

When it comes to technology, they rule: they are online longer, adopt and master new technologies faster than adults and participate in a wider variety of online activities. In Canada, 85% of tweens have access to a computer, 82% to a video game system, 25% to an iPod or MP3 player and 26% have a cell phone (this number rises to 26% among 12 to 14 year-olds).

While their favorite medium is still television (50%), 27% of American 9 to 14 year-olds watch it on the internet.



Spending by tweens has doubled every decade for the past 30 years. In the US today, between spending their own money and influencing their parents' purchasing decisions, this segment controls or influences approximately US\$500 billion in retail spending<sup>1</sup>. According to the BRANDchild study (conducted by Millward Brown among 2,000 young people ages 9 to 14 years in several countries), Tweens influence 80% of their parents' brand purchases.

In 2005, there were approximately 2.5 million tweens in Canada and their average annual income was CAN\$1,155. This means they controlled CAN\$2.9 billion of their own money in addition to influencing another CAN\$20 billion in family purchases.

It is this financial power that differentiates tweens from earlier generations; never has this age group exercised such influence. The generation is populous enough to ruin a brand it does not like or catapult another to success by adopting it.

Surprisingly, tweens and teens are shopping online in increasing numbers, thanks to prepaid gift cards. Major companies now offer prepaid credit cards designed especially for young people. The Visa Buxx card is just one example and can be used everywhere Visa is accepted, particularly online!

## 2.4 Mobile Social Networking

Children and tweens are engaged in mobility and connecting over mobile devices. Social networking is an activity that 70% of online teens engage in every month, and the numbers continue to grow. E-Marketer projects that by 2011, one-half of adults will be online and 84% of teens in the US will use social networking.



### 2.4.1 A Changing Market

According to Nielsen, 5% of tweens access the Internet over their phone each month. While 41% of tween mobile Internet users say they do so while commuting or traveling (to school, for example), mobile content such as the Internet is also a social medium for this audience: 26% of tween mobile Internet users say they access the web while at a friend's house and 17% say they do so at social events.

<sup>1</sup> Marketing to Children: Kids and Tweens Demographic Research Reports, e-Marketer. 2007.