



A Raw & Complete Look into Social Media

By Jeff Toohey

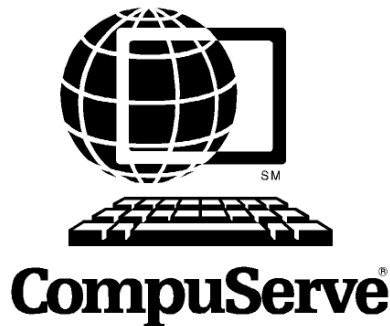
Owner of Toohey Web Designs

www.tooheywebdesign.com

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The Start of Social Media Networking



Technology began to change very rapidly in the 20th Century. After the first super computers were created in the 1940s, scientists and engineers began to develop ways to create networks between those computers, and this would later lead to the birth of the Internet.

The earliest forms of the Internet, such as CompuServe, were developed in the 1960s. Primitive forms of email were also developed during this time. By the 70s, networking technology had improved, and 1979's UseNet allowed users to communicate through a virtual newsletter.

By the 1980s, home computers were becoming more common and social media was becoming more sophisticated. Internet relay chats, or IRCs, were first used in 1988 and continued to be popular well into the 1990's.

The first recognizable social media site, Six Degrees, was created in 1997. It enabled users to upload a profile and make friends with other users. In 1999, the first blogging sites became popular, creating a social media sensation that's still popular today.

SixDegrees.com was a social network service website that lasted from 1997 to 2001 and was based on the Web of Contacts model of social networking. It was named after the six degrees of separation concept and allowed users to list friends, family members and acquaintances both on the site and externally; external contacts were invited to join the site. Users could send messages and post bulletin board items to people in their first, second, and third degrees, and see their connection to any other user on the site. It was one of the first manifestations of social networking websites in the format now seen today. Six Degrees was followed by more successful social networking sites based on the "social-circles network model" such as Friendster, MySpace, LinkedIn, XING, and Facebook.

MacroView (later renamed to SixDegrees), the company that developed the site, was founded by CEO Andrew Weinreich and was based in New York City. At its height, SixDegrees had around 100 employees, and the site had around 3,500,000 fully registered members. The site was bought by YouthStream Media Networks in 1999 for \$125 million.

This first evolutionary step lasted pretty long, let's say from the beginning of the new century until 2007. In this phase many services evolved and started to woo users. It was during this period that many of the social sites appeared that later became huge, like :

- Friendster (started in 2002)
- MySpace (started in 2003)
- Netlog (started in 2003)
- Hi5 (started in 2003)
- Bebo (started in 2005)

Even Facebook was founded during that first period, though it was open only to students of Harvard University students in the beginning.

The first evolutionary step was characterized by so called "Walled Gardens", that means destinations which were totally separated from the outside web, with no interaction between the service and external websites. The competing sites aimed at getting as many registered users as possible to reach a critical mass. That was important to leverage "network effects", which are necessary to reach exponential growth.



Friendster was a social gaming site based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was originally a social networking service website. Before Friendster was redesigned, the service allowed users to contact other members, maintain those contacts, and share online content and media with those contacts. The website was also used for dating and discovering new events, bands and hobbies. Users could share videos, photos, messages and comments with other members via profiles and networks. It is considered one of the original and even the "grandfather" of social networks.

We wouldn't be able to discuss the start of social media if we didn't discuss

MYSPACE



Myspace is a social networking website offering an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music, and videos. Its headquartered in Beverly Hills, California.

From 2005 to 2008, Myspace was the largest social networking site in the world, and in June 2006 surpassed Google as the most visited website in the United States.

As of March 2017, Myspace was ranked 3,178 by total Web traffic, and 1,650 In the United States.

Myspace had a significant influence on pop culture and music and created a gaming platform that launched the successes of Zynga and RockYou, among others. Despite an overall decline, in 2015 Myspace still had 50.6 million unique monthly visitors and has a pool of nearly 1 billion active and inactive registered users.

In June 2009, Myspace employed approximately 1,600 employees.

In June 2011, Specific Media Group and Justin Timberlake jointly purchased the company for approximately \$35 million. On February 11, 2016 it was announced that MySpace and its parent company had been bought by Time Inc.

After all that what do we get? Pretty much just memories of this guy :



Tom from MySpace!

What killed Myspace you ask? Well according to Edward King, an old Myspace employee;

“I think the main problem was too much friction in the browsing experience on MySpace. The main source of this friction was the profile page, which gave user's more freedom of expression than Facebook's profile walls, but ultimately took far too long to load, crashed people's browsers and meant that the UI elements constantly changed from profile to profile.”

While Myspace was in steady decline there were two sites slowly making their way to center stage; Second Life and LinkedIn.

In late 2002, Reid recruits a team of old colleagues from SocialNet and PayPal to work on a new idea. Six months later, LinkedIn launches. Growth is slow at first—as few as 20 signups on some days—but, by the fall, it shows enough promise to attract an investment from Sequoia Capital.



Reid Hoffman, Co-Founder and CEO of LinkedIn.

The battle for social media supremacy continued until 2006 when the internet world was provided access to what was once only available to Harvard College students as an intranet.



No social media article would be complete without addressing Facebook, so let's do that now.

Facebook is a social networking service launched on February 4, 2004. It was founded by Mark Zuckerberg with his college roommates and fellow Harvard University student Eduardo Saverin. The website's membership was initially limited by the founders to Harvard students, but was expanded to other colleges in the Boston area, the Ivy League, and gradually most universities in Canada and the United States, corporations, and by September 2006, to everyone of age 13 and older with a valid email address.

But where did it all start you ask?

On October 23, 2003 a Harvard student named Mark Zuckerberg sat at his computer after a few drinks and began blogging. This is what happened:

"I'm a little intoxicated, not gonna lie. So what if it's not even 10 pm and it's a Tuesday night? What? The Kirkland dormitory facebook is open on my desktop and some of these people have pretty horrendious facebook pics. I almost want to put some of these faces next to pictures of some farm animals and have people vote on which is more attractive."

An hour later...

"Yea, it's on. I'm not exactly sure how the farm animals are going to fit into this whole thing (you can't really ever be sure with farm animals...), but I like the idea of comparing two people together."

And finally...

"Let the hacking begin."

AND FACEBOOK WAS BORN

How Social Media Changed the World

Before I cover the “Bad,” let’s start by appreciating the things social media has done to add to our lives. Here are some of the better things I’ve observed.

Immediate Access to Information

Given all the consolidation of media companies in the United States, it is pretty easy to question whether the news we get from the major media is the full story or not. After all, it’s not a rare occasion to hear more about the latest Kardashian scandal or celebrity death than a political uprising in Turkey or elsewhere in the world.

One of the things that attracted me personally to Twitter was the immediate access to other sources of information. Back when the government raided Osama Bin Laden’s fortress in Pakistan, there was a nearby citizen live tweeting his observations of the whole situation through the night. I was out at an event that evening, and learned of it pretty soon after news broke domestically, directly from my contacts on Twitter.

Social media is also very helpful for expanding our sources of content as a whole. With so much being blogged and written, then curated and shared proactively, the volume of content has grown exponentially. Now, there is no shortage of viewpoints and sources from which we can draw our own conclusions about what is really happening in the world. It’s less important to have a news team interpret it on our behalf.

Pervasive Connectivity To Others

I remember the days of phones with old style dials. We didn’t even have answering machines back then. If you called someone and they didn’t answer the phone, you had to call back and try to catch them in real time.

When a call came in, there was no caller ID. You just picked it up and said, “Hello.” It was sometimes hard to catch up to people, so you had to hand write and send a letter to communicate when you were both leading busy lives.

Today, if you can’t catch someone on the phone, you can leave a voice mail or send a text. Or even better, tweet, Facebook message, or touch base in some other means. You can see what others are doing within seconds of them doing it, assuming they share it on a social network of some sort. It’s not hard to catch up with someone if they want you to find them. Kids have no idea how convenient this is in our daily lives (privacy concerns aside).

Globalized Voices

Similar to the phone situation I just spelled out, it was extremely difficult to access a globally reaching platform where one could share their opinions or findings back a mere 25 years ago. I recall in the early 1990s where it was a huge deal to send in a letter to the editor to a local newspaper, and have them actually decide to include the letter in the paper.

Today, all we have to do is login to our platform of choice. We can rant, rave, kumbaya, tell jokes, share images, and generally mix and mingle to our heart's content. For those of us who can write, it takes only a couple of minutes to create a new blog and start putting our thoughts into words. And those thoughts could grow legs of their own once the social sphere grabs hold of them.

It is far easier to do something remarkable and noticeable, and have it reach people across the planet, than it has been at any time in our history. We now have truly globalized voices. What a privilege!

More Level Playing Field for Business

Some may argue this point, but by providing us with global reach for our voices, social networks enable businesses across the world to amplify their message in a way never thought possible only a decade or two ago.

In the old days, mass media ruled. A company had to pony up thousands or even millions of dollars to be heard in most cases. Very large companies with deep pockets ruled the roost. Only those businesses could afford to have wider reach.

Now, a small company can achieve global reach within days of launching their business when the cards fall right. Perhaps it's via an ingenious video, by sharing opinions that resonate and haven't been stated in the past, or creating new knowledge that spreads like wildfire. Maybe it's by simply sharing the business concept and bigger voices latching onto it. In any case, social media has provided a means to have a voice on par with the big dogs for everyone, including the smallest startups or "Mom & Pop" businesses.

It would be short-sighted to only highlight the good from social media if I want to stay grounded in reality. Now here are some of the things that make me want to close the browser window and move on.

Selfies

I know, it's been mocked and made fun of ad nauseum – the selfie. No matter whether it's because of a shirtless guy flexing in front of a mirror, girls making abominable duck faces, or people with bad judgment taking selfies in front of natural disasters or sunbathing with their grandmother's ashes, we're stuck with them.

I get why so many selfies make their way out onto the social networks. Phones come with high res cameras now. Computers have webcams where it's easy to take a snapshot. You don't even need anyone present to catch a picture from the top of Mount "Amazing-est View in the World."



But really, it's not hard to ask some friendly passer-by to take a picture if you really want one. Everyone can see right through your humble brag about the cool places you're visiting or the awesome people you are hanging out with. If you aim to post selfies, please, PLEASE take at least a moment to consider whether it will come across as narcissistic. In many cases, it will. And those are times to resist the urge. Especially if posting to a business page or Twitter account.

Political Tirades

I have to admit; this one managed to suck me into its tractor beam during the most recent presidential election. I found myself engaged in many a "debate." Looking back, that's something I don't plan to allow again.

When it comes to politics, religion, or any other very personal area of life, discussion gets contentious almost immediately. If you have a different belief system from someone else, you are both more likely to fight to defend it rather than cave to the other side of the argument. These

are very delicate topics, and it's too easy for the conversation to devolve into personal attacks and negative judgments of each others' characters.

I avoid them now. It's simply not worth losing a friend or colleague over what stacks up to be nothing more than a difference of opinion. Regardless of how those with the other opinion are depicted by the media. Social media is meant to be social, not a boxing rink. Everyone is happier when it stays that way.

Hiding Behind Anonymity

Although it is getting harder to shield your identity these days, anonymity has been a key piece of the internet since its early days. It's amazing to see how people behave when their true identity is masked.

Now we have everything from outright trolls to habitual pranksters. This is the kind of behavior that makes the whole internet, and particularly social media, less productive and enjoyable for all. If you want to say something and are afraid to have anyone know you said it, perhaps you should buck up and use common sense before putting it out there. Being offensive anonymously is not only cowardly, it shows a lack of character. We should all be better than that.

All Talk, No Action

In recent years, we've seen a ton of hashtag activists and similar behaviors across social media (most recently, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge). It has become a trend to take a selfie (double whammy) holding a sign with a political or social message on it, and a new hashtag of course. Or take a video in the case of the Ice Bucket Challenge. The idea is to get likes and shares on the picture or video, or challenge others to take part, aiming to have a message spread.

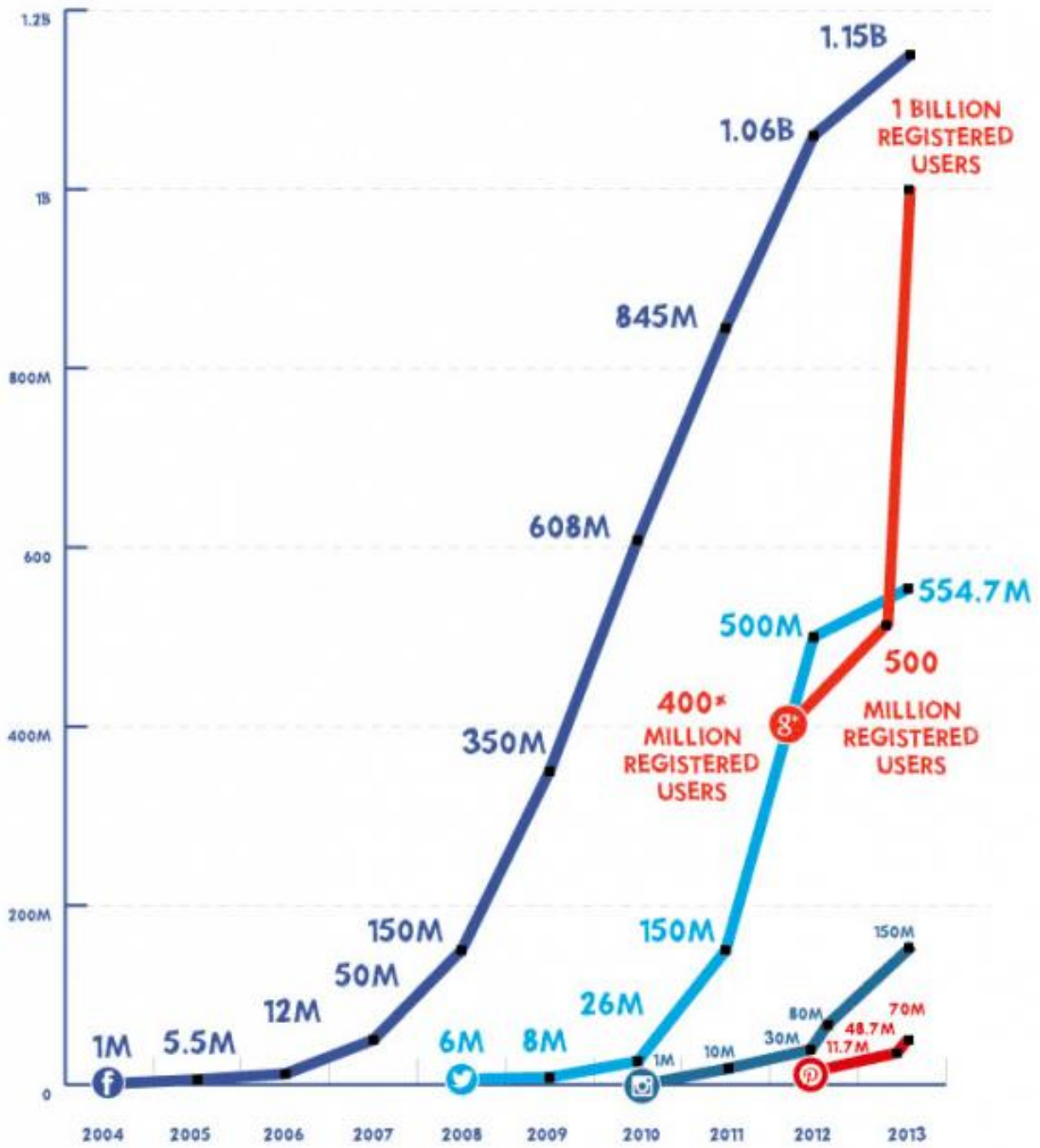
While that's fine in concept, hashtag activism is all talk. If an issue is important enough to take action, why not take real action? Facebook is crawling with people ready to go to social media war with anyone on a topic they care about, but what else are they doing to fix the problem? Venting on social media doesn't fix a thing; it just stirs the pot.

There are plenty of charities and volunteer opportunities available. Rather than get spun up on Facebook, go give back on the weekend, or make a donation without taking part in a random stunt. Not only will it make a real difference, but it will make you feel better inside. And in the end, isn't that part of the story anyway?

The Life and Growth of Social Media

SOCIAL MEDIA VISITOR GROWTH

REGISTERED USERS



FACEBOOK

TWITTER

GOOGLE+

PINTEREST

INSTAGRAM

* GMAIL USERS

BUSINESSES AND MARKETERS LOVE SOCIAL MEDIA!



93%

OF MARKETERS USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BUSINESS



70%

OF BRANDS HAVE A PRESENCE ON GOOGLE+
4% GROWTH FROM Q4 2012



70%

OF MARKETERS HAVE USED FACEBOOK TO SUCCESSFULLY GAIN NEW CUSTOMERS



34%

OF MARKETERS HAVE USED TWITTER TO SUCCESSFULLY GENERATE LEADS



FACEBOOK, TWITTER, AND GOOGLE+ ARE THE TOP 3 SOCIAL MEDIA SITES USED BY MARKETERS



TUMBLR

FLICKR

FLICKR, TUMBLR, AND STUMBLEUPON ARE THE LEAST POPULAR SITES USED BY MARKETERS

GROWTH AMONG THE TOP 3 SOCIAL NETWORKS

44%



TWITTER IS CURRENTLY THE FASTEST GROWING SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICE WITH A 44% GROWTH FROM JUNE 2012 - MARCH 2013

33%



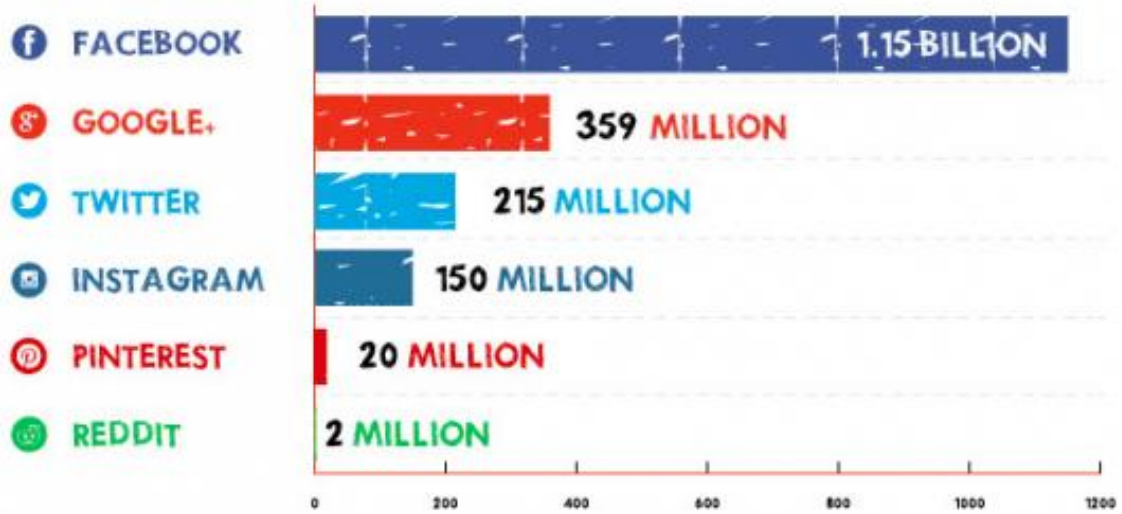
COMPARE THIS TO GOOGLE+, WHICH EXPERIENCED 33% GROWTH DURING THE SAME TIME PERIOD.

23%

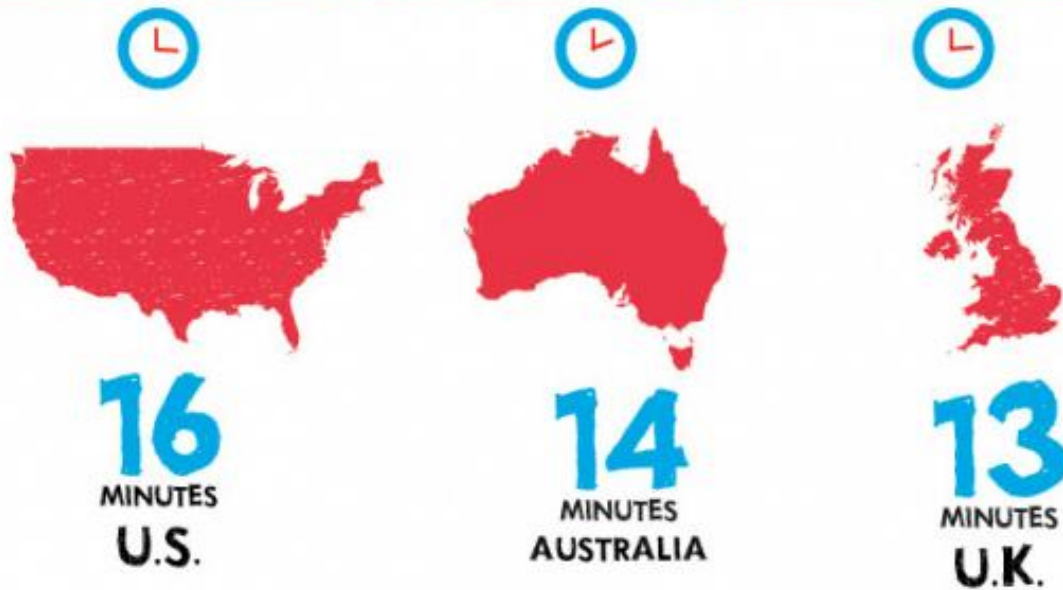


FROM 2012 TO 2013, FACEBOOK'S USER BASE ONLY INCREASED BY 23%.

MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS



TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS PER HOUR

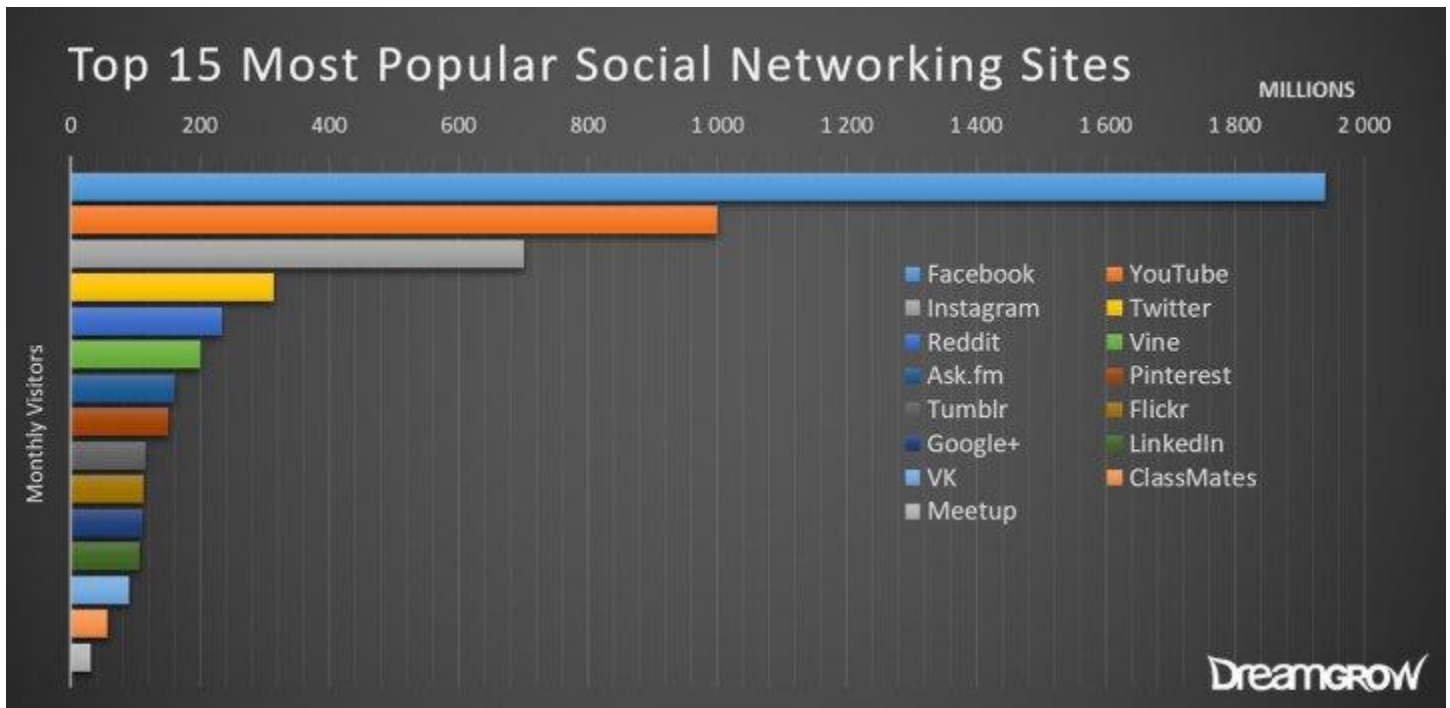


FASTEST GROWING SOCIAL SEGMENTS:

OLDER USERS



The Social Media Major Players



- Facebook
- Instagram
- Reddit
- Ask.fm
- Tumblr
- Google+
- VX
- Meetup
- YouTube
- Twitter
- Vine
- Pinterest
- Flickr
- LinkedIn
- ClassMates

What can you achieve with Social Media Networking

According to Jayson DeMers on Forbes.com there are 10 major benefits to using social media properly. They are as follows :

- **Increased Brand Recognition**

Every opportunity you have to syndicate your content and increase your visibility is valuable. Your social media networks are just new channels for your brand's voice and content. This is important because it simultaneously makes you easier and more accessible for new customers, and makes you more familiar and recognizable for existing customers. For example, a frequent Twitter user could hear about your company for the first time only after stumbling upon it in a newsfeed. Or, an otherwise apathetic customer might become better acquainted with your brand after seeing your presence on multiple networks.

- **Improved brand loyalty**

According to a report published by Texas Tech University, brands who engage on social media channels enjoy higher loyalty from their customers. The report concludes "Companies should take advantage of the tools social media gives them when it comes to connecting with their audience. A strategic and open social media plan could prove influential in morphing consumers into being brand loyal." Another study published by Convince & Convert found that 53% of Americans who follow brands in social are more loyal to those brands.

- **More Opportunities to Convert**

Every post you make on a social media platform is an opportunity for customers to convert. When you build a following, you'll simultaneously have access to new customers, recent customers, and old customers, and you'll be able to interact with all of them. Every blog post, image, video, or comment you share is a chance for someone to react, and every reaction could lead to a site visit, and eventually a conversion. Not every interaction with your brand results in a conversion, but every positive interaction increases the likelihood of an eventual conversion. Even if your click-through rates are low, the sheer number of opportunities you have on social media is significant.

- **Higher conversion rates**

Social media marketing results in higher conversion rates in a few distinct ways. Perhaps the most significant is its humanization element; the fact that brands become more humanized by interacting in social media channels. Social media is a place where brands can act like people do, and this is important because people like doing business with other people; not with companies.

- **Higher Brand Authority**

Interacting with your customers regularly is a show of good faith for other customers. When people go to compliment or brag about a product or service, they turn to social media. And when they post your brand name, new audience members will want to follow you for updates. The more people that are talking about you on social media, the more valuable and authoritative your brand will seem to new users. Not to mention, if you can interact with major influencers on Twitter or other social networks, your visible authority and reach will skyrocket.

- **Increased Inbound Traffic**

Without social media, your inbound traffic is limited to people already familiar with your brand and individuals searching for keywords you currently rank for. Every social media profile you add is another path leading back to your site, and every piece of content you syndicate on those profiles is another opportunity for a new visitor. The more quality content you syndicate on social media, the more inbound traffic you'll generate, and more traffic means more leads and more conversions.

- **Decreased Marketing Costs**

According to Hubspot, 84% of marketers found as little as six hours of effort per week was enough to generate increased traffic. Six hours is not a significant investment for a channel as large as social media. If you can lend just one hour a day to developing your content and syndication strategy, you could start seeing the results of your efforts. Even paid advertising through Facebook and Twitter is relatively cheap (depending on your goals, of course). Start small and you'll never have to worry about going over budget—once you get a better feel for what to expect, you can increase your budget and increase your conversions correspondingly.

- **Better Search Engine Rankings**

SEO is the best way to capture relevant traffic from search engines, but the requirements for success are always changing. It's no longer enough to regularly update your blog, ensure optimized title tags and meta descriptions, and distribute links pointing back to your site. Google and other search engines may be calculating their rankings using social media presence as a significant factor, because of the fact that strong brands almost always use social media. As such, being active on social media could act as a "brand signal" to search engines that your brand is legitimate, credible, and trustworthy. That means, if you want to rank for a given set of keywords, having a strong social media presence could be almost mandatory.

- **Richer Customer Experiences**

Social media, at its core, is a communication channel like email or phone calls. Every customer interaction you have on social media is an opportunity to publicly demonstrate your customer service level and enrich your relationship with your customers. For example, if a customer complains about your product on Twitter, you can immediately address the comment, apologize publicly, and take action to make it right. Or, if a customer compliments you, you can thank them and recommend additional products. It's a personal experience that lets customers know you care about them.

- **Improved Customer Insights**

Social media also gives you an opportunity to gain valuable information about what your customers are interested in and how they behave, via social listening. For example, you can monitor user comments to see what people think of your business directly. You can segment your content syndication lists based on topic and see which types of content generate the most interest—and then produce more of that type of content. You can measure conversions based on different promotions posted on various social media channels and eventually find a perfect combination to generate revenue.

Even if you don't own or operate a fortune 500 company
you can still make use of social media networking.

The Latest Social Media Changes & Updates



The diminishing returns of organic content

You aren't imagining your content is reaching fewer and fewer people; Facebook formally confirmed years ago that it has been deliberately reducing your organic visibility.

The company claims this is an ongoing effort to improve the relevance of users' news feeds, but I wouldn't blame you for suspecting this decrease is a way to encourage more brands to harness the power of paid promotion.

Facebook isn't the only platform under pressure to perform, either — Twitter has been worrying investors for some time now, and its revenue growth leaves much to be desired.

Gradually, but surely, you can expect the organic visibility of your branded posts to decline across multiple platforms as they follow Facebook's lead.

It's hard to imagine any platform evolving to become paid-only, especially this year, but you'll have to think carefully about how you manage your content syndication efforts and find alternative ways to increase your reach.

Advanced audience targeting

On the other hand, platforms are doing more to help brands maximize the effectiveness of their social activity. Facebook, for example, recently launched a new feature to help non-advertising brands target specific audiences in each post.

On the surface, this seems like an exclusively positive tool for brands, but think about it this way: you're restricting the overall reach of your content, essentially doing Facebook's job of limiting your organic visibility for it. You just happen to control it in a way that best benefits you. It's a useful spin on a necessary restriction, and it's one you can expect other social brands to imitate.

Beyond that, audience targeting options on paid advertising platforms continue to become more robust, leading us into an age where you can target individuals based on almost-creepy factors, like social behavior and contact lists.

The hybridization of e-commerce

Pinterest's recent addition of a "buy" button was met with confusion and criticism from a number of sources, but users are responding warmly to the feature. In fact, Pinterest is expanding the feature to more companies, and you can expect more bells and whistles to roll out over the course of the year.

Why is this relevant, when advertising is commonplace on social media? Because this is a new kind of advertising; in fact, I'd argue that it isn't advertising as much as it's a hybridization of a social media and e-commerce platform.

With so many brands competing for advertising dollars, I'd bet good money that by the end of the year, at least one other major player will introduce a similar e-commerce hybrid feature, transforming consumer expectations of social media and presenting new options to brands.

The rise of real-time streaming

Users are demanding more instantly available content. It's not enough to hear a post-game recap; they want to see the game in progress.

Several social media platforms are already doing more to enable real-time captures, such as Twitter's acquisition of real-time streaming platform Periscope and Facebook's Livestream feature. Soon, it won't be enough to schedule your posts in advance or retroactively make announcements or posts. You'll have to live in the moment, communicating with your audience immediately. Fortunately, you'll have the technology to do so easily.

The emergence of virtual reality (VR)

The Facebook-owned Oculus Rift is ready to ship early this year, and it's expected to spark a new revolution of VR technology. You can bet that Facebook will have a major incentive to urge users to create, share and demand more VR-compatible content, and others will follow in its footsteps.

Several of the major players in the gaming space are working on their own versions of a VR headset, and even Google is getting in on the action. I won't speculate about how fast this trend will grow or if it will explode the way it's been widely predicted to — but I can tell you if it takes hold, it will almost certainly challenge and transform the way we consume media and communicate with each other.

What Social Media Means for Tomorrow

AI Lenses for Facebook & Instagram

The rise in popularity of Snapchat's facial filters (artificial intelligence lenses) makes the network interactive, engaging and unique compared to others. However, social media marketers shouldn't have to wait long until competitors start to catch up with their own facial lenses.

In fact, Facebook already tested facial lenses for its mobile interface in 2016. This could be a major sign of budding social media trends. With the launch of Instagram Stories, expect the popular social media feature to move across channels.

According to TechCrunch, there were 100 million active users on Instagram Stories within two months after its release. Additionally, Instagram Stories are watched by 18% of the network's 600 million active users each day.

This puts all the pressure on Snapchat to maintain in the social media space. The competition is only likely to increase with Snapchat possibly going public as early as March 2017. Snapchat certainly has their own slice of the pie with 150 million active users in 2016 and 41% of US adults between the ages 18-34 use the network daily.

Younger generations continue to spend large amounts of time on these features and the battle for facial lenses could heat up in 2017.

More Customer Service Chatbots

Customer care should be on the minds of most businesses entering 2017. According to the Sprout Social Q2 2016 Index, in Q1 2016, the average number of social messages needing a response grew 18% year over year. This has many brands looking for ways to increase their customer service resources and more are turning to chatbots.

Platforms like Facebook Messenger and Slack use chatbots to communicate with customers, answer frequently-asked questions or to provide immediate information on a product or service. These chatbots can increase communication and reduce response times to social messages in need of an answer.

Here's how both Slack and Facebook Messenger are preparing for the increase in automated customer service:

Slack

- Slack grew to 4 million daily active users in 2016. (VentureBeat)
- Slack owns roughly 1.25 million paid accounts.
- BotList shows 484 Slack Bots currently available. (BotList)

Facebook Messenger

- There are 11,000 active Facebook Messenger Bots. (The Verge)
- 300 million people actively use voice and audio calling features on Facebook Messenger. (Forbes)
- Facebook Bots now accept major vendors such as MasterCard, Visa and American Express.

Paid Content Continues to Reign

There's no doubt social media algorithms make it harder for businesses to promote organic content. With the introduction of the Instagram algorithm in 2016, nearly every major social network uses some sort of content preferential treatment.

The majority of these algorithms have one simple purpose—to make its users happy with the content they see in their feeds. But this is making it difficult for brands to be seen if they strictly publish organic social content.

On the other hand, paid content is growing faster each quarter. According to Adobe, social media ad spend is estimated to surpass \$41 billion in 2017. And it's not limited to just one channel or network.

Even though Twitter's possible sale in 2016 worried some marketers, VentureBeat showed Q3 advertising revenue grew from \$513 in 2015 to \$545 million in 2016. Along with Instagram's newest algorithm, more emphasis was put on paid content.

The visual social network's mobile ad revenue drew \$1.53 billion across the globe in 2016. In fact, a Content Marketing Institute report discovered paid advertising on search (76%), social media ads (74%) and promoted posts (76%) increased dramatically year-over-year into 2016.

The need for quality and engaging content has never been higher. To ensure brands get their money's worth whether it's paid or organic, content has to have a purpose and be engaging.

Priority on Business Features & Analytics

In 2016 Instagram launched its Business Tools feature, which works in the same vein as Twitter Analytics and Facebook Insights. This could mean social media trends point toward native tool enhancements to meet business needs.

Analytics and reporting features are nothing new to the industry. According to a KPMG survey, 92% of C-level executives already use data and analytics for marketing insights. And it's very likely marketers and business owners don't stop at measuring social media efforts as well.

In fact, a Simplify360 report found 36% of businesses use social media analytics for more than competitor analysis. The competition is only getting stronger in the social landscape, which results in more analytical thinking and marketing.

Social Shopping & Instant Purchases

Social commerce isn't slowing down and more networks are providing brands with easier ways to sell to customers. Instant purchases are available on Instagram, but social media trends point to faster sales across the board.

warby parker cta example

The Sprout Social Index discovered 57% of consumers are more likely to buy from a brand they follow. Additionally, 75% have made a purchase because they saw it on social media.

The power of social media can truly impact a buyer's impression and more brands are moving toward social commerce. Brands are now focusing on buyer's emotions for purchases.

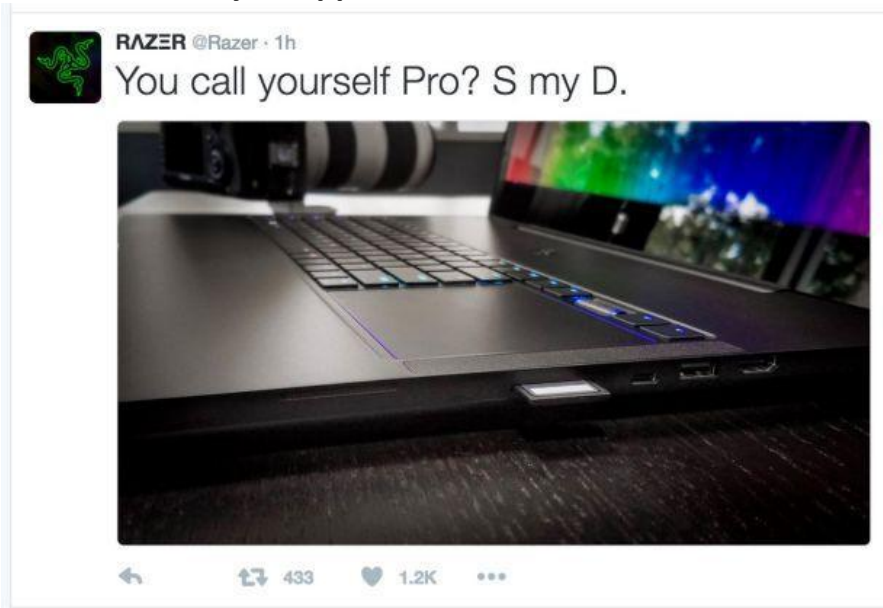
But brands just can't promote without engaging. Social selling still needs interaction. According to an Epsilon report, 28% of consumers said a brand's social presence was the biggest reason to try new products or services.

Cutting out the fat between clicking "buy" and receiving "order complete" will continue to evolve. Throughout the year, expect retailers to find faster ways to make sales and limit purchasing decisions.

When Social Media Backfires

When social media marketing is done correctly it can be blissful but when you cross that invisible line you can destroy an entire corporation in 60 seconds. Here are some entertaining examples of corporate fails on social media.

Razer Talks Dirty to Apple



The 2016 MacBook Pro has a lot going for it, but the lack of a secure digital (SD) slot drove the competition at Razer to tweet something at the tech behemoth: "You call yourself Pro? S my D," read the message atop the photo of an SD card in the Razer Blade laptop. The response: despite 4,800 "likes" on the tweet, the Internet coverage was mind-bendingly bad, especially in the wake of Gamergate and in the time of Candidate Trump. Razer tried to defend the position as "just proud of our SD card slot," but that didn't last long. By the next day it deleted the offending tweet and posted: "We apologize for the SD reader joke. To those who were offended, it was intended as a lighthearted turn of phrase that missed the mark."

US Airways Tweets a Naughty



In April 2014, in an exchange with a customer on Twitter who was upset about a late flight, the airline somehow accidentally tweeted a super-filthy image. We're not gonna show it, but BuzzFeed has the (seriously NSFW) image, if you must.



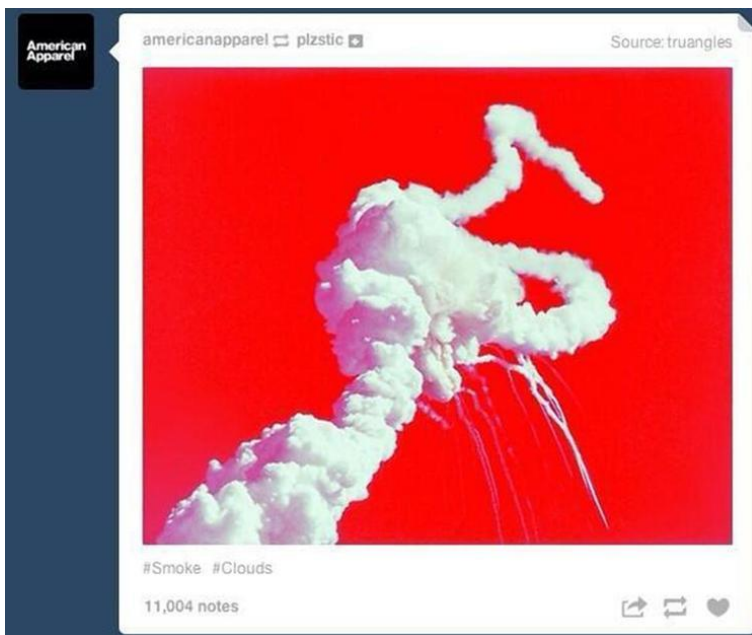
ESPN Analyst Links to Pornhub



College football recruiting analyst Gerry Hamilton was trying to write about a high school linebacker when he somehow threw in the URL for a leading porno site. Oopsie. It was deleted and would be forgotten, had someone on Reddit not been fast enough to take a screenshot. (The @Pornhub account did later ask Hamilton about switching jobs for a day, but got no response.)

American Apparel's Challenge

On Fourth of July 2014, the clothing chain American Apparel tried to share an image of "#smoke" and "#clouds."



What it used was a Photoshopped image of the exploding space shuttle Challenger from 1986. Der.

Chrysler Hates Detroit Drivers



Most people controlling corporate accounts also have personal accounts. Sometimes they get mixed up. Chances are, the person who did this one for ChryslerAutos didn't get to run the corporate account for much longer.

Racist Bot

It's just a chatbot. What could go wrong? Plenty.



Microsoft wanted to test out its artificial intelligence software, so it released the "Tay" chatbot on Twitter. Things started out innocently enough, but the Internet being the Internet, the trolls soon emerged. The bot turned out to be a huge hit with online miscreants, who cajoled Tay into repeating racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic slurs. Microsoft later shut her down.

Thank You

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