

FORBES INSIGHTS/GOOGLE STUDY SHOWS THE INTERNET IS THE CHIEF SOURCE FOR BUSINESS INFORMATION FOR THE C-SUITE

How the Internet is used often depends on the age and work experience of the executive

NEW YORK, NY (Thursday, June 18, 2009) – Forbes Insights, in association with Google, announces the release of a new study, "The Rise of the Digital C-Suite: How Executives Locate and Filter Business Information." The complete study is available at: www.forbes.com/forbesinsights.

The findings clearly show that the Internet has become the chief source of business information, and that how the Internet is used frequently depends on the age and work experience of the executive. The study is based on a survey of 354 C-level and top executives at large U.S. companies (annual sales of greater than \$1 billion).

"The common perception is that top executives at the largest companies do not use the Internet, but the reality is just the opposite," said Stuart Feil, editorial director of Forbes Insights. "These findings show that C-level executives are more involved online than their counterparts, and younger generations of executives – those whose work careers have coincided with the growth of the PC and the Internet – are bringing profound organizational change to these companies."

Highlights of the study:

- The Internet is the most valuable resource for executives for gathering business information, outstripping at-work contacts, personal networks, trade publications, etc. In fact, 74% of respondents rated the Internet as very valuable (5 on a 5-point scale).
- During work hours, 70% of executives prefer to read "traditional print media" online rather than in print (30%), and 69% prefer to access "traditional broadcast media" online rather than over the air.
- Over half of the C-suite respondents (53%) said they prefer to locate information for decision-making themselves, rather than start the process and forward it to others to complete (26%) or assign others to gather it (21%). Among non-C-level executives, 40% said they prefer to do it themselves.
- Search engines are the most valuable source for locating business information; 63% of executives rated them as "very valuable." More interesting is the number of searches executives conduct daily. Overall, 60% of executives conduct 6 or more work-related searches each day, and 19% conduct 20 or more. Among executives under age 40, 74% conduct six or more searches, and 39% conduct 20 or more work-related searches each day.
- A big generational split occurs when it comes to what executives will click on. Those under age 50 are much more likely to click on online advertising such as paid listings in search engines, banner ads, pop-up ads, etc.

- Video is growing in importance – 24% of C-suite (compared to 16% non-C-suite) executives prefer reviewing business information via video. There’s a generational split here, too. Among executives under age 50, 33% view work-related video daily, and 26% view work-related video several times per week. For the 50-plus age group, 11% view work-related video daily, and 18% view it several times per week.
- Executives under age 40 (which the report calls “Generation Netscape”) are by far the most likely to engage with emerging Internet technologies:
 - 65% of under-40 executives maintain a work-related blog weekly or more frequently. That figure is 41% for 40 to 49-year-olds (“Generation PC”) and 10% for those above 50 years (“Generation Wang”)
 - 65% of the under-40 executives contribute to or read Twitter at least weekly. That drops to 44% for 40 to 49-year-olds and just 7% for those who are over 50 years old.

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