

Games defeat e-mail as online time eaters

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(AP) -- For the first time, games have overtaken e-mail as Americans' No. 2 online time killer, according to new research from the Nielsen Co.

But not surprisingly, blogs and social networks - Facebook, mostly - are still what Americans spend the biggest chunk of their online time scouring.

Of the nearly 24 hours of time that Americans on average spent online during the month of June, 23 percent was on social networks and blogs, Nielsen found. That is up from 16 percent in the same month a year earlier.

By far the most visited social network was Facebook, which recently celebrated reaching half a billion active users worldwide. The site commanded 85 percent of the time Americans spent on social networks.

Games, meanwhile, accounted for more than 10 percent of Internet users' total time online in June, up from 9 percent last year. E-mail, on the other hand, counts for just 8 percent of Americans' Internet time, down from nearly 12 percent last June. That could reflect many Americans contacting friends through Facebook or phone text messages rather than traditional e-mail.

The most popular online games were from Electronic Arts Inc. Its Web games include "Tiger Woods Online" and casual games played on Facebook.

It was not always clear whether a game people played on Facebook counted toward the online games or the social networks category. Zynga's "Farmville," for example, is sometimes hosted on Zynga's servers and sometimes on Facebook's.

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