

The Future on the Internet

By Susan L Koza

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The future of the internet

Tweens: 8-13

Teen: 14-17

Ask any teenager if the internet is here to stay and you will get the same answer. Absolutely! The internet has played a major role in their lives for as long as they can remember. It can be compared to the telephone in most cases. Could a teenager live without a telephone? We all know that answer. Nor could a teen imagine living without internet access. From constant communication with their friends to surfing to buy the latest "must have" fad; the internet has been interwoven into their lives.

The Internet Generation: Tweens and Teens Online

It is hard to imagine that it took over forty years for the telephone to find acceptance in mainstream America. For the Internet it took only about four years. Many a dot com has gone bust, but the Internet as a communications tool is here to stay. Tweens, individuals between the ages of 8 to 13, and Teens (ages 14-17) can hardly imagine life without the Internet.

For website operators, now is the time to really take a look at the "Internet Generation". These are the portions of the population that grew up with the Internet for all or for a major part of their lives. To fit this definition an individual would have to have spent at least 20% of their lifetimes after the age of two potentially exposed to the Internet. The demographics for this group is staggering.

Consider the following facts:

Market Researchers estimate that 54% of teens live in a home with Internet access

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the average teen spends over 53 hours each week using various media.

A Jupiter Communications study revealed that 67% of teens who were online reported that they have "researched or purchased" products online.

The number of teens living in a home with Internet access will increase from the 8.7 million found in 1999 to over 13 million in 2004. Online shopping by these teens will grow from \$321.8 million in 1999 to \$2.4 billion in 2004

Savvy e-marketers have learned quickly that this segment has little patience for flashy graphics that

take a long time load. They want a well-designed site with simple and easy to use navigational tools. And the content of the site had better be top notch.

Apply these lessons now because the teens and tweens of today will be the ones using your site in the future.

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