

“SILVER SURFERS BECOMING LARGEST ONLINE GROUP”

by

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Hitwise, the online competitive intelligence service, has revealed that UK Internet users aged 55+, the so-called silver surfers, are set to overtake 35-44 year olds as the demographic age group with the largest representation online.

Those aged 55+ accounted for no less than 22% of UK visits to all categories of websites in the four weeks to 12th May 2007, up 54% since 2005 and 40% since 2006. This compares to 23.5% of Internet visits from 35-44 year olds.

The increase has come from rich and poor alike. The Experian Mosaic groups "Twilight Subsistence" (pensioners subsisting on meagre incomes) and "Grey Perspectives" (pensioners enjoying retirement with savings to supplement their pensions) have both increased their online footprint. Internet visits from Twilight subsistence are up 29% over the past two years and visits from Grey Perspectives are up 30%.

Heather Hopkins of Hitwise UK commented that, "among the top categories visited by those aged 55+, Search Engines, Adult and Shopping & Classifieds are the favourites, and are consistent with the most visited categories overall.

Of particular interest to hospitality managers is that Silver Surfers show a particular fondness for Travel and News & Media websites. In one recent week, 27% of visits to Travel websites and 24% of visits to News and Media websites were from those aged 55+."

In particular money and leisure pursuits are more interesting to Silver Surfers than other demographic groups. Cruise, Lifestyle - Family, Stocks and Shares, E-Greetings and Yachting and Boating websites receive the highest concentration of visits from silver surfers.

The burgeoning part of the hospitality industry is cruising and this is reflected in the fact that websites for such businesses received 48% of their traffic from UK Internet users aged 55+ in the four weeks to 12th May 2007.

Wealthy Groups Still More Active Online

When one compares the percentage of UK Internet visits by Mosaic Group with the size of each group in the offline population, the wealthiest groups continue to be more active online than their less well-off counterparts.

In particular, "Symbols of Success" and "Urban Intelligence", which are among the groups most likely to earn a household income in excess of £50,000, are 22% and 31% over-represented online. The groups "Twilight Subsistence" and "Municipal Dependency", which are among the most likely to earn a household income of less than £7,499, are 37% and 34% are under-represented online.

THE WORLD'S MOST AMAZING BATHROOMS

Ever used a 14 karat gold toilet in Hong Kong? Or, stepped inside a giant egg-shaped stall in a London restaurant to relieve yourself? Hoteliers, retailers and nightclub owners are increasingly building a new amenity into their blueprints and budgets – over-the-top lavatories for guests and patrons.

Concierge.com recently announced its list of the most noteworthy bathrooms in the world and hospitality managers might like to take mull over some of the innovative features being used by their competitors.

“One really creative way to attract attention for your hotel or nightclub is to build an amazing bathroom,” said Peter J. Frank, editor-in-chief of Epicurious.com. “An entertaining, creative restroom becomes a conversation piece for a new property and developers recognize the power of this amenity to separate them from the pack.”

- o **Sofitel Queenstown men's room** – Queenstown, New Zealand
 - o Life-sized photographs of female voyeurs watch as patrons use the urinals
- o **The John Michael Kohler Arts Center** -- Sheboygan, Wisconsin
 - o Kohler Arts Center commissioned six American artists to each create their own beautiful bathroom
- o **Dolce & Gabbana Gold** – Milan, Italy
 - o D&G's Milan restaurant's bathrooms are outfitted in floor to ceiling gold bamboo and enormous gold mirrors, not to mention *Goldfinger* playing on a loop in each stall
- o **Bar 89** – New York
 - o SoHo bar and restaurant's peek-a-boo stalls are clear until you lock them, when they fog up for privacy

- o **Chung Yo department store** – Taichung City, Taiwan
 - o 16-floor department store has 14 themed restrooms, including basketball bathroom complete with a hoop, and a beer bathroom with frosty green beers lining the walls
- o **R-Bar** – Brighton, UK
 - o Giant, glossy-lipped, mouth-shaped urinals cause a stir at this gay bar
- o **Swishhorn Gold Palace** - Hong Kong
 - o It was a \$50 million project to create this jewellery showroom bathroom using three tons of gold
- o **Sketch** – London
 - o Eight large egg-shaped bathrooms sit at the top of a sweeping staircase at this restaurant and bar
- o **The NaRa Family Shopping Mall** – Nara, Japan
 - o State-of-the-art stalls each have a self-cleaning wand to wash you off, a jet of hot air to dry you and a noise-machine to drown out sound for those with stage fright

- o **Reinabruja** – Madrid, Spain
 - o Constantly changing colours and pulsing, flashing lights bounce off reflective pillars and wavering walls to keep the party going in this nightclub bathroom
- o **Galleria Emi Fontana Art Installation** – Touring, Next location TBD
 - o Touring art installation titled Don't Miss a Sec looks like a mirrored silver box, but inside the bathroom patrons can see out to the rest of the world
- o **Jade on 36 Bar** – Shanghai, China
 - o Inspired by a Chinese jade jewel box, two steel cylindrical stalls slide open to reveal floor-to-ceiling neon tubes and sci-fi fixtures

Will your rest room be on Concierge.com's next list?

FACEBOOKINGS

SideStep, the Internet's travel search company, has announced the launch of Trips, a social travel application built on the Facebook Platform, which enables companies and developers to build applications for the Facebook website. The Trips application enables Facebook users worldwide to share their travel plans and to make new friends while travelling.

The Facebook Platform is a development that enables companies and engineers to integrate with Facebook and gain access to its millions of users. More than 50 percent of the site's users return

to the site each day, providing unparalleled distribution potential for applications and the opportunity to build a business that is relevant to people's lives.

Trips is said to simplify the process of planning trips and sharing travel experiences. Using Trips, Facebook users can list upcoming trips as well as future travel interests, and then display them on their profile page to their friends and networks. Additionally, users can search for other users with similar travel interests and discover who will be travelling or has travelled to the same destinations.

"Facebook Platform creates an ecosystem for developers to build applications that deeply integrate into Facebook and use its social graph," said Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook. "By enabling developers to make applications within Facebook, we're working together to create a better utility for millions of people."

Facebook is a social utility that offers a way for people to stay connected with their friends and the people around them. Its users communicate and share information through the social graph, the network of connections and relationships between people. With more than 24 million active users it is the sixth-most trafficked website in the United States.

"Facebook is a wildly popular site with millions of people connecting each day," said Rob Solomon, president and CEO of SideStep. "With our new Trips application, we will help connect travelling Facebook users with those who share similar travel interests, particularly those travelling to the same destination at the same time."

Links:

Concierge.com: www.concierge.com

Concierge.com's most unusual and noteworthy restrooms:

<http://www.concierge.com/ideas/styledesign/tour/detail?id=1457>

Facebook: www.facebook.com

Hitwise: www.hitwise.com

Sidestep: www.sidestep.com

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