

Digital Hot List

The Best of the Web 2007

AdweekMedia

1



It was clear Facebook had nailed the college market when it tied with beer in a survey of what's in on campus. And over the last year, the onetime student-driven site opened wide: letting anyone join and, crucially, allowing third-party developers to build applications letting users do everything from share movie reviews to throw sheep at each other. While much smaller than MySpace, its audience has swelled, attracting the attention of big brands. It's betting its "social graph" will form the underpinnings of a targeted ad system with placements based on user interests. Facebook "beats out MySpace in a heartbeat," says one media buyer.

UNIQUE AUDIENCE: 16.5 MILLION
AUDIENCE GROWTH: 110%
WEB PAGES PER PERSON: 299 (UP 26%)
TIME PER PERSON: 1:07:56 (UP 24%)
LAST YEAR'S HOT LIST RANK: 10

2



And to think MySpace used to be known as the place to get exposure for your new garage band. These days, the site is looking more and more like Generation Y's Web portal, where 60 million monthly unique users can congregate, connect—and now, consume content via the likes of Reuters and RipeTV. Finally, say media execs, its sales force is making headway, offering better ad targeting. To that end, parent Fox Interactive Media in February snatched up Strategic Data Corporation. The FIM sales team also gets props for investing in research on marketing via social networks, spawning the recent Never-Ending Friending study.

UNIQUE AUDIENCE: 59.7 MILLION
AUDIENCE GROWTH: 30%
WEB PAGES PER PERSON: 606 (UP 20%)
TIME PER PERSON: 2:38:14 (UP 40%)
LAST YEAR'S HOT LIST RANK: 2

3



It's hard to believe video-sharing behemoth YouTube is just two-and-a-half years old. In that time, it's brought the world hot clips ranging from "The Evolution of Dance" to Tay Zonday's "Chocolate Rain." Google's \$1.65 billion acquisition assured it a SWAT team of lawyers to fight off copyright suits from the likes of Viacom. While NBC Universal and News Corp. plotted a "YouTube killer" this year, the site just kept growing. Now the hard part: introducing an ad system that doesn't alienate users. One buyer calls its new overlay spots a watershed, while others fret it will antagonize consumers with a more annoying version of pop-ups.

UNIQUE AUDIENCE: 51.4 MILLION
AUDIENCE GROWTH: 162%
WEB PAGES PER PERSON: 56 (UP 51%)
TIME PER PERSON: 0:43:50 (UP 57%)
LAST YEAR'S HOT LIST RANK: 1

4



TMZ has benefitted from a perfect storm of celebrity gossip and the march of technology. As online video becomes ubiquitous, seemingly every resident of greater Los Angeles with a camera phone is a budding stalkerazzo—and the scandal-prone posse of Britney, Paris and Lindsay just keeps giving them new material. With 9 million uniques per month and counting, the AOL-owned site's audience ballooned an eye-popping 101 percent year over year, with time spent swelling 212 percent. Meanwhile, a spinoff syndicated TV show debuts this week. As one buyer sums it up, "They're exploding."

UNIQUE AUDIENCE: 9 MILLION
AUDIENCE GROWTH: 101%
WEB PAGES PER PERSON: 9 (UP 125%)
TIME PER PERSON: 0:13:01 (UP 212%)
LAST YEAR'S HOT LIST RANK: 4

5



In February, Disney revamped its signature Web property, looking to ditch its dated, corporate-portalesque navigation to create a Web 2.0-ready outlet serving kids and parents alike. As a result, the new Disney.com has seen uniques soar. Thanks to Disney XD, an innovative social-networking/widget platform, the time users spend on the site has surged. Expect the entertainment colossus to leverage its recent acquisition: virtual world ClubPenguin, to which the company "will definitely figure out how to add advertising," says one buyer. Media execs point to the site's deep connection with moms, calling it "a must-buy."

UNIQUE AUDIENCE: 13.8 MILLION
AUDIENCE GROWTH: 28%
WEB PAGES PER PERSON: 15 (UP 7%)
TIME PER PERSON: 0:11:20 (UP 21%)
LAST YEAR'S HOT LIST RANK: NEW TO LIST

6



CEO Dmitry Shapiro has the air of a mad scientist, but it appears he's cooked up the right formula for staying ahead of the pack of YouTube wannabes. Veoh struck deals with NBC, National Lampoon and Paramount Pictures. With former Disney honcho Michael Eisner as an investor, look for still more content pacts. VeohTV, meanwhile, is emerging as a credible alternative to the much-hyped Joost Internet TV system. Veoh promises to play a pivotal role in the evolution of video ads on the Web—though Universal Music Group's justified copyright-infringement suit suggests pitfalls ahead.

UNIQUE AUDIENCE: 2.5 MILLION
AUDIENCE GROWTH: 253%
WEB PAGES PER PERSON: 16 (UP 33%)
TIME PER PERSON: 0:10:31 (UP 75%)
LAST YEAR'S HOT LIST RANK: NEW TO LIST

7



"The Landlord," featuring a foul-mouthed, beer-toting toddler, won't go down as a seminal moment in the development of Western civilization. Yet the two-and-a-half-minute sketch featuring Will Ferrell—viewed over 40 million times on this site, which the comic actor's production company rolled out in April—signals that the pros are becoming a power in Web video. Hollywood heavies realize the power, and ad-revenue potential, of Internet distribution. Funny or Die led to an avalanche of high-quality fare—what one media exec calls the "rising middle class of content"—that also promises to bring a flood of opportunities for marketers.

UNIQUE AUDIENCE: 1.9 MILLION
AUDIENCE GROWTH: N/A*
WEB PAGES PER PERSON: 6
TIME PER PERSON: 0:06:19
LAST YEAR'S HOT LIST RANK: NEW TO LIST

8



While virtually every TV network busily adds video to its site while touting multi-platform ad opportunities, buyers say Discovery.com truly delivers on both fronts. The site added full-length on-demand episodes of several series while featuring original video content and UGC—during Shark Week last month, it enabled users to create their own great-white documentaries. This super-serving of the network's devoted fan base appears to be resonating, with Discovery.com generating steady growth in terms of uniques and engagement. The site continues to show still-fumbling "old media" hands how to really do it on the Web.

UNIQUE AUDIENCE: 5.4 MILLION
AUDIENCE GROWTH: 23%
WEB PAGES PER PERSON: 23 (UP 35%)
TIME PER PERSON: 0:09:00 (UP 50%)
LAST YEAR'S HOT LIST RANK: NEW TO LIST

9



Advertisers chasing the elusive young man have found him eating up Digg, a community site dedicated to ferreting out the best content on the Web. Getting a high recommendation on Digg—with links to articles ranging from the latest on the Iraq war to America's wackiest roadside attractions—has been known to crash servers. The little "Digg It" icon is popping up on sites everywhere. Buyers are wary of ad-averse Diggers, but that didn't stop Microsoft from inking a three-year deal to sell the site's display inventory. Like Facebook, Digg's challenge is finding new ad formats that tap into user-preference data without courting a backlash.

UNIQUE AUDIENCE: 4.1 MILLION
AUDIENCE GROWTH: 154%
WEB PAGES PER PERSON: 9 (UP 125%)
TIME PER PERSON: 0:08:02 (UP 211%)
LAST YEAR'S HOT LIST RANK: NEW TO LIST

10



The road to ad-supported music sharing is littered with lawsuits and failed business models. iMeem may have cracked the code, paving a way to reach young consumers. Via iMeem, users can upload music, share it with friends and discover new artists through recommendations. iMeem, enjoying triple-digit growth, has engaged users while convincing Warner Music Group and dozens of indies of its merits. CEO Dalton Caldwell predicts deals with every major label. Like other Web 2.0 start-ups, its ad model is in the early banner stage. But it sits on a trove of user data that could prove valuable to marketers—if it can win over music execs.

UNIQUE AUDIENCE: 1.6 MILLION
AUDIENCE GROWTH: 143%
WEB PAGES PER PERSON: 53 (UP 382%)
TIME PER PERSON: 0:23:57 (UP 588%)
LAST YEAR'S HOT LIST RANK: NEW TO LIST