NIELSEN UNCOVERS THE NEW DIGITAL DIVIDE
FACEBOOK USERS VS NON-FACEBOOK USERS

Sydney, 12 April 2010 — A new digital divide is emerging between Facebook users and non-Facebook users, according research company Nielsen.

Findings from a Nielsen report, released today, show that the amount of time spent online and general levels of Internet engagement of Facebook users is far greater than non-Facebook users, highlighting the extent to which Facebook is influencing Australian Internet activities, with Facebook users spending an average of 3.26 times longer on the Internet than non-Facebook users – 25.8 hours compared to 7.91 hours respectively (see chart 1). Even excluding time spent on Facebook, Facebook users are still spending 2.5 times more on average per month than those who aren’t on Facebook.

“The results we’ve uncovered in this report are extraordinary in that they point to the emergence of a fractured Internet population consisting of Facebook users and non-Facebook users and each group has distinctly different online habits,” explains Mark Higginson, Director of Research for Nielsen’s online division. “Facebook has created a fundamental shift in Internet usage and those who aren’t using Facebook aren’t really engaged in using the Internet.

Nielsen Internet usage figures show that a substantial proportion of the Australian Internet population is now on Facebook. Of the 14 million Australians who use the Internet in any given month, around 8.8 million (63%) are Facebook users while 5.2 million (37%) do not engage with the site.

Significantly, the time spent on Facebook by its members is now rivalling total time spent online by non-Facebook users. In January 2010, average time spent on Facebook peaked at over eight hours...
(8.32 hours) and for the first time was higher than the total time spent online in the month by non-Facebook users (8.13 hours) (see chart 2).

Nielsen’s research also shows that Facebook users are becoming more entrenched in their favourite social networking site, with share of online time given to Facebook increasing from 20 percent in July 2009 to 27 percent in February 2010 (see chart 3).

“This isn’t just about the rise and rise of Facebook, these numbers have implications for how we view Internet usage as an industry,” emphasises Higginson. “Around the world, advertisers have observed the phenomenal rise of Facebook with a sense of curiosity, anticipation and in many cases perplexity. It is now more evident than ever that those advertisers need to understand how they can tap into this trend and use it as a way to engage their clients, customers, stakeholders and the general Internet population.”
Chart 1: Average time spent on the Internet

Chart 2: Average monthly Facebook time compared to non-Facebook users' average monthly Internet usage
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