Chapter IX
Teens and Social Networking Services:
An Overview

Maryann Mori
Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter provides an overview of the ways teens interact with social networking services. It acknowledges that teens are active users of social networking sites, and the implications of this usage affect and/or cross social, moral, educational and political lines. By reviewing current trends and statistics from various authors and sources, this chapter provides background information to understanding the growth and importance of online social networking among the Internet generation. Topics include demographics, ramifications on social behavior, adults' concerns, policies designed to restrict teens' Internet access, educational benefits and future directions of teens' use of social networking services. Realizing the importance and influence of online social networks among teens should provide readers with a better understanding of how these sites can not only be used for educational and marketing purposes, but also be integrated within work environments.

INTRODUCTION

Adults may refer to the online sites as social networking services or sites, online social networks, interactive Web applications, or variations on a theme of Web 2.0. But as adults create titles and descriptions for these sites, "teens are speeding ahead, making it up as they go, including the language and the tools and their uses. To them, these sites are just another tool for socializing"

(Magid & Collier, 2007, p. 2). Teens generally refrain from using any of the adult variations of titles and simply refer to the services and sites by function or commercial site name. By reviewing current trends, uses, effects and concerns of teens' use of social networking services, this chapter provides background information about the continued growth and importance of online social networking among teens.

In order to increase awareness and understanding of the various implications of social networking as they influence teens, this chapter will attempt to do the following:

• Review the way the Internet in general and social networking services specifically have influenced teen generations;
• Examine teens' online behavior and their use of social networking services;
• Discuss why social networking sites are so attractive to teens;
• Consider the ways social networking affects teens' interaction in online and real-life social situations;
• Address the concerns of parents, other adults and media reports of online dangers;
• Review information about various legislations and policies designed to restrict minors' use of social networks;
• Present successful and creative uses of social networking among teens;
• Show that social networking services are a major part of teens' lives and a viable aspect that will continue to increase in usage among teens and impact their adult lives.

While the exact age of teens varies among sources, the term usually describes students in middle school and high school. The American Library Association's division of Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) defines *teens* as students ages 12-18 (American Library Association [ALA]: Young Adult Library Services

Association [YALSA], n.d.). It is the definition generally used for purposes of this chapter.

When Donald Tapscott wrote his book *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation* in 1998, he referred to teens as the Net generation (also Net Gen or N-Gen). Teens born after the rise of computer technology have been given an assortment of generational titles including the Internet generation, Generation M (for Media) (CBS, 2005), Gen Y and MySpace generation. The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press calls these teens "Generation Next" (2007). The assortment and interchangeability of titles seem appropriate for a generation that is used to constant change in technology. For purposes of this chapter either Net Generation or Next generation (or variances of those two titles) will be used to describe the generation. The titles describe a generation used to multi-tasking and instant information (Tapscott, 1998). This generation is willing to compromise privacy (Kelsey, 2007) in exchange for accessing the world 24/7 via the Internet. They are more literate in visual concepts than previous generations (D. Oblinger & J. Oblinger, 2005), yet equally comfortable with text that amply appears on the screens of computers, cell phones and video games. They are a generation that is inclusive and social (D. Oblinger & J. Oblinger, 2005), as well as interactive and investigative (Tapscott, 1998). Specifically, they are a generation born around 1980—after Generation X which comprises individuals born from 1966-1980 (Pew Research Center, 2007). Tapscott refers to the Net generation as those people "born between 1977 and 1996 inclusive" and declares that "internationally the Net Generation is huge, numbering over two billion people" (Tapscott & Williams, 2006, p. 46). Next generation teens are creative, and they have found an outlet for their creativity by using social networking services to express themselves, and to evaluate each other and their world.

Related Content

Business and Social Media: Collaboration for the Sixth Discipline

Kate Andrewsand Bethany Mickahail (2015). *Social Media and the Transformation of Interaction in Society (pp. 158-172).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/business-and-social-media/138073

The Use of Social Interaction Technologies in E-Portfolios

Lina Pelliccione, Catherine Pockneeand Julie Mulvany (2010). *Social Computing: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 829-840).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/use-social-interaction-technologies-portfolios/39759

Home Media Access with Heterogeneous Devices

Tayeb Lemlouma (2015). *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking (pp. 1-16).*

www.irma-international.org/article/home-media-access-with-heterogeneous-devices/149470

Social Computing: Implications for E-Government

Rhoda C. Joseph (2009). *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking (pp. 23-33).*

www.irma-international.org/article/social-computing-implications-government/2951

Impact of Social Media Marketing Strategies on Consumers Behaviour in Delhi

Deepali Salujaand Shamsher Singh (2014). *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking (pp. 1-23).*

www.irma-international.org/article/impact-of-social-media-marketing-strategies-on-consumers-behaviour-in-delhi/121667