

Web 2.0 and Employee Communications

Summary of Survey Findings

March 2009

Align your media to employees' preferences and get results faster. Survey findings show emerging preference for Web 2.0 media in employee communications.



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Introduction

Web 2.0 media (social media) messages spread rapidly and feedback is nearly as fast, affecting and altering personal perceptions.

- Blogs and tools like Twitter offer personal opinions and can help leadership deliver messages to employees and obtain instant feedback.
- Instant messaging, text messaging and controlled social networks can spread news and perceptions quickly through an electronic grapevine that can help internal communicators.

While the internet provided the vehicle, it is a new generation, born between 1980 and 2000, that helped introduce the use of Web 2.0 media in the workplace. In fewer than 10 years, this generation, referred to as millennials and numbering 92 million,* will become the largest generation in the US workforce.

The value of using Web 2.0 media in communication planning with millennials is clear. They already use this media on their own and their workplace presence will continue to grow in size. Employers that successfully integrate Web 2.0 media into engagement and education strategies will get results faster with this generation.

However, our survey results show a much broader use of Web 2.0 media among all generations, whether hourly or salaried, not to socialize, but to get their jobs done. With a broader, multi-generational audience using Web 2.0 media today, employers have another reason to look closely at harnessing the power of Web 2.0 media and integrating these tools into their internal communications.

This report looks at the emerging role Web 2.0 media has in employee communication and engagement** strategies. Employers can resist Web 2.0 media and restrict its use at work or they can leverage its influence and integrate Web 2.0 media into strategies for recruiting, educating, engaging and retaining employees. The point is, employees are using Web 2.0 media at work for work purposes anyway, employers should capitalize on this to enhance their business.



In this report, Web 2.0 media include social networks, blogs, text messaging, instant messaging, wikis and gaming technology (see page 5 for definitions).

**The population figures represent US Census Bureau estimates of current US residents.*

**We define engagement as the cognitive (mental), physical, and emotional attachment that an individual experiences with regard to his/her work. Specifically, engaged employees are those who are:

- **Passionate** and **enthusiastic** about their work
- **Devoted** to getting the job done right
- **Immersed** fully in the task at hand
- **Focused** and **concentrate** intensely while on the job
- **Driven** to do whatever it takes to complete the task



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Why This Report Matters

What Employees (Not Employers) Think

If you believe that employers can effectively ban Web 2.0 media in the workplace or that employees only use Web 2.0 media to socialize, this report will change your mind. It's based on a survey that asked questions of over 8,000 employees (not employers) how they use Web 2.0 media at home and at work. It gives you what you need to know about how these tools can be used to support traditional media to speed results, whether for recruiting, training or engaging employees. These tools are effective and, as more millennials enter the workforce, they will become more prevalent in the employer communication toolkit.

If your workforce is comfortable using Web 2.0 media at home, they are ready to use these tools at work. In other words, the better you can align your communications to your employees' media preferences, the easier and faster you can achieve results.

Balancing Risk, Cost and ROI in Using Web 2.0 Media

The risk in using Web 2.0 media is that they may detract from productivity, a common employer position. But survey findings show people, even non-millennials, are using these tools not to socialize, but to get their jobs done.

The cost of Web 2.0 media is relatively low compared to the cost of printing. If the cost is lower, and they can help you reach results faster, the risk that they will be used for socializing may be worth it, especially if the risk can technologically be minimized and if results relate employee engagement.

The return on investment (ROI) is more than just in cost savings, however. According to the 2008 Aon Talents and Benefits Survey, 70% of responding HR leaders said that will "increase" or "substantially increase" employee engagement during the next three to five years. Why? Because engaged employees:

- Have a 44 percent higher rate in retention
- Are 56 percent better in customer service performance
- Have a 50 percent higher record for safety
- Are 50 percent more productive
- Are 33 percent more profitable

Source: 2004 Gallup poll (latest available)

Yet, a 2009 Gallup poll shows only 26% of employees are engaged, while 56% are not engaged and 18% are actively disengaged. The faster you can achieve engagement, the sooner you reap the return on investment. Web 2.0 media provides an opportunity to accelerate the engagement process.

The Market Downturn, Web 2.0 Media and Employee Engagement

Whether you're implementing a survival strategy and/or planning to emerge from the down economy with a modified and/or aggressive business strategy, it makes sense to prepare and engage your workforce now. As you prepare to implement your business strategy, look at your employees' media preferences. The better you can align your communication and engagement strategy to their preferences, the faster you'll get results. Use this report for ideas. Aon's Organizational Performance & Implementation team created this survey and have more details if you'd like to discuss them. The 2009 Web 2.0 and Employee Communications survey will launch in April, if you want to participate.

Web 2.0 Media

Defining the Web 2.0 media used in this report.

Avatar

A graphic identity you either select from a group of choices or create on your own to represent yourself to other parties through instant messaging (IM) or a multiplayer gaming session. An avatar is a caricature, not a realistic photo and can be a simple image or a bizarre fantasy figure. Some employers are using avatars on recruitment websites and in training employees. The avatar helps the prospect or employee interact with the corporate environment.

Blogs

A website where individuals or groups update entries in a journal on a daily or other periodic basis. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. Some leaders find blogs useful in getting their message out to employees on a regular basis and using the blog to obtain comments and feedback on initiatives.

Gaming

Games you play online over the internet either by yourself or with others online. More organizations are using gaming technology to attract millennials in recruiting and to train and engage employees in a wide range of initiatives from sales promotions to diversity training.

Social Networks

Social networks like Facebook, MySpace, or LinkedIn (A collection of ways for users to interact online, such as chat, messaging, email, video, voice chat, file sharing, blogging, discussion groups, and so on). Social networks offer access to employee profiles for skill matching on project teams, faster on-boarding and integration for new hires and increased employee morale. During a down economy, they can be useful in saving on travel costs.

Wikis

Software that allows users to collaboratively create, edit, link, and organize the content of a website, usually for reference material. (Wikipedia is an example.) They offer work teams the ability to document project progress and keep the team in touch with each other more effectively than email.

Other Web 2.0 media

Twitter is a micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as *tweets*. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length. Updates are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends. Twitter has potential application as a restricted tool for delivering website links, positioning perceptions and receiving responses from employees.

Web 2.0 Media in the Workplace

Here are some applications for Web 2.0 media in the workplace.

Use or Purpose	Web 2.0 Media	Comments
Peer-to-peer and team member communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instant messaging ▪ Text messaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up instant messaging chat rooms for discussion groups. ▪ Group text messaging also possible
Remote employee communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instant messaging ▪ Net meetings ▪ Podcasts ▪ Virtual training 	With more employees expected to work remotely, Web 2.0 media provides tools to help keep them engaged.
Leadership-to-employee communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Blogs ▪ Micro-blogs (i.e., Twitter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful blogs are built on a foundation of trust and credibility and can be used to feed the grapevine and monitor the results. When effective, they function as a two-way communication avenue. ▪ The optimal blog becomes a forum for leadership perceptions and decisions, enabling discussion and feedback from employees at all levels. ▪ Employees can feel included in decision making and business strategy implementation, a key element to successful engagement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee recruitment ▪ Employee onboarding ▪ Employee orientation ▪ Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avatars: Websites with avatars to help recruits with a virtual experience of the workplace or for a first-day experience. ▪ Gaming technology and podcasts for employee orientation, education and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The investment in gaming technology for employee recruitment and orientation has a significant return depending on your costs to replace an employee. ▪ For example, some have estimated the cost to replace registered nurses is about \$65,000 and the cost to replace hourly hotel workers ranges between \$2,500 and \$14,100 per employee (Society of Human Resources Management).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee bonding (sharing the employment experience) ▪ Staffing global projects ▪ Knowledge exchange 	Internal social networks for employees are similar to Facebook	An estimated 85 percent of employees work on projects with colleagues from other offices, making social networks a source for staffing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project management ▪ Corporate HR interaction with field HR 	Wikis	Wikis help work teams manage projects, solve problems, answer questions in a group setting.

Key Findings

At Home

If people are using these tools at home, they are ready and willing to use them at work.

- All generations use the internet at relatively high rates (at least 40 percent are online an hour or more daily when not at work).
- As expected millennials are frequent users of text messaging, instant messaging and social networks at home.

Most Used Web 2.0 Media at Home

Web 2.0 Media	Non-Millennials	Millennials
Internet	77%	87%
Text messaging	21%	49%*
Instant messaging	14%	72%
Social networks	14%	49%
Blogs	11%	20%

Gaming and Avatars

Gaming technology can accelerate training and employee engagement.

- 19 percent of the non-millennials are gaming online; 11 percent have avatars.
- 33 percent of millennials are gaming online; 23 percent have avatars.

**Respondents were asked for use of text messaging when looking for information, not for communicating with friends and families.*

At Work

Employees are using Web 2.0 media with or without employer approval.

- All generations use their employees' intranet at work for work (about two thirds of hourly and salaried employees use the intranet).
- Surprisingly, non-millennials are using Web 2.0 media at work than they do at home – a clear signal that these communication tools are effective.

Most Used Web 2.0 Media at Work for Work

Web 2.0 Media	Non-Millennials	Millennials
Intranet	65%	72%
Text messaging	25%	38%
Instant messaging	46%	48%
Social networks	13%	20%
Blogs	8%	13%

Working Remotely

- 45 percent of the respondents work remotely at times; 4 percent all the time.
- Because the number of remote workers is expected to increase, Web 2.0 media offers another communication tactic for engaging them.

Blogs and Wikis Are Emerging Work Tools

- Only 8 percent of respondents said they use blogs and wikis at work.
- The cost efficiencies and immediacy in knowledge transfer will encourage employers to expand usage.

What These Findings Mean

The internet's power not only gives people access to a wide range of news perspectives, but it grants each person an outlet to express his or her own opinion on it. Employees are using social media to collect information, to interpret and communicate it to others.

Your intranet and the internet are already resources for internal communications, using Web 2.0 media will help you maximize these resources. To use Web 2.0 effectively, you have to recognize that employees also share the power of this media and build your employee engagement and education communication strategies knowing and counting on employees sharing your message with other employees.

Employees' ability to share and alter the message through Web 2.0 media is a core issue to address when integrating social media into internal communications. It requires a different approach to message management – particularly post-delivery where you need to collect feedback, monitor reactions and reinforce your message to sustain credibility and ensure effective message delivery.

The point is that the use of Web 2.0 media is most effective if you have built trust and credibility with employees. If not, you will need to by recognizing their voice and opening up channels to collect and share their input in helping you build a communication process that recognizes their ability to manage and reinforce messages through Web 2.0 media. The sooner you can build this foundation for Web 2.0 media, the more effective your communication strategies and the quicker you can achieve results.

Demographics

Survey participants include the general public and employees of public and private employers who agreed to forward the survey to their employees. This section looks at survey participant demographics and at how participants were hired by their current employers, linking Web 2.0 media to employee recruitment (an alternative and potentially lower cost way to hire employees).

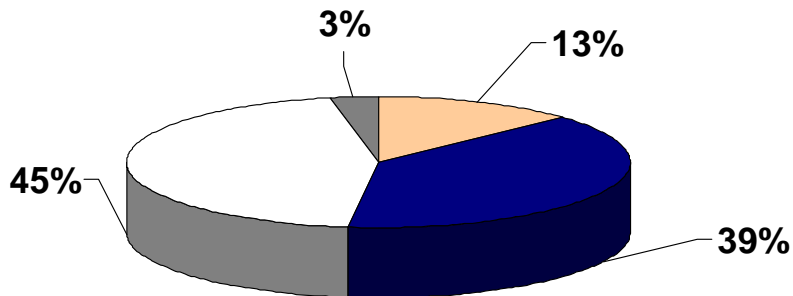


Generations

Four generations participated in the survey.

- **Traditionalists**
 - Age 63 and older
 - Make up 3 percent of surveyed participants
- **Boomers born between 1946 and 1964**
 - Ages 44-62
 - 78 million in size, 45 percent of workforce
 - Make up 45 percent of surveyed participants
- **Gen Xers born between 1965 and 1980**
 - Ages 29-43
 - 38.6 million in size, 40 percent of workforce
 - Make up 39 percent of surveyed participants
- **Millennials (Generation Y) born after 1980**
 - Age 28 and younger
 - 92 million in size, currently 10 percent of the workforce but within 10 years may be as large as 50 percent
 - Make up 13 percent of the surveyed participants

Generations Participating in the Survey



Survey Demographics

	Non-Millennials	Millennials
Participants	7,777	974
Males	40%	34%
Females	60%	66%
Full-Time	95%	89%
Salaried	68%	43%
Hourly	32%	57%
Years of Service		
Fewer than 5	45%	90%
5-10	21%	10%
11-15	12%	0%
16-20	8%	0%
More than 20	14%	0%
Education		
Advanced degree	14%	7%
College degree	40%	49%
Some college	14%	32%
High school degree	31%	12%

13% of survey base; overall millennials are 10% of total US workforce

More women, which supports trends in college enrollments among millennials

More hourly employees – use of Web 2.0 media among millennials does not appear to be affected by job position

88% have at least some college compared to 68% of the non-millennials



The “average” respondent*

- Female
- Early 40s (on the cusp between Boomer and Gen Xer)
- College educated
- Salaried
- Five years with current employer

**Based on median responses*

Recruitment

Participants were asked how they joined their current employer

- 30 percent referred by a colleague
- 17 percent recruited by employer or outside recruiter
- 13 percent responded to job posting in newspaper or other print publication
- 12 percent applied through company's online career site
- 8 percent walked in and applied
- 5 percent viewed job posting on career/job site (e.g., Monster, CareerBuilder)
- 12 percent other



What This Means...

Survey results show more employees are referred by a colleague than are recruited. Because millennials network better than any other age group, they will recruit for you if you establish a strong culture that appeals to employees, including millennials. This reinforces the value that Web 2.0 media offers for employers interested in achieving or sustaining a preferred-employer status.

Communication at Home

In this section, you'll see how people use the internet and Web 2.0 media outside of work to find information that interests them. This can help you gauge the impact that the internet and Web 2.0 media has had in personal communication and apply that information to your employee communication and engagement strategies.



Communication at Home – Summary

Summary	Non-Millennials	Millennials
TV is most popular information source for both groups	89%	87%
Internet is more popular than radio and newspapers and millennials use it as much as they use TV for information	77%	87%
Online for more than one hour: Four out of 10 people are online for more than one hour <i>daily</i> ; two-thirds of millennials	41%	64%
Use of Web 2.0 Media:		
Text messaging	21%	49%*
Instant messaging	14%	72%
Social networks	14%	49%
Gaming: Playing games online (potentially can be use in recruitment, orientation and training)	19%	33%

Internet as popular as TV among millennials

No surprise here, millennials grew up with Web 2.0 media and it's a natural resource for them to rely on for news and learning

**Respondents were asked how often they use text messaging when looking for information, not for communicating with friends and families.*

The use of social networks will continue to increase. In 2008 alone, Facebook users grew 127 percent to 222 million visitors. But, millennials are not the only ones joining. Over 73 million users are between the ages of 35 and 54, according to Comscore, an online audience measuring company.

At-Home Media

Millennials key up websites for information just as frequently as they turn on the TV – or they use the internet to validate information and interact through chat rooms and blogs. TV provides a range of viewpoints on news, but the internet and its blogs, chat rooms and social interactions allows people to express their own views and interact with others.

Millennials are also more prone to rely on word of mouth as a resource (text messaging is an electronic version of word of mouth).

It’s also interesting to note that the growth of the internet as a source of information ranks ahead of both newspapers and radio for both non-millennials and millennials.

Traditional Media Used at Home	Multiple Responses	
	Non-Millennials	Millennials
TV	89%	87%
Internet sites	79%	87%
Newspapers	72%	60%
Radio	70%	62%
Word of mouth	58%	70%
Magazines	47%	49%
Other	N/A	N/A

What This Means...

The internet’s power not only gives people access to a wide range of perspectives on news, but it grants each person an outlet to express his or her own opinion on it. As Web 2.0 media become more prevalent in the workplace, employers will have to recognize that employees’ share the power of this media. Employers can harness that power and leverage it by recognizing employees’ voice in the use of Web 2.0 media and opening channels to collect and share their input.

Web 2.0 Media Used at Home

Millennials who grew up with Web 2.0 media in their personal lives, as well as in the education system, are more likely to use Web 2.0 media for news and information at home compared to non-millennials.

Use of Web 2.0 Media (Multiple Responses)		
Media	Non-Millennials	Millennials
Social networks	14%	49%
Text messaging	21%	49%*
Instant messaging	14%	26%
Blogs	11%	20%
Online gaming	19%	33%
Use of avatars	11%	23%

Frequency in Using Web 2.0 Media at Home		
Outside of Work	Non-Millennials	Millennials
Time spent online per day		
Less than 1 hour	59%	36%
1 or more hours	41%	64%
Frequency using text messaging		
Never	37%	7%
Occasionally	36%	20%
Frequently	27%	73%
Frequency using instant messaging		
Never	46%	28%
Occasionally	35%	42%
Frequently	19%	30%

*Respondents were asked for use of text messaging in looking for information, not for communicating with friends and families.

What This Means...

It's no surprise that millennials use Web 2.0 media at greater levels at home than non-millennials. However, these findings suggest that many millennials will bring Web 2.0 media to the workplace for both personal and work use. Employers need to be aware that Web 2.0 media can be used for internal communications, particularly employers with large numbers of millennials. Because millennials will become a larger group in the workforce during the next few years, the opportunity to integrate Web 2.0 media into internal communications will also become greater.

Communication at Work

The survey asked respondents to specify media, including Web 2.0 media, used at work for information.



Communication at Work – Summary

Summary	All Respondents
Memos and emails are most common media for employer information.	73%
The employer's intranet is second most common source for employer information.	65%
Web 2.0 media: Instant messages, social networks, blogs and wikis emerging as communication tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% - Instant messaging • 25% - Text messaging • 13% - Social networking • 8% - Blogs • 8% - Wikis

Traditional sources of information are most commonly used.

Although not used as much as memos, the intranet is not that far behind.

Doesn't necessarily mean that the employer offers Web 2.0 media resources, it reveals the percentage of employees who are using Web 2.0 media at work for their jobs.

At-Work Media

Memos and emails from management remain a standard method for communicating with employees – in the traditional top-down communication approach. Nearly three quarters of the respondents look to memos and emails for employer news.

Nearly two thirds of the respondents also turn to the employee intranet as a source for news. Interestingly, an employer’s face to the public – its website – is a more common source for news than meetings.

Sources used at work (Multiple responses)	All
Management memos/emails	73%
Employee intranet	65%
Company newsletter	55%
Word of mouth	53%
Company website	46%
Meetings	41%
News media	36%
Mailings to home	28%
Human resources	27%
Webcasts	20%

What This Means...

Even among hourly employees, employers’ intranet sites are a primary source of information. A large number of participants use several sources for employer information (memos/emails, their employers’ intranet sites, internal newsletters and meetings). They are using multiple sources to obtain and confirm news, just like they do at home.

Word of mouth was also highly rated. This suggests that feeding the grapevine with the right information can help build credibility – critically important if you consider that employees using Web 2.0 media to discuss company messages broadens the grapevine’s power. You can manage the grapevine message by tapping into the power of social networking through Web 2.0 media. This will help you to confirm if employees have received and understood the message correctly.

Social Networking at Work

As millennials enter the workforce, they are accessing social networks, such as MySpace and Facebook, bringing Web 2.0 media to the workplace. A survey by Challenger, Gray & Christmas found that one in four of 200 surveyed employers have blocked access to social networks. One of the key reasons is that social network sites are viewed as a major drain on worker output.

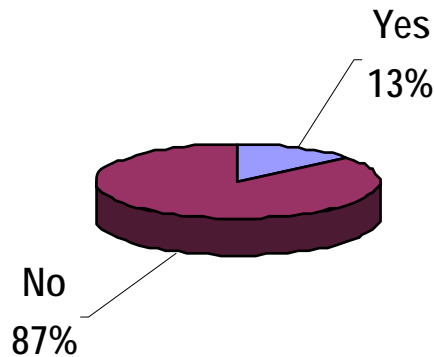
The survey also found some employers (less than 10 percent) actually encourage employees to use social networking sites. "Banning use of sites could also make it hard to recruit young employees. To get a real recruiting edge, business should integrate social networking and other Web 2.0 tools into every facet of the organization, from marketing to internal employee communication."

Some employers have created internal social networks for employees to use for screening skills and subject matter experts to match needed skills to projects. This has become especially important as more organizations are staffing projects on a global basis. Internal social networks have also helped internal communication and employee bonding. See the case study on the next page.

In the Aon survey, 14 percent of the respondents indicated they use social networks at work; about the same as those who use them at home.

The use of social networks at work is consistent with the use of social networks at home

Use of Social Networks at Work



Millennials use of social networks

- 20% Yes
- 80% No

What This Means...

While millennials outnumber other generations on social networks, a third of the 222 million Facebook users are between the ages of 35 and 54, according to Comscore, an online audience measuring company.

Case Study: Social Networks

Several employers are using internal social networks to create “face pages” (profiles) of employees. Larger, global firms can especially benefit from internal social networks.

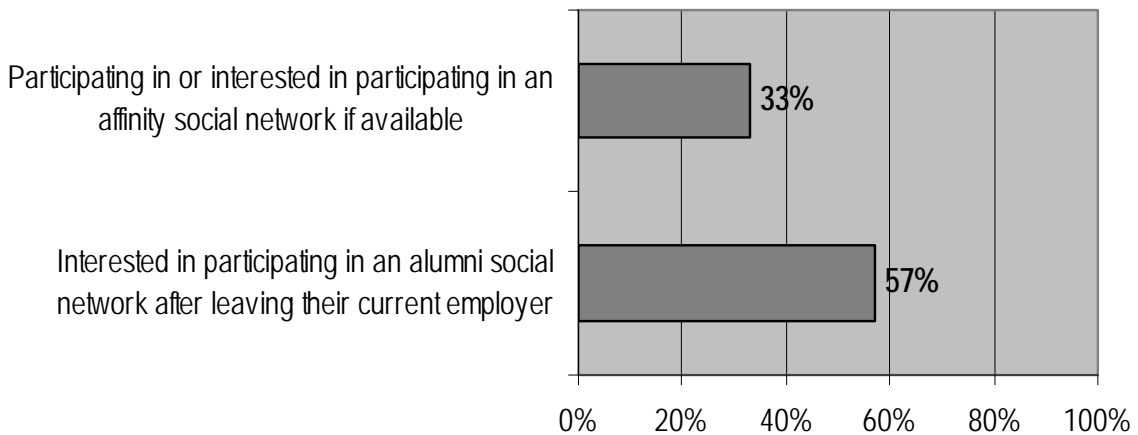
Case Study available upon request.

Social Networking at Work (continued)

Other growing uses for social networks are emerging as well. The Aon survey reveals, for example, that 33 percent of the respondents participate or are interested in participating in online affinity groups at work for an area of interest to them (e.g. working parents, working women, gay/lesbian, areas of technical expertise, etc.). Six percent noted they currently participate and another 27 percent said they would be interested, if available.

Also, 57 percent of respondents are interested in participating in an online social network of fellow alumni if they left their current employer. Professional services firms such as consulting firms, audit, financial and legal services firms use affinity groups to stay in touch with former employees who can become potential clients.

Use of Alumni and Affinity Social Networks



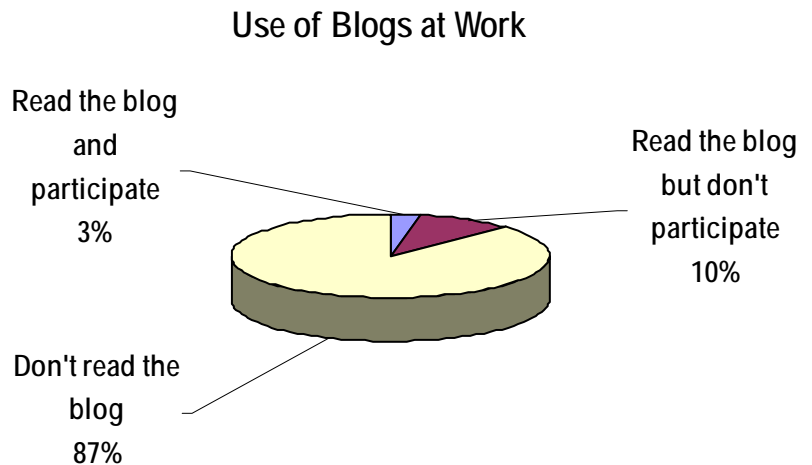
What This Means...

Affinity networks offer an opportunity for an organization to address diversity within the workplace. Alumni networks are a way for former employees to interact with current employees.

Web 2.0 Media at Work – Blogs

A McKinsey survey showed use of company blogs increased from 21 percent in 2007 to 38 percent in 2008. Blogs are an especially helpful tool for executives who want to personalize their leadership. They allow executives to present a perspective on business and management issues, engage employees in dialogue and solicit input. See the case study on the next page.

Of the 8 percent who said their employers have a blog, only 10 percent read the blog and 3 percent add content to the blog



Millennials Use of Blogs at Work

- 2% Read and participate
- 11% Read, don't participate
- 87% Don't read

What This Means...

Organizations that want to share leadership information and solicit feedback on the information with employees find blogs very useful. However, not every organization can succeed with blogs. Blogs are most effective in environments where leadership has built credibility and trust and are viewed as listeners and collaborators.

To assess the feasibility of blogs as a leadership communication tool, poll employees on their perceptions of leadership and determine if credibility and trust are issues. If they are a concern, take steps to mitigate these perceptions first, adding a blog as a second phase to show that leadership is collaborative and is listening to employees.

Case Study: Blogs

Blogs are an extremely useful leadership communication tool, enabling management to regularly update employees on the organization while collecting feedback from employees. They can be used on a division basis or at the top level. In some cases, blogs are used to spearhead a cultural change and to engage employees in new business initiatives or goals. They are cost-effective and easy to use. However, as mentioned earlier, the organization must take steps to build support for a blog and then promote it before launching it. Without such preliminary work, a blog can actually be counterproductive.

To better connect with employees and obtain feedback from employees, a CEO can use a blog on business topics, such as:

- New directions
- Leadership changes
- Marketplace rumors
- Work environment
- Brand reputation

Leaders can regularly join the discussion to respond to specific questions and concerns.

Case Study available upon request.

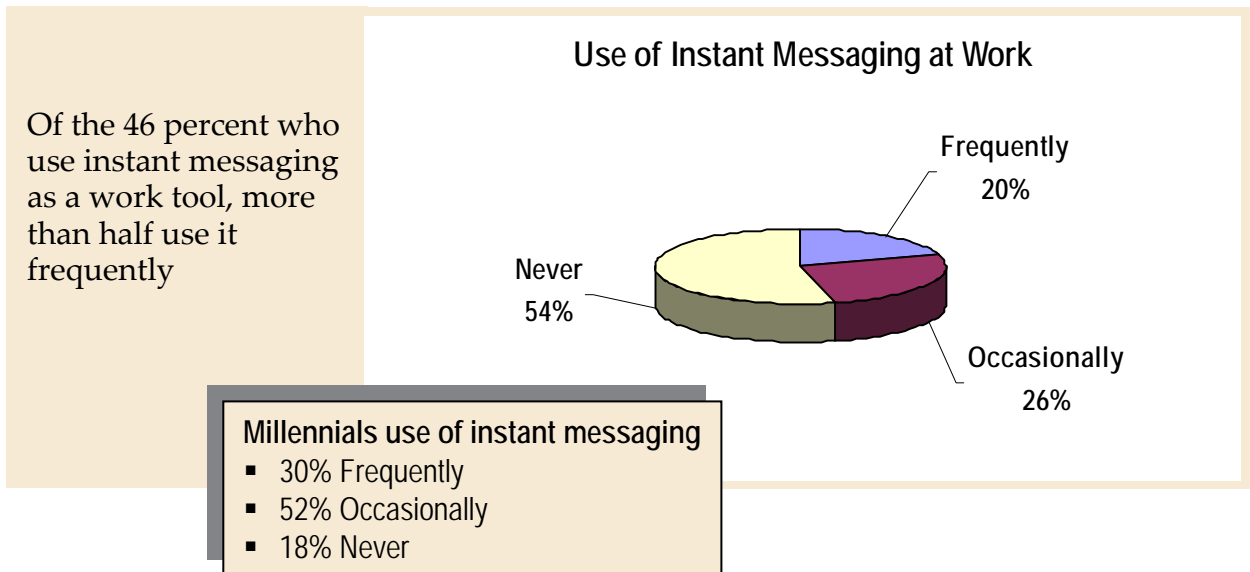
Web 2.0 Media at Work – Instant Messaging

Computer-to-computer instant messaging is a communication tool that is more direct than email because the users can converse online in real time. It also offers the capability for multiple users to “group think” on a topic, project or work issue.

Whether the employer offers instant messaging or employees use their own services, usage is on the rise. According to a 2006 American Management Association report, almost one third of employers, 31 percent, have an instant messaging policy in place detailing how employees can and can't use the program during work hours.

The Aon survey asked respondents if they use instant messaging at work with coworkers without regard to whether their employer had a formal instant messaging internal network or if the respondent uses instant messaging through an internet service (such as AIM). Nearly half, 46 percent, said they do. Of these, 20 percent said they do so frequently.

The fact that non-millennials are using instant messaging at work more than they are at home is interesting. In comparison, millennials use instant messaging more at home than they do at work. This is likely because many millennials have a large network of friends and family who regularly use instant messaging, whereas non-millennials' friends and family members may not be using instant messaging nearly as frequently. Here's where a generational difference shines through. See the example on the next page.



What This Means...

Email may be more common, but instant messaging is more direct and urgent. It has a potential role in corporate communications. For example, instant messaging can be used to remind supervisors of upcoming communication events and employee survey or enrollment deadlines.

Example: Instant Messaging

Project managers at Example, Inc. must stay in regular connection with team members as they work at client sites on various projects. Most of the project team members have laptop computers that they use onsite. Email is frequently used as employees log on remotely to stay in touch with project team members and their managers.

The company recently added instant messaging as an alternative and more immediate way for team members to discuss work issues. They found problem solving easier through group chat features in the instant messaging system.

The company recently made changes to its business model that affected all employees and their managers. Several business lines were restructured and sales, operations as well as customer service were all affected. With employees scattered around the country, the company faced productivity and cost issues to hold meetings to overview and discuss the impact of the changes on the work teams. Alternatively, corporate communications set up a webcast to present a general overview of the changes, created separate podcasts for operations, sales, customer services and other groups. Managers were also given special training and a series of questions to discuss with their work teams. Rather than call in these employees from the field, the company used instant messaging and the chat feature to hold discussion groups with the smaller project teams. Each supervisor was able to ask a series of questions – in a sort of focus group setting – to discuss how the change impact their groups.

This strategy is effective because it eliminated the need to organize onsite meetings and incur travel expenses. It allowed for a cascading of the change message from the highest executive levels to the front lines where managers could personalize the change for their workgroups. It also enabled leadership to collect feedback from all levels within the organization.

Other uses for instant messaging and chat features include:

1. Virtual focus groups facilitated remotely by a focus group moderator.
2. Call center interaction among customer service representatives as they field questions from callers.
3. Human resources discussing rollout of new benefits or compensation plans with field representatives, managers or team leads.
4. Pulse surveys asking three or four questions to poll employees with instant response.

Gaming Technology

Although the survey did not ask respondents whether they used gaming technology in training programs at work, the survey found that 19 percent of non-millennials and 33 percent of millennials were gaming online at home regularly. It's important to recognize that millennials spent a lot of time learning with games and interacting online with a wide range of games. This gaming technology has application in the workforce for recruiting, orientation and training. Here's some examples:

1. **Recruitment:** A small start-up software company needs young employees to help build, sell and support customer service for a new product in the construction industry. It competes with big name, Silicon Valley type employers for these recruits at colleges. Rather than produce a brochure and other traditional materials for recruiting purposes, the company constructs a website and gives candidates a button connect on a wire that plugs into a USB port. When the candidate pushes the button, it takes them automatically to the company's special website where the candidate is greeted by the CEO in a video.

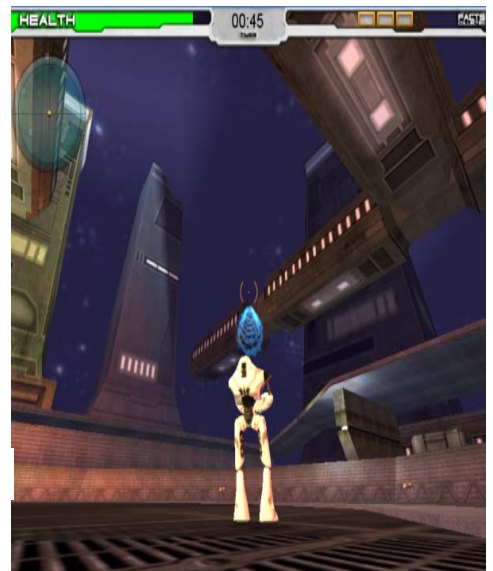


The candidate can select an avatar and take a virtual tour of the company...stopping at the R&D department, sales, customer service and product support sites where the candidate can see and hear more about the jobs available and the type of culture.

2. **First Day Orientation:** When candidates accept job offers, they are filled with anticipation and enthusiasm for the new job. When they start the job they must become familiar with the new employer's culture, orient themselves to the new environment and figure out who is important and where to spend their initial energy in establishing their credibility and value. A first-day website with a game or avatar-type program would help new employees be prepared for their first day, even before it starts (i.e., during the period after they accept the job offer).
3. **Training:** Web designers are also using gaming technology to support learning. Millennials who learned how to build simulated cities, fly jet fighters and battle armies of adversaries online, can learn new job positions quickly and at their own pace. No need for group meetings and travel costs as online gaming can be completed at home or at a workstation.

Like "Flight Simulators" for working scenarios, gaming technology can put business goals and job roles in context.

With special thanks to Jim Wexler at BrandGames



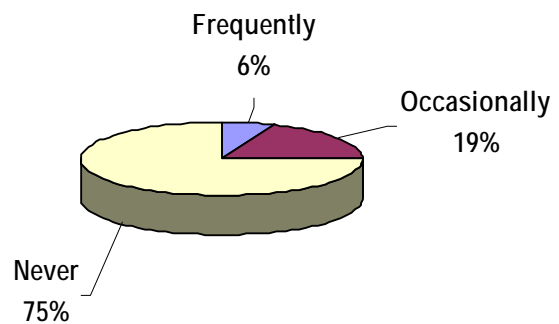
Web 2.0 Media at Work – Text Messaging

Text messaging is a little trickier to use because of privacy issues. When is it ok for an employer to send a text message to employees' personal cell phones? Group text messaging can be used to notify team members of a change in meeting time or location and for safety and crisis communication – to alert employees of a safety issue or provide direction during a crisis, for example.

The survey asked respondents if they used their cell phones to text message with coworkers. Just over one quarter, 25%, said they do. Millennials, as would be expected, text message with coworkers more frequently – but not in large numbers.

Of the 25 percent who use text messaging with coworkers, most use it occasionally

Use of Text Messaging at Work



Millennials Use of Text Messaging

- 9% Frequently
- 29% Occasionally
- 62% Never

What This Means...

Employers can encourage work teams to use text messaging if the employer is paying the cost of the cell phone. HR may find value in text messaging to keep in contact with their field staff and vice versa, especially when employees are asking questions about initiatives, changes or HR policy/benefit programs.

Web 2.0 Media at Work – Wikis

Wikis are a communication tool for a project team or work groups. Employees can log on and use a wiki for problem solving, tracking progress or in posting journal-type entries.

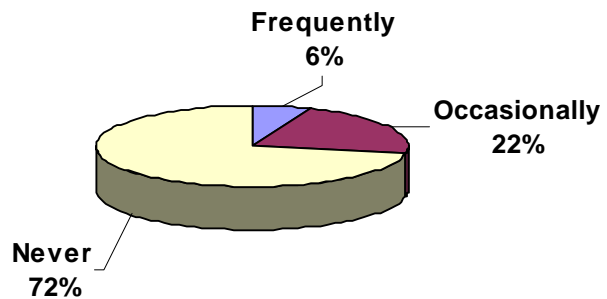
Respondents were asked if their employers offered wikis as a work tool. Fewer than one said they did have access to wikis. However, of those whose employers offered wikis, only 6 percent used one frequently in their jobs and 22 percent said the occasionally use one.

Of the 8 percent who work for employers that offer access to wikis for work groups, most never access it

Millennials use of wikis

- 8% Frequently
- 23% Occasionally
- 70% Never

Use of Wikis at Work



What This Means...

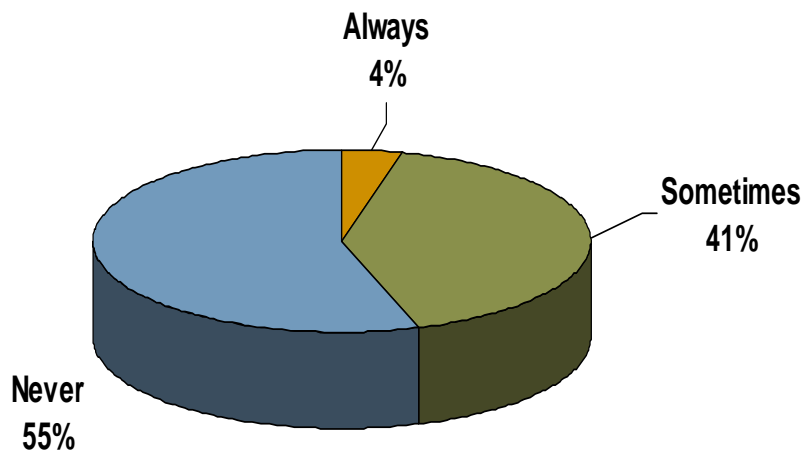
Human Resources can use wikis for managing large- and small-scale projects, where HR staff and field administrators can interact and problem solve as a group, or to track employee questions about policy and benefits. Corporate communicators may find wikis useful in change management initiatives.

Working Remotely Creates a Communication Challenge

According to an independent survey conducted in mid-2008 of senior executives, more than two-thirds (69 percent) said it is common for their employees to work off-site. In addition, 82 percent said they expect the number of employees who work remotely to increase in the next five years.

The Aon survey reveals that 45 percent of the respondents work offsite either always (4 percent) or sometimes (41 percent). Remote workers present a challenge to communication and engagement. It's more difficult for them to build affinity, a key element of productivity, and it's harder for them to stay in touch with what is going on at work.

Respondents Who Work Remotely



What This Means...

As more employees work remotely, corporate communicators and executives will be challenged in keeping them engaged and informed. Millennials have a high regard for employers who can be flexible in helping them blend their work-life commitments. Working remotely, whether during normal work hours or according to their own schedule, is part of that expectation. Since many remote workers may not be available for company-wide meetings and learning events, Web 2.0 media offers an alternative for helping them stay informed and engaged through podcasts, webcasts, e-learning modules and other electronic media.

Where to go for more information



About Aon Human Capital Consulting

Service Area	Description	Specific Products and Services
<i>Organizational Improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic communication and change management expertise to ease clients through initiatives and small- and large-scale change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizational Communication ▪ Change Management ▪ HR Transformation ▪ Knowledge and Capability Transfer ▪ Workforce Engagement
<i>Talent Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expertise in the strategic management of human capital, from talent alignment and workforce planning to human resources optimization strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Resources Functional Assessment ▪ Talent Attraction/Retention Assessment ▪ Total Rewards Alignment ▪ Workforce Planning/Workforce of the Future
<i>Talent Acquisition & Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure our clients have the talented employees and leaders they need now and in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talent Acquisition ▪ Workforce Performance ▪ Leadership Development and Talent Management ▪ Benefits Compensation Statements ▪ Recruitment Process Outsourcing ▪ Call Center Performance