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## **What Does the Maturing of Facebook Mean for Fund Raisers?**

Facebook is no longer just an online playground for teenagers and twentysomethings. The number of the people over 35 who use the network has doubled in just the last 60 days, according to data from the blog [Inside Facebook](#).

Tom Belford writes on [The Agitator](#) blog that the more this happens, the more valuable the social-networking site will become to fund raisers.

At the same time, he says, e-mail may become less valuable.

He draws readers' attention to an article by Loren McDonald, of the e-marketing firm Silverpop, on [Email Insider](#). Ms. McDonald says that "because so much personal communication is happening on social networks now, what's left in the inbox is commercial messages, social-network notifications, time-sensitive alerts like payment-due requests or appointment reminders, and, of course, a bit of spam."

She says that on a recent birthday, she received many public greetings on Facebook and other social-networking sites. But e-mail marketers, many of whom she had provided with her birth date, did not take advantage of the day to reach out to her through her personal e-mail account.

"My point is not about birthday information but that, in general, most marketers are not using the data they collect to deliver the relevant messages that consumers increasingly expect," Ms. McDonald writes.

Mr. Belford concludes his post: "E-mail messages — the main tool of most nonprofits for 'push' marketing — will need to meet a higher and higher bar in terms of relevance, or it will be increasingly ignored."

What do you think?

— [Caroline Preston](#)