

## **FACEBOOK MONOPOLISES NEW ZEALAND'S ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING LANDSCAPE**

Facebook has captured the hearts (and time) of Kiwis while MySpace has disappeared off our radars completely.

In 2009, 74 per cent of those with a membership to a social networking site said they used Facebook the most often. This figure has jumped to 96 per cent in 2011, the latest World Internet Project New Zealand has discovered.

With 'Facebook' being the second most searched item on Google New Zealand in 2011\*, it is no wonder New Zealanders are using it more than ever before.

The third bi-annual World Internet Project New Zealand survey of more than 1200 New Zealanders has found that overall levels of Internet use continue to increase. 86 per cent of New Zealanders are now online, up from 79 per cent in 2007 and 83 per cent in 2009.

Director of AUT's Institute of Culture, Discourse and Communication Professor Allan Bell says that the growth in broadband is one of the most striking changes between 2007 and 2011. "91 per cent of users now have a broadband connection at home.

The trajectory from 67 per cent in 2007 to 84 per cent in 2009 has continued but is now easing as we approach saturation. We are finally bringing New Zealand close to other comparable countries on an important measure where it once lagged."

The survey findings have also shown an increased popularity in the use of smartphones and other handheld wireless devices with usage having risen from 7 per cent in 2007 to 27 per cent of Internet users in 2011.

The influence of wireless networking has also contributed to a change in where the Internet is used in the home, with 54 per cent of users now accessing the Internet mostly from communal areas of their home, up from 36 per cent in 2007.

"These changes illustrate the increasing embeddedness of the Internet in everyday home life. More and more New Zealanders (58 per cent) also affirm the overall importance of the Internet to their daily lives" says Professor Bell.

Of those still not using the Internet, reasons vary from not finding it interesting to not feeling confident using the technology. A surprisingly small number of respondents say financial constraints are their main reason.

With three surveys completed, Professor Bell says the reports are now more than ever able to map Internet use in New Zealand and identify trends that can be used to inform government and business decision-making.

New Zealand is one of 30 countries involved in the World Internet Project – a longitudinal study that enables comparisons of Internet use across countries. AUT University, with funding from the National Library of New Zealand and from Internet NZ, conducted its first survey in 2007, the second in 2009 and the most recent in 2011.

### **Highlights of the 2011 New Zealand World Internet Project**

- Use of the Internet in New Zealand has continued to rise reaching 86 per cent in 2011, up from 79 per cent in 2007 and 83 per cent in 2009
- 69% of respondents rated the Internet as an important source of information ahead of television, newspapers, radio and other people.
- 58% of New Zealanders feel the Internet is important or very important in their everyday lives
- 40% of Internet users look up the definition of a word every week
- 59% surf the web daily
- Māori, Pasifika and Asian ethnicities are more likely to 'make friends' online than NZ Europeans
- More females (68% of those that use the Internet) use Social Networking Sites (SNS) than males (59%)
- 64 % of Internet users say they belong to a SNS
- SNS membership is highly stratified by age, attracting 87% of under-30s but only 34% of over-60s
- Of those with a SNS membership, 96% say Facebook is the site they use the most
- 72% of Internet users buy things online
- Almost half (48%) say they use the Internet to sell things
- 58% of Internet users log onto their Internet banking accounts at least once a week

\*According to Google's annual Zeitgeist lists: the year's hottest search terms on [google.co.nz](http://google.co.nz)