

# Millennial Mom 101

## Why Millennial Moms are Supplanting College Students As the Most Connected and Technology Dependent Population

By Mr Youth and RepNation Media



## TWO POWERFUL DEMOGRAPHICS

Moms and college students have long been two critical targets for brands: moms for their hefty control of household spending and college students for the important transitional life stage they are in; a period that shapes their brand preferences for years to come. College students and moms have also both traditionally played key roles in influencing key household purchases like cars, technology and clothing.

## SO DIFFERENT, YET SO MUCH THE SAME

Until now, marketers have not seen many similarities in the two demographics and perhaps for good reason. What may have seemed like two polar opposites a decade ago now bear considerable resemblance as a result of changes in communications spawned by technology. But let's be clear, this paper is not suggesting that Moms will soon be attending all night keg parties but rather explores how these two groups have some astounding similarities in the ways they communicate, consume media and interact with technology.

## A FAMILIAR MARKETING CHALLENGE

Millennials, defined as individuals born between 1977 and 1996, are now well within their baby rearing years. According to [The Parents Network](#), 79% of all first-births and 68% of all births are to Millennial Moms. These new parents have been raised on the internet, e-mail, SMS and IM and quickly adopted Facebook and social networking in their teens or early 20s. Gen X moms have also been even quicker than the general population to integrate new technologies and communication platforms to their lifestyles. As older parents tend to adopt new technologies used by younger parents within their play circles, Millennial Moms are influencing them as well. Quite simply, much of the frustration that marketers have faced over the past decade in reaching the youth market now bears many similarities to the challenges in reaching the newly defined Millennial Mom demographic.

## THE IMPETUS FOR THIS WHITEPAPER

As an agency originally rooted in helping marketers reach a continually evolving and elusive college market, we found it necessary to constantly innovate the channels, concepts and messaging we utilized in order to remain relevant and be heard by this demographic. Word-of-mouth marketing and connecting through social media evolved from “nice to haves” to necessities for every campaign we developed. Almost overnight, we found ourselves helping our clients market diapers, crackers and crayons in addition to soda, mobile phones and computers. The target demographic for many of our campaigns changed, but our philosophy and strategy had not been flipped on its head. We were using much of what we had learned from being immersed in marketing to the college demographic and applying it in marketing to moms. Perhaps even to our own surprise, it was really working.

## 4 WAYS MILLENNIAL MOMS MIRROR COLLEGE STUDENTS

- 1 THEY'RE MULTI-TECH MULTI-TASKERS** - New technology is adopted and valued as a means to streamline busy lives, enabling them to do more
- 2 THEY BUILD COMMUNITIES TO EASE TRANSITION** - The anxiety of entering a new life stage is offset by participating in online communities that provide support and information
- 3 THEY CROWDSOURCE DECISIONS** - Peers are sought out for advice over expert sources and celebrity endorsements
- 4 THEY'RE MASTERS OF THE OVERSHARE** - The curtains are peeled back as the lines between public and private life are blurred





# 1 They're Multi-Tech Multi-Taskers

*Life is rapidly changing with new responsibilities at every turn. Technology is welcomed openly and looked upon to help create order out of the chaos.*

## FAMILY MANAGEMENT 2.0

Similar to college students, moms view technology as a way to seamlessly integrate all areas of their lives. And as they often still maintain heavy responsibilities at home in addition to work, moms adopt technology that allows them to manage home life more efficiently. According to [BSM Media](#), moms' primary objective in utilizing technology is for scheduling and to stay in touch with their busy families. In fact, 65% of moms utilize five or more separate technologies each day including video, blogs and wireless devices to multi-task and 55% of today's moms create online photo albums instead of traditional ones.

## UNLIKELY TECH TREND SETTERS

As technology now plays such a critical role in moms' lives, it's not surprising that they welcome new technology with open arms. What's shocking, however, is that they appear to be as open to it as college students. In a recent study of over 1,000 people that included 300 moms and 300 college students, conducted through Mr Youth's [RepNation word-of-mouth influencer network](#), a nearly identical percentage of moms (49%) and college students (48%) agreed with the statement, "I am enthusiastic about learning about the latest products and technologies". More surprisingly, moms are less likely than college students to feel overwhelmed by new technology and do not feel that it complicates their lives (40% of moms to 45% of college students).

## SHORT FORM CONTENT FITS

Like their collegiate counterparts, moms are shifting media consumption to short form online content. While ADD and over stimulation may be to blame for the college population, moms view this content as a fit for their busy lifestyles where breaks often cannot be timed and come in short bursts. According to BSM Media, 82% of moms have watched two or more videos in the last week and 64% of moms say video is appealing because it meets the needs of their busy lifestyle. At the same time, moms are also turning online for their reading material. 35% of moms have read blogs in the past week, perhaps partly due to not having the time to read print publications.



## 2 They Build Communities to Ease Transition

*Motherhood, like college, is a period of great transition. Now, more than ever, moms are living in cities far from their close family members and find themselves in need of additional support and new connections.*

### IT TAKES A VIRTUAL VILLAGE

As moms seek advice and reassurance, many turn to social networks, blogs and forums to access new support systems to help them raise their children. Millennial Moms utilize this digital community to reinforce their parenting ideas or seek out new ones that fit instead of looking for “expert” books and advice that promote a singular way of thinking. [The Compass/BlogHer 2009 Women and Social Media Study](#) found that 49% referred to blogs and 46% to social networks for information about parenting. Sites like [The Cradle](#), [Circle of Moms](#), [BabyCenter](#) and [Café Mom](#) have found success in creating platforms for moms to seek out advice from and share stories with fellow moms. Gone are the days when “What To Expect When You’re Expecting” was the definitive bible. Today, social sites have blown open the doors to more personal parenting advice and niche ideas.

### COMMUNITY LEADERS

Moms have always liked to talk and meet other moms. While online communities first targeted the youth market, moms could be the ideal users. A recent study by the [Retail Advertising and Marketing Association](#) found that moms are 10% more likely to be on Facebook, nearly 10% more likely to be on MySpace and more likely to be on Twitter than the general adult population. The Mr Youth/RepNation survey found that moms not only outpace the adult population on social networks, but they also have higher penetration than college students on MySpace, Bebo, MyYearbook, Twitter and Gather. Only Facebook had a higher penetration of college students than moms.

### SOCIAL NETWORKERS ANONYMOUS

Communicating online has become an integral part of moms’ day-to-day lives. While addiction may be a strong word, The Mr Youth/RepNation study found that the majority of moms (50.9%) say they visit social networking sites “many times a day”. Though not quite college students’ level of frequency (67.1%), it is certainly an alarming statistic. Moms’ usage patterns are a major driving force for why women’s online communities are the most visited and fastest growing internet category according to the Compass/Blogher Study.



## 3 They Crowdsourc Ideas

*Both moms and college students see their virtual peers as more credible sources than the experts, explaining their preference to crowdsourc their purchasing decisions to online networks.*

### LEVERAGING THE WISDOM OF THE CROWD

Moms today recognize that they have networks of other moms within their reach and are not shy in leveraging them for advice. According to a [BabyCenter survey](#), more than 4 in 10 (44%) use social media for word-of-mouth recommendations on brands and 73% feel they find trustworthy information about products and services through online communities. The Mr Youth/RepNation study results support this claim; moms are 2.5% more likely than other adults to look to blogs and forums for information to help them make a purchasing decision.

### GIVING BRANDS A PIECE OF THEIR MIND

It's not surprising that moms turn to online advice to aid in purchasing decisions given how willing they are to share their own. In fact, this is one area where moms differ greatly from college students. While college students "Hardly ever" post reviews about products or services, "Moms are most likely to post reviews about products or services "Once a week", according to The Mr Youth/RepNation study. Moms have always been vocal in their opinions about a particular purchase or brand but instant broadcasting channels like Twitter, Facebook and online reviews can immediately amplify any mistake or quickly spread a new product or promotion. Keeping a two-way dialogue open and involving mom early in the product development and marketing cycles is critical for brands to help shape the conversation.

### PEER PRESSURE PREVAILS

Moms strongly weigh recommendations from their friends and peers. Like college students, the majority of moms surveyed agreed that online reviews and recommendations from a friend, relative or coworker are "highly influential" when deciding whether to purchase a product or service. Moms even place a lot of trust in the friendships they have made online, being almost 2.5x more likely than other adults to frequently utilize information from friends they have met online (Mr Youth/RepNation Study). A quote from a young mom from Akron, NY in the Brand Week article, [The Post Soccer Mom](#), illustrates moms' attitude well; "I definitely prefer the feel of a two-way conversation instead of being talked at and told what I should like, nobody likes being bossed around. If one of my friends recommends a product to me, I'm way more likely to buy it than if some supermodel recommends it via the TV. I like being involved."



## 4

# They're Masters of the Overshare

*Though college students and moms overshare very different information, both groups are highly prone to share information publicly that would hardly have been shared with strangers in the pre-Web 2.0 world.*

### TMI (TOO MUCH INFORMATION)

While the acronym was surely coined by the youth market, moms today are more freely sharing their life experiences publicly. Many might remember this [college student's](#) unfortunate overshare but many parents are also now finding themselves [oversharing](#) everything from baby barf, boogers and circumcisions that need to be re-done, as the hilarious Tumblr, [Shut the F\\*\\*K Up Parents](#), chronicles. Moms are even open and vocal about being able to post breastfeeding photos. When Facebook officially banned their upload and all offending photos were subsequently pulled, [a major controversy was spurred](#) with a 245,000 mom strong petition. Certainly moms now view a much larger network as a viable audience for all their life experiences.

### BOASTING GOES BEYOND BUMPER STICKERS

We all know of the “My Kid’s an Honor Student” badge that proud moms have displayed on their cars for decades. Now, with social networking, moms have an open forum to share almost everything about their children and family lives. And they do. From online scrap books to shared albums on Facebook to Twitter updates on a child’s three goals scored in a pee wee soccer game, moms view social networks as an appropriate forum to show their pride in. Moms aren’t even waiting ‘til their children can walk to show them off. As featured in the [New York Times](#), moms are even updating Twitter and Facebook through the eyes of their babies or creating their own pages through [lil grams](#), [totspot](#) and [kidmondo](#).

### HOLD THE PRESSES

Many moms enjoy sharing so much that they create blogs and publish their lives frequently using them. The Mr Youth/RepNation study found that moms out-blogged college students with 22% of moms having their own blog opposed to 19% of college students. Organizations like [Mom Bloggers Club](#) and [Twitter Moms](#) have found no shortage of willing members as more and more moms continue to find value in having an outlet to air their thoughts and hear others’ similar stories. As Millennial Moms move to becoming the majority of moms with children at home over the next decade, mom blogs will certainly become a major form of media consumed by moms.

## So How Does this Change Things?

Well, how doesn't it? Until recently, if moms, college students and Facebook were mentioned in the same sentence, it might mean a stalking mom, [like in this hilarious video](#). Today, Millennial Moms have quickly become technology's early adopters, uber social connectors and a powerful online voice. The implications of the changes cannot be underestimated. Looking at the changes of the behaviors and marketing opportunities to college students over the past five years will provide a start to building a road map to future changes. Brands that plan to market to Millennial Moms in the coming years will need to quickly get up to speed and stay in the loop on the latest trends, technologies and communication patterns to stay connected to their consumers.

## The Millennial Mom Road Map

Observing the youth market over the current decade has provided many insights into a new approach that will need to be taken when marketing to this new mom market. Below are 10 rules that brands should begin shifting towards in marketing to Millennial Mom.

- 1 Build platforms, not campaigns
- 2 Create movements, not noise
- 3 Look to peers over celebrities
- 4 Create conversation topics, not a brand message
- 5 Be authentic and stand for something
- 6 Crowdfund ideas, don't assume
- 7 Be democratic and participatory
- 8 Think about engaging, not reaching
- 9 Personalize, localize and customize everything
- 10 Hand over the keys, let Mom own your brand



For more research and interesting links from Mr Youth or to download a copy of this whitepaper visit [www.millennialmoms.com](http://www.millennialmoms.com).

## About Mr Youth

New York-based Mr Youth is a social marketing agency that was founded in 2002 as the antidote to traditional media burnout. Since then, Mr Youth has worked with some of the world's leading brands to help them connect with the rapidly evolving and highly elusive consumer. Mr Youth develops strategies and campaigns centered around the modern media mix of word-of-mouth, social interactive and experiential marketing, with a strong focus on creating integrated campaigns that fully engage the audience.

Mr Youth's RepNation, a word of mouth network of 125,000+ savvy consumers, provides marketers a direct channel to conceive ideas, market with, and gain insights from their own consumers. In just six years, Mr Youth has become an award-winning agency and a recent addition to the prestigious Inc 500 list of the nation's fastest-growing private companies. Clients include Microsoft, Pepsi, Macy's and Nike. For more information, visit [www.mryouth.com](http://www.mryouth.com).

