



23-04-2009

4,700,000 over-50s active in social networks in UK

4 out of 10 online over-50s in the UK (4,700,000) belong to at least 1 social network. Facebook is the most popular social network in this target group: 93% know it and 35% are a member. Social networks are mainly used for private purposes and less so for professional purposes. For the latter, LinkedIn is the most popular network. Belgium and the Netherlands are trailing behind the UK as far as the awareness and membership of social networks is concerned amongst online over-50s. All this has become apparent in market research carried out by InSites Consulting regarding awareness and use of social networks in Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK.

Facebook is the most popular

In the UK, 59% of over-50s is active on the internet. In this online group, 4 out 10 (4,700,000) people belong to at least 1 social network. Almost everyone knows Facebook (93%) and MySpace (90%). Facebook is not just the best-known network, it is also the network used most by online over-50s (35%). Social networks for private purposes are much better known than professional networks. For the latter, LinkedIn is the most popular network (6%).

The over-50s use social networks less than people under 50. 72% of the under-50s online population use these sites. For the over-50s, the figure is 1 in 4.

“Our research clearly dispels the myth that social networks and interactive websites are used only by young people. Today Facebook is popular amongst our over-50s and this will only be more so in the future. Many people in this target group realise very well that membership of a social network is necessary to communicate with young people and most simply really enjoy it,” according to Steven Van Belleghem, Managing Partner at InSites Consulting.

Online over-50s in UK far ahead of Belgians and Dutch

In the UK, almost all over-50s know Facebook or MySpace. 40% of them are also actual members of at least one social network. This figure is considerably higher than member percentages in Belgium (27%) and the Netherlands (22%).

As is the case in Belgium, online over-50s in the UK also mainly use social networks for private purposes. With a penetration of 8%, Hyves is the most popular social network in the Netherlands. Belgian online over-50s are more inclined than their neighbours to use social networks even more in the future, both for professional (21%) and private (31%) purposes.

“The figures show that these are not just a few isolated individuals using sites such as Facebook. We are seeing a clear rising trend amongst the over-50s to make more use of social networks in order to communicate and stay in touch with their family and friends,” Steven Van Belleghem of InSites Consulting says.

These survey data result from a market survey conducted by InSites Consulting in September 2008. The survey provides an overview of the use of and attitude towards social networks as well as other brands and communication topics. In total, 900 consumers and 250 marketing professionals took part in this online survey, in Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The figures are representative of the internet population of each country, according to age (18-65) and gender.



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Press Release - 23-04-2009

InSites Consulting

InSites Consulting is a leading market research company in the field of online market research with a strong international position. It was created as a spin-off from the Vlerick Leuven Ghent Management School. Via an online panel comprising more than 2,000,000 panel members spread over 25 European countries, both quantitative and qualitative online marketing research is conducted. The main office in Ghent has 75 highly educated and experienced employees. InSites Consulting stands for: expertise and consulting, driven by innovation, excellent customer service and quality-oriented. More information on our website www.insites.eu and our blog <http://www.blog.insites.be>

