

MYSPACE STRIKES BACK

FACEBOOK, SHMACEBOOK. RUPERT MURDOCH'S SOCIAL-NETWORK PLAY IS STILL THE COUNTRY'S MOST TRAFFICKED WEBSITE. AND IT'S GETTING STRONGER.

BY DAVID KIRKPATRICK “Everyone believes all the b.s. press that says MySpace is done for and Facebook has passed us,” moans Tom Anderson. You may know Tom. He’s president of MySpace. He may even be your “friend”—he’s the first one that all of MySpace’s 200 million-plus members got when they signed up. Normally he’s low-key, but the subject of that other social-networking site has him a little worked up. “It’s just ridiculous!”

“But you can’t say that too much,” gently interrupts his business partner, Chris DeWolfe, MySpace’s CEO. “You sound defensive.”

If there’s a consensus in technology, it’s that the next big thing after Google is social networking. People of all sorts are joining this new kind of website because you really can have more fun online—and sometimes even get more done—when you’re doing it with others. Now there’s starting to be real money in the business, as every major consumer advertiser realizes that if you can engage effectively with these newly networked hordes, they become agents of your brand. Last year MySpace was on the lips of every teenager. Now Facebook is growing faster, is usurping the buzz, and thus has Tom Anderson tied into knots.

But defensiveness does not behoove executives who run a division of News Corp., Rupert Murdoch’s consummately aggressive company—especially not when that division is the biggest player by far in an explosively expanding business like social networking. It’s easy to dismiss MySpace, with its unruly graphics, clunky navigation, and general sense of chaos. But the masses love it. MySpace is the most trafficked website in the U.S.: It registered 45 billion page views in

MYSPACE CADETS
Co-founders Chris
DeWolfe (left) and
Tom Anderson