

Website targets senior surfers

The 50-plus crowd accounts for nearly a quarter of all internet use

Sarah McDonald

The 50-plus demographic isn't often at the forefront of marketer's minds – and even if they are, the internet is the last place most would think to look for them.

But local site Grownups (www.grownups.co.nz), which targets senior web surfers, is trying to change this image.

The website, which is about a year old, has 13,000 members and 34,000 unique users per month.

It focuses on lifestyle content and allows users to submit content, meaning they can share travel stories, recipes and product reviews.

Grownups doesn't look like a seniors site at first glance but is designed using bigger fonts and simple menu structures so people don't get lost moving through the content.

Site founder Richard Poole said the discussion forums were one of Grownups' most popular features and there were plans to extend these further into helping older people find companionship.

Over a million people in New Zealand are 50 or older, and according to Nielsen NetRatings, they account for nearly a quarter of all internet use.

Mr Poole and business partner Shane Bradley (who is also involved in www.finda.co.nz) own 40% each of Grownups. The other 20% is owned by home-equity release



RICHARD POOLE: Owns 40% of Grownups

company Sentinel.

Despite this connection Mr Poole said the site remained independent – although it did carry some Sentinel advertising it also had an independent review of home-equity release schemes.

He said that the site's demographic was distrustful of advertising and didn't like to feel pressured by it.

So although there are banner ad spots available, which are sold through APN Digital, Mr Poole sees revenue for Grownups coming from other forms of promotion, including reselling products such as travel and taking a commission.

"We have the issue with advertisers thinking, 'But hang on, people 50-plus aren't on the internet,'" he said.

"The market actually has disposable income and high net worth, but this doesn't often get recognised."