

Social networking sites still popular

MySpace led in first place of 10 popular social-networking sites that collectively grew 47 percent year-over-year, according to Nielsen//NetRatings.

The Internet media and market-research firm announced Thursday that April's Top 10 social-networking sites increased from an "unduplicated unique audience of 46.8 million last year to 68.8 million in April 2006, reaching 45 percent of active Web users."

MySpace topped Nielsen//NetRatings' April Top 10 with 38.4 million visitors and a year-over-year growth rate of 367 percent.

It was followed by Blogger with 18.5 million and 80 percent, and thirdly Classmates Online with 12.9 million and 10 percent year-over-year increase.

To round off the top 10 in consecutive order was YouTube, MSN Groups, AOL Hometown, Yahoo! Groups, MSN Spaces, Six Apart TypePad and Xanga.com.

"Social networking sites are the reality television of the Internet," stated Jon Gibs, senior director of media, Nielsen//NetRatings. "The content is relatively inexpensive for publishers to produce, and social networking is not a fad that will disappear. If anything, it will become more ingrained in mainstream sites, just as reality TV programming has become ubiquitous in network programming."

"However, again like reality programming, the concept of 'reality' alone, or in this case 'social networking,' is not enough," he added. "In this competitive marketplace, sites also have to provide consumers with distinct content they can identify with."

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