

48% of Americans Active on Social Networking Sites



RISMEDIA, April 18, 2009-It may seem like everyone is “Twittering” or updating their Facebook pages, but half of Americans (51%) do not use Twitter or have a MySpace or Facebook account. Just under half (48%) of adults have either a MySpace or Facebook page with 16% of adults updating their page at least once a day. While the media may have found Twitter, only 5% of Americans are currently using it. These are some of the findings of The Harris Poll, a new nationwide survey of 2,220 U.S. adults surveyed online between March 31 and April 1, 2009 by Harris Interactive. As expected, there are some substantial differences in who is and who isn’t using these social networking sites:

- Three-quarters of those aged 18-34 years old (74%) have a Facebook or MySpace account, but this quickly drops off the older one gets. Just one-quarter (24%) of those 55 and older have an account;
- Tweeting is also slightly more prevalent among the young, but not by much; 8% of 18-34 year olds use Twitter, 7% of those 35-44 use it, 4% of those aged 45-54 and just 1% of those 55 and older;
- While men and women use Twitter at the same levels (5% each), women are more likely to have a Facebook or MySpace account (52% versus 45%);
- There is also an educational difference in usage of social networking sites. Two in five people with a high school degree or less (40%) have a Facebook or MySpace account compared to 55% of those with some college and 52% of those with at least a college degree.

There has been some discussion about whether these social networking sites may, at some point, become a threat to search engines such as Yahoo! or Google. Right now, that doesn’t seem to be an issue - 45% of adults believe the sites are popular, but they won’t pose a real threat to the domination of search sites while just one in ten (9%) say they may become a threat. Fully 46% of Americans are not at all sure. Even among the largest users of the social networking sites, 18-34 year olds, three in five (62%) say they will not become a real threat to the search engines.

While the media may be all abuzz about Twittering, mainstream America is not hopping on the same bandwagon. While the younger age groups are all about the social network sites, they haven’t yet migrated to Twitter. The question is will they or won’t they? If they had found it before the media had, there is a stronger possibility they would be increasing their usage, but they may already be looking for the next big thing - before it becomes a media darling.

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