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186 million Americans use social networks: Facebook is the most popular site

Results of a global social media study



Key conclusions:

- 76% of Americans use social network sites, Facebook being the most popular one.
- The United States has a somewhat higher adoption level than European countries.
- Twitter is an exception: 77% knows it, but only 20% uses it.
- 57% of social network users follows information on brands and companies.
- The majority of social network users would like to be involved in the management of companies they like.

The US counts 186 million users of social networks

76% of American Internet users uses social network sites. In total this is about 186 million people. Facebook is the most popular site with 70%. 22% of American Internet users use LinkedIn. Twitter comes 3rd with 20% penetration amongst American Internet users. The US has a somewhat higher usage of social networks than the European average (73%). Countries such as India (88%) and Brazil (86%) show a higher adoption rate. These are some remarkable conclusions from an InSites Consulting survey amongst more than 9,000 consumers in 35 countries.

"These numbers show that social network sites have penetrated all layers of society. 22% of Facebook users are 55+. An analysis of the users shows everyone is there: young, older, employed or unemployed." says Professor Steven Van Belleghem, Managing Partner at InSites Consulting.

Twitter, the exception

The InSites Consulting survey shows that Twitter is the exception among social networks. 77% of all Americans know Twitter, but only 20% use it. The intention of shortly starting to use Twitter is large: 15% of non-users are planning to start using it soon.

"Twitter is an exceptional social network. Twitter users in the US are more often men than women, the average age is lower than on Facebook and they mainly come from the active population. The direct effect may seem limited since the number of people is limited, but the type of people active on Twitter create a major indirect effect. Journalists follow Twitter messages closely and publish them in their paper, thus creating a link to and an impact on traditional media which is greater than Facebook." says Van Belleghem.



57% of American social network users follow a brand

4 Americans out of 10 who have a social network site profile follow at least one brand. Four sectors are very popular: media, fashion, food and retail chains. The InSites Consulting survey shows that people become a fan of a product after having used it. Their own experience is much more important than advertising campaigns, to quote an example. People expect companies to give them extra promotions and information. 56% of fans expect extra promotions of the brand on social media, 55% want to receive invites to events and 50% are looking forward to reading more product information.

Consumers wish to be a part of a company's management

Some consumers are keen to be involved in their favourite brand's management. 47% of all American social network users would love to share ideas with a company; 27% would love nothing more than to co-create new products and services with a fun brand.

"Consumers have a very tight connection with certain brands. Involving these people in your company's management via social media is a new way of approaching your company and the market. Social media help consumers to better understand how marketing works and therefore also help them to play a determining part in a company's management." says Van Belleghem.

About the study

- More than 9,000 respondents
- 35 countries (Europe, South & North America, Asia and Oceania)
- Sample representative for the Internet population of the participating countries
- Research realised by InSites Consulting
- Full research report available online:

<http://www.slideshare.net/stevenvanbelleghem/social-media-around-the-world-2011>



Prof. Steven Van Belleghem

Managing Partner InSites Consulting

Author of the Conversation Manager

Steven.VanBelleghem@insites.eu

M +32 497 473 444



Steven_InSites

About InSites Consulting

InSites Consulting is an innovating global online marketing research and consultancy agency. In the past 2 years we won no less than 12 prize from different respected organizations such as AMA, ARF, ESOMAR, Media Marketing, MRS, MOA, SPSS, AMMA and eConsultancy. InSites employs 120 people and has branches in Ghent, Rotterdam, London and Timisoara. Early in 2012 a New York office will join the list. More information on www.insites.eu and <http://blog.insites.be>.

About the Conversation Manager

The book 'The Conversation Manager' by Steven Van Belleghem was published in February 2010. Steven explains in his book how companies could manage their online and offline conversations. It's a description of the changing role of brands concerning word of mouth advertising, and deals with advertising, branding, social media and the integration of all these marketing elements.



Apart from having sold more than 20.000 copies of the book, it was also awarded the 2010 PIM Marketing Literatuurprijs (PIM Prize of Marketing literature). More information on www.theconversationmanager.com.

