

Old catching up to young on US Internet: study

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File photo shows an elderly woman checking out a laptop computer at an apple store in Bethesda, Maryland. Older folks are closing ground on youngsters quick to leap on hot Internet trends such as social networking and online shopping, according to a Pew Research Center study.

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While members of a Millennial Generation made up people ages 18 to 33 are still way ahead in areas such as using smartphones to connect online, their dominance is slipping in many Internet arenas, the US study concluded.

"Even in areas that are still dominated by Millennials, older generations

are making notable gains," study authors said in their findings.

"Some of the areas that have seen the fastest rate of growth in recent years include older adults' participation in communication and entertainment activities online, especially in using social network sites such as Facebook."

Approximately half of "Younger Boomers" ages 46-55 used online social networks in May as compared to just 20 percent two years earlier, according to the study.

The fastest adoption of social networks took place with people 74 years of age or older, with use quadrupling in two years to 16 percent of the group, the study found.

Overall use of [online social networks](#) by US adults of all ages nearly doubled in two years to 61 percent, while 83 percent of Millennials are members of such Internet communities, according to the research.

While Millennials are still more prone to watch online video, other generations are adopting the habit.

About 55 percent of "Older Boomers" ages 56 to 64 have watched video online, as have one-in-five members of the "G.I. Generation" ages 74 and older.

Older [Internet users](#) were also taking increasingly to getting news online.

Millennials were more inclined to send text messages or play [online games](#), while older folks were more likely to visit government websites or check financial information on the Internet.

Online activities that proved popular to Internet users of all ages

included shopping, banking, email, searches, and rating products or services.

"Searching for health information, an activity that was once the primary domain of [older adults](#) is now the third most popular online activity for all internet users 18 and older," the study said.

The only online activity that had its popularity eroded was blogging, with people evidently opting to express themselves in forms such as Twitter messages and Facebook status updates, according to the research.

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