

# DowntownWomensClub.com 2006 Online Networking Survey: High Tech or Not High Tech, That is Our Question



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By DowntownWomensClub.com  
a division of DWC Services, Inc.  
[www.downtownwomensclub.com](http://www.downtownwomensclub.com)  
contact: [diane@downtownwomensclub.com](mailto:diane@downtownwomensclub.com)



# **DowntownWomensClub.com 2006 Online Networking Survey: High Tech or Not High Tech, That is Our Question**

## **Introduction**

In January 2006, DowntownWomensClub.com, a women's network and career website, surveyed 1,000+ business women across three generations to spot trends about technology and online networking. We then compared the responses from the three generations – Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers – and found some startling differences between these groups.

## **Key Findings**

- When it comes to networking online:
  - The main drivers for online networking are “time-management” issues.
  - Gen Ys are more likely to use online social networks for business.
  - When asked why they didn't network online, nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the respondents put “don't know how” as a reason.
- Nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the respondents can't be found on Google (or have never bothered to “ego-Google” themselves).
- Gen Xers like their high-tech gadgets more than the other generations.
- None of the generations are blogging or reading blogs with regularity for business purposes.
- We found that Gen Ys showed a significant increase in the number of their moms who worked, and in the number of different sports they played growing up.

## **Methodology**

We surveyed the members of DowntownWomensClub.com, plus supplementary lists of working women through an online survey powered by Zoomerang. The survey respondents included approximately 1/3 baby boomers (326 respondents), 1/3 Gen Xers (362 respondents), and 1/3 Gen Ys (371 respondents between 23 and 28 years old, college-educated, and in the workforce).

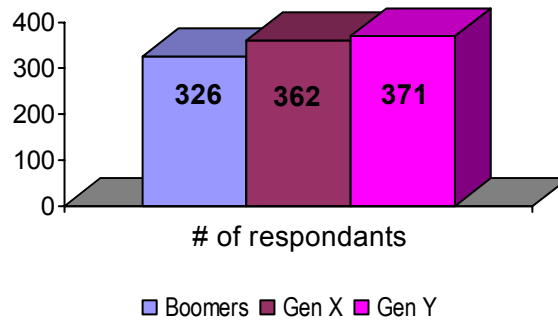
## Part I – Survey Participants' Generation

1. We know you don't like to give your age, but it helps us get to know you better (really, we're not just being nosy) and we'll even let you generalize. Are you a:

- Baby Boomer (born 1946-1964)\* – 326 respondents.
- Generation X (born 1965-1976)\* – 362 respondents.
- Generation Y (born 1977-1993)\* – 371 respondents.

*\*Note that the actual year ranges of the generations are hotly debated.*

Total respondents to survey  
(broken down by generation)

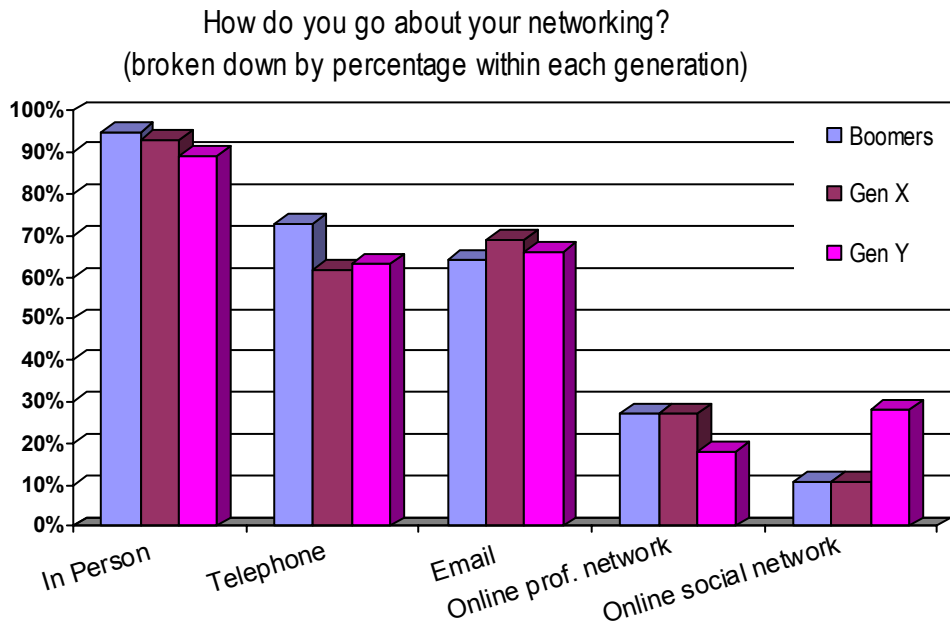


## Part II – Networking Questions

### 2. How do you go about your networking?

Of interest is that email eclipses the telephone for Gen X and Gen Y. But the biggest difference was in the use of online social networks, where Gen Y more than doubles the ratio of Gen X and Baby Boomers (28% v. the other two at 11%).

Respondents were allowed to answer “never, rarely, some of the time, most of the time, all of the time.” The following includes respondents who answered “some of the time, most of the time, and all of the time” broken down by generations.

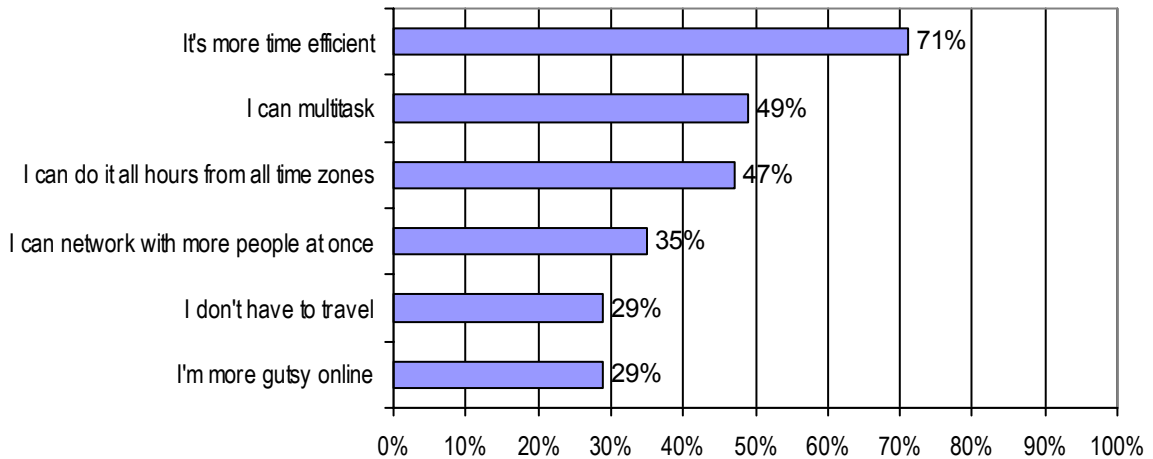


### 3. If you network online (via email or an online service), why? (Check all that apply.) Skip this question if you do not network online.

We noted that the top five reasons businesswomen network online are all related to time-management issues. The only real generational difference is in the response regarding multitasking, where 25% of Boomers and 29% of Gen Xers cited this as a reason to network online; whereas 41% of Gen Ys cited this reason. The other change we noticed was with regard to being gutsier networking online, 12% of Boomers; 17% of Gen Xers, and 25% of Gen Ys said this was true.

We had 59% of our overall respondents tell us they network on line. Of that 59%, 29% were Boomers; 34% were Gen Xers; and 37% were Gen Ys. We had 41% respond that they did not network online. Of that 41%, 36% were Boomers; 36% were Gen X; and 28% were Gen Y).

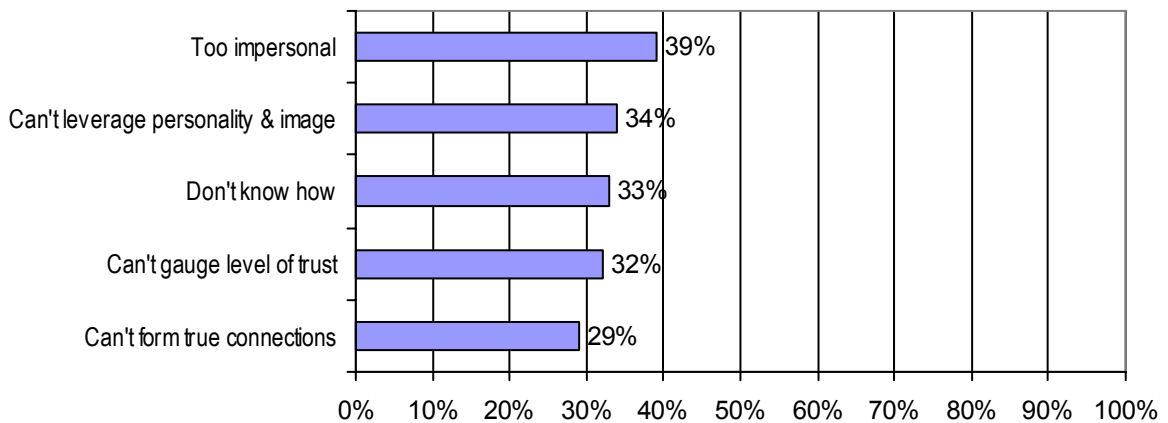
Top 6 Reasons Businesswomen Network Online - All Generations Combined  
(Multiple answers allowed)



**4. If you DON'T network online, why not? (Check all that apply.) Skip this question if you do network online.**

While Boomer women are leading in most of these characters, it was not by large percentages (i.e. less than 10% in all cases).

Top 5 Reasons Businesswomen do not Network Online - All Generations Combined (Multiple answers allowed)

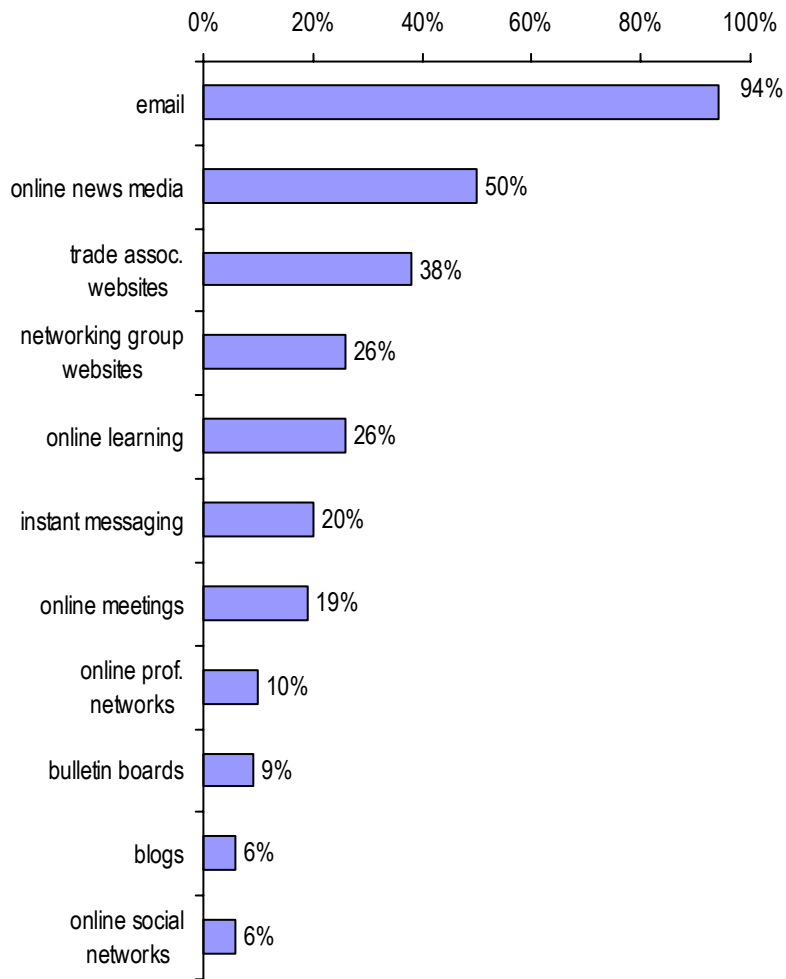


**5. How useful are the following online tools for your business/career?**

Respondents were allowed to answer “naah, once in a while, sometimes, pretty useful, can’t live without.” The following are responses of businesswomen who answered “pretty useful, and can’t live without.”

Note that online social networks only comprised 6%. However, of the online social network users, 60% were Gen Y. Similarly, while IM’ing had a higher total percentage of users at 20%; 50% of that group were Gen Ys. We expect these percentages to rise as more Gen Ys enter the workforce.

How useful are the following online tools for your business/career?  
All generations combined (Respondents could select multiple answers)



**6. What are the top 5 bulletin boards you spend time on for business purposes? Put "N/A" if not applicable. Put "What's a blog" if really not applicable.**

There were no frequently chosen bulletin boards or blogs, indicating women are not reading in the blogosphere. This is in line with our question 10, later in the survey, which asked if our members had their own blog or bulletin board that helps with their business/career. Only 5% of our members said yes. However, we believe women may be reading blogs more than they realize, as we had a fairly significant number of women who reported reading online "news media" and trade association websites (question #5).

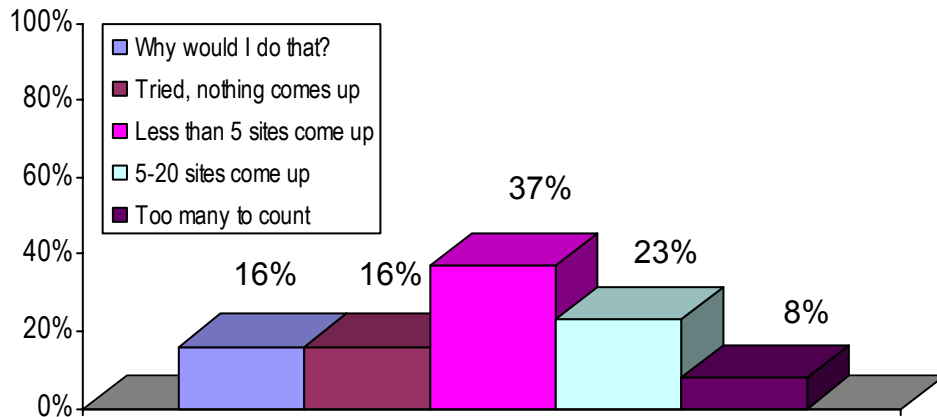
We noted that Gen Ys read fewer "bulletin boards/blogs" for work, but this is likely due to dominance in entry-level positions. This also could account for the higher percentage of Gen Ys who said this question was not applicable.

	<b>Businesswomen who read at least one bulletin board/blog</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>What's a blog?</b>
Boomer	24%	65%	11%
Gen X	25%	66%	9%
Gen Y	14%	75%	11%

**7. Have you ever "ego-Gogled" yourself? If so how many relevant sites come up?**

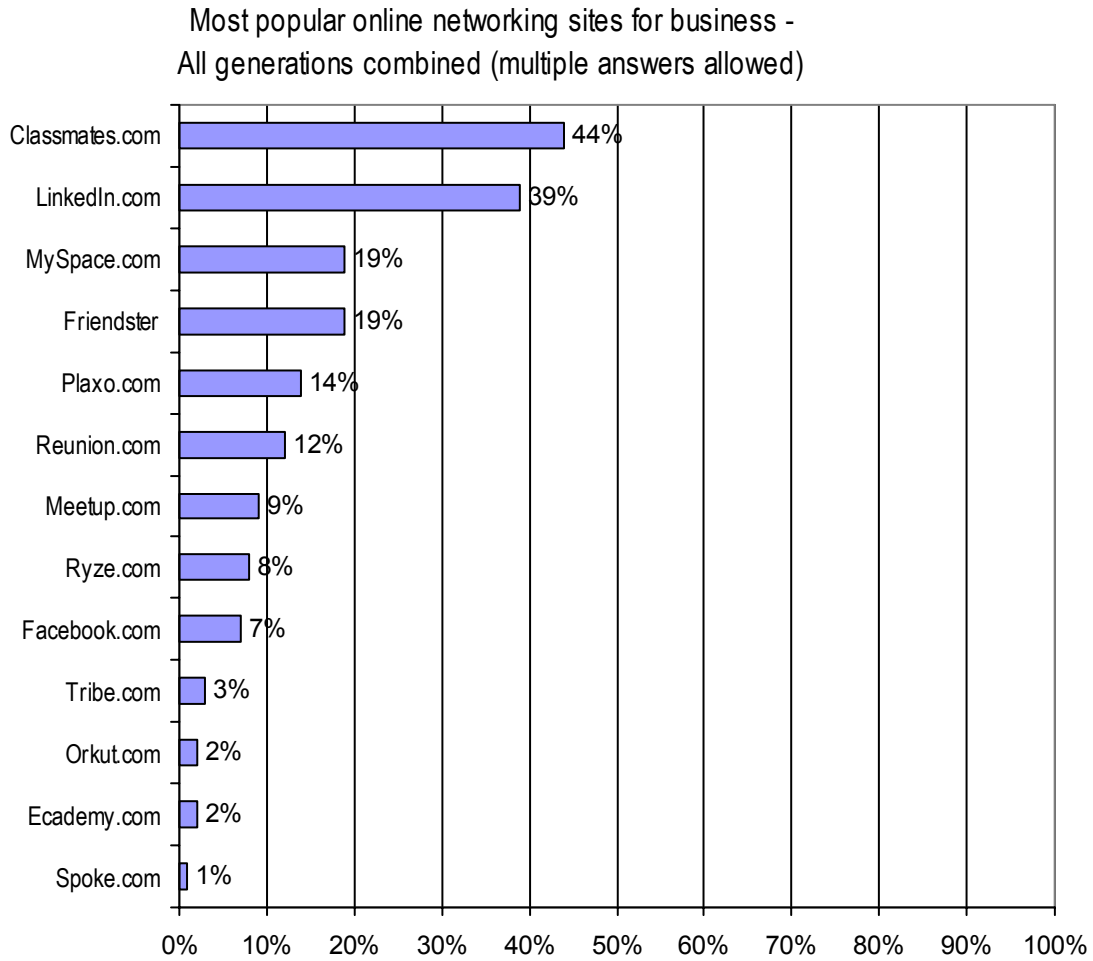
There weren't too many generational differences here, although Gen Xers seemed to have slightly more hits on Google (probably due to their years of career experience during the Internet's existence).

Have you ever "ego-Gogled?" How many hits?  
(all generations combined)



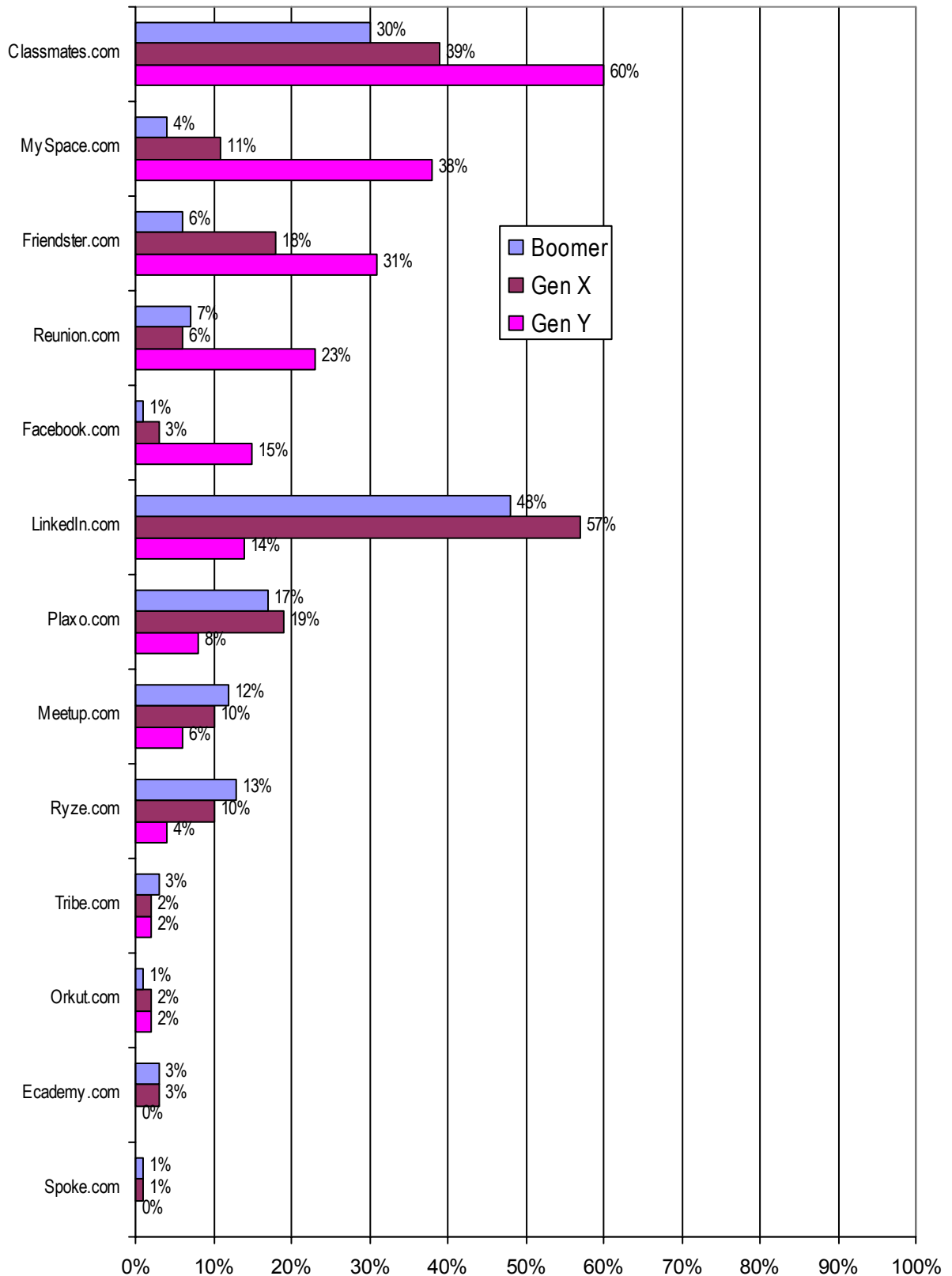
**8. Which online professional and social networks and services do you belong to and/or use for business networking? (Select all that apply.)**

We were surprised to find Classmates.com at the top of the list for pretty much all generations. However, you can see a shift across all three generations, where LinkedIn has more Boomer and Gen Xer users and Gen Ys are heavy users of MySpace and Friendster. Facebook lags behind as its focus is on college students; and, since it launched only two years ago, it would, for the most part, only be used by the 23 and 24 year olds in our survey and not reach the upper end of Gen Y.





Most popular online networking sites for business -  
Broken down by generation (multiple answers allowed)



**9. Which gadgets/services do you own/use regularly for business?**

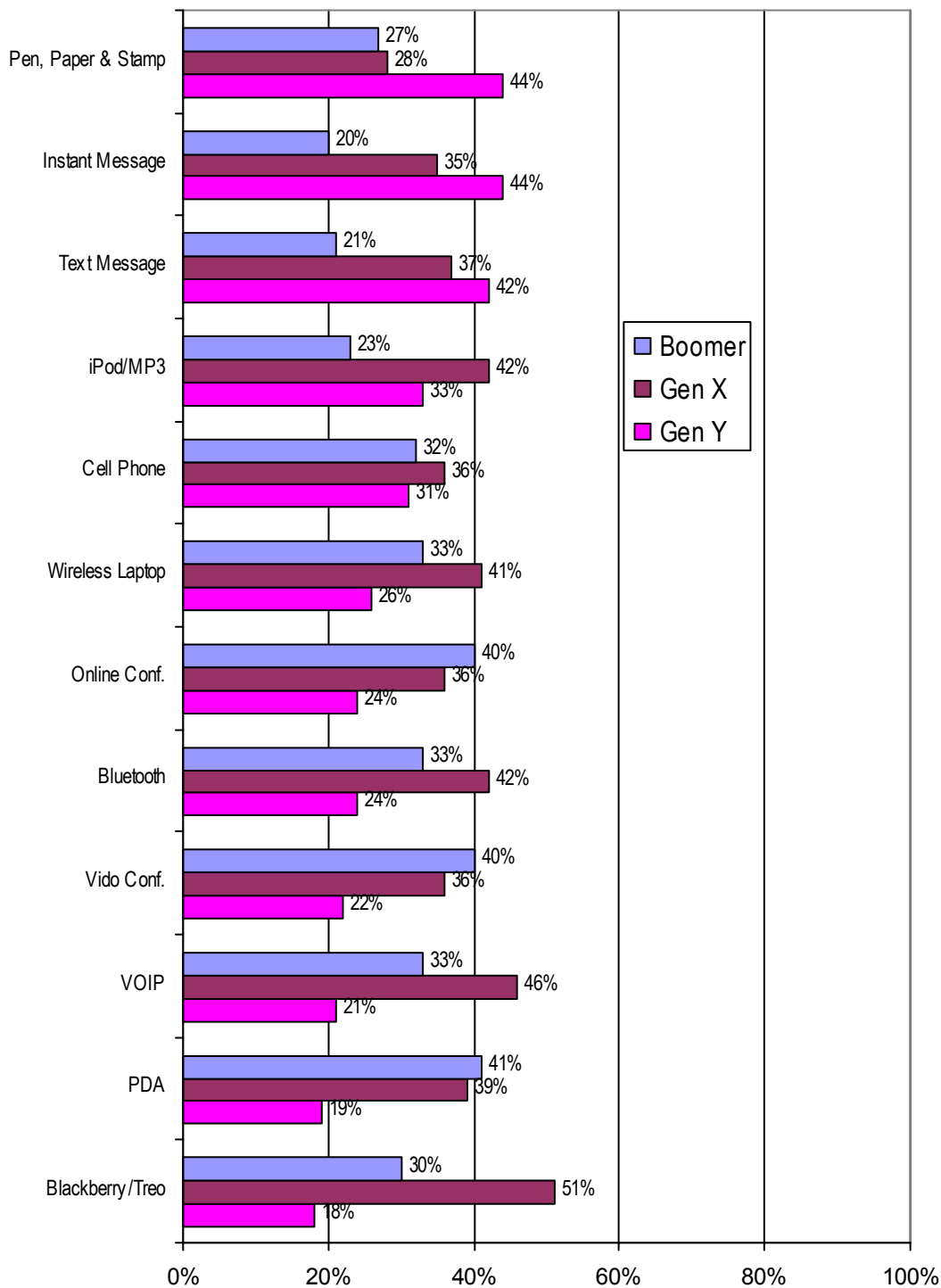
Respondents were allowed to select as many as applied. So we will assume that the “pen, paper and stamp” was in addition to other technology. Of interest is that the Gen Xers seem to be the more “gadget-heavy” generation. This might be due to stage of life – they have more disposable income than Gen Ys; or they may be higher up in an organization and would have company supplied laptops, BlackBerry’s, etc. As expected, Gen Ys lead in Instant Messaging and Text Messaging.

**What gadgets/services do you own/use regularly for business?  
Respondents could answer more than one**

	Total	Boomer	Gen X	Gen Y
Cell Phone	86%	32%	36%	31%
Wireless laptop	52%	33%	41%	26%
A pen, paper and stamp	40%	27%	28%	44%
Instant Messaging	32%	20%	35%	44%
Text Messaging	31%	21%	37%	42%
Personal Digital Assistant (no internet)	22%	41%	39%	19%
Online conferencing	22%	39%	36%	24%
iPod or MP3	21%	23%	42%	33%
Blackberry/Treo/Pocket PC	18%	30%	51%	18%
Bluetooth technology	11%	33%	42%	24%
Video conferencing	10%	40%	36%	22%
VOIP	8%	33%	46%	21%

\*The highlighted numbers represent the highest percentage in the group.

What gadgets/services do you own/use regularly for business?  
 (broken down by generation) Respondents can answer all that are applicable



**10. Do you have your own blog or bulletin board that helps you with your business/career?**

Only 5% answered yes, and there was no variation between generations.

**11. What are the top 5 acronyms you use in online and text communications, and what do they mean?**

**Top 5 Most Used Acronyms**

LOL – Laugh out Loud

BTW – By The Way

N/A – Not Applicable (although not sure whether they really meant this or were just telling us they found acronyms “N/A”).

BRB – Be Right Back

TTYL – Talk To You Later

**6 Funniest Acronyms**

MUAH (a kiss)

NYD – No you didn’t!

ROTFLEMAO – Rolling on the floor, laughing my a\*\* off

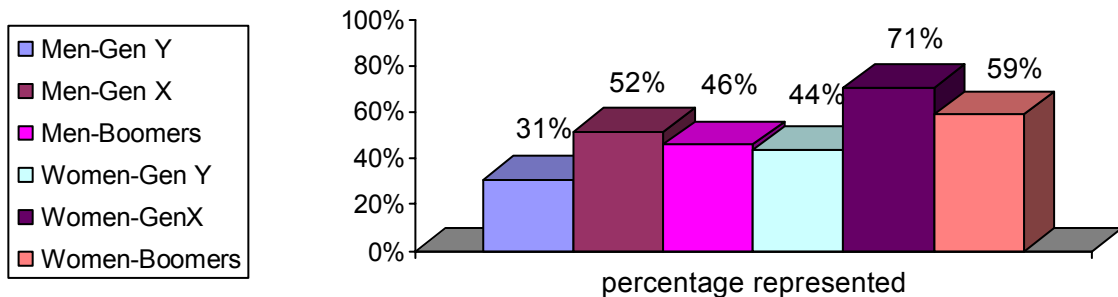
RTFM – Read the freaking manual

BOHICA – Bend over, here it comes again

**12. Which groups are well-represented in your regular networking group of contacts? (Check all that apply.)**

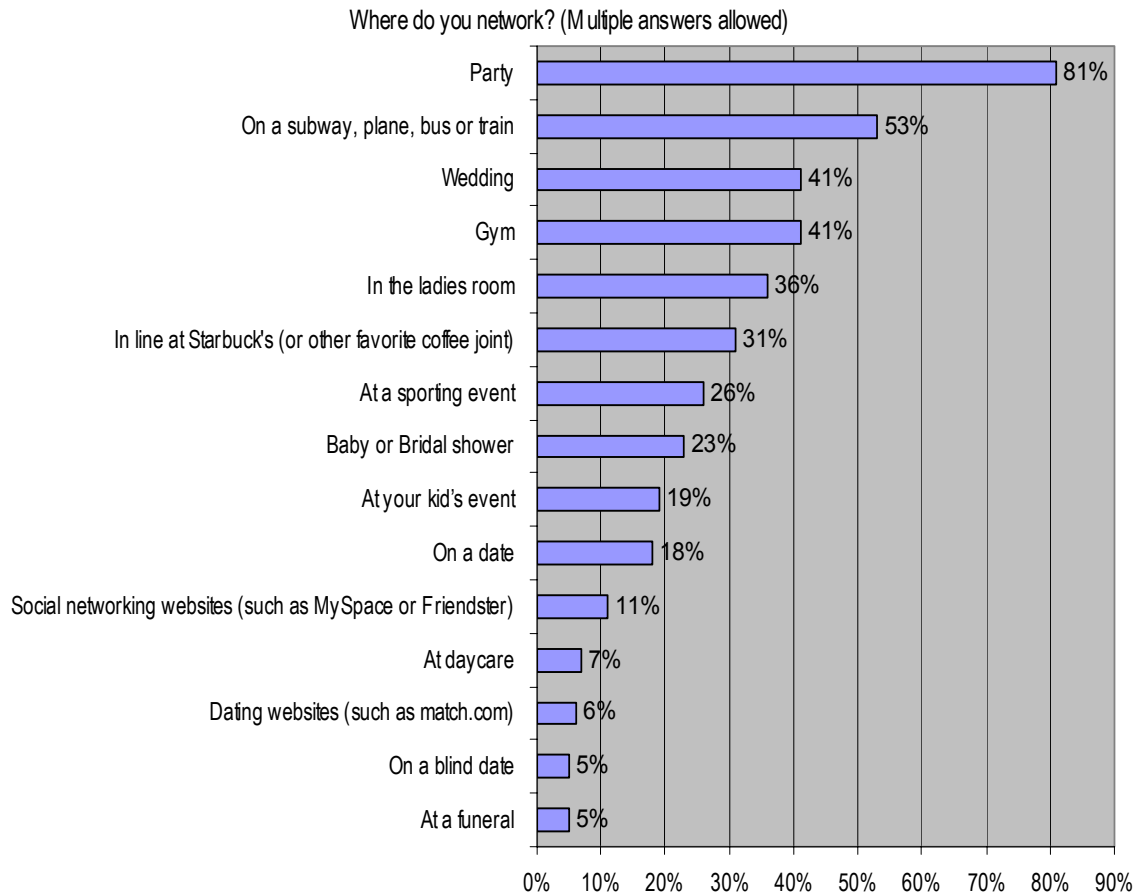
This is probably one of the few times it’s good to be a Gen Xer. They seem to mix with both Boomers and Gen Ys. Male Gen Ys appear to be the odd group out.

Which groups are well-represented in your networking contacts?



**13. Have you ever networked for your business/career at any of the following non-business events/locations? (Check all that apply.)**

Our members like to “network on-the-go,” whether at a party, using public transportation, at weddings or working out at the gym. The generational breakdown on this question had more to do with life stages.



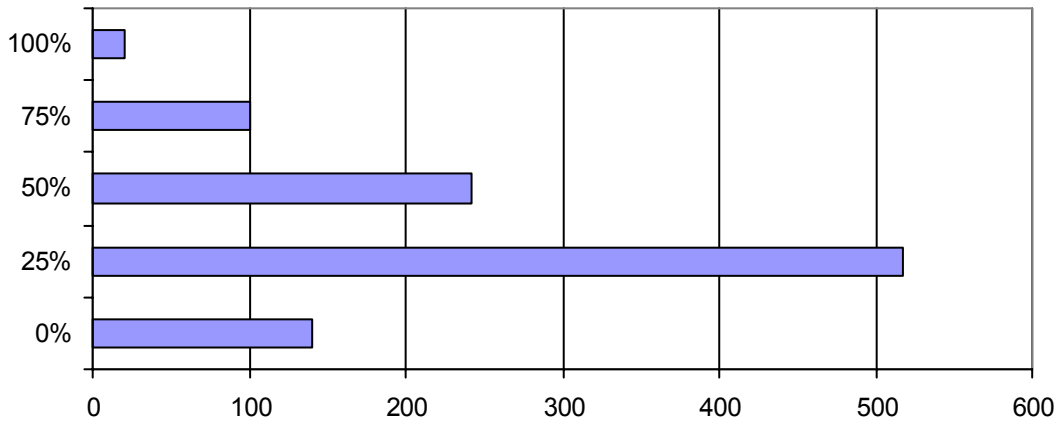
**Here are some of the more creative networking venues submitted by respondents to our open ended option to this question:**

1. In a parking lot
2. On Craig's List
3. At the vets (while taking my cat in for a check up)
4. During surgery (when do you get 3 doctors together?)
5. Jury duty
6. On the chair lift at a ski slope
7. Outside a men's room, at a concert!
8. Visiting a house of mourning
9. While running a marathon
10. At a national park (hiking)

**14. What percentage of your friends would you say are also business contacts?**

Of all the questions, this one surprised us the most. There was no difference between generations. Perhaps this means women do not feel they have "friends" in the office; or that they still completely separate personal from professional relationships.

Percentage of friends who are also business contacts  
(all generations combined)



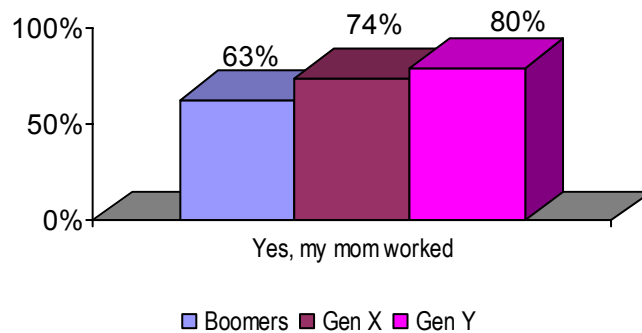
### Part III: Lifestyle and General Career Questions

15. **Did your mother work? And, just for fun - Which TV mom did she most resemble? (Carol Brady? June Cleaver? Bree Van De Kamp? Claire Huxtable? Murphy Brown? The women of *Absolutely Fabulous*? We promise not to tell her!)**

What's notable about the responses to this question is the increase of working mothers over the generations – nearly a 20% increase from Boomers to Gen Ys. When we asked the women who their mom most resembled on TV we noticed the following trends:

- The presence of single moms – Murphy Brown, *AbFab* women, Lorelei Gilmore (*Gilmore Girls*), and Anne Romano (*One Day at a Time*).
- A working, professional mom topped the list – Claire Huxtable (*The Cosby Show*). We noted that many women chose Claire regardless of their own racial or ethnic background.
- Many respondents were of Asian and other descent and noted that there weren't moms on television who reflect their families, then or now.
- A handful of European respondents (who are residing in the US) said they were unfamiliar with these TV moms.

Did your mom work?  
(broken down by percentage within each generation)



### Which TV Character most resembles your mother? (all generations)

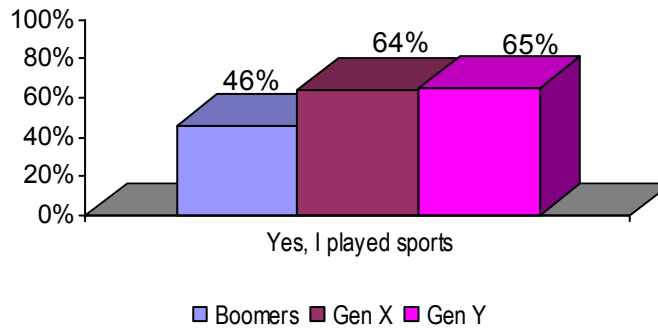
Character	Responses	Percent
Claire Huxtable (Cosby Show)	136	25%
Carol Brady (The Brady Bunch)	100	18%
June Cleaver (Leave it to Beaver)	86	15%
Murphy Brown (Murphy Brown)	49	9%
Rosanne (Roseanne)	32	6%
Bree Van De Kamp (Desperate Housewives)	14	3%
The women of Absolutely Fabulous	10	2%
Laura Petri, Dick Van Dyke Show	7	1%
Lucy Ricardo (I Love Lucy)	7	1%
Florida Evans (Good Times)	6	1%
Lorelei Gilmore (The Gilmore Girls)	5	1%
Marie (Everybody Loves Raymond)	5	1%
Anne Romano (One Day at a Time)	4	1%
Donna Reed (Donna Reed)	4	1%
Peg Bundy (Married with Children)	4	1%
Maude (Maude)	4	1%
Other (including "no one like my mom" answers)	82	15%
	555	100%



**16. Did you play a competitive sport(s) growing up?**

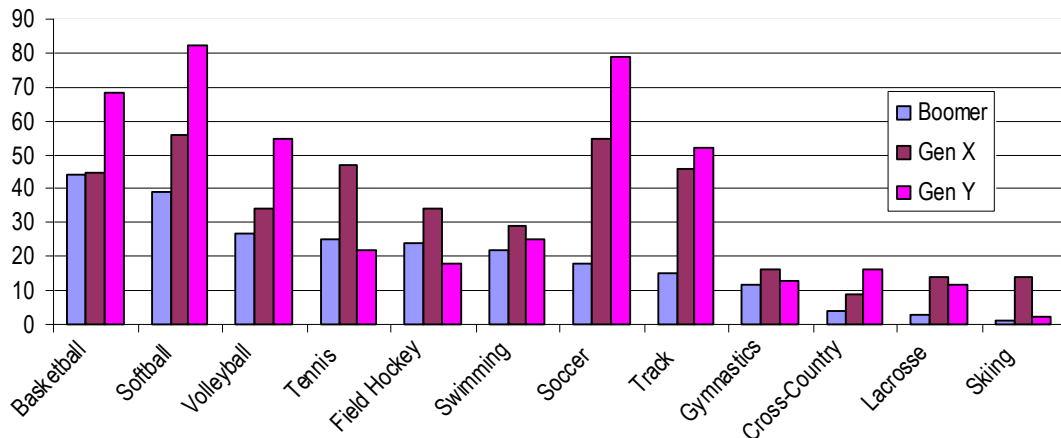
There was a leap of 20% between the Boomers and Gen Xers. We believe this is most likely due to the adoption of Title IX in 1972, when the first wave of Gen X women were 6 years old. It's interesting to note that the difference between Gen X and Gen Y is minimal, which may reflect that when given all the options to play sports, approximately 65% of girls will choose to play sports.

Percentage of respondents who played sports  
(broken down by percentage within each generation)



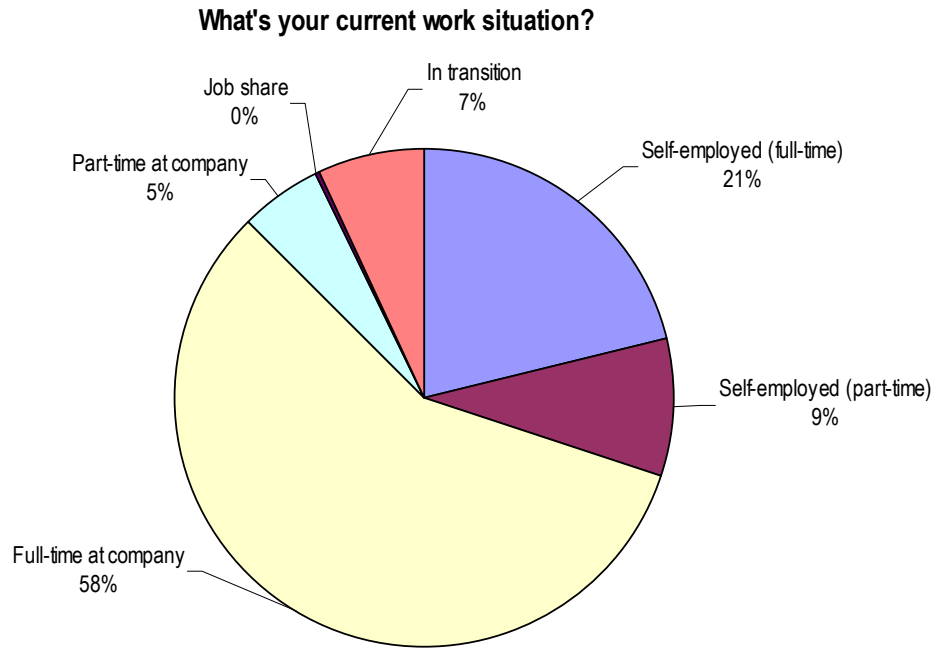
We also looked at the different sports played by each generation. By the time Gen Y came around, the top three sports had changed from basketball, softball and volleyball to softball, soccer and basketball. Another difference was the increase in the number of sports played by each individual. This is why in the next graph, it appears that more Gen Y women are playing sports; where in actuality, the percentage of Gen X and Gen Y women playing sports is identical, it's just that more Gen Ys played multiple sports.

DWC Sports across generations – broken down by number of women playing the sport in each generation (respondents could pick more than one)



**17. What's your current work situation?**

We noted that "job sharing" is not the norm. Only 2 of the 1,000+ women surveyed job-shared. As for women working part-time (self-employed or at a company), they make up only 14%; yet over 30% of our respondents had kids.



18. **JUST FOR FUN - In 2002, Pulitzer Prize winning writer Laura Sessions Stepp coined the terms Alpha, Beta and Gamma girls to describe the hierarchies of pre-teens and teenage cliques. So, we're curious, now that we're all in the working world, where did you fall on the spectrum way back when in middle school?**

<b>Alphas, Betas &amp; Gammas</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Alphas are the brightest stars in their constellation, defining life as the young teen knows it. They decide what you wear with jeans, what water you drink at lunch, who is persona non grata at their lunchroom table and most of all, they achieve their position by the power of exclusion	10%
Betas usually make better grades than Alphas. They run faster in track and play a sweet violin. However, they can often be Alpha "wannabes" and spend time worrying about whether they're part of the "in" crowd	40%
Gammas don't care who was in, out or otherwise – what she does is more important than what she appears to be. Gammas are the student council vice president and co-editor of the yearbook, or they're elected president and vice president, assisted by other Gammas who crank out the election posters	50%

There was no variation across generations, and we believe the results are potentially due to the following:

- There was probably one Alpha per 4 or 5 Betas and Gammas in middle school. So the numbers reflect the middle school hierarchy by having the same ratios.
- Maybe some Alphas don't want to admit they were Alphas.
- Finally, perhaps Alphas tend to get married and drop out of the workforce in greater numbers than Betas and Gammas.

## About DowntownWomensClub.com

DowntownWomensClub.com ([www.downtownwomensclub.com](http://www.downtownwomensclub.com)) is a leader in "Networking to Go" - 24/7 business and social networking that is convenient, pressure free and adaptable to today's varying work styles. It was founded in 1998 by Diane K. Danielson, whose credits include author, lawyer, entrepreneur and software developer. Its innovative "Clicks and Mix" model offers thousands of women an online and offline community using new and emerging technologies such as DWC Faces (a proprietary, Internet-searchable "Facebook" for career women). Member-launched, custom tailored local chapters currently include Boston, Washington DC, LA, NYC, Pittsburgh, San Diego, and Worcester, MA, with new locations in the pipeline. For a yearly membership fee of \$49.99, members access "networking to go", professional development, promotional opportunities, social events, discounts and more, anytime, anywhere and anyway they choose.

Contacts:

Diane K. Danielson  
ceo, DowntownWomensClub.com  
[diane@downtownwomensclub.com](mailto:diane@downtownwomensclub.com)

Lynn Schwartz  
Newsmaker Group  
[lschwartz@newsmakergroup.com](mailto:lschwartz@newsmakergroup.com)

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