

Survey: Most Americans take breaks from Facebook

By Heather Kelly, CNN

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(CNN) -- Facebook follows you everywhere. It's on phones and computers, at work and home, and in the news. So it's understandable that people might need a little rest from the social network.

New research suggests that Facebook fatigue may be setting in with some users. Twenty-seven percent of Facebook users surveyed in the U.S. plan to spend less time on the site in 2013, compared with only 3% who plan to spend more time, according to a [study from the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project](#).

(Another 69% of Facebook users say they plan to spend the same amount of time on the site this coming year.)

The Pew study also found that 61% of Facebook users have taken a break from the service for several weeks or more. During these breaks, the vast majority of Facebook vacationers don't delete their profiles.

The site boasts that it has more than a billion active users. Pew found that two-thirds, or 67%, of American adults who are online use Facebook.

The reasons people gave for taking a sabbatical from the network were varied. The most common motivation was not having enough time for the site, with 21% of people saying they were just too busy with real-life responsibilities to spend time reading posts, liking and commenting.

Other reasons for leaving: Ten percent called it a waste of time, 10% cited a lack of interest in the content, and 9% said they were unhappy with the amount of drama and gossip on the site. Only 4% of people mentioned privacy and security concerns as their reason for taking a breather.

Among the comments from those who took Facebook breaks: "I was tired of stupid comments." ... "(I had) crazy friends. I did not want to be contacted." ... "I took a break when it got boring." ... "It was not getting me anywhere." ... "You get burned out on it after a while." ... "I gave it up for Lent." ... "People were (posting) what they had for dinner." ... "I didn't like being monitored." ... "I got harassed by someone from my past who looked me up." ... "It caused problems in my (romantic) relationship."

Not everyone who leaves Facebook comes back to the site. According to Pew, 20% of online adults who currently don't use Facebook formerly maintained a profile on the site. The number of Facebook users in the U.S. may be plateauing, as only 8% of non-users said they would be interested in joining.

Mark Zuckerberg's company needs to keep its users active on the site and mobile apps, especially since the pool of untapped of potential new members in the U.S. is dwindling. If Facebook starts to feel stale, more of its active users could take longer breaks or leave altogether, like they did with such formerly hot social networks as Friendster and MySpace.

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