

SOCIAL MEDIA IS COMING OF AGE

Social media and social networking are no longer in their infancy. Since the emergence of the first social media networks some two decades ago, social media has continued to evolve and offer consumers around the world new and meaningful ways to engage with the people, events, and brands that matter to them. Now years later, social media is still growing rapidly and has become an integral part of our daily lives. Today, social networking is truly a global phenomenon. What's driving the continued growth of social media?

MOBILE

More people are using smartphones and tablets to access social media. The personal computer is still at the center of the social networking experience, but consumers are increasingly looking to other devices to connect on social media. Time spent on mobile apps and the mobile web account for 63 percent of the year-over-year growth in overall time spent using social media. Forty-six percent of social media users say they use their smartphone to access social media; 16 percent say they connect to social media using a tablet. With more connectivity, consumers have more freedom to use social media wherever and whenever they want.

PROLIFERATION

New social media sites continue to emerge and catch on. The number of social media networks consumers can choose from has exploded, and too many sites to count are adding social features or integration. While Facebook and Twitter continue to be among the most popular social networks, Pinterest emerged as one of the breakout stars in social media for 2012, boasting the largest year-over-year increase in both unique audience and time spent of any social network across PC, mobile web, and apps.

How is consumer usage of social media evolving?

THE GLOBAL LIVING ROOM

Social TV is on the rise. The skyrocketing adoption and use of social media among consumers is transforming TV-watching into a more immediate and shared experience. As of June 2012, more than 33 percent of Twitter users had actively tweeted about TV-related content. Some 44 percent of U.S. tablet owners and 38 percent of U.S. smartphone owners use their devices daily to access social media while watching television. In the Latin America region, more than 50 percent of consumers say they interact with social media while watching TV; in the Middle East / Africa region, more than 60 percent do. From global events like the Summer Olympics, to regional events like the Presidential debates in the U.S., consumers around the world used social media to engage with everyone from close friends to complete strangers, revolutionizing the television viewing experience.

SOCIAL CARE

Social Care is transforming customer service. Social media has emerged as an important channel for customer service, with nearly half of U.S. consumers reaching out directly to brands and service providers to voice their satisfaction or complaints, or simply to ask questions. In fact, one in three social media users say they prefer to use social media rather than the phone for customer service issues.

How is social media impacting marketing?

SOCIAL WORD-OF-MOUTH

Social media enables consumers to generate and tap into the opinions of an exponentially larger universe. While word-of-mouth has always been important, its scope was previously limited to the

people you knew and interacted with on a daily basis. Social media has removed that limitation and given new power to consumers.

HYPER-INFORMED CONSUMERS

Social media is transforming the way that consumers across the globe make purchase decisions.

Consumers around the world are using social media to learn about other consumers' experiences, find

more information about brands, products and services, and to find deals and purchase incentives.

OPPORTUNITY FOR ENGAGEMENT

Consumer attitudes toward advertising on social media are still evolving. Though roughly one-third

of social media users find ads on social networking sites more annoying than other types of Internet

advertisements, research suggest that there are opportunities for marketers to engage with consumers

via social media. More than a quarter of social media users say they are more likely to pay attention to

an ad shared by one of their social connections. Additionally, more than a quarter of consumers are ok

with seeing ads on social networking sites tailored to them based on their profile information.

Nielsen and NM Incite's 2012 Social Media Report provides some insight into what is driving our

collective, global obsession with social media. In the following pages, you'll get a more detailed

snapshot of what is helping to power the continued growth of social networking around the world,

how consumers' social media behavior is evolving, and how these changes impact the way brands and

consumers engage through social networks.

-Deirdre Bannon

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