

LinkedIn #2 Social Media Platform in US

This July, LinkedIn became the No. 2 social networking site in the United States.

LinkedIn had 33.9 million unique visitors in June in the U.S., compared to MySpace's 33.4 million; Facebook had 160.8 million. Short messaging blog Twitter is closing in on MySpace, with 30.6 million, and Tumblr had 11.7 million.

"I think we're seeing the U.S. social networking market come of age," Andrew Lipsman, comScore's vice president of industry analysis said in an email to msnbc.com. "While Facebook has clearly emerged as the dominant player in this market, several other social networks – LinkedIn, Twitter and Tumblr – are carving out strong niches."

Also of interest was his comment that given Facebook's size – it now has 750 million users worldwide – that its future growth in the U.S. is "likely to come more from increasing usage per visitor than its ability to attract new users in perpetuity. One impressive stat to note is that Facebook's average U.S. visitor engagement has grown from 4.6 hours to 6.3 hours per month over the past year, so it appears to be succeeding in that regard."

Whether the same will hold true for LinkedIn – where people tend to get in and out quickly to check or make connections – remains to be seen.

The rise of LinkedIn is good news for B2B marketers, particularly those in high-tech industries. In the UK, particularly, LinkedIn is the one platform that B2B companies understand... they know that their customers are driving LinkedIn. If the rise in the US LinkedIn usage reflects what's happening in the UK and Europe, and it should, B2B companies

now have a powerful marketing ally.

Bottom line: LinkedIn participation, joining groups, starting groups, responding to pertinent questions, etc., should be central part of your social media plans.

And notice the Facebook numbers: 3/4 of a billion users!!!! How can B2B marketers continue to ignore this audience? Sure, you may not like Facebook or understand its value, but you can't argue with the numbers.