

# Abstract

## **The Changing Face of Social Networking**

*Move Over MySpace, There's a New Kid in Town*

**April 2008**



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## The Changing Face of Social Networking

### Background

The social networking industry is rapidly growing and introducing new concepts, relationships and experiences online. MySpace is one of the largest social networking sites with more than 100 million reported members since its inception in 2003, and more than 255,000 new members joining every day. Facebook is beginning to gain ground, achieving more unique users than MySpace for the first time in 2007 and seeing more active and frequent daily visitors than MySpace in 2008.

As new players continue to enter the social networking space, there is a clear need to understand how current social networking users perceive these new sites and to identify what key features are required to prevent loyal users from being wooed by the ever growing competition. What are the attitudes towards each of the top social networking services, across age groups? What is the appetite among consumers for unique features and functionality? Is there a need that has not yet been met among consumers? This Social Networking report addresses these questions in detail, and identifies what key attributes make a social networking Website a leader in this new and rapidly growing industry.

### Highlights

- 68% of consumers currently use a social networking site
- 80% are likely to use a social networking site in the next year
- 76% of users are likely to communicate with friends they know online
- Among ages 13-19, users significantly prefer Facebook (51%) over MySpace (36%)
- Among ages 30-39, users significantly prefer MySpace (34%) over Facebook (16%)
- 71% of users find Facebook easy to use, compared to only 54% on MySpace
- Facebook is also rated more secure; While MySpace offers more customization

### Objectives

The objectives of this study are to understand more about the current usage and perception of social networking sites among different age groups, specifically:

- Understand overall awareness and usage
- Identify reasons for using different social networking sites
- Determine perceived strengths and weaknesses of top sites
- Identify areas for improvement and new functionality
- Discover key differentiators between sites for personal vs. business usage
- Explore attitudes about social networking and future likelihood to engage

### Methodology

For this study, eVOC Insights and RelevantView surveyed 400 U.S. online consumers who are all currently using or interested in using social networking Websites. Respondents were equally recruited into the following age groups:

- 13-19 (n=100)
- 20-29 (n=100)
- 30-39 (n=100)
- 40-59 (n=100)

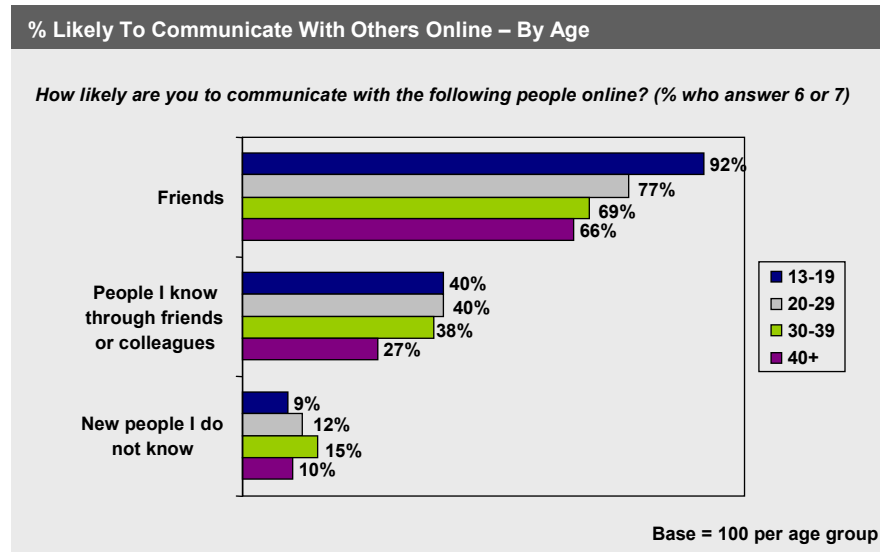
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## Behavior Snapshot

92% of teenagers are likely to communicate with their friends online, however, as people get older this likelihood significantly declines to only 77% of the 20-29 age category and drops even lower for older segments. Interestingly, teenagers are equally as likely as twenty and thirtysomethings to converse with 'friends of friends', or 'people they do not know'.

BEHAVIOR –  
FIGURE: 10



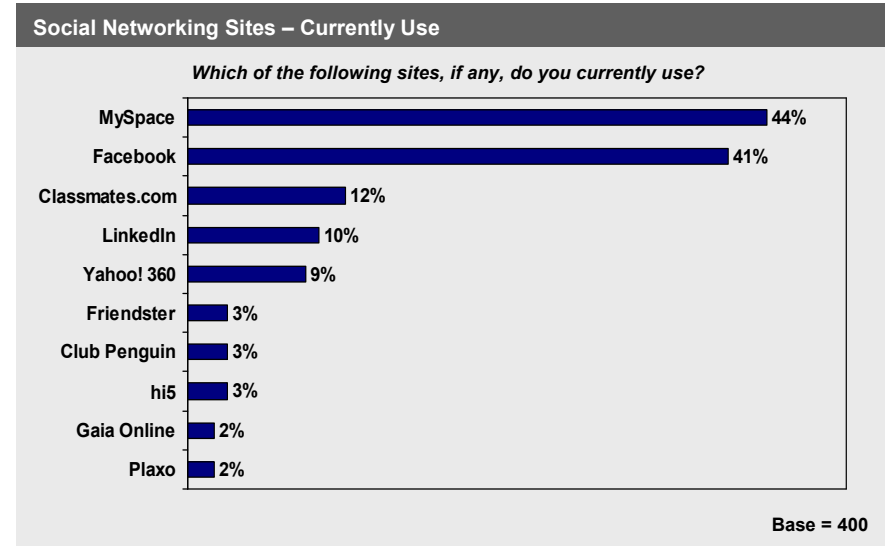
Source: eVOC Insights / RelevantView, March 2008

## Awareness & Usage Snapshot

MySpace is the most used site at 44%, followed closely by Facebook at 41%. Classmates.com, LinkedIn, and Yahoo! 360 are vying for third place with usage at about 10% each.

**AWARENESS & USAGE –**

**FIGURE: 13**



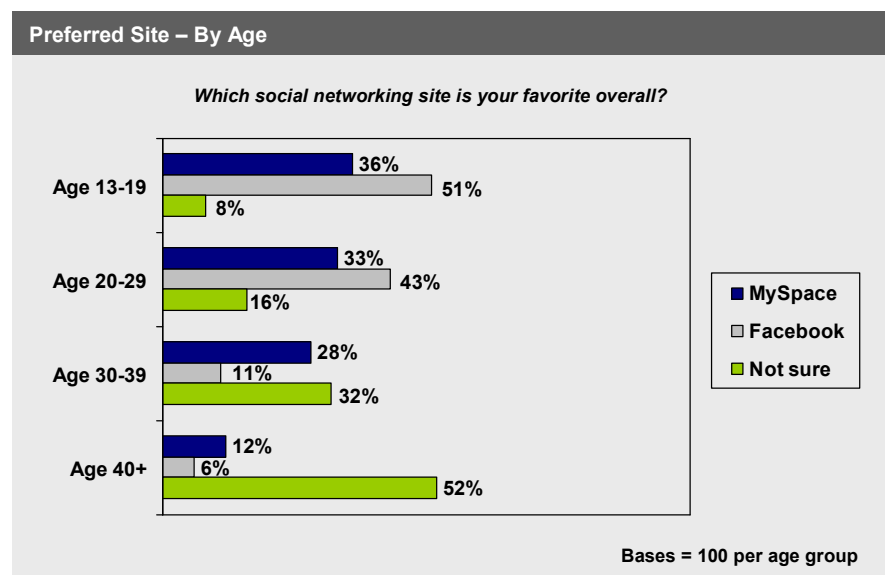
Source: eVOC Insights / RelevantView, March 2008

## Perceptions & Preferences Snapshot

Comparing preferences across age groups, teens significantly prefer Facebook over MySpace, 51% to 36% respectively. Users in their 20's show a similar trend at 43% preference for Facebook, compared to 33% for MySpace. Conversely users in their 30's and 40's are more than twice as likely to prefer MySpace over Facebook.

**PERCEPTIONS & PREFERENCES –**

**FIGURE: 21**



Source: eVOC Insights / RelevantView, March 2008

Quick Poll

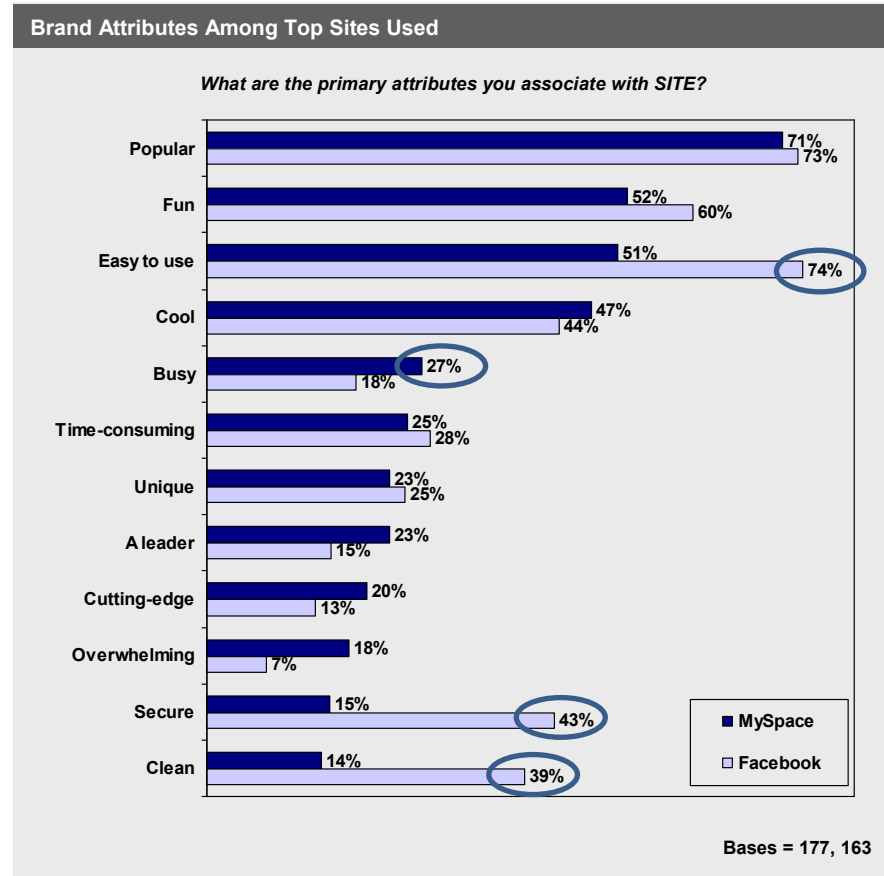
66% of respondents indicate that they are “very wary of providing too much personal information online”

## Perceptions & Preferences

Among the top social networking sites used, several differences exist in the perceived brand attributes associated with each site. Facebook stands out as easy to use, secure and clean. MySpace has somewhat of an advantage in being viewed as the leader and cutting edge, although many of its users find it too busy and overwhelming.

PERCEPTIONS & PREFERENCES –

FIGURE: 19



Source: eVOC Insights / RelevantView, March 2008

PERCEPTION OF MYSPACE VERSUS FACEBOOK

*“Well I use Facebook because it’s more of a school thing, a lot easier to find my friends who go to the same school as me. I use MySpace because it has cool features like adding songs to your profile, setting your own background, it is very easy to use, like writing blog, reading other peoples blogs. It is a good site overall.”*

*“Not all of my friends have one or the other, and they have different features. Applications and groups on Facebook. Bulletins in which to inform all friends on MySpace.”*

Source: eVOC Insights / RelevantView, March 2008

## Acknowledgements

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