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PLANNING TO RETIRE

# Senior Citizens Expand Their Social Network Online

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Baby boomers and seniors are the fastest growing group of social networking website users. Older Americans are increasingly using the Internet to reconnect with people from their past and to seek information and support with medical issues, according to a new Pew Research Center report.

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Social networking use among those age 50 and older has nearly doubled from 22 percent to 42 percent over the past year, according to the survey of 2,252 adults conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates. Young adults continue to be the heaviest users of social media, with 86 percent of those age 18 to 29 having a Facebook, LinkedIn, or MySpace account. But almost half (47 percent) of adults age 50 to 64 now use social networking sites, up from 25 percent in April 2009. While fewer senior citizens have created an online profile, their numbers are also growing fast. A quarter (26 percent) of Americans age 65 and older have connected with their friends or colleagues online, up from 13 percent a year ago.

[See [When Do You Become a Senior Citizen?](#)]

E-mail and online news gathering are already a habit for all age groups, Pew found. Almost all baby boomers between ages 50 and 64 (92 percent) and senior citizens (89 percent) send or read e-mail. More than half of each group exchanges e-mail messages daily. The majority of middle-aged Americans (76 percent) and seniors (62 percent) also read online news.

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Status update sites such as Twitter, however, are only just beginning to catch on among older adults. Some 11 percent of those age 50 to 64 and 5 percent of adults age 65 and older have either tweeted or read someone else's tweets. But that's up from 5 percent and 3 percent respectively a year ago.

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