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## What Consumers Want On Media Web Sites

This is the fourth document in the “What Online Consumers Want” series.

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Forrester asked more than 5,000 online consumers about the content and functionality they'd most like on a variety of industry Web sites. In this document, we take a closer look at what consumers across five generations want on media sites. Some of our findings: Discussion boards/forums top the list, product videos come in last, and no site feature received more than 20% of consumer votes.

### CONSUMERS VOICE THEIR EXPECTATIONS FOR MEDIA SITES

Forrester recently asked more than 5,000 online consumers to tell us what they'd most like to see on the Web.<sup>1</sup> For this document, we took a closer look at consumers' expectations for media sites. What content and functionality are consumers wild about? Nothing, actually. Just 20% of consumers voted for the top-rated offering — discussion boards/forums — and enthusiasm for other types of offerings trailed off from there (see Figure 1). What was at the bottom of consumer wish lists? Product videos.

To get a richer picture of consumers' online preferences, we took a look at the survey data across five generations — Gen Yers, Gen Xers, Younger Boomers, Older Boomers, and Seniors (see Figure 2). We found that:<sup>2</sup>

- **Gen Yers demand the most.** Gen Yers expressed the strongest interest in quizzes or questionnaires, customer testimonials, product or price comparison tools, and product videos. Along with Gen Xers, Gen Yers also voted for special offers/coupons and entertaining games more than Boomers and Seniors.
- **Gen Xers want discussion boards/forums.** Gen X stands out as the single generation that rallied more than 20% of the vote for any single site offering — 24% of Gen Xers said they'd like discussion boards/forums on media sites.
- **Younger Boomers want content subscriptions and discussion boards/forums.** Younger Boomers tied with Gen X in their desire for RSS or email alerts — 20% of both generations voted for this functionality. The same number of Younger Boomers also voiced interest in discussion boards/forums.



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- **Older Boomers are aligned with Seniors.** Older Boomers' votes matched those of Seniors for five of the 11 site offerings. For another five, Older Boomers' and Seniors' preferences varied by only 3%.
- **Seniors want user ratings/reviews.** Seniors voted much less frequently than other generations for 10 of the 11 types of content and functionality on our list. However, the oldest generation was the *most* enthusiastic for user ratings and reviews — 20% of seniors voted for this site offering compared with just 15% of Gen Y.

**Figure 1** Content And Functionality That Consumers Want On Media Sites



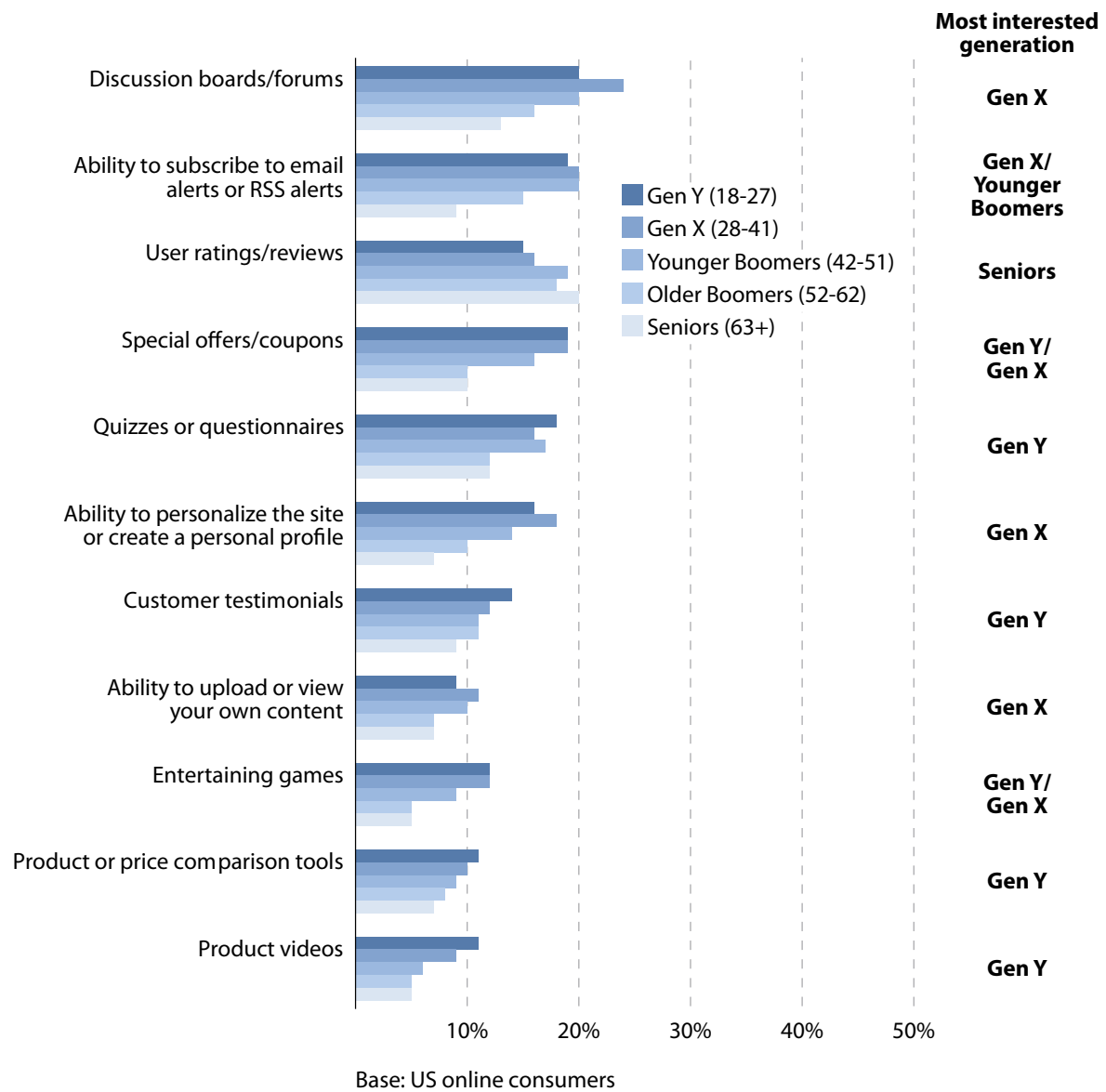
Base: US online consumers

Source: North American Technographics® Customer Experience, Marketing, And Consumer Technology Online Survey, Q3 2007

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

**Figure 2** What Consumers Want On Media Sites By Generation



Source: North American Technographics® Customer Experience, Marketing, And Consumer Technology Online Survey, Q3 2007

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### MEDIA SITE OWNERS SHOULD GIVE USERS WHAT THEY WANT

Consumers have a clear message for media sites: They don't want bells and whistles. Web execs that want to supplement the primary subject matter on their sites should focus on developing features that support consumers' ability to consume content — like discussion boards, RSS or email alerts, and user rating and reviews.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> We found that consumers want user ratings and reviews, special offers, and comparison tools the most — especially on consumer electronics and travel sites. Entertaining games, quizzes and questionnaires, and the ability to upload content fell to the bottom of list — though Gen Yers showed greater interest in these offerings than did older generations. We also asked consumers about the overall qualities they value most in their favorite sites and found that usability trumps entertainment and content. See the February 6, 2008, “[User Ratings Top Consumers' Online Wish Lists](#)” report.
- <sup>2</sup> Data comes from Forrester's North American Technographics® Customer Experience Online Survey, Q3 2007. There were 5,296 respondents in this survey.