

Silver surfers: New social networking Web site Genkvetch geared to seniors

March 23 2009, By Lois K. Solomon

Facebook, shmacebook. Senior citizens want their own social networking sites.

Marilyn Carroll, 61, says her peers want jokes, movie reviews, book recommendations and recipes. They also want to make new friends and reconnect with old ones, but refuse to plod through complicated instructions with unfamiliar terminology.

Carroll; her husband, Mel; and friend, Steve Greenbaum, are the creators of a new senior networking site, [Genkvetch](#), in honor of the generation that "kvetches," a Yiddish word meaning complains, whines or nags. The site, open to people of all faiths, accepts no advertisements.

Marilyn Carroll, of Surfside, Fla., said the focus of Genkvetch is easy readability: Big fonts, few flashy colors, a personals section and news of interest to seniors, including health, current events and volunteer opportunities.

"There are so many sites for the young," said Carroll, a retired school counselor. "We wanted somewhere that the 50-plus crowd could have fun."

Carroll said the group did little research about existing senior sites, such as Seniorocity, ThirdAge and SeniorPeopleMeet. These sites and others geared toward [Baby Boomers](#) and [older adults](#) seek to connect people who did not grow up with the Internet and may not feel comfortable with

computers.

Alan Titan, 69, a retired electrical engineer, said he spends an hour or two on Web sites each day, looking for news updates, movie reviews, piano instructional videos and information on the New York Jets.

Titan, who lives west of Boynton Beach, Fla., said he likes Genkvetch for its understanding of senior citizens' interests.

"They have things that are pertinent to our age group," Titan said. "The movie reviews are written by average, honest people who will tell you the truth."

While online sites for seniors proliferate, young people still constitute the majority of social network users: Only 7 percent of adults 65 and older have joined online networks, compared with 75 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Still, the phenomenon is catching on: 8 percent of adults had an online profile in 2005, more than quadrupling to 35 percent today, Pew reported.

Ilene Goldberg, 56, of Boynton Beach, Fla., plans to post an online profile on Genkvetch. She said she searches the Internet daily for crossword puzzles and health news. "It's a good site for people older than I am because nothing seems to change on it, and older people like things that don't change," said Goldberg, a retired information technology specialist.

Carroll said her husband updates the site almost daily with readers' joke submissions and health news. She said they have responded to reader requests by enlarging fonts and buying new software to make it easier to set up personal profiles.

Although the site may seem unsophisticated to experienced Web users, Carroll said, seniors seem to relish the group's simple approach and the recipes and jokes.

"We wanted to put up something people could laugh at," Carroll said. "Things bother us. Life gets complicated at our age."

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