Teens and Social Media
An Overview

Amanda Lenhart
New York Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
April 10, 2009
Road map

• Teen internet use basics
• Teen tech tool ownership
• How teens communicate
  – Social networks
  – Mobile phones
• Young adults & communication
• Young adults and online health
• Wrap up
Methodology

• RDD surveys with teens 12 to 17 and a parent or guardian
  – Sept-Nov 2007 (n=700)
  – Nov-Feb 2008 (n=1102)
• Focus groups
• RDD surveys of adults on online health information seeking
Teen internet use basics

- 93% of teens 12-17 go online
- 89% of online teens go online from home, and most of them go online from home most often
- 77% of teens go online at school
- 71% go online from friends or relatives' house
- 60% go online from a library
- 66% of households with teens go online via broadband, 22% via dial-up, and 10% do not have access at home.
- 63% of online teens go online daily
Teens and their tools

- 77% of teens 12-17 own a game console
- 74% of teens 12-17 own an iPod or Mp3 player
- 71% of teens 12-17 own a cell phone
- 60% have a desktop or laptop computer
- 55% have a portable gaming device like a DS or a PSP
How has tool ownership changed?

- Cell phone ownership is way up:
  - 45% of 12-17 year olds had them in 2004
  - 63% in 2006
  - 71% in early 2008.
- Computer ownership is stable at least over the past two years
- Caveat: Concept of “ownership” varies from device to device
Online activities: Teens

• 97% of teens play video games
• 81% go to websites about movies, TV shows, music groups or sports stars you are interested in
• 65% use an online social networking site
• 63% go online to get news or information about current events or politics
• 57% have watched a video on video-sharing site like YouTube*
• 55% go online to get information about a college or university*
• 38% buy things online like books, clothing or music*
• 28% look online for health, dieting or physical fitness information*
• 27% keep a blog or online journal
• 19% have downloaded a podcast*
• 18% have visited a chat room*
• 11% have a website
How teens communicate

All teens:
• 95% of teens spend time with friends face to face
• 88% of teens talk to their friends on a landline
• 67% of teens talk to their friends on their cell phone
• 65% of teens send email to friends
• 61% send messages to friends through social networking sites
• 60% of online teens send instant messages to friends
• 58% of teens send text messages to friends
How teens communicate daily

Everyday:
• 51% of teens (with cell phones) talk on their cell phones
• 42% of teens (who use SNS) send messages through social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook
• 38% of teens send text messages to each other
• 32% of teens talk to friends on a landline phone
• 29% spend time with friends in person doing social activities outside of school
• 26% send instant messages
• 16% send email
Changes since 2006

• Up: texting
• Stable: SNS, email, in person, cell phone
• Down: IM, landline (more saying that they never do this, or use it less than once a week)

• What teens don’t do? Twitter.
What is twitter anyway?
Likelihood of Twitter use by age

Source: *comScore Media Metrix*
April 10, 2009

Teens & Social Media
• 65% of online teens have a profile online
• Girls, particularly older girls, more likely to use SNS than boys (86% of girls 15-17 have profile online, compared to 69% of boys 15-17)
• Age is major factor
  – 12-14 year-olds; 38% have an online profile
  – 15-17 year-olds; 77% have an online profile
• Other demographic factors not significant
  – Income
  – Race/ethnicity
Social networking activities

- 83% of social network users have added comments to a friend’s picture
- 77% post messages to friend’s page or wall
- 71% send private messages to friends within the SNS
- 66% post comments on a friend’s blog
- 54% send bulletins or group messages to all their friends
- 54% send IMs or text messages to friends through the SNS
- All activities (except comments on pictures and sending IM/txts via sns are down since 2006)
Mobile phones

- 71% of teens ages 12-17 have a mobile phone
  - Up from 65% in Fall 2006 and 45% in Fall 2004
- 88% of parents have mobile phones
- No significant difference in mobile phone ownership by race/ethnicity
- Some differences by socio-economic status – but mostly a minor bump up in the highest income and education brackets.
- Age is very important – huge bump up in mobile phone ownership at age 14
  - 52% of 12-13 year olds have a mobile phone
  - At age 14 jumps to 72%
  - By 17 its 84% of teens have a mobile phone
- No gender differences in ownership
Young adults and communication

- 91% of 18-31 use the internet
- 89% of 18-31 use email
- 75% of Gen Y get news online
- 70% of Gen Y (ages 18-31) use social network sites
- 57% of Gen Y use IM
- 18% of 18-31 use twitter

- 74% of Gen Y have a cell phone
  - 85% of Gen Y use cell phone to send texts
  - 38% of Gen Y use cell phone to access internet
Young adults and online health

- 79% of online young adults 18-29 look for health information
- Similar to other age groups except 65+ who are less likely
- Health information that young adults are more likely to seek than other cohorts:
  - Exercise or fitness information (55%)
  - Sexual health information (21%)
  - Immunizations or vaccination information (18%)
  - Problems with drugs or alcohol (14%)
  - How to quit smoking (13%)
- 22% of teens go online to look for information about a health topic that’s hard to talk about like drug use, sexual health or depression.*
Adults and online health

• Overall, women are much more likely to look online for any health information
• Highly educated internet users are also more likely to look online for health information of all kinds.
• Half of health information searches are for someone else
• 2/3rds of health searches start at search engines
• Typically visit two or more sites during a health search session
Wrap up

- Small signs of social network fatigue
- MySpace still relevant
- Mobile is ascendant
- Don’t forget about other mobile devices – not just mobile phones, but mp3 players, smart phones and portable gaming devices
- More video integration into social networks in the future?
Thank You!

Amanda Lenhart
alenhart@pewinternet.org
http://www.pewinternet.org