

Top 5

Generational Trends in Social Media Use

Every generation is doing it.



1 Research suggests that social networking is popular across the four major generations living in America. The percentage of Millennial-teen (73% in 2009) and young adult (83%)—Generation X (77%), Baby Boomer (52%), and Senior (32%) Internet users who access social networking sites have all increased since 2005. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and Tumblr are primary social media used by “wired” Americans today.

2 Millennials are most active.

Young adults (18-29) in the Millennial generation were most actively engaged in social networking in 2012. This generation’s use of social media has changed from macro to more micro forms of blogging. Millennial Internet users trended toward Facebook (86%) and Twitter (27%), followed by Instagram (19%) for their social networking activities in 2012. Interestingly, 38% of Facebook users in this generation planned to spend less time on the site in the next year.

3 Generation X-ers play the field.

Adult Internet users between the ages of 30 and 49 were the second most engaged in social networking. Those in this generation were mostly using Facebook (73%), followed by Twitter (16%) and Pinterest (19%). Many Generation X Internet users are parents of minor children and tend to use social networking to monitor their children’s online activities.



4 Boomers are not far behind the pack.

Slightly over half of adults between the ages of 50 and 64 who use the Internet also use social media. Wired Baby Boomers’ overall use of social networking sites seems to be catching up to younger generations. Internet-using Boomers were primarily on Facebook (57%), followed by Pinterest (12%) and Twitter (10%).

5 Seniors are never too old.

One third of Senior Internet users also use social media. Adults Internet users who are 65 or older are staying connected in more ways than one as their social networking activities “surged” to 32% in 2012. Like other generations, older adults favor Facebook (35%), but a small and growing group of Seniors have adopted Pinterest (4%). Increasingly, senior centers and even long-term care facilities are holding classes and providing individualized instruction to help seniors learn and use new tricks to stay connected with family and friends.

Reference Note: The following reports from Pew Internet & American Life Project, <http://pewinternet.org>, were used as references in this handout: Demographics of Social Media Users-2012, Digital Differences, Parents, Teens and Online Privacy, Social Media and Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults.