

Teens turn from Facebook to fresher social-media sites

June 22 2012, By Nick Foley

Facebook appears to have competition for teens' attention, and they're drifting to other social-media sites as evidence mounts that the growth of the world's largest social network is slowing.

Drawn to niche sites such as Foursquare and [Tumblr](#), teens appear to be expanding beyond Facebook. According to market research firm YPulse, 18 percent of teens prefer to "check in" on Foursquare instead of Facebook, and 10 percent say Pinterest is a better site for browsing.

"We're supportive of these websites growing, and the websites integrated with Facebook are more social because of it," said Malorie Lucich, communications manager for Facebook.

Facing mounting investor scrutiny after its disappointing [IPO](#), Facebook is under pressure to report increased growth and revenue to Wall Street.

But Facebook, which claims more than 900 million members, had 158 million unique visitors to its site in April, according to researcher [ComScore](#), up just 5 percent from a year ago. That compares with year-over-year growth rates of 89 percent in April 2010.

More than eight years after Facebook's inception, its mass appeal has drawn older crowds who add their kids as [Facebook friends](#). That development could be tarnishing the site's "cool factor" in the eyes of teens, said Jake Katz, chief architect at YPulse.

There are other reasons teens are divvying up their digital presence. It assures them more privacy, as well as new popularity among a smaller audience. Instagram, for example, features users' photos on its "Popular" page.

"There's a new flavor of gratification," that Facebook doesn't have, Katz said.

To meet rising mobile interests, where many teens surf the Internet and chat, the social giant has made strides to make its mobile app a crucial part of Facebook.

Facebook has sliced site functions into separate [mobile apps](#) such as Facebook Messenger and Facebook Pictures, a move that could appeal to [teens](#), as online identities spread across multiple sites, Katz said.

Also, the social network is testing ways to allow children under 13, now prohibited, to participate with parental supervision.

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