

For Immediate Release:
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SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES GROW 47 PERCENT, YEAR OVER YEAR, REACHING 45 PERCENT OF WEB USERS, ACCORDING TO NIELSEN//NETRATINGS

Successful Sites Drive High Visitor Retention Rates

NEW YORK– May 11, 2006– Nielsen//NetRatings, a global leader in Internet media and market research, announced today that April's top 10 social networking sites collectively grew 47 percent year over year, increasing from an unduplicated unique audience of 46.8 million last year to 68.8 million in April 2006, reaching 45 percent of active Web users.

MySpace, which has attracted significant media attention of late, topped the list with 38.4 million unique visitors and a remarkable year-over-year growth rate of 367 percent (see Table 1). Blogger took the No. 2 spot, garnering 18.5 million unique visitors and growing 80 percent year over year, followed by Classmates Online with 12.9 million unique visitors and a 10 percent year-over-year increase. Newcomer YouTube and the more established MSN Groups rounded out the top five, with 12.5 million and 10.6 million unique visitors, respectively.

"Social networking sites are the reality television of the Internet," said Jon Gibs, senior director of media, Nielsen//NetRatings. "The content is relatively inexpensive for publishers to produce, and social networking is not a fad that will disappear. If anything, it will become more ingrained in mainstream sites, just as reality TV programming has become ubiquitous in network programming," Gibs continued. "However, again like reality programming, the concept of 'reality' alone, or in this case 'social networking,' is not enough. In this competitive marketplace, sites also have to provide consumers with distinct content they can identify with."

Table 1: Top 10 Social Networking Sites* for April 2006 (U.S., Home and Work)

Site	Apr-05 UA (000)	Apr-06 UA (000)	YOY Growth
MySpace	8,210	38,359	367%
Blogger	10,301	18,508	80%
Classmates Online	11,672	12,865	10%
YouTube	N/A	12,505	N/A
MSN Groups	12,352	10,570	-14%
AOL Hometown	11,236	9,590	-15%
Yahoo! Groups	8,262	9,165	11%
MSN Spaces	1,857	7,165	286%
Six Apart TypePad	5,065	6,711	32%
Xanga.com	5,202	6,631	27%

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings, May 2006

* Note: This is a custom category and does not appear in Nielsen//NetRatings' syndicated service.

Loyal Users

The interactive nature of social networking sites keeps visitors coming back. MySpace enjoyed the highest retention rate among the group, with 67 percent of all March at-home visitors returning in April (see Table 2). MSN Groups and Facebook also benefited from a loyal following, with 58 and 52 percent of visitors returning month over month, respectively. Xanga.com and MSN's new social networking site MSN Spaces rounded out the top five sites ranked by retention rate, with 49 and 47 percent, respectively.



“The social networking sites that are seeing strong growth have developed a unique online presence that is continually refreshed by user generated content,” said Gibs. “This promotes ongoing consumer interest and visitor loyalty. However, while these sites have seen explosive growth over the past 12 months, this is a fickle youth audience, and the masses that have rushed to these sites, could turn their attention elsewhere. The question that remains is ‘how strong are the social networks that consumers are building on these sites?’”

Table 2: Top 5 Social Networking Sites ranked according to Retention Rate, April 2006 (U.S., Home Only)

Brand	Retention Rate (%)
MySpace	67.04
MSN Groups	57.62
Facebook	51.73
Xanga.com	48.92
MSN Spaces	47.33

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings, May 2006

Nielsen//NetRatings reports April 2006 data for the Top Sites by Parent Company and Top Brands. In addition, Nielsen//NetRatings reveals the Top Advertisers by Company for April 2006.

Nielsen//NetRatings Top 10 Web Sites by Parent Company and Top 10 Web Sites By Brand, April 2006

Table 1. Top 10 Parent Companies, Combined Home & Work

Parent	Unique Audience (000)	Time Per Person (hh:mm:ss)
1. Microsoft	112,596	2:00:15
2. Yahoo!	105,907	3:09:58
3. Time Warner	99,204	4:51:35
4. Google	93,715	0:54:21
5. eBay	60,050	1:50:37
6. News Corp. Online	55,736	1:38:43
7. InterActiveCorp	54,249	0:26:10
8. Amazon	44,765	0:21:37
9. Walt Disney Internet Group	39,554	0:33:20
10. New York Times Company	38,447	0:14:31

Table 2. Top 10 Brands, Combined Home & Work

Brand	Unique Audience (000)	Time Per Person (hh:mm:ss)
1. Yahoo!	105,444	3:10:02
2. Microsoft	95,777	0:45:25
3. MSN	92,786	1:38:53
4. Google	92,120	0:52:48
5. AOL	70,433	6:11:06
6. eBay	53,465	1:53:00
7. MapQuest	40,801	0:10:53
8. MySpace	38,359	2:06:46
9. Real Network	38,183	0:47:48
10. Amazon	37,854	0:19:37

Example: The data indicates that 38.4 million home and work Internet users visited at least one of the New York Times Company-owned sites or launched a New York Times Company-owned application during the month, and each person spent, on average, a total of 14 minutes and 31 seconds at one or more of their sites or applications.

A parent company is defined as a consolidation of multiple domains and URLs owned by a single entity. A brand is defined as a consolidation of multiple domains and URLs that has a consistent collection of branded content.

Nielsen//NetRatings AdRelevance Top 10 Advertisers, April 2006

Top advertisers, ranked by estimated spending, are based on data from AdRelevance, Nielsen//NetRatings' advertising research service. An impression is counted as the number of times an ad is rendered for viewing.



Top 10 Advertisers by Estimated Spending

Advertiser	Total Estimated Spending	Impressions (000)
1. Vonage Holdings Corp	\$37,962,100	16,897,475
2. GUS Plc	\$28,150,700	16,950,398
3. United Online, Inc.	\$21,842,000	7,244,330
4. Netflix, Inc.	\$14,370,300	7,173,759
5. LowerMyBills.com, Inc.	\$14,236,300	2,700,334
6. Verizon Communications, Inc.	\$12,987,200	3,836,843
7. Apollo Group, Inc.	\$11,513,400	3,235,280
8. NexTag, Inc.	\$11,508,200	4,743,402
9. E*TRADE FINANCIAL Corp.	\$10,337,500	2,708,051
10. Scottrade, Inc.	\$8,855,200	1,695,014

Estimated spending reflects CPM-based advertising online, and excludes search-based advertising, paid fee services, performance-based campaigns, sponsorships, barter, partnership advertising, advertorials, promotions and email. Impressions reported exclude house ads, which are ads that run on an advertiser's own or related property and co-branding relationships.

Example: An estimated 1.7 billion Scottrade, Inc. ads were rendered for viewing at the cost of approximately \$8.9 million during the surfing period.

About Nielsen//NetRatings

NetRatings, Inc. (Nasdaq: NTRT) delivers leading Internet media and market research solutions, marketed globally under the Nielsen//NetRatings brand. With high quality, technology-driven products and services, Nielsen//NetRatings is the global standard for Internet audience measurement and premier source for online advertising intelligence, enabling clients to make informed business decisions regarding their Internet and digital strategies. The Nielsen//NetRatings portfolio includes panel-based and site-centric Internet audience measurement services, online advertising intelligence, user lifestyle and demographic data, e-commerce and transaction metrics, and custom data, research and analysis. For more information, please visit www.nielsen-netratings.com.

Editor's Note: Please source all data to Nielsen//NetRatings.

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