Being Young, Being Digital

Some Observations on Young People’s New Media Behaviors

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“Computing is not about computers any more. It is about living...

- Nicholas Negroponte, “Being Digital”
...We have seen computers move out of giant air-conditioned rooms into closets, then onto desktops, and now into our laps and pockets. But this is not the end.”

- Nicholas Negroponte, “Being Digital”
What is social media?
mobile
personal & customizable
communal
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jD-sSI00UM&feature=related
The Facebook Effect

Add Mark as a friend?

At 23, Mark Zuckerberg has already changed the way millions of us connect. Now he’s facing a new challenge: how to turn an online obsession into a fixture of the digital age. By Steven Levy

BusinessWeek

The MySpace Generation

They live online. They buy online. How companies are reaching them.

TIME

PERSON OF THE YEAR

You.

Yes, you.
You control the Information Age.
Welcome to your world.
Our goal is to examine the social aspects of social media through original research.
Survey Data
Depth Interviews
What are we learning?
1. Spending more time online than with TV
Figure 1.
(Civilian noninstitutional population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent of households with a computer</th>
<th>Percent of households with Internet access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data on Internet access were not collected before 1997.
Home Broadband Penetration (US)
(% of all adult Americans with high-speed at home)

Source: Pew Internet, extrapolated by Website Optimization, LLC
Percentage of Households with Internet Access, by Race, 1994-2003
Source: NTIA
2. Social networking sites are an online hot spot
Growth of Facebook
More than half, 55%, of all online American youths ages 12-17 use online social networking sites.
48% of teens visit these sites daily or more often
Pew Internet & American Life Project

Older teens (15-17) are more likely to use these sites
70% older girls have an online profile, 54% of boys do
Teens ♥ MySpace
Avg. minutes per person age 12-17 at MySpace and Facebook, August 2007

- MySpace, 331 minutes
- Facebook, 74 minutes

“Teens who enjoy social media are intensive users and highly engaged.”

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings
empowerment
autonomy
identity
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zb7wRxXTZK8
Young Computer Users

- Historically early adopters
- Access to computers/broadband
- Key predictor of computer in U.S. households
- Eager to experiment
- Web 2.0 “brand makers”
- Cultural influencers
our survey: a few quick facts
98% have a personal profile
58% visit three or more times a day
80% visit Facebook most often
The social aspects & consequences of social media
1. Youth are not simply surfing the web; they are managing parts of their lives on the web.
2. Is social media anti-social?
What does it mean to be part of an online community?
cyberbullying
3. Consequences for community
TRUE or FALSE?

Most teens use social networking sites to meet people they don’t know?
FALSE

91% of all social networking teens say they use the sites to stay in touch with friends they see frequently.
## Multi-Channel Teens Are Super Communicators

The percent of teens who communicate with their friends every day via these methods...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>All teens (n=935)</th>
<th>Multi-channel teens+ (n=265)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk to friends on landline telephone</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk on cell phone</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time with friends in person</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant message</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>54*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send texts</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send messages over social network sites</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send email</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project Survey of Teens and Parents, October-November 2006, n=935. Margin of error for teens is ±4%. *Multi-channel teens are defined as teens who use the internet, have cell phones, use instant messaging, text messaging and use social network sites.* * indicates statistically significant differences between the percentages in the row.
CMCs predate web 2.0

- internet-based discussion groups
  - chat rooms
  - MUDs
  - e-mail
  - detached
“super public”
cyberbalkanization

(sy.bur.bawl.kuh.ni.ZAY.shun)
The social web & social capital

• Use of the Internet increases our social capital?

• Social capital: Informal networks, social ties, bonds, community, strong and weak ties

• “Strength of weak ties”

• Enhances our connection to others

• Email, IM’ing, texting, social networking
Social capital

bonding

vs.

bridging
Bonding Social Capital

- Connections that are exclusive
- Connections that are inward looking
- Connections that are homogeneous
- Connections to “people like us”
- Connections that don’t expand, but rather reinforces our narrower selves
Bridging Social Capital

- Connections that are inclusive
- Connections that are outward looking
- Connections that are heterogeneous, encompass diversity
- Connections to “people not like us”
- Connections that expand our narrower selves
Are everyday social media practices a form of bonding or bridging social capital?

our focus is on race and class
Bonding not bridging

Bringing us together and pulling us apart
The social communities we form online often reflect the social communities we develop offline.
Influence of race and class
Social network sites reproduce rather than create social boundaries.
Thank you.
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