

{ SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE }

## Web Demographics

WHAT ARE THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF WEB USERS?  
WHO IS USING THE WEB NOW?

THE PANELISTS



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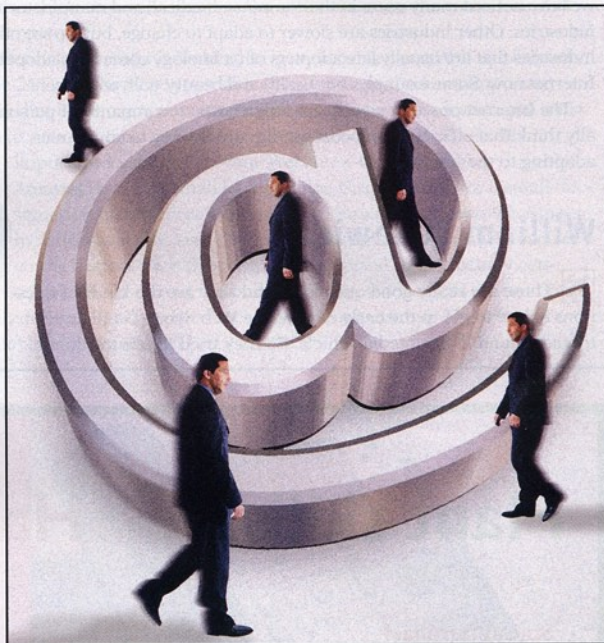
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### Suzanne McGann

**X** The year brought more people in business on line. It appears that 92 percent of registered businesses have a Web site. And, anecdotally, Voyageur finds more often than not that businesses are relying on Web site information first for their brand impressions, company research, and subsequent buying decisions. Professional Web sites have become the expectation for all competitive businesses—no matter whether a small venture or a large corporation. Marketing dollars are being reallocated to maximize online presence.

Service and retail businesses are trending to content-rich, well-branded, and well-designed Web sites that are easily found on line, due to search positioning. Being found on line is a concern for most clients—they are looking for managed search services (search engine optimization and pay-per-click performance management). Online budgets are increasingly including paid advertising to drive customers to a company's Web site.

**Within the global online community, North Americans have the highest rate of Internet usage—edging out the European Union by nearly 18 percent.** Within the States, overall Internet usage is highest among 19 to 35 year olds, with the fastest growth category being the over-55 category. Men slightly



edge out women for online use, although women spend more. Those who are 45 to 64 are an aggressively targeted consumer audience, as they represent the largest spenders in general. As the baby boomers move on line, many e-businesses are expecting high returns. Although the majority of Americans are using the Internet, the largest users (personal/business) are college educated and fairly affluent, with \$75,000+ annual income.

### Ricardo Ortizcazarin

**X** The users are changing, and the most active users are young and affluent between the ages of 25 to 34 years old. They have household



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incomes of more than \$75,000 in the United States. **Most of these users are male and connected to the Internet with broadband at home**, according to Jupiter Research.

In my experience, each different industry has a different type of demographic. Usually the more technology savvy the company is, the more likely they will have more potential users using the Internet. For example, we have noticed many users in the computer, medical, and manufacturing industries. Other industries are slower to adapt to change, but we see other industries that are usually late adopters of technology come in to adopt the Internet now. Some examples are health and beauty, golf, and others.

The Internet provides significant efficiencies to companies. I personally think that efficiency and cost savings are the key to companies adapting to the Internet.

## William Jurewicz

**X** Those are really good questions, and they are the kinds of questions I used to get in the early days of the Web, when people were trying to understand it as a media vehicle. So they tried to use traditional

media metrics, like demographics.

But, that's over.

Anyone who has access to a computer is a Web user—from the kids at the inner-city school library to the international traveler checking out hotels in Beijing to the grandma sending e-cards to her grandkids in Fargo.

Thinking about the Web as a media vehicle is inherently limiting. And a big mistake. It's a content vehicle . . . an idea vehicle . . . a business vehicle. **While content certainly segments along demographic and psychographic lines, Web usage as a whole should not be considered 'niche' by any stretch.**

Assume Web users are your best prospective customers. It's easier than ever—because of the evolution of search technologies—for people to find you. Once they do, you better be relevant. Obviously, there are techniques that build traffic, but once they're at your site, you better be relevant, because it's as easy as a click for them to get to your competition.

## Paul Frett



**X** As I scan the daily articles, blogs, and research about the Web, I see discussions that include such a wide variety of demographics that it is difficult to suggest that the Web appeals more to one group or another. At this point in the evolution of the Web, the question of usage has become more about how audiences use the Web, not so much about who is using the Web.

Kids, tweens, teens, and newly independents are leading the way with adoption of new media—accessing the Web via phones, downloading

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music, creating blogs, sharing photos, and truly using the Web as the interactive interface for their worlds. However, even audiences that have not grown up with the Internet are quickly adopting the Web as a means to get the information they need more quickly and to communicate with those close to them instantly. In 2005, 65 percent of people ages 50 to 65 were also using the Web to access financial, health, and other key information, as well as using e-mail and community sites. **The key to successfully marketing our businesses in the Web era will be helping our customers find us.**

This starts with knowing our audiences and then discovering ways to deliver Web experiences that are relevant to them and their need for our information, our products, and our services. Traditional media should still play a role. But a Web-centric approach should be used. It leverages all communication channels to drive customers to a Web experience that enables us to tell our story in the most relevant way possible.

## A.J. Meyer

**X** The reporting of traditional demographics (age, income, education, et cetera) has little impact on telling businesses what they need to do to attract customers. While we cannot say the Web has become ubiquitous, it's clear that over the past few years that Web access has grown tremendously. Nearly everyone has access to a computer connected to the Internet, either at home, at a friend or family member's home, or at public locations such as the library.



**One of the fastest growing behavioral demographic groups is the**

**socially conscious Web user.** All things being equal (quality, price, availability, shopping confidence), a socially conscious Web user is more likely to support smaller businesses and companies that give back to the community and to charities. While it has always been present to some degree, this entire movement began building steam with the tsunami in December 2004 and continued through [last] summer with hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma.

Business leaders can assume that everyone is on line looking for them. By everyone I mean customers, potential customers, potential employees, vendors, and business partners—even competitors and recruiters looking to hire away your C-level employees. **Company Web sites are becoming more than a sales tool, a customer service tool, or a recruiting tool.** Web sites are becoming the multichannel communications vehicle that pulls together the entire message, the entire brand of a company.

Because everyone is looking for you, because your Web site is available 24/7, and because your Web site is perhaps the most important snapshot of who you are as a company—as a business leader, you must make sure you have a handle on all aspects of your Web site. The important lesson is that your Web site—whether you're Amazon.com or a small local retailer; Cisco Systems or a small designer of printed circuit boards—can impact your overall business in ways you're not even aware of today. Look for ways you can set yourself apart from the competition, appeal to the socially conscious Web user, and remember to address the needs of your entire audience (and yes, that means your competitors). The world is watching—put on a good show. **TCB**

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