space, www.myspace.com, my	Top Referral Sites (192,963 Sites): facebook.com, yahoo.com, google.com, zynga.com, youtube.com	Top Destination Sites (180,389 Sites): facebook.com, google.com, yahoo.com, zynga.com, youtube.com	Top Tags: teens, fox, social, videos, community
friendster.com Social Networking > Personal	1,200,620	-5.94%	-15.92%
Top Search Terms (3,021 Terms): friendster, friendster.com, www.friendster.com, friendsters.com, friendster log in	Top Referral Sites (3,601 Sites): yahoo.com, google.com, facebook.com, myspace.com, fmodules.com	Top Destination Sites (3,464 Sites): yahoo.com, google.com, facebook.com, myspace.com, fmodules.com	Top Tags: community, network, networking, personal, social

⁴¹ <http://siteanalytics.compete.com/facebook.com+myspace.com+friendster.com/>

Pew Generational Differences ⁴²

Generational Differences in Online Activities								
	Online Teens ^a (12-17)	Gen Y (18-32)	Gen X (33-44)	Younger Boomers (45-54)	Older Boomers (55-63)	Silent Generation (64-72)	G.I. Generation (73+)	All Online Adults ^b
Go online	93%	87%	82%	79%	70%	56%	31%	74%
<i>Teens and Gen Y are more likely to engage in the following activities compared with older users:</i>								
Play games online	78	50	38	26	28	25	18	35
Watch videos online	57	72	57	49	30	24	14	52
Get info about a job	30	64	55	43	36	11	10	47
Send instant messages	68	59	38	28	23	25	18	38
Use social networking sites	65	67	36	20	9	11	4	35
Download music	59	58	46	22	21	16	5	37
Create an SNS profile	55	60	29	16	9	5	4	29
Read blogs	49	43	34	27	25	23	15	32
Create a blog	28	20	10	6	7	6	6	11
Visit a virtual world	10	2	3	1	1	1	0	2
<i>Activities where Gen X users or older generations dominate:</i>								
Get health info	28	68	82	74	81	70	67	75
Buy something online	38	71	80	68	72	56	47	71
Bank online	*	57	65	53	49	45	24	55
Visit gov't sites	*	55	64	62	63	60	31	59
Get religious info	26	31	38	42	30	30	26	35
<i>And for some activities, the youngest and oldest cohorts may differ, but there is less variation overall:</i>								
Use email	73	94	93	90	90	91	79	91
Use search engines	*	90	93	90	89	85	70	89
Research products	*	84	84	82	79	73	60	81
Get news	63	74	76	70	69	56	37	70
Make travel reservations	*	65	70	69	66	69	65	68
Research for job	*	51	59	57	48	33	9	51
Rate a person or product	*	37	35	29	30	25	16	32
Download videos	31	38	31	21	16	13	13	27
Participate in an online auction	*	26	31	27	26	16	6	26
Download podcasts	19	25	21	19	12	10	10	19

^a Source for Online Teens data: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys conducted Oct.-Nov. 2006 and Nov. 2007-Feb. 2008. Margin of error for online teens is ± 4% for Oct.-Nov. 2006 and ±3% for Nov. 2007-Feb. 2008.

^b Source for Online Adult data: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys conducted August 2006, Feb.-March 2007, Aug.-Sept. 2007, Oct.-Dec. 2007, May 2008, August 2008, November 2008, and December 2008. Margin of error for all online adults is ±3% for these surveys. The average margin of error for each age group can be considerably higher than ± 3%, particularly for the "Matures" and "After Work" age groups. See Methodology for average margins of error for each generational group.

* Most recent teen data for these activities comes from the Pew Internet & American Life Project Teens and Parents Survey conducted Oct.-Nov. 2004. Margin of error is ± 4%.

* No teen data for these activities.

⁴² <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Generations-Online-in-2009.aspx>

Demographics of Adult Users ⁴³

Demographics of Social Network Users	
<i>The percentage of online Americans in each demographic category who have a profile on a social network website:</i>	
All adults	35%
Sex	
Men	35
Women	35
Age	
18-24	75*
25-34	57*
35-44	30*
45-54	19*
55-64	10
65+	7
Race	
White, non-Hispanic	31*
Black, non-Hispanic	43
Hispanic	48
Annual Household Income	
Less than \$30,000	45*
\$30,000 - \$49,999	38
\$50,000 - \$74,999	30
\$75,000 +	31
Education	
Less than HS	43
HS grad	31
Some college	41*
College grad	33
Locale	
Urban	34*
Suburban	26
Rural	23

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Survey December 2008 Survey, n=2,253, with an n of 1,650 internet users. For internet users the margin of error is ±3%.

* These groups are significantly different from the other groups in the section.

⁴³ <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Adults-and-Social-Network-Websites.aspx>