

Do women really rule social sites as stats show, or is this a fleeting trend? Think about how far are Mars and Venus sided and decided in cyberspace...

Facebook femmes don't Tweet nothings

"Facebook and Myspace are for chicks, I don't use them."

"Yeah, they're lonely birds, all keyed in and nowhere to go."

Ladies, let's hold our peace. Ignore hissing back "Damn MCPs" to the macho murmurs and consider. It's possible we could just be born the better communicators!

Those were comments stoked by the headline – Females outnumber males on social networking sites. Beneath that bland statement heaves a little gender tumult. If, across age spans, women do score a proven majority over men as subscribers of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Bebo et al, it's worth asking the provocative Why.

I'm not on *any* site. Despite being a social animal who loves nothing more than to join hands with people known or unknown with the same zest. Friends gripe about separately mailing me reunion pictures they fire off in a shot to entire Facebook fraternities. I won't be tagged, poked and whatever other strange verbs steer the course of online bonding.

No missing core stats on the subject, though. Women are fitted with an innate ability to express thoughts. An interesting Pingdom survey shows 84 per cent of us log onto 16 of 19 popular sites. Technology and content-driven Digg and Reddit lure men in droves, while Slashdot is the standout site crowning male geekdom with 82 per cent users.

Too early in a new paradigm to generalise, so should we slow down the hype? Who knows, later data might reverse these findings. For now it remains a curious trend to explore. Market consultant Denis Pombriant of Beagle Research recalls an inciting remark at a conference: Men visit social sites because women do. Studies find activity on any typical online site focus around women, with photo sharing and detailed bios being sure hits. Men follow content fanned by women they do and do not know. Women flock to content produced by women they know and a few men they don't. Men receive altogether less attention from other men.

Collegian Aneesh Menon reveals it's a myth to believe that the gals alone are longwinded – "We're as big suckers for trivia and gossip as girls, if you compared our postings."

Shunt me to the technological stone ages, if you will. I prefer meeting over coffee or lunch where I can really hug a friend. The most electronic I concede going is an enjoyable phone chat or fully newsy mail. Ultra remote e-cards flashing

birthday wishes with emoticons are weak substitutes, tossing out the passion of crisp paper a beloved hand physically writes on. You actually smell affection on greeting cards – try sniffing next time you have the good luck to get one. It's devastating when death is not spared either. Distant condolence messages bleep dully alien sympathy in online print, leaving you to crave the warmth of familiar voices.

Why confuse communication with means of communication? People can jabber onsite 24/7 and say nothing. Maximised doesn't equal meaningful. Out flies privacy in this vast community cauldron of stirred up confidences, from banal "Woke with a bad tummy" to self-indulgent "Drank lifesaving Starbucks, now for a smoke".

Several women add posts by default, to spy on hormonal children's party plans. I gulp as a mum, urging me to jump onto the Facebook bandwagon, justifies: "Keep up or ship out. Kids are proud of net-savvy parents." The impulsive young also fall quick victims to trite impersonality. A girl cries foul as bunches of campus mates sense the class nerd's obsession with her before she has. Breaking up – historically hard to do – is brazenly easy today. Boyfriends moan their loves coldly ditch them online, abetted by instant feminine feedback from nosey pals.

The keyword may well be Overshare. This decade turned our world into a busy shrink's clinic on a public street: relentless Facebook status updates, celebrity Twitter feeds and puerile mommy blogs cast widening webs of tiresome intimacies.

Yet, we figure smitten kittens announce their beaux' antics louder than the other way round. Even given Hollywood

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excess it's amusing that when Jim Carrey hired a skywriter to draw a heart high up on Valentine's Day for Jenny McCarthy, she micro messaged the virtual universe at large: 'So fun. Everybody in LA go look at the sky!' (That they split soon after is pure bad luck.) Oho, but vice versa is tougher to imagine, chuckle a group of men discussing the couple's PDA.

Maybe. Maybe not. The idea stays attractively shrouded, as at least some gender issues should. How far are Mars and Venus sided and decided in cyberspace? Think – or tweet – about it. ▼