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News Release

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1.8 MILLION NEW ZEALANDERS INTERACTING VIA SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES: NIELSEN

AUCKLAND, 19 JULY 2010 — Online New Zealanders are increasing their participation in social media at a rapid rate, with content sharing the most popular social media activity, according to findings from Nielsen's 2010 Social Media Report, released today.

The report, which tracked Internet users' social media usage, found that more than four in five New Zealand Internet users (81%) sent or shared a photo in the past year, three quarters (75%) posted (uploaded) photos online and 73 percent sent or shared a link. The biggest increases in social media usage were reading wikis (up 26 percentage points), updating and creating social networking profiles (up 17 points and 16 points respectively) and looking at others' social networking profiles (up 16 points), (see chart 1).

More than two in five online New Zealanders (42%) are interacting with companies via social networking sites, reinforcing notions that New Zealanders are open to engaging with brands and companies online. Social media is also playing an important role in product and service purchasing decisions – 44 percent have published opinions specifically about products, services and brands while 73 percent have read other consumers' product opinions online. Further, of those who haven't read consumer reviews and discussions, almost two thirds intend to do so in 2010.

"The opportunities for brands and companies to tap into the social media phenomenon are really just beginning to emerge and to date we've only seen the tip of the iceberg," states Tony Boyte, Research Director for Nielsen's online business. "Incredibly, nearly two million online New Zealanders (1.92 million) have looked to their fellow Internet users for opinions and information about products, services and brands, and New Zealanders' engagement with online word of mouth communication is going to increase in coming years as social media plays an increasingly important role in consumer decision making."

In contrast to the previous iteration of Nielsen's Social Media Report in 2007, Facebook has overtaken Bebo and now dominates the New Zealand online social networking space, with more than four in five New Zealand Internet users (82%) reporting to have visited Facebook (see chart 2), 70 percent have a Facebook profile, and 79 percent of social networkers name Facebook as their main social networking platform, up from just 19 percent in 2007. Of those who say Facebook is their main profile, 54 percent visit the site at least daily, and 39 percent are on the site for at least four hours a week.

Micro-blogging site Twitter has also begun to gain traction in New Zealand in the past year, off the back of much global and local hype – more than one quarter of New Zealanders (27%) have visited the site and 11 percent have created a Twitter profile. Of Twitter's user base in New Zealand, 44 percent say they have 'followed' companies or brands via the site. New Zealand companies are also jumping on the Twitter bandwagon, with close to one third (30%) of marketers saying that their company has established a presence on Twitter.*

"For now, the battle of the social networking sites has clearly been won, and Facebook has proven its dominance by providing valuable and compelling content that has more than half of their users returning every day," observes Boyte. "These days, any New Zealander who cares to participate in online social networking has almost certainly been on Facebook. But looking to the future, who knows what evolution could take place in this space, and it's certainly possible that Facebook could be usurped by another social networking star."

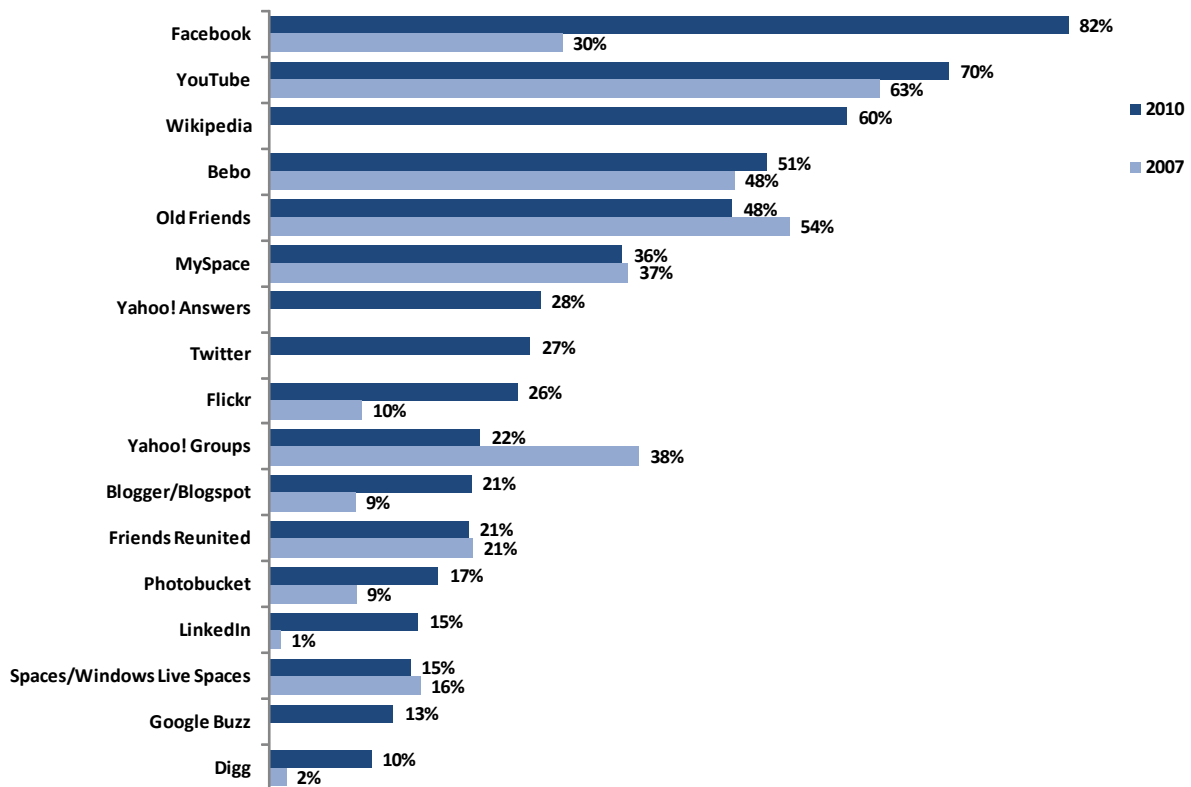
The rise in Smartphone ownership and the lowering of mobile data charges has seen mobile social networking gain traction in the past three years. Nielsen's report found that nearly one quarter of social networkers (24%) participated in mobile social networking in the past year, with younger consumers the most likely to participate in social networking via mobile – 64 percent of mobile social networkers are under 35 years of age. Facebook is the most popular social networking site accessed via a mobile (84% of mobile social networkers have visited Facebook), followed by Bebo (23%), YouTube (15%) and Twitter (10%). However, Twitter sees the most frequent mobile usage, with 16 percent of its mobile users visiting the site daily. In comparison, Facebook saw 13 percent of its mobile users visit the site daily, while seven percent of Bebo users were making daily visits.

**Figure taken from Social Media amongst New Zealand Businesses Survey conducted in December 2009 by Nielsen on behalf of the CAANZ Digital Leadership Group.*

Chart 1: Fastest growing social media activities, 2007 to 2010

	Activity	2010	2007	Difference
1	Read a wiki	66%	40%	+26 points
2	Updated a social networking profile	66%	49%	+17 points
3	Looked at social networking profiles	79%	62%	+16 points
4	Created a profile on a social networking site	61%	45%	+16 points
5	Sent/shared a link with someone	73%	59%	+14 points
6	Posted pictures/photos online	75%	61%	+13 points
7	"Tagged" something	15%	6%	+9 points
8	Downloaded a Podcast	12%	7%	+5 points
9	Read a blog	55%	49%	+5 points
10	Subscribed to RSS feed	10%	6%	+5 points

Chart 2: Most popular social media websites*, 2007 vs 2010



* Proportion of New Zealand Internet users having ever visited website

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