

Internet Audience Growing Older

The old guys - both sexes - got off to a late start but they are now the fastest growing segment of the Internet audience. While the Internet audience continues to grow its composition is being changed by the rapid growth of the over 50 segment of the population, according to a trend analysis by [The Media Audit](#).

From 1997 to 2000 the age groups, 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44 and, 45 to 54 maintained their superiority in numerical terms but declined or barely maintained their position as a percent of the total Internet audience. The 50+ age group increased as a percent of the Internet audience from approximately 19 percent in 1997 to more than 25 percent in 2000.

"This group is of tremendous value to marketers of a variety of products and services because of their numbers and affluence," says Bob Jordan, co-chairman of the 30-year-old research firm that produces The Media Audit ([themediiaudit.com](#)). The research is based on more than 500,000 phone interviews from 1997 through 2000 in the 85 metropolitan markets served by The Media Audit.

The 85 markets have an aggregate population of approximately 125 million and an over age 50 population of approximately 44.5 million. In 1997 only 18 percent of those over age 50 in the 85 markets were accessing the Internet, by 2000 that had climbed to more than 38 percent. The age groups, between 18 and 54, have access rates per group between 60 and 65 percent. Of the total 50+ population in the 85 markets (44.5 million) 19.6 million, or 44 percent, are retired.

"The increasing numbers for the 50+ group demonstrate the universal appeal of the Internet," says Jordan, "and we expect that 38 percent access rate to continue to increase steadily during the next several years."

The 50+ group brings to the Internet the demographics that have made it an increasingly popular target for marketers in recent years. Nearly 33 percent have annual incomes over \$50,000 a year. Of the 56 percent still working, 8 percent are business owners, partners or corporate officers. Among those between the ages of 55 and 64, 31 percent have liquid assets (cash, stocks) in excess of \$100,000 and 15 percent have liquid assets in excess of \$250,000.

They also exceed the levels of travel, both domestic and international, experienced by the general population. They still like Buicks, Cadillacs, and Lincolns more than most of the population. More than 47 percent own cell phones and they are warming up to buying on the Internet. In TMA's most recent data, more than 21 percent made five or more e-commerce purchases during the past year.

"They bring great value to the Internet audience," says Jordan, "not just because of the purchases they make personally but also because of all the purchasing decisions of others they influence."

"They didn't grow up with the personal computer. They are readers of the printed word. They are the backbone of

newspaper and magazine readership. To attract them to the Internet is a remarkable achievement for the new medium," says Jordan.

Jordan also pointed out that the over 50 segment of the population is growing rapidly and will continue to do so at least another 15 years. "The baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964 started turning 50 in 1996 and there are more than 80 million of them in the pipeline," says Jordan, "and in addition to adding to this group in sheer numbers they will also make the group more affluent as they enter it."

The Media Audit provides both quantitative and qualitative data for media web sites as well as for traditional media. In addition to comprehensive audience profiles, TMA provides trend data and market penetration and market share.

Traditional media - print, broadcast and outdoor - have used TMA data in sales, marketing and management for 30 years. In 1997, the survey started providing data on local media web sites. The surveys now contain more than 400 fields of qualitative information in addition to quantitative measurements of local web audiences.

TMA has more than 1700 clients that include radio and television stations, cable television networks, cable television operators, daily newspapers, alternative weekly newspapers, city and regional magazines, shopper publications, outdoor billboard companies, and direct mail houses. In addition, TMA clients include local Internet web sites for daily newspapers, television and radio stations, alternative newspapers, shoppers and city guides. The client base also includes more than 500 advertising agencies, media buying services and advertisers.

TMA is a product of International Demographics, Inc., a 30-year-old Houston firm that is engaged exclusively in syndicated, multimedia surveys conducted at the local market level.

Source: [The Media Audit](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>