

Old folks give Facebook its biggest boost

By: The Canadian Press – Michael Oliveira

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TORONTO — Facebook may be the world's biggest social network, and particularly popular in Canada, but there are still plenty of Canadian holdouts who refuse to join or have logged off permanently, suggests recently released research.

One in three Canadian Internet users told pollsters that they did not use Facebook in the previous month, according to a report by the Media Technology Monitor, based on telephone surveys with more than 4,000 Canadians last spring.

Of them, 14 per cent said they used to have a Facebook account but quit, 16 per cent said they're technically still a member but rarely use the site, and 70 per cent said they never joined at all.

Younger non-Facebook users were more likely to have abandoned their profiles.

Poll respondents between 18 to 24 who said they weren't using Facebook were 10 times more likely to have dropped their account, rather than having never signed up in the first place.

And non-Facebook users between 25 to 33 were three times as likely to have started and stopped with the social network, rather than having never tried it.

When poll respondents were asked why they quit Facebook, the most common response was they didn't find the site useful, followed by privacy concerns, and a lack of time to engage with the site.

As some younger users are signing off, older members appear to be picking up the slack, according to the report.

While estimated growth among 18- to 34-year-old users was just four per cent from the fall of 2010 to the spring of 2013 — based on surveys by MTM — it was 26 per cent among users 50 to 65 and 38 per cent among those over 65.

The results of the MTM poll are considered accurate within 1.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

Another recently released report indicates the Facebook market in Canada has matured to the point that growth is now slowing down.

According to estimates by the U.S.-based research firm eMarketer, Facebook is on pace to add another 500,000 users in Canada this year, pushing the membership base here past 17 million.

That would represent an overall user increase of about 2.9 per cent over last year, down from the annual increase of nearly five per cent in 2012.

EMarketer expects that by the end of 2014, 92.6 per cent of Canadian social media users will have a Facebook account, as will 63 per cent of Internet users, and 49.1 per cent of the overall population.

But eMarketer is also projecting the number of Canadian social media users who use Facebook will decrease by 1.3 percentage points this year.