Global social media research summary 2016

Our compilation of the latest social media statistics of consumer adoption and usage

Social networks are now so well established, that there are now a core ‘top 5’ social networks which are most popular which doesn't change from year-to-year. But, as we'll see in this post, the most popular social media sites vary a lot by level of usage in different countries and with demographics. So understanding these differences in popularity of different social networks is really important when targeting specific audiences. When comparing the most popular social networks it's best to review them by active account usage, not just the number of user accounts. We'll also see in this summary that some social networks are growing more rapidly than others while some are now in decline.

2016 social media stats update

We'll keep this post updated during 2016 as the latest statistics are published drawing on our recommended top 10 digital marketing statistics sources. In this first update of the year we highlight the great summary of social media and mobile stats from WeAreSocial Singapore, which is mainly extracted from GWI who they partner with.

For statistics on the social network usage and growth we recommend Global Web Index (GWI) as one of the most reliable research sources of social media statistics to compare consumer use and engagement across different social networks. Research is conducted in quarterly waves, each of which has a global sample size of more than 40,000 internet users. Many other social media research programmes are no longer active. Although Global WebIndex are a paid subscription service, their blog provides useful insights on digital consumer behaviour and the Global Web Index Slideshare gives the latest top-level summaries which we share later in this compilation.

Each year, We Are Social update their massive global compendium of stats which gives some great insights into the world of social media. It's a great download for presentations. It's particularly interesting how far some countries are diverging in terms of social media use, and surprising that Western Countries are actually lagging a fair way behind in adoption rates.

(https://www.slideshare.net/globalwebindex/documents)

Annual growth continues apace, particularly in the number of mobile social users, which hit 17% last year.
Asia-Pacific is driving much of this growth, which internet usage rates high and number of active social media users increasing 14% on the year before.

When looking at the world by number of internet users, it really rams home the importance of East Asian and South Asian markets. Digital offers new opportunities to reach these people, although as always cultural differences are considerable challenges to international marketers.

The full report from we are social contains a massive amount of data across 537 slides. It provides country-specific data for a the vast majority of the world, so you might want to check out the slides of the countries in your core markets to get a better idea of the current state of social in the areas you operate.
The above chart from Comscore shows engagement in terms of time spent on the platform vs reach among the millennial demographic. It's interesting to see how effectively Facebook dominates, but also interesting to see how well Snapchat is doing in terms monthly usage per visitor.
Facebook Dominates The Social Landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Platform</th>
<th>Penetration</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB Messenger</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Plus</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The size of each circle represents the number of days each site was accessed monthly on average. The color intensity and accompanying number represents the number of sessions.

Base: 1,952 US smartphone owners (18+)
*Base: 31-782 US smartphone owners (18+) who accessed the mentioned app at least once in the past month
Note: Forrester does not collect usage data on preinstalled (native) email or messaging apps.
Source: Forrester's Mobile Audience Data, October to December 2015 (US)

October 2015 update - US Social media adoption

US consumer technology adoption specialists Pew Research Center released a new set of data on US Social Media US (http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/) on October 8th which shows the latest social media trends and how far it has permeated society. Looking at data from the past 10 years, it charts the meteoric rise of social media.

10 years ago on 7% of the US population used one or more social networking sites. Now that figure has increased almost tenfold, to 65%. Of those who use the internet a massive majority of 76% of American’s use social media.

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Facebook's dominance is truly extraordinary. Not only does it take the top spot, it's other platforms also take 2nd and 3rd respectively. Facebook Messenger has an impressive 47 penetration, and Instagram (also owned by Facebook) comes 2nd for engagement.
Social Media has grown massively, but its growth is now starting to plateau. Interestingly the over 65s segment are now driving growth, as other age groups have plateaued completely and use is hardly growing at all. Among the 50-63 age cohort, use hasn’t increased since 2013. (http://www.smartinsights.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Screen-Shot-2015-10-12-at-15.43.22.png)

The most popular social networks worldwide in 2015?

Here is the latest Global Web Index summary in January 2015 (the most recently published) showing social network account ownership and active usage. It’s useful to have both since it’s the active social media use statistic which really shows the potential of a platform. Although Facebook is no longer growing at the rate it was based on the previous chart, it’s clearly the number one. (http://www.smartinsights.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Screen-Shot-2015-10-12-at-15.47.15.png)
The popularity of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are expected. You can see that Facebook is most popular in terms of active use - other charts in the report show it scores well in terms of frequency.

The ongoing importance of the Google social platforms YouTube and Google+ may be a surprise since Google+ is no longer actively promoted, but they are integrated into their unified account sign-in.

Social network popularity by country

This is a great visualisation of the popularity of social networks based on the interviews in the GWI report. If you pick out your country it's probably way behind the countries in which these four core social networks are most popular. Indonesia, Philippines, Mexico, India and Brazil are in the top 10 for each with significantly higher levels of use than the US, UK and European countries.

The fastest growing social networks?

Which are the fast growing networks? Well, through 2014 Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram and LinkedIn had the biggest growth, so we can expect this has continued into 2015. So, if you're not actively using these networks for marketing, this could be a missed opportunity. This chart doesn't show Reddit, which is another network that is growing rapidly.

Use of social networks by different demographics

This chart is striking for the similarity of usage across different age groups. It shows that the social networks are now at a stage of maturity where they give opportunities to reach all age and gender groups. The exceptions to this are Instagram and Tumblr which are clearly popular with younger age groups.
Recommended social media marketing resources

Social media marketing strategy guide (http://www.smartinsights.com/guides/social-media-marketing-7-steps-to-success-ebook/)

Influencer outreach guide (http://www.smartinsights.com/guides/influencer-outreach-guide/)

Smarter Facebook marketing guide (http://www.smartinsights.com/guides/smarter-facebook-marketing-guide/)

PREVIOUS

NEXT
Social media customer care research (http://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-listening/social-media-customer-care-research/)

Share your thoughts

Enter your comment here...


Thank you for sharing this. It is really helpful for my school paper.

ilanumaran commented on April 23, 2016

it help to research document in social media excellent

socialpimp commented on April 16, 2016

Social Media is very important for driving traffic for any type of business. Good Article.

Marketing Sweet (@MarketingSweet) commented on November 17, 2015

Thank you Dave for sharing this article. You should also mention that some of these social networks are more popular and relevant if you are a B2C marketer, I am thinking about Facebook. However, if you’re a B2B marketer, LinkedIn will be more efficient.

Aaron Acevedo commented on November 11, 2015

It’s a excellent resources for make a obejctives planning. Thanks
I am surprised to see that much of the 65+ age group are using Social Media. Although it was an excellent article with backup by the statistics, good to read that.

Seems like Snapchat should be on here somehow, as it is clearly more popular than at least half of this list. I just don’t know how much that site can be measured.

You give excellent data about the social media marketing. Thanks for sharing with us.

Thanks for sharing the social media platforms that are mostly used. It will give a clear view that which social media platforms should be more focussed by any agency for promoting their brand.
Excellent data for social media engagement.

Mihir shah commented on April 27, 2015

social media is a part to digital marketing. and people can see what is new you have.

Akash Agarwal commented on April 3, 2014

Now a day's social media is very helpful. It helps to increases the traffic for your website. Thanks for sharing these social media strategies.

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Social media marketing toolkit

Social media marketing strategy guide
Influencer outreach guide
Smarter Facebook marketing guide (http://www.smartinsights.com/guides/smarter-facebook-marketing-guide/)

Need help with your Social media marketing?

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