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The Social Graf

Half A Million Tiny Voices Converge On MinyanLand

Erik Sass, Feb 10, 2010 03:01 PM



Sort of a weird coincidence: As I was pontificating about the social media usage patterns of young 'uns yesterday, *MinyanLand* -- a virtual world where kids can learn about financial responsibility -- celebrated its second birthday by announcing it has 500,000 registered members ages 6-12. My first thought was, it's a good thing it's a virtual world (imagine if you had half a million pre-teens convened in one location in the real world, like a kid's version of Woodstock or something. In a word: terrifying).

My second thought was, geez, that really is a lot of kids -- I wonder how big the age cohort is overall? I'm glad I asked. In 2010 the U.S. Census Bureau projects that there are a total of about 37 million kids ages 5-13, so I would guess the 6-12 cohort is about 28 million, meaning *MinyanLand* has almost 2% of that population signed up, not to mention 150,000 parents (that's not all: as I was Googling away I came across a 2008 report from the NPD Group which said kids ages 2-12 -- meaning mostly ages 6-12 -- account for 25% of all online gaming. I'm skeptical, but I can't find any more recent data or other studies contradicting or confirming it).

And you can see why parents love *MinyanLand*: a program called "Virtual Allowance" lets registered parents give their kids imaginary money in exchange for doing real-world chores ... oh, the genius of it. Anyway, hats off to a fascinating social experiment; I'm looking forward to watching what happens with *MinyanLand* over the next couple years, as well as regretting it didn't exist when I was a kid (by the way, *MinyanLand* is open to online partnerships with other sites pursuing the same laudable goal of teaching your kids how not to ruin your credit rating a couple years from now.

Laurie Petersen, *Minyanville Family Media's* general manager, advises: "We welcome partners who have a mission to empower moms and children through financial understanding."