

# **Current Status of Online Social Networking in Korea:**

## **A preliminary report**

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# Outline

- ❑ Online social networking use rates
- ❑ Online social networking use behaviors
- ❑ Perceptions about online social networking
- ❑ Perceived importance of online social networking & satisfaction with online social networking
- ❑ Problems with using online social networking
- ❑ Managing personal networks (both offline & online relationships) via online social networking

# Definitions

- ❑ An *online social networking service (SNS)*, in this paper, is very broadly defined as:
  - an *online café, online club or online community* that is used for communicating with others via posting contents, chatting, sharing information, etc. (e.g., Daum Café, Naver Club, Freechal Community, Photoagit, etc.)
  - a *blog or minihompy* that is built for communicating with at least one friend, neighbor, or otherwise confirmed link such as Daum Blog, Naver Blog, Cyworld's "ilchon" (일촌);
  - an instant messaging (IM) with at least one registered friend or contact such as NateOn, MSN, buddyBUDDY Messenger, SayClub Tachy (세이타키), DreamWiz Genie, etc.;
  - a *social networking sites or social networking service* such as Facebook, MySpace, Linknow, SK Telecom's "Tossi", me2DAY, PlayTalk (플레이토크), etc.; or
  - a virtual reality (VR) service such as Second Life, Cyworld, MINILife, etc.
- ❑ As such, a *user of online social networking* is defined as an Internet user who communicates with others at least once a month using at least one of these SNS services.

# *When were they introduced in Korea?*

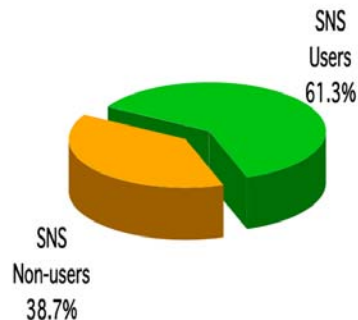
	1985	1987	~ ~ ~	1997	1999	2001	2002	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009	
Cafés/clubs/ communities	DACOM Chollian				DAUM Café								
Instant Messaging (IM)					MSN Messenger								
Minihompy					Cyworld Miihompy								
Blogs					Weblog-in <a href="http://www.blog.korea.co.kr">www.blog Korea .co.kr</a>								
Social networking service										Linknow, Tossi			MySpace Facebook
Virtual reality service										Second Life			
	1985	1987	~ ~ ~	1997	1999	2001	2002	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009	

## **The Main Data: The 2009 Survey on the SNS Usage (by NIDA)**

- ❑ The survey population: All Internet users who were 12-49 years old as of March 26, 2009 nationwide
- ❑ Sample size: 3,000
- ❑ Sampling method: Multi-stage stratified sampling with clusters (*stratified by age, sex & region*)
- ❑ Data collection period: March 26 - March 31, 2009
- ❑ Data collection method: Online survey with URL for the questionnaire sent via email
- ❑ Response rate: 53.25%

# Use of Online Social Networking

Among the Internet users of 12-49 years old, 61.3% reported using cafés, clubs, communities, blogs-minihompys, instant messaging (IM), social networking services, and/or virtual reality services *online for communicating with others*.



Of the 94.4% of the SNS users of at least once a month:

Online cafés/clubs/communities	84.4%
Blogs/Minihompys	78.1%
Instant Messengers	64.3%
Social networking sites	11.8%
Virtual reality services	4.9%

## Uses of Online Social Networking

Of those using online social networking at least once a month, 61.1% reported using them “often” or “very often” for communication with others. In terms of specific uses, these frequent users of online social networking reported using it:

- *For existing relationships and communication with family, friends and other acquaintances* 45.2%
- *For maintaining relationships and communication with others via conversations/chatting, short messages/notes (쪽지), etc.* 41.8%
- *For sharing interesting information* 38.3%
- *For sharing information about self* 29.9%
- *For developing relationships and communicating with new people* 17.8%

## Demographic Characteristics of SNS Users: Sex & Age

- A very little gender difference.
- Not surprisingly, those who are under 30 years of age used it more often than those 30 years or older.



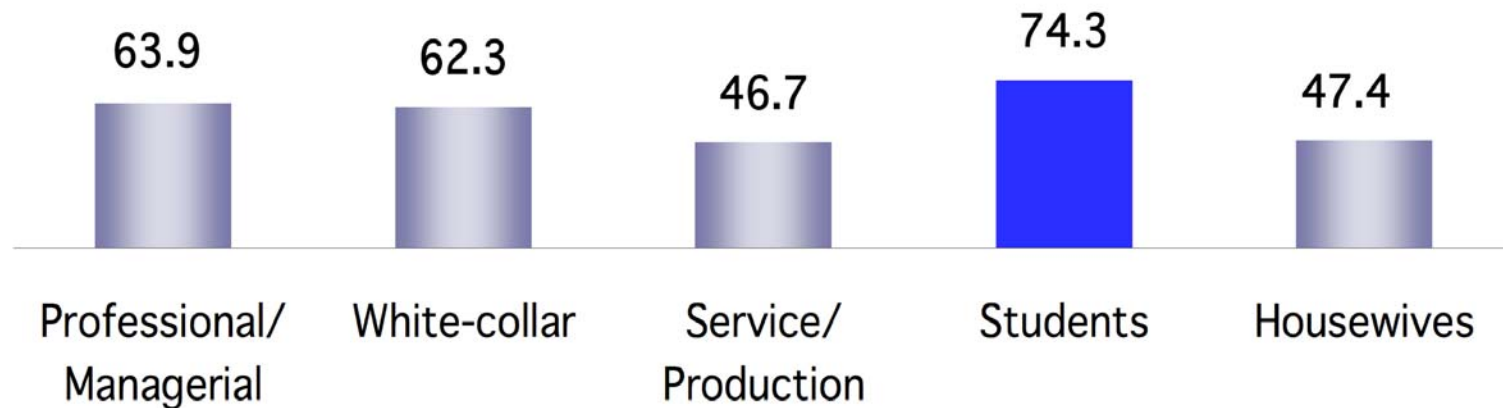
## Demographic Characteristics of SNS Users: Sex & Age (continued)

- Little gender differentials in using cafés/clubs/communities, IMs and VR services.
- The male Internet users reported using social networking sites more than their female counterparts did (**12.0%** and 7.7%, respectively).
- The female Internet users were using blogs/minihompys more than their male counterparts were (**56.8%** and 52.2%, respectively).
- The Internet users in their **20s** topped the rates of use across **all** categories of online social networking, followed by those of 12-19 years of age.

	Frequency	Online café/club/community	Blog/Minihompy	Instant Messaging (IM)	Social networking site	Virtual reality service
<b>Total</b>	3,000	56.4	54.4	47.2	9.9	4.4
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	1,569	56.9	52.2	46.9	<b>12.0</b>	4.6
Female	1,431	55.9	<b>56.8</b>	47.5	7.7	4.1
<b>Age Group</b>						
12-19	580	<b>62.7</b>	<b>62.4</b>	<b>46.8</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>6.2</b>
20-29	781	<b>72.3</b>	<b>74.8</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>8.2</b>
30-39	891	51.0	48.8	44.9	5.7	2.2
40-49	748	41.4	33.5	27.9	7.1	1.6

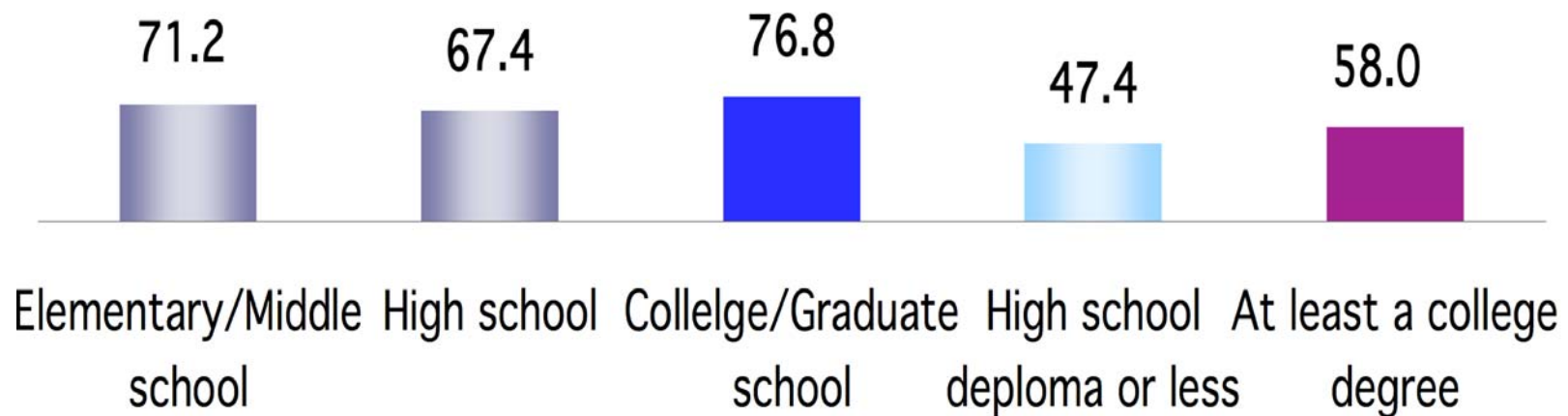
## Demographic Characteristics of SNS Users: Occupation

74.3% of the Internet users who were *students* used online social networking the most (74.3%).



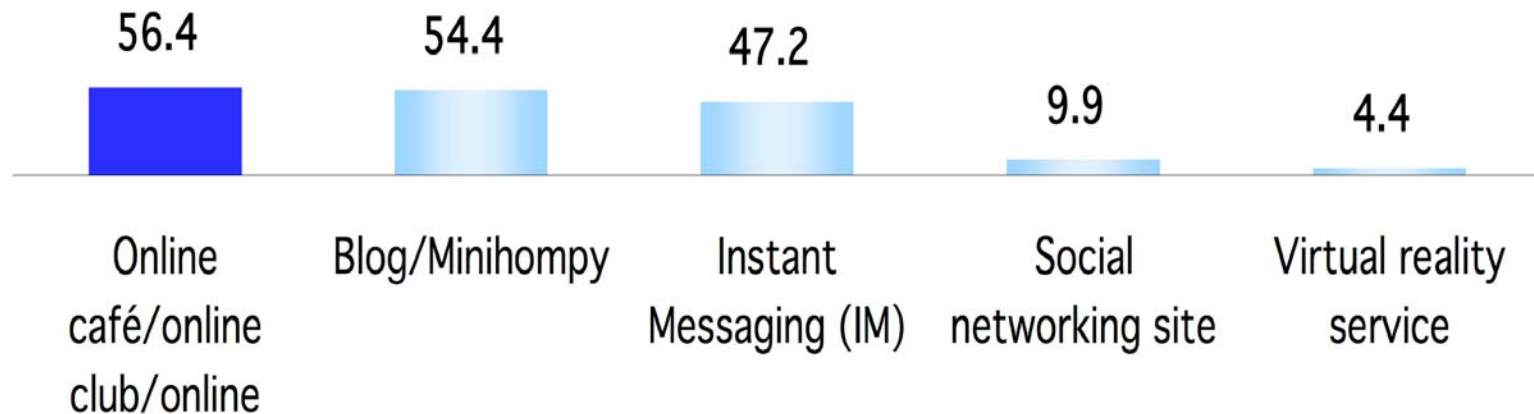
## Demographic Characteristics of SNS Users: Education

- Among the students, college and graduate students (76.8%) reported using online social networking the most.
- Among the non-students, 58.0% of those with at least a college degree were using online social networking, while only 47.4% of the rest were.

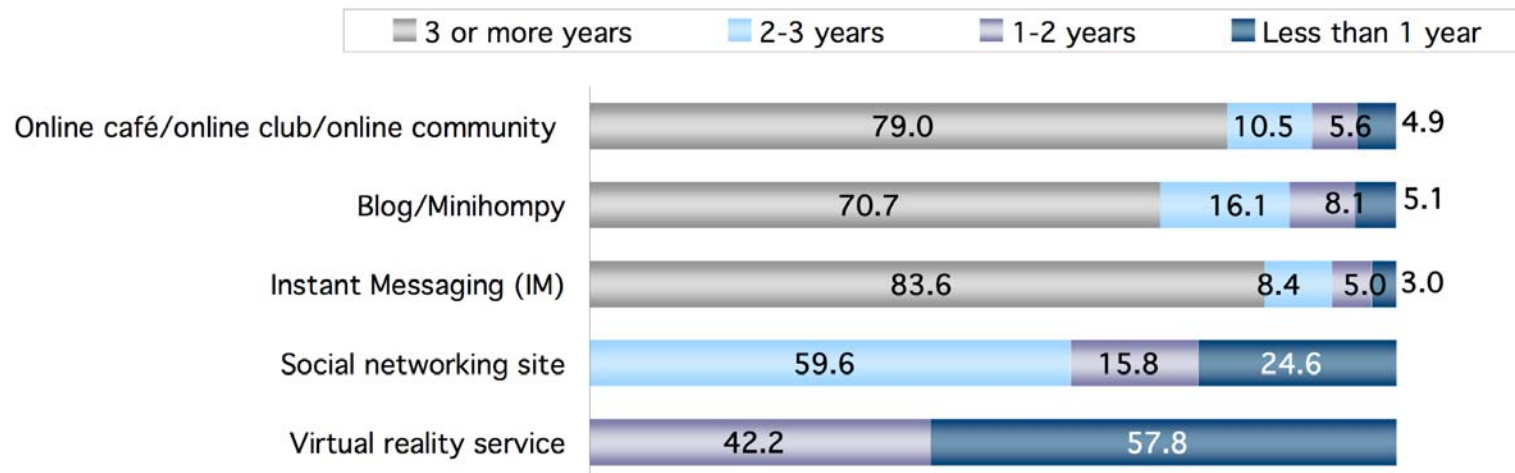
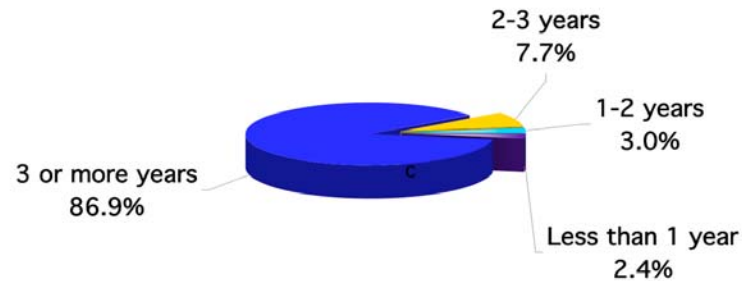


## Online Social Networking by Type

Online cafés, clubs and communities were used the most (56.4%), followed by blogs-minihompys (54.4%) and the IMs (47.2%).



# Length of Time Using Online Social Networking



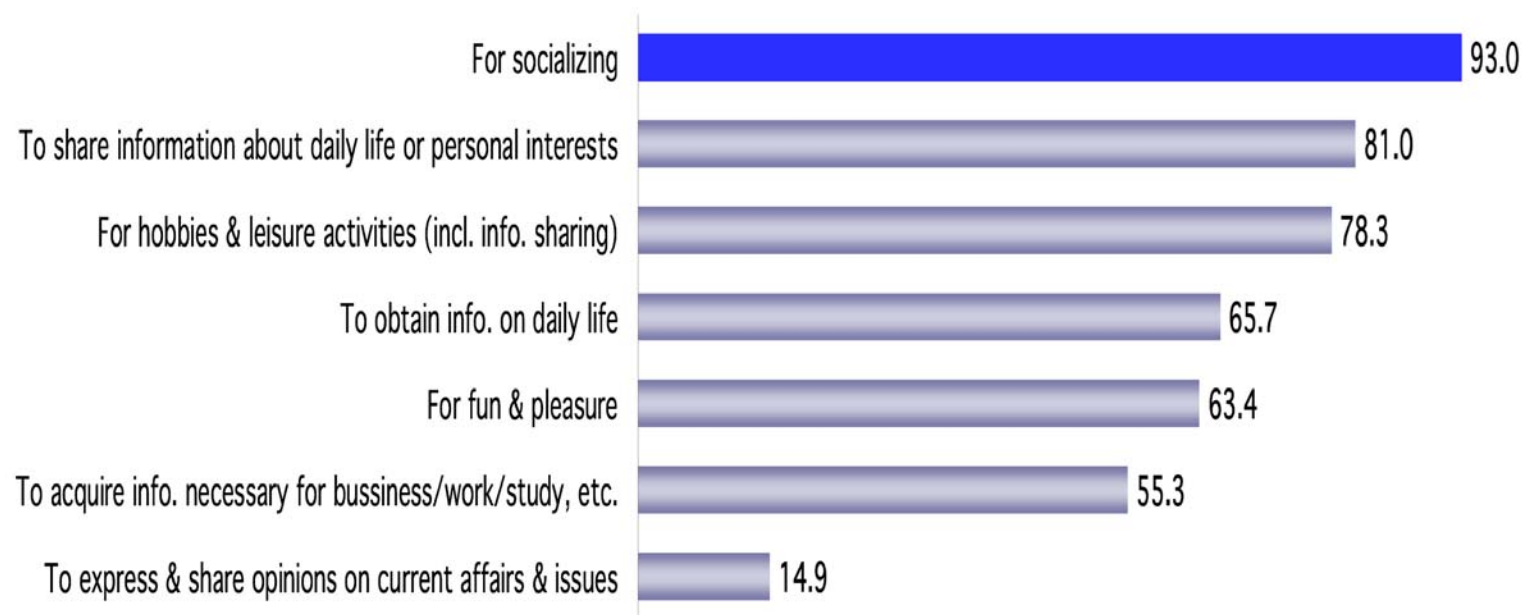
# *Reasons for First Use of Online Social Networking*



## *Reasons for First Use of Online Social Networking by Type*

	Because it seems helpful for socializing.	To share information about daily life or personal interests	To share knowledge/information	Out of curiosity, or for new kinds of fun & pleasure	To acquire information in diverse areas	Because it can be helpful for bussiness/ work/ study, etc.	Invited by a registered member	Other
Online café/online club/online community	63.5	49.4	<b>75.6</b>	33.2	42.6	28.5	4.3	0.7
Blog/Minihompy	<b>82.0</b>	72.4	41.2	51.8	23.4	14.9	9.3	1.6
Instant Messaging (IM)	<b>94.0</b>	54.9	41.4	31.1	14.8	41.1	17.1	1.4
Social networking site	<b>87.0</b>	45.4	45.0	26.4	33.4	40.1	17.5	0.5
Virtual reality service	<b>74.8</b>	55.8	19.9	70.2	25.8	9.5	24.9	2.5

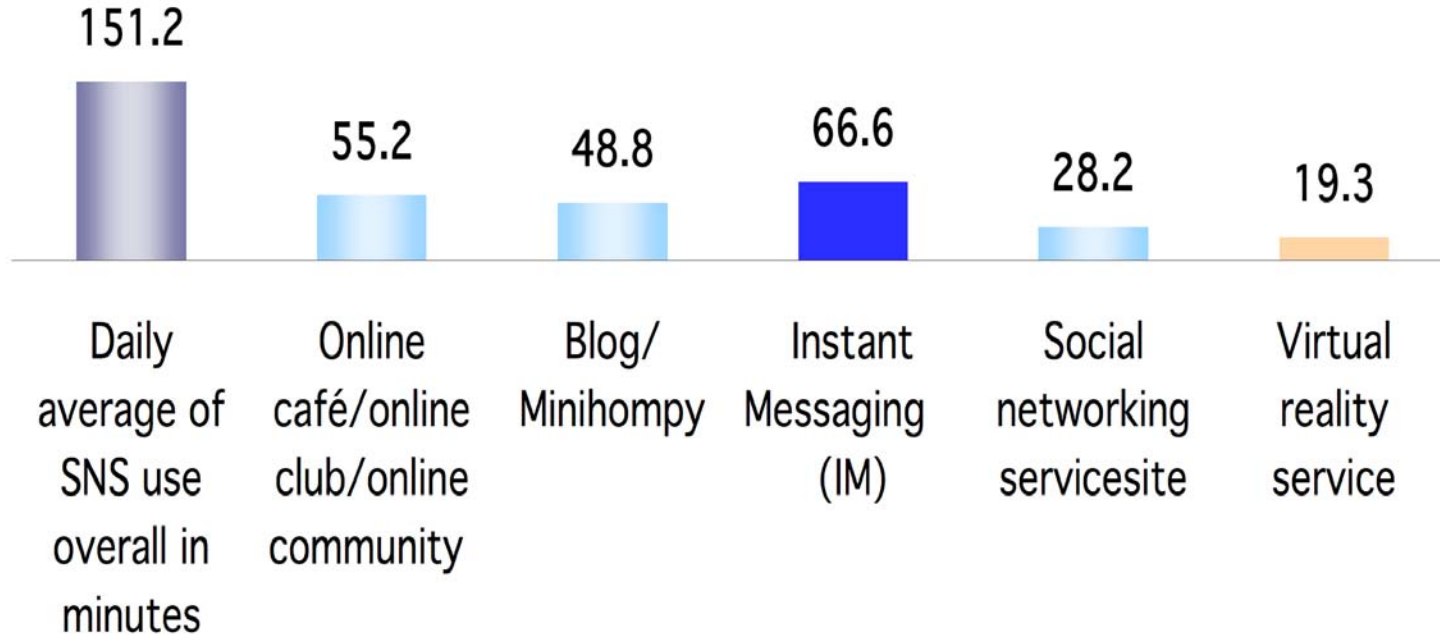
# Reasons for Current Use of Online Social Networking



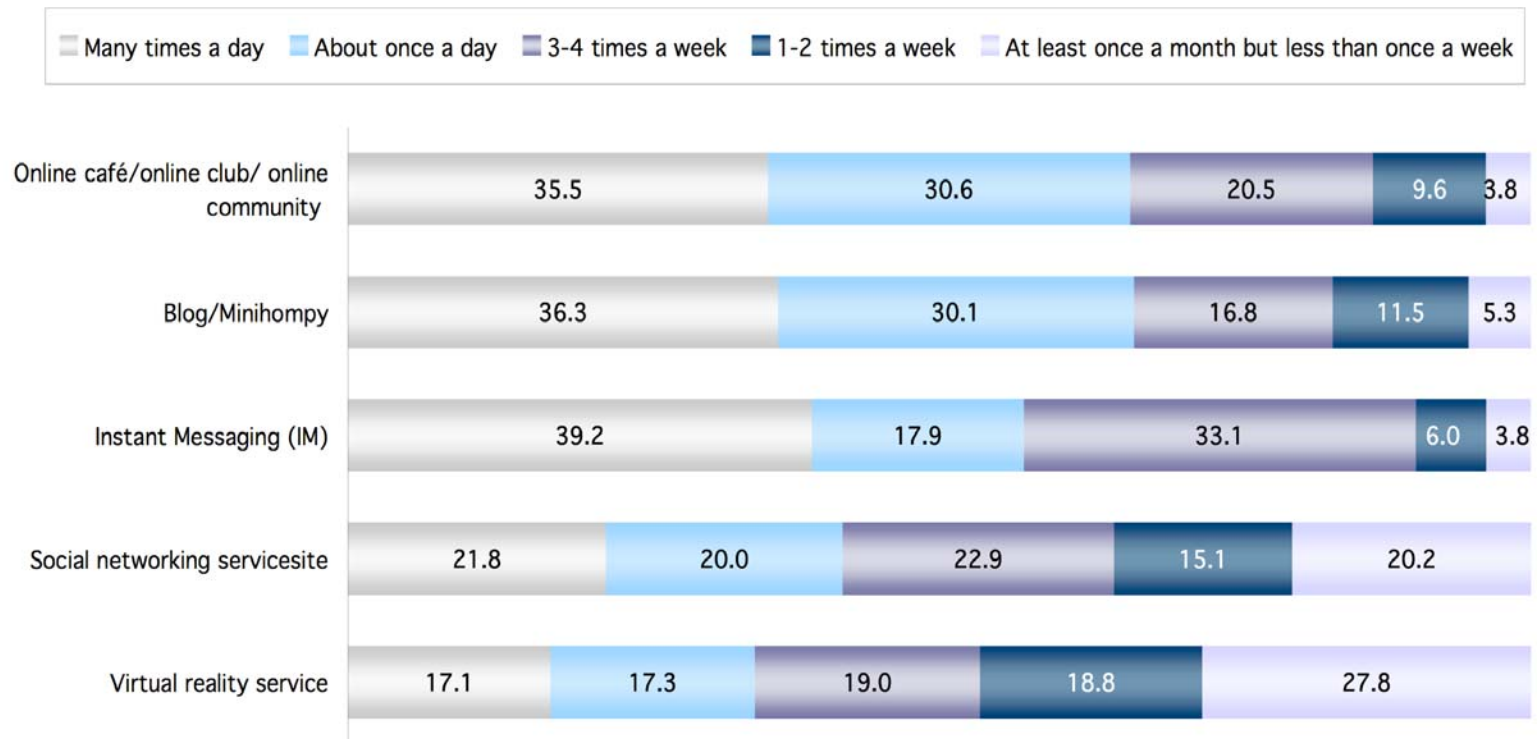
## *Reasons for First Use of Online Social Networking by Type*

	For socializing	To share information about one's daily life or personal interests	For hobbies & leisure activities (incl. info. sharing)	To obtain info. necessary for daily life	For fun & pleasure	To acquire info. necessary for business/work/study, etc.	To express & share opinions on current affairs & issues	Other
TOTAL	93.0	81.0	78.3	65.7	63.4	55.3	14.9	2.4
Online café/online club/ online community	60.9	47.6	63.6	48.0	32.8	36.2	7.4	0.3
Blog/Minihompy	78.6	63.9	50.5	31.8	46.5	18.7	5.0	0.8
Instant Messaging (IM)	92.3	50.6	30.7	30.1	41.9	41.3	5.5	1.9
Social networking site	82.6	45.3	41.8	40.9	32.8	38.5	13.3	0.3
Virtual reality service	68.9	46.5	50.2	26.4	68.9	18.9	4.6	2.7

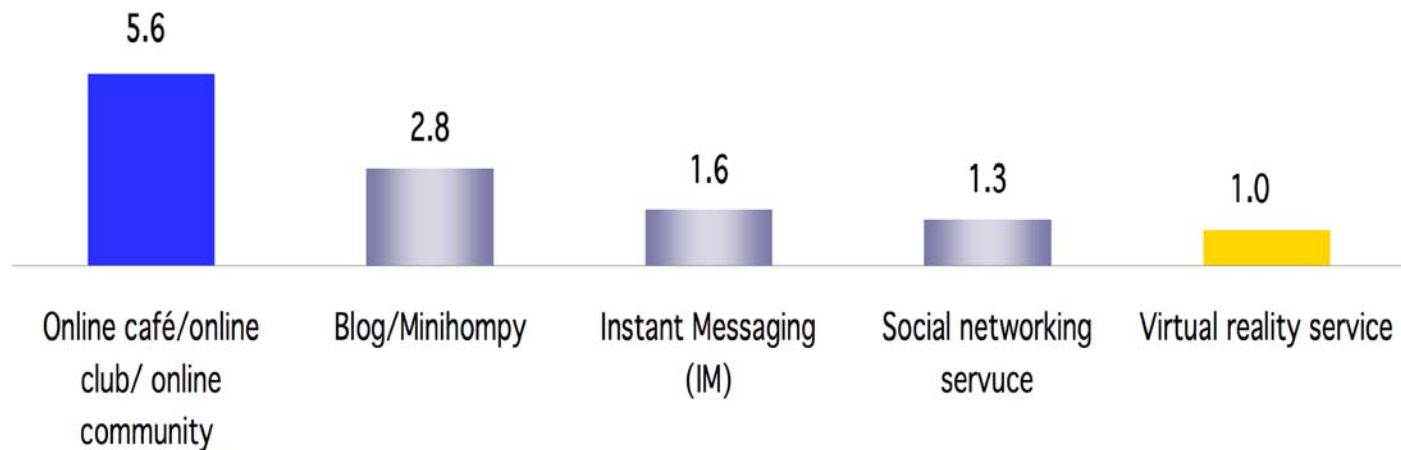
**Extent of Use of Online Social Networking:**  
**Amount of Time Spent**  
*(in minutes)*



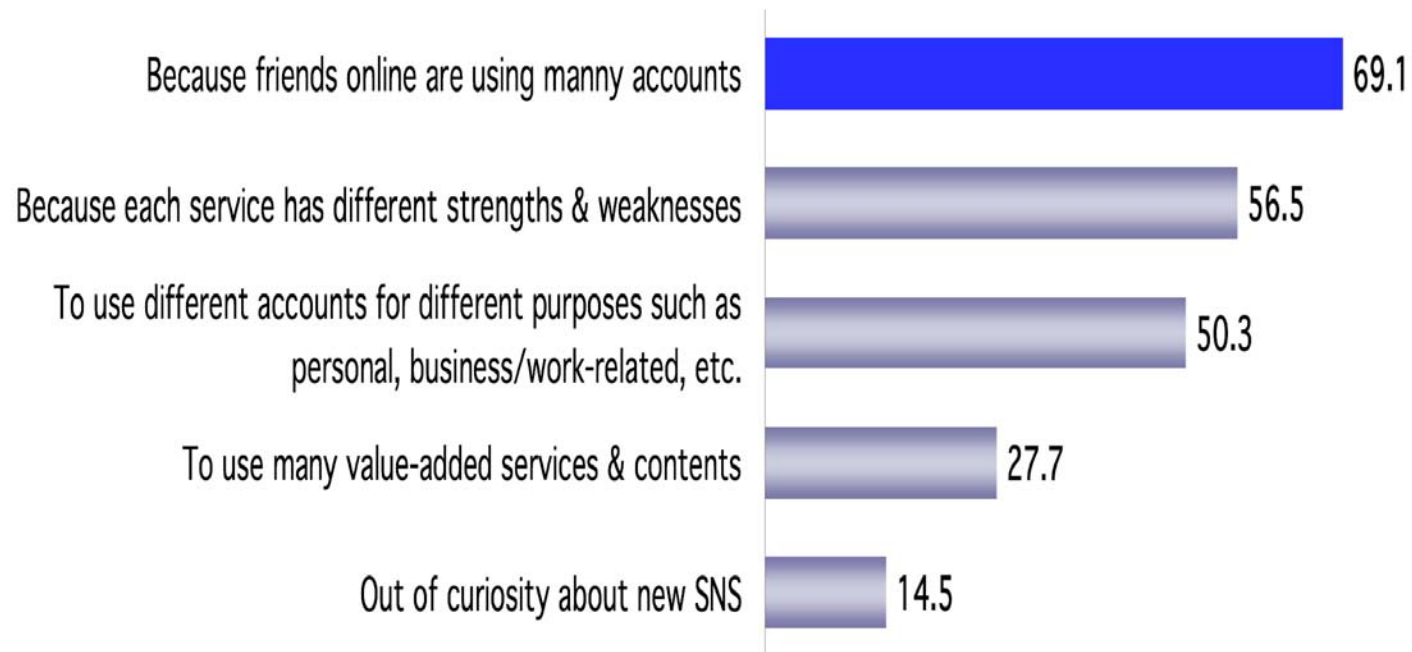
# Extent of Use of Online Social Networking: Frequency of Use



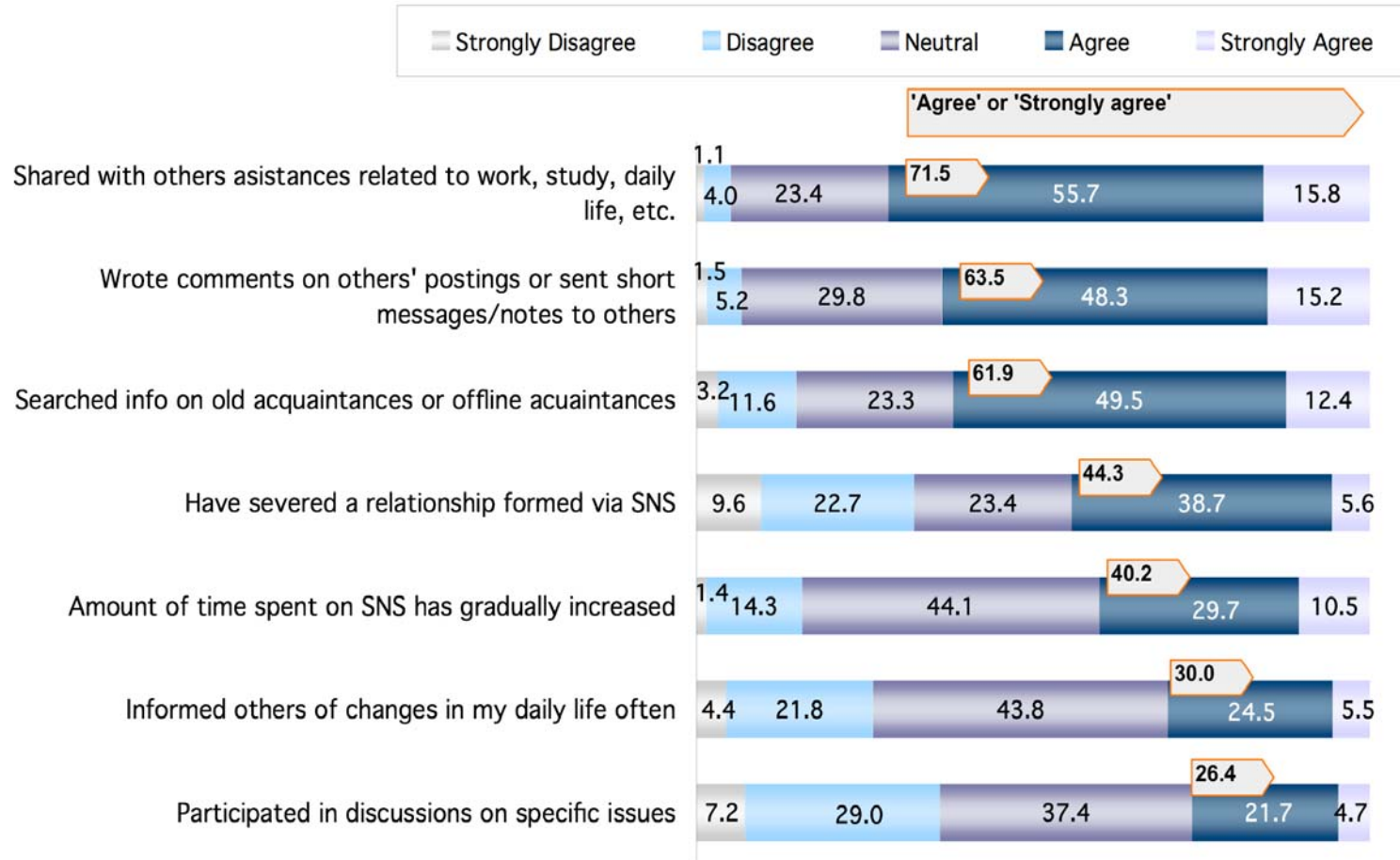
## Extent of Use of Online Social Networking: Average Number of Accounts



## *Reasons for Using More Than Two SNS Accounts*



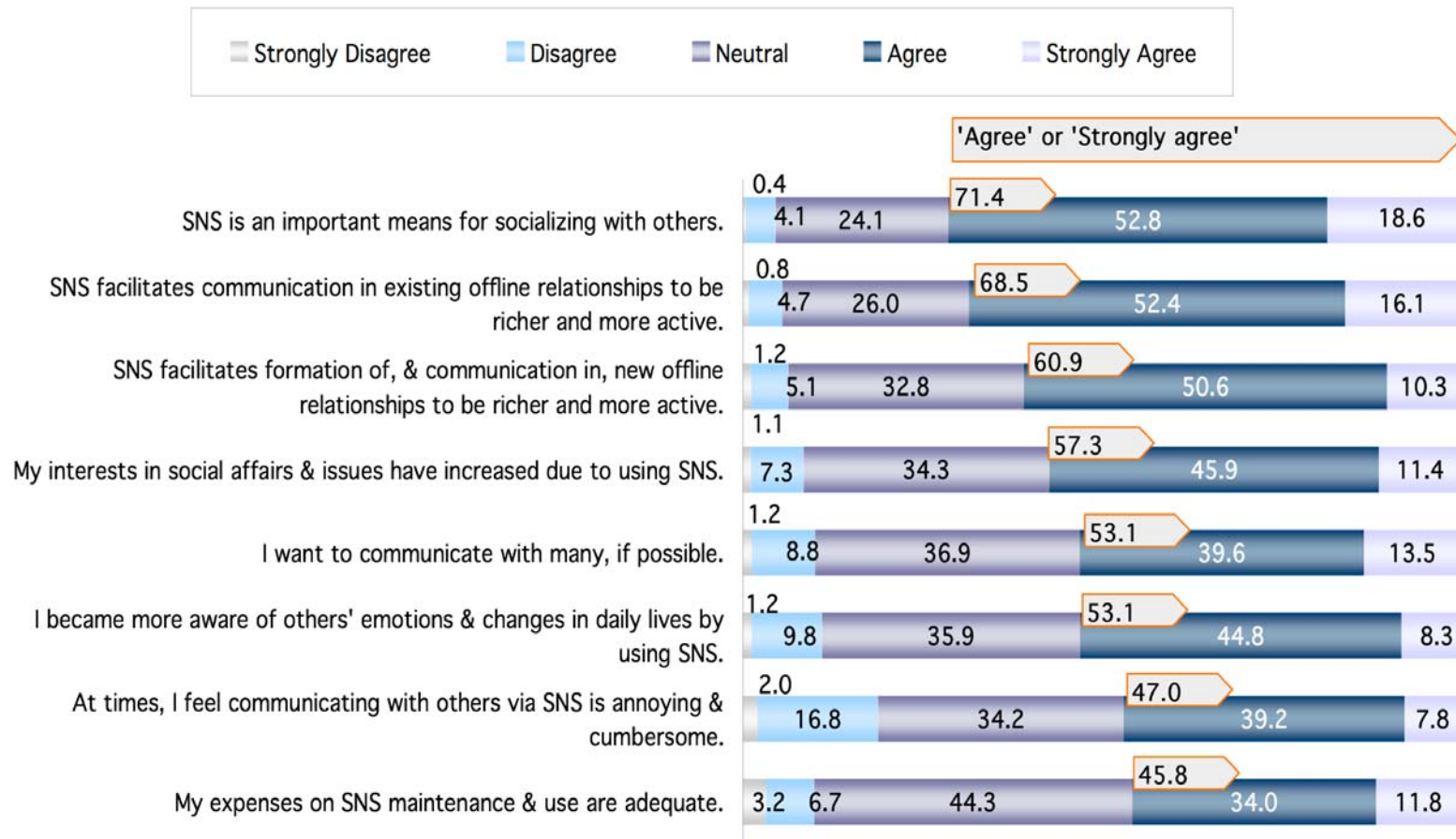
# Experience with Online Social Networking



## Experience with Online Social Networking (continued)

- *“Shared with others assistances related to work, study, daily life, etc.”* 71.5%
- *“Wrote comments on others’ postings or sent short messages/notes (쪽지) to others”* 63.5%
- *“Searched information on **old acquaintances or offline acquaintances**”* 61.9%
- *“Have severed a relationship formed via SNS”* 44.3%
- *“Amount of time spent on SNS has gradually increased”* 40.2%
- *“Informed others of changes in my daily life often”* 30.0%
- *“Participated in discussions on specific issues”* 26.4%

# Perceptions on the Use of Online Social Networking



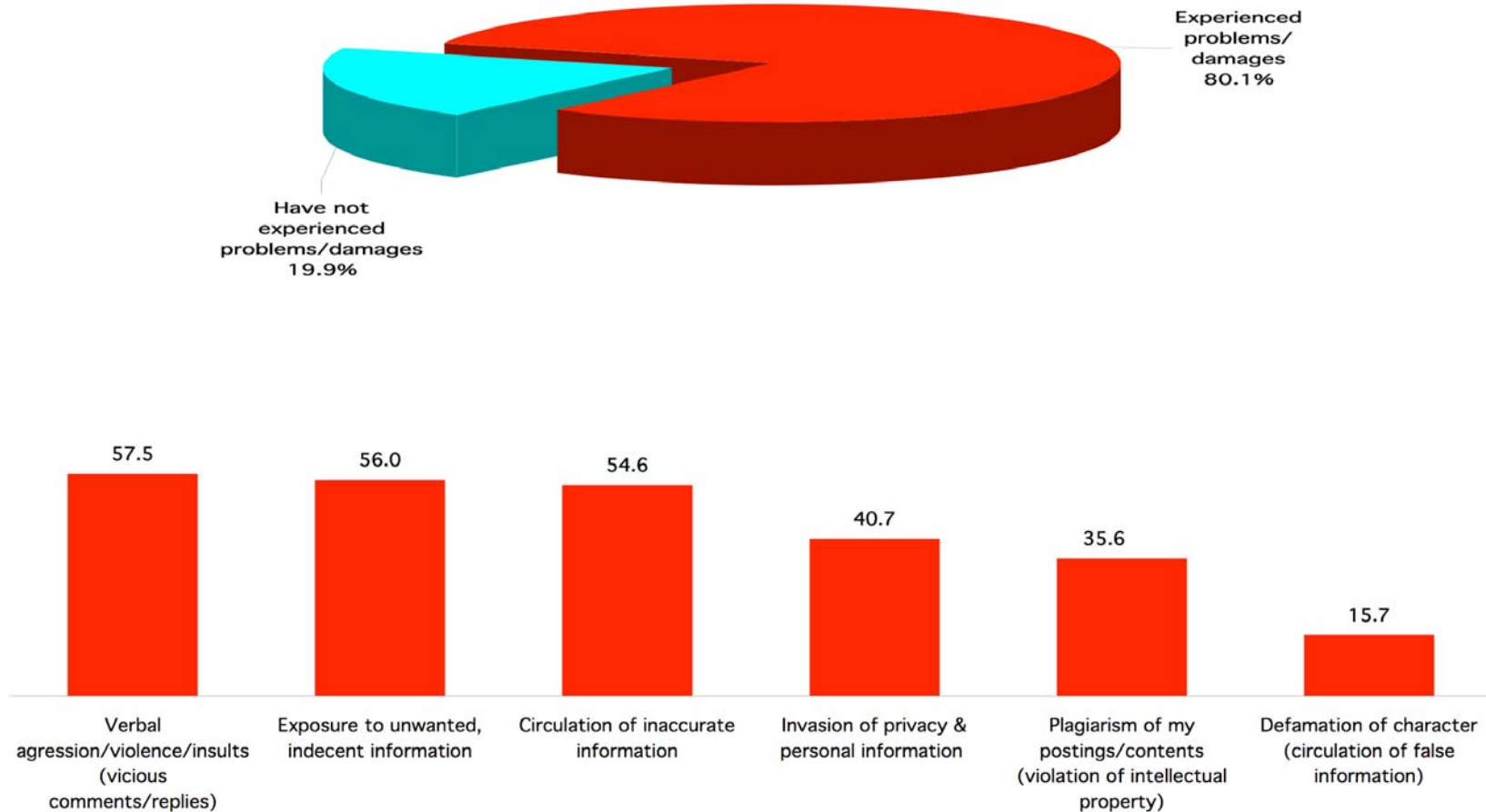
## Perceptions on the Use of Online Social Networking

- *"SNS is an important means for communication with others."* 71.4%
- *"Activities to maintain existing offline relationships have increased due to the newly formed relationships via SNS."* 68.5%
- *"Activities to establish and maintain new offline relationships have increased due to the newly formed online relationships."* 60.9%
- *"My interests in social affairs & issues have increased due to using SNS."* 57.3%
- *"I want to communicate with many, if possible."* 53.1%
- *"I became more aware of others' emotions & changes in daily lives by using SNS."* 53.1%
- *"At times, I feel communicating with others via SNS is annoying & cumbersome."* 47.1%
- *"My expenses on SNS maintenance & use are adequate."* 45.8%

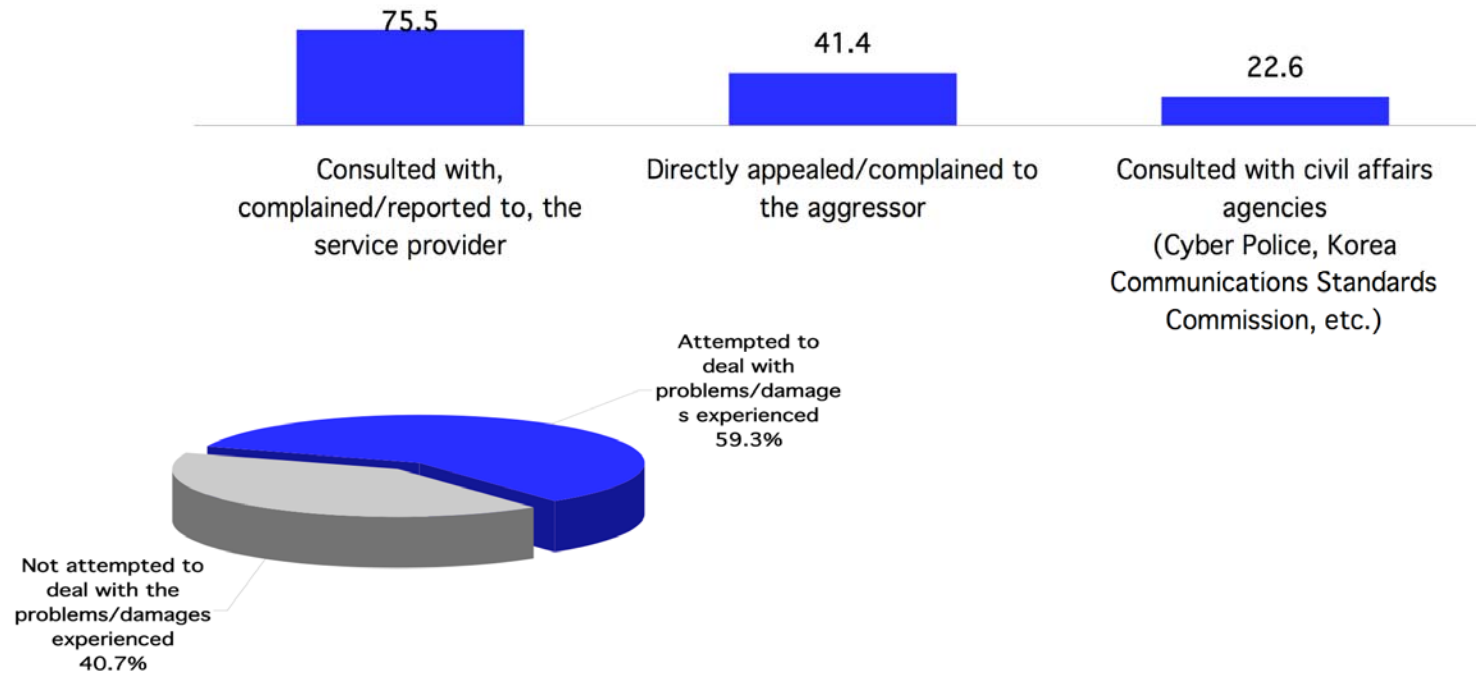
# Perceived Importance of & Satisfaction with SNS Functions

Online Social Networking (SNS) Functions	IMPORTANCE (%)			SATISFACTION (%)		
	Important (I)	Very Important (VI)	I + VI	Satisfied (S)	Very Satisfied (VS)	S + VS
Possible to express/offer opinions or information freely	59.2	21.4	80.6	23.9	64.4	88.3
Possible to obtain or share diverse & useful information easily	51.7	35.5	87.2	28.8	57.3	86.1
Many members with whom wide range of exchanges are possible	47.3	22.2	69.5	23.4	59.7	83.1
Diverse methods of exchanges available	48.2	19.0	67.2	30.5	40.6	71.1
Offers environment & systems to protect individual privacy, and filtering of spams & ads	28.8	58.8	87.6	26.7	25.5	52.2
Offers many added services or contents for entertainment	37.1	13.3	50.4	26.2	24.4	50.6
SNS offered via various IT devices (cell phone, PDA, IPTV, etc.)	30.4	14.2	44.6	21.5	25.3	46.8
Ease of use				28.8	52.8	81.6
Simple & easy to register				29.7	39.8	69.5
Use of SNS overall				43.9	40.7	84.5

# Problems with Online Social Networking

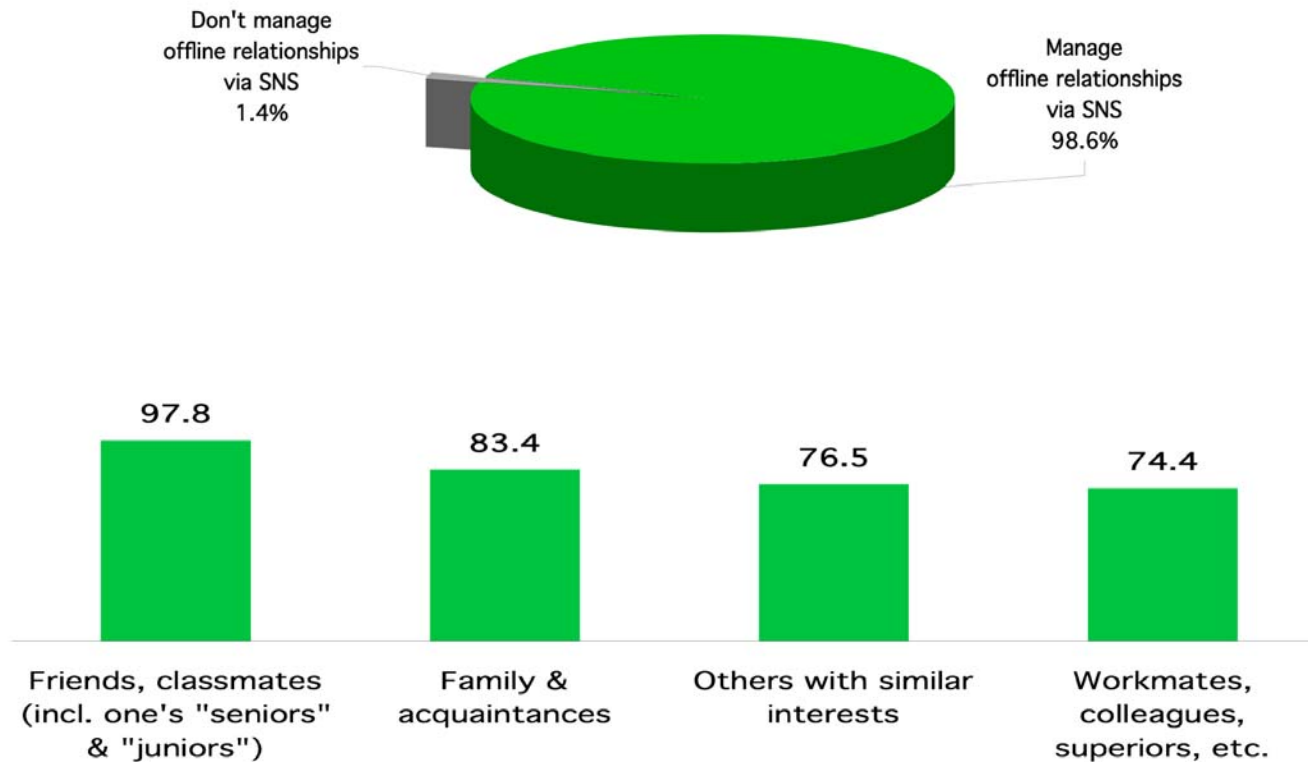


## Attempt to Deal with the Problems Experienced

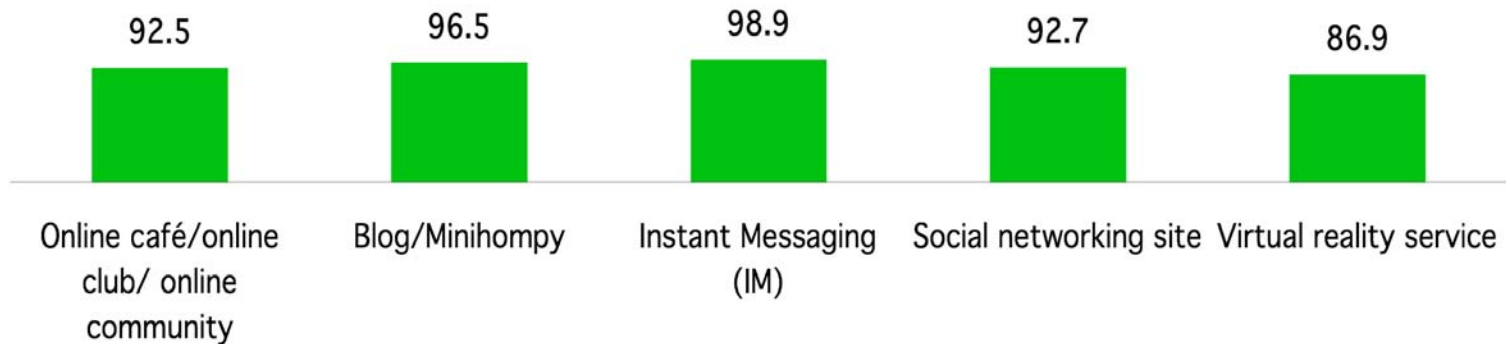


Complicated & didn't want to bother with it	42.3%
Thought it was trivial	27.4%
Didn't think complaints/reports would solve the problem	12.5%
Didn't know how to deal with it	8.2%
The procedures were too complicated and difficult.	8.9%
Other	0.7%

# Online Social Networking & Personal Network Management: Existing Offline Relationships



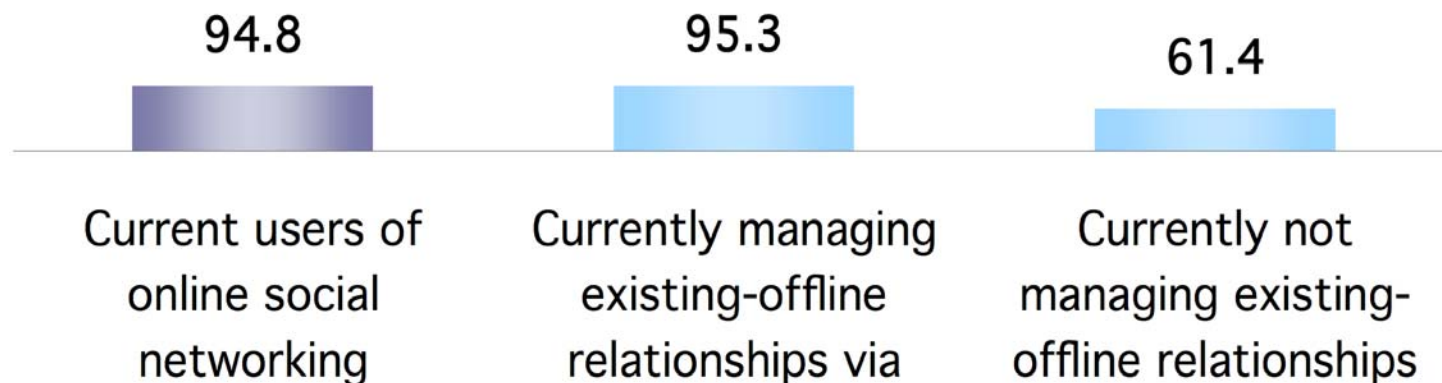
**Online Social Networking & Personal Network Management:**  
**Existing Offline Relationships** (continued)



	Friends, classmates (incl. one's "seniors" & "juniors")	Family & acquaintances	Others with similar interests	Workmates, colleagues, superiors, etc.	Others
Online café/online club/online community	93.4	67.4	74.7	65.6	13.4
Blog/Minihompy	95.0	74.0	55.1	60.8	11.4
Instant Messaging (IM)	97.8	75.2	43.9	70.6	9.4
Social networking sites	85.8	58.3	63.2	60.7	8.6
Virtual reality service	90.4	56.8	53.0	50.4	8.1

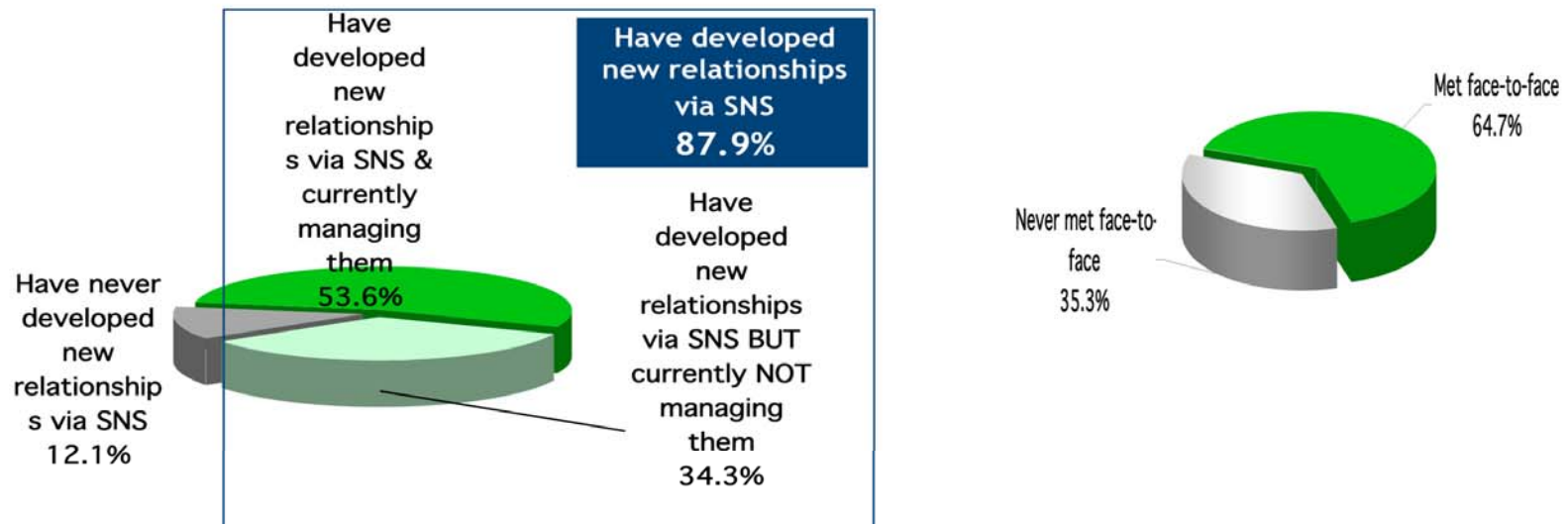
## Online Social Networking & Personal Network Management: Intention to Manage Existing Offline Relationships

- ❑ Among those currently using online social networking, 94.8% expressed intent to manage existing offline relationships via online social networking in the future:
  - Among those currently managing existing offline relationships via SNS, 95.3% would continue to do so.
  - Among those currently not managing, 61.4% intend to do so.



## Online Social Networking & Personal Network Management: Developing NEW Relationships

- ❑ Among those currently using online social networking, 87.9% reported that they have developed new relationships via SNS:
  - 64.7% of them have met those relationships formed online face-to-face offline.



## *Other main findings so far...*

- ❑ The main reason cited by those who have not developed any online relationships was “there are many who abuse or misuse online anonymity” (38.9%).
- ❑ Most new online relationships were formed with members of the same cafés/clubs/online communities (78.2%).
- ❑ These trends appear to continue.

## *In closing...*

- ✓ Online social networking is mostly used for maintaining pre-existing offline relationships rather than establishing new online relationships.
- ✓ Both *social network services* and *virtual reality services* are still in their early stage of diffusion in Korea. Although they are still relatively new, they appear to have difficulty penetrating the market possibly due to:
  - the fact that other online social networking services such as an *online cafés, online clubs or online communities* (e.g., Daum Café, Naver Club, Freechal Community, Photoagit, etc.), *blogs or minihompys* (e.g., Daum Blog, Naver Blog, Cyworld's "ilchon", IMs (e.g., NateOn, MSN, buddyBUDDY Messenger, SayClub Tachy [세이타키], DreamWiz Genie, etc.), Cyworld, etc. were already widely adopted by the Internet users in Korea; and
  - Perhaps, the newly introduced social network service sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Second Life, etc. were perceived by the Internet users in Korea to be lacking relative advantage, compatibility, and ease of use.

## *Limitations*

- ✓ Measurement:
  - ❖ SNS was too broadly defined and measured.
  - ❖ Uses of the specific services were not measured.
  - ❖ Comparability problem.
  
- ✓ Sampling:
  - ❖ No data on the Internet users under 12 years of age and those 50 years or older.

***Mahalo!***