

Six Million More Seniors Using the Web than Five Years Ago

December 10, 2009

While people 65 and older still make up less than 10 percent of the active Internet universe, their numbers are on the rise. In the last five years, the number of seniors actively using the Internet has increased by more than 55 percent, from 11.3 million active users in November 2004 to 17.5 million in November 2009. Among people 65+, the growth of women in the last five years has outpaced the growth of men by 6 percentage points.

Not only are more people 65 and older heading online, but they are also spending more time on the Web. Time spent on the Internet by seniors increased 11 percent in the last five years, from approximately 52 hours per month in November 2004 to just over 58 hours in 2009.

“The over 65 crowd represents about 13% of the total population and with this increase in online usage, they are beginning to catch up with their offline numbers,” notes Chuck Schilling, research director, agency & media, Nielsen’s online division. “Looking at what they’re doing online, it makes sense they’re engaged in many of the same activities that dominate other age segments – e-mail, sharing photos, social networking, checking out the latest news and weather – and it’s worth noting that a good percentage of them are spending time with age-appropriate pursuits such as leisure travel, personal health care and financial concerns.”

How do they Keep Busy on the Web?

Online visitors 65 and older partake in a variety of activities, from e-mail to bill paying. With 88.6 percent of seniors, checking personal e-mail was the No. 1 online activity performed in the last 30 days. Viewing or printing online maps and checking the weather online were the second and third most popular online activities, with 68.6 and 60.1 percent, respectively.

Top 10 Online Activities Performed in the Last 30 Days by People 65+ (U.S.)

RANK	Profile Point: Internet Activities in Last 30 Days	Audience Composition Percent
1	Personal E-mail	88.6
2	Viewed or Printed Maps Online	68.6
3	Checked Weather Online	60.1
4	Paid/Viewed Bills Online	51.2
5	View/Posted Photos Online	50.1
6	Read General/Political News	49.2
7	Checked Personal Health Care Info	47.3
8	Planned Leisure Travel Trip Online	39
9	Searched Recipes/Meal Planning Suggestions	38.4
10	Read Business/Finance News	37.8

Source: The Nielsen Company, Nielsen @Plan Fall 2009 Release, Adults 18+

The No. 1 online destination for people over 65 in November 2009 was Google Search, with 10.3 million unique visitors. Windows Media Player and Facebook were No. 2 and No. 3, with 8.2 million and 7.9 million visitors, respectively. Interestingly, Facebook, which came in at No. 3, ranked No. 45 just a year ago among sites visited by senior citizens.

Overall, the number of unique visitors who are 65 or older on social networking and blog sites has increased 53 percent in the last two years alone. 8.2% of all social network and blog visitors are over 65, just 0.1 percentage points less than the number of teenagers who frequent these sites.

Top 10 Online Destinations Visited by People 65+ in November 2009 (U.S., Home and Work)

RANK	Site	Unique Audience (000)	Unique Audience Composition (%)
1	Google Search	10,253	7.7
2	Windows Media Player	8,241	10.9
3	Facebook	7,946	7.2
4	YouTube	7,668	8.4
5	Amazon	5,679	9.3
6	Yahoo! Mail	5,638	7.8
7	Yahoo! Search	5,583	8.7
8	Yahoo! Homepage	5,383	6.8
9	Bing Web	4,510	10.1
10	Google Maps	4,397	8.4

Source: The Nielsen Company

Article printed from Nielsen Wire: <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire>

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