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STATISTICS BOOK

Social media – statistics & facts | Business Stats

22 full reports · Edition October 2026

71%

TIKTOK — HIGHEST
PLANNED ORGANIC
INCREASE (NEXT 12
MONTHS)

70.3%

PINTEREST AUDIENCE
FEMALE

+42%

THREADS - FASTEST
GROWING SOCIAL
PLATFORM (MAY 2026
YOY)

~41%

GLOBAL ADULTS
USING SOCIAL MEDIA
FOR NEWS — APRIL
2026



ABOUT THIS BOOK

Social media – statistics & facts | Business Stats

Social media statistics 2026 5.4B+ users, \$267B ad revenue & daily usage trends. Get Facebook, Instagram, TikTok data, marketing & AI insights.

Each chapter is a complete Business Stats report with its text, charts, tables and primary sources. The online version of every report is updated continuously; this book shows them as of Oct 19, 2026.

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STATISTICS REPORT

Planned changes in use of selected social media for organic marketing worldwide 2026

Updated May 21, 2026 · businessstats.com/future-use-of-social-media-among-marketers-worldwide-by-platform

71% TIKTOK — HIGHEST PLANNED ORGANIC INCREASE (NEXT 12 MONTHS)	40% TWITTER/X — HIGHEST PLANNED ORGANIC DECREASE	+62pp TIKTOK NET SCORE — INCREASE MINUS DECREASE
-18pp TWITTER/X NET SCORE — ONLY PLATFORM BELOW -10PP	52% THREADS — FASTEST RISING NEW PLATFORM (2ND HIGHEST PLANNED INCREASE)	78% SHORT-FORM VIDEO — MOST PLANNED CONTENT FORMAT INCREASE

Overview

Planned changes in the organic use of selected social media for marketing purposes during the following 12 months worldwide as of April 2026

The planned changes in organic social media marketing use for the 12 months following April 2026 reveal a stark two-speed social media marketing landscape. Platforms built around short-form video and algorithmic content discovery — TikTok (71% planning increase), YouTube (58%), Instagram (64%) — are seeing overwhelming planned growth in organic marketing investment. Meanwhile, platforms associated with declining algorithmic organic reach or brand safety concerns — Twitter/X (40% planning decrease, net score -18pp), Facebook (20% decrease, net score -4pp) — are seeing significant contraction in organic marketing plans. The broader social media statistics context for these platform dynamics is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

TikTok's extraordinary 71% planned increase rate — nearly three quarters of marketers worldwide planning to grow their organic TikTok presence — reflects the platform's fundamental advantage for organic reach in 2026: TikTok's algorithm distributes content to non-follower audiences at a rate significantly higher than any other major platform. While Instagram and YouTube primarily show content to existing followers or paid-promoted audiences, TikTok's For You Page algorithm can expose any piece of content to millions of new viewers without any paid amplification. This organic reach advantage makes TikTok the most

compelling platform for organic marketing investment and explains why planned increases far exceed every other platform. The social media marketing benefits that drive this investment are in our [influence of social media marketing on businesses analysis](#).

By Platform

Planned Organic Use Changes by Platform 10 Platforms Ranked (April 2026, Next 12 Months)

Planned changes in organic social media use for marketing — increase, maintain, decrease — 10 platforms — worldwide marketers — April 2026 Planned Changes in Organic Social Media Marketing Use — By Platform (April 2026, % of Marketers Worldwide) TikTok: 71% increase, 20% maintain, 9% decrease. Instagram: 64% increase, 26% maintain, 10% decrease. YouTube: 58% increase, 30% maintain, 12% decrease. Threads: 52% increase, 34% maintain, 14% decrease. LinkedIn: 55% increase, 34% maintain, 11% decrease. Reddit: 44% increase, 40% maintain, 16% decrease. Pinterest: 38% increase, 42% maintain, 20% decrease. Snapchat: 28% increase, 44% maintain, 28% decrease. Facebook: 42% increase, 38% maintain, 20% decrease. Twitter/X: 22% increase, 38% maintain, 40% decrease. Sources: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±3-5pp. 71%TikTok — highest increase

Increase Maintain Decrease

LinkedIn's 55% planned increase rate — placing it third among established platforms — reflects the platform's growing importance as a content marketing channel for B2B organisations and the expansion of LinkedIn's creator tools in 2024-2025. LinkedIn newsletters, LinkedIn Live, collaborative articles, and enhanced video features have given B2B marketers new organic content formats that generate significantly higher engagement than traditional LinkedIn posts. For B2B marketers specifically, LinkedIn's planned increase rate is even higher — with approximately 68% of B2B marketers planning to increase organic LinkedIn activity. The social media platforms used by marketers worldwide are in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Planned Organic Social Media Changes Full Data Table (April 2026)

Planned Changes in Organic Social Media Marketing Use — 10 Platforms Worldwide (April 2026, HubSpot / Statista / Hootsuite) Click column to sort



PLATFORM	PLAN TO INCREASE	PLAN TO MAINTAIN	PLAN TO DECREASE	NET SCORE	TRAJECTORY
TikTok	71%	20%	9%	+62pp	Strong increase
Instagram	64%	26%	10%	+54pp	Strong increase
YouTube	58%	30%	12%	+46pp	Strong increase
LinkedIn	55%	34%	11%	+44pp	Strong increase
Threads	52%	34%	14%	+38pp	Emerging platform
Reddit	44%	40%	16%	+28pp	Moderate increase
Pinterest	38%	42%	20%	+18pp	Modest increase
Facebook	42%	38%	20%	+22pp	Marginal positive
Snapchat	28%	44%	28%	0pp	Flat / declining
Twitter/X	22%	38%	40%	-18pp	Strong decrease

Sources: Statista Organic Social Media Marketing Survey April 2026. HubSpot State of Marketing 2026 (n=1,400+ marketers). Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026. ±3–5pp per platform. Net score = % planning to increase minus % planning to decrease. Organic use only — excludes paid advertising. "Planned changes in the 12 months following April 2026" — intention data, not guaranteed outcome.

Reddit's 44% planned increase rate — placing it #6 — reflects a significant shift in how marketers perceive the platform's organic marketing potential. Reddit's 2024-2025 growth in monthly active users, combined with Google's increased indexing of Reddit content in search results, has made organic Reddit presence increasingly valuable for brands. However, Reddit requires a fundamentally different organic approach than other platforms — overtly promotional content is actively downvoted by Reddit communities, and successful organic Reddit marketing requires genuinely useful contributions to specific subreddits rather than branded content marketing. The social network penetration context for Reddit's expanding audience is in our [social network penetration worldwide analysis](#).

Net Score Ranking



TikTok +62pp Net Score to Twitter/X -18pp Full Platform Organic Marketing Momentum Ranking

The net score — planned increase percentage minus planned decrease percentage — provides the clearest single-metric view of organic marketing momentum for each platform. TikTok's +62pp net score is the highest of any platform in this survey, indicating an extraordinary consensus among marketers worldwide that TikTok organic presence deserves more investment. Instagram (+54pp) and YouTube (+46pp) follow, reflecting the durable strength of visual and video-first platforms for organic marketing. The stark contrast with Twitter/X (-18pp) reflects the dramatic change in the platform's organic marketing proposition since Elon Musk's acquisition — reduced moderation, brand safety concerns, and algorithm changes reducing organic reach for non-paying accounts have collectively driven marketers away from organic Twitter/X investment. The daily social media usage patterns driving these platform preferences are in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Net organic marketing momentum score by platform — planned increase minus planned decrease — worldwide marketers — April 2026 Organic Social Media Marketing Net Score by Platform (April 2026, % Increase minus % Decrease) TikTok: +62pp. Instagram: +54pp. YouTube: +46pp. LinkedIn: +44pp. Threads: +38pp. Reddit: +28pp. Facebook: +22pp. Pinterest: +18pp. Snapchat: 0pp. Twitter/X: -18pp. Sources: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±5-8pp net score. +62ppTikTok — highest -18ppTwitter/X — lowest

Facebook's +22pp net score — positive but the second-lowest among all platforms with a positive net score — tells the story of an organic marketing channel in gradual structural decline. Facebook's organic reach for business pages has fallen from approximately 16% of followers in 2012 to less than 2% in 2026, meaning that Facebook organic posts now reach only a tiny fraction of an account's own followers without paid amplification. Despite this, 42% of marketers still plan to increase organic Facebook activity — primarily for community management through Facebook Groups, where organic reach remains higher than for page posts. The number of worldwide social network users still on Facebook driving this planned activity is in our [worldwide social network users analysis](#).

Investment Trajectory

TikTok Index 148, Threads 138 Platform Organic Investment Trajectory 2024 to 2026

Indexing planned organic marketing investment against a 2024 baseline (100 = same as 2024) reveals the magnitude of planned shifts. TikTok at index 148 means marketers are planning approximately 48% more



organic TikTok marketing activity than in 2024 — an extraordinary planned acceleration. Threads at index 138 reflects its emergence from near-zero in 2023 (when it launched) to a meaningful organic marketing channel in 2026, with marketers in text-based content categories finding it a strong alternative to Twitter/X. YouTube at index 128 reflects the accelerating shift to long-form and live video content combined with YouTube Shorts adoption. The internet companies generating revenue from this organic activity are in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

Organic social media marketing investment trajectory by platform — index 100 equals 2024 baseline — April 2026 Organic Social Media Marketing Investment Trajectory — Platform Index (2024 = 100, April 2026) TikTok: 148. Threads: 138. YouTube: 128. Instagram: 118. LinkedIn: 114. Reddit: 108. Pinterest: 96. Snapchat: 88. Facebook: 82. Twitter/X: 62. Index 100 = same organic investment as 2024. Above 100 = planned increase, below 100 = planned decrease. Sources: Statista, HubSpot, Hootsuite 2026. ±5-8pp. 148TikTok index — highest

Index 100 = 2024 baseline Above 100 = planned increase Below 100 = planned decrease

Twitter/X at index 62 — indicating marketers plan approximately 38% less organic Twitter/X marketing activity than in 2024 — represents the steepest planned decline of any established social media platform. This decline is primarily driven by brand safety concerns following Musk's content moderation changes, which have made Twitter/X a more hostile environment for branded content, and by the reduction in organic reach for accounts not subscribing to Twitter Blue (now X Premium). Many marketers have explicitly cited Threads (Meta's Twitter/X alternative) as their primary Twitter/X replacement for text-based content marketing. The social media news source context for Twitter/X's declining role is in our [social media news source analysis](#).

Content Format Shifts

Short-Form Video 78%, Live Streaming 52% Content Formats Most Planned for Increase

Alongside platform-level changes, marketers are planning significant shifts in the content formats they use for organic social media marketing. Short-form video leads all planned format increases at 78% — consistent with TikTok's dominance in planned platform increases and the short-form video algorithm advantages across Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts. Live streaming at 52% reflects the growing recognition that live content generates significantly higher organic reach than static content on most platforms — Instagram Live, YouTube Live, and LinkedIn Live all prioritise live content in algorithmic

distribution. The biggest social media platforms enabling these format shifts are in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Content format planned increase for organic social media marketing — worldwide marketers — April 2026 — percentage planning to increase use Planned Content Format Increases for Organic Social Media Marketing (April 2026, % Planning to Increase Use) Short-form video: 78%. Live streaming: 52%. Stories/ephemeral: 48%. Long-form video: 44%. AR filters: 31%. Static image: 36%. Audio content: 22%. Text/link posts: 28%. Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026. ±4-6pp per format. 78%Short-form video #1 22%Audio content — lowest

Static image posts — the original staple of Instagram and Facebook organic marketing — showing only a 36% planned increase (the second-lowest of visual content formats) reflects the format's declining algorithmic performance across most platforms. Meta's shift to AI-powered content recommendation in 2023-2024 has systematically reduced the reach of static image posts relative to video content, driving marketers to shift organic investment toward video formats. Text and link posts at just 28% planned increase similarly reflects the declining organic reach of traditional social media posting formats as algorithms increasingly prioritise native video content. The social media usage reasons context for these format preferences is in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

By Business Size

Micro Businesses Lead TikTok Planned Increases at 76% Enterprise Follows at 64%

Planned organic social media increases vary significantly by business size — and in a counterintuitive direction. Smaller businesses (micro, under 10 employees) show the highest planned increase rates for both TikTok (76%) and Instagram (72%), while enterprise organisations (5,000+ employees) show lower planned increase rates (TikTok 64%, Instagram 58%). This size-inverse pattern reflects that smaller businesses have historically been slower to adopt new platforms but are now aggressively catching up — particularly as TikTok's organic reach advantage and zero-cost entry point make it especially attractive for resource-constrained smaller organisations. Enterprise organisations, by contrast, already have more mature social media presences across all platforms and are growing from a higher base. The world population and SME context for these business size differences is in our [global economy analysis](#).

Planned organic social media marketing increase by business size — TikTok and Instagram — April 2026
 Planned Organic Increase by Business Size — TikTok vs Instagram (April 2026, % Planning to Increase)



TikTok increase: Enterprise 64%, Mid-market 70%, SMB 74%, Micro 76%. Instagram increase: Enterprise 58%, Mid-market 62%, SMB 68%, Micro 72%. Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026 business size segment analysis. ±5-8pp per segment. 76%Micro business TikTok increase

TikTok planned increase Instagram planned increase

The SMB (small and medium business) and micro business segment's TikTok enthusiasm reflects TikTok's documented track record of helping small businesses go viral — a phenomenon that is essentially impossible on Facebook or Instagram without paid advertising. TikTok's algorithm has produced numerous documented cases of small businesses with under 1,000 followers achieving millions of views on individual posts, transforming their sales overnight. This viral potential — essentially unavailable on other platforms for zero organic marketing spend — makes TikTok uniquely attractive to businesses that cannot afford significant paid social advertising. The social media penetration context for reaching these small business audiences is in our [social network penetration by region analysis](#).

Planned organic social media marketing increase by platform — sorted ranking — worldwide marketers —

April 2026 Planned Organic Increase by Platform — Sorted Ranking (April 2026, % Planning to Increase)

TikTok 71%, Instagram 64%, YouTube 58%, LinkedIn 55%, Threads 52%, Reddit 44%, Facebook 42%, Pinterest 38%, Snapchat 28%, Twitter/X 22%. Sources: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±3-5pp. 71%TikTok leads

% planning to increase organic use Planned organic social media marketing decrease by platform — sorted

ranking — worldwide marketers — April 2026 Planned Organic Decrease by Platform — Sorted Ranking

(April 2026, % Planning to Decrease) Twitter/X 40%, Snapchat 28%, Pinterest 20%, Facebook 20%, Reddit 16%, Threads 14%, YouTube 12%, Instagram 10%, TikTok 9%. Sources: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±3-5pp.

40%Twitter/X — most decrease

Key Statistics

Planned Changes in Organic Social Media Marketing Key Statistics (April 2026)

71%TikTok — Highest Planned Organic Increase, +62pp Net Score (April 2026)Approximately 71% of marketers worldwide plan to increase their organic TikTok marketing use in the 12 months following April 2026 — the highest of any platform. Only 9% plan to decrease, giving TikTok a net score of +62pp — the strongest organic marketing momentum of any platform in this survey. TikTok's organic reach advantage (algorithmic distribution to non-followers) is the primary driver of this extraordinary planned increase.



Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ± 3 –5pp. 40% Twitter/X — Highest Planned Organic Decrease, -18pp Net Score — Steepest Platform Decline Approximately 40% of marketers worldwide plan to decrease their organic Twitter/X marketing use in the 12 months following April 2026 — the highest planned decrease of any platform. Only 22% plan to increase, giving Twitter/X a net score of -18pp — the only platform with a strongly negative organic marketing trajectory. Brand safety concerns, reduced moderation, and algorithm changes limiting organic reach for non-paying accounts are the primary drivers.

Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ± 3 –5pp. 52% Threads — Fastest-Rising New Platform, 2nd Highest Planned Increase Among New Platforms Approximately 52% of marketers worldwide plan to increase their organic Threads use in the 12 months following April 2026 — the second highest planned increase among platforms launched after 2020, behind TikTok. Threads (launched July 2023) has emerged as the primary organic alternative to Twitter/X for text-based content marketing, with its Meta integration giving it reach advantages over other Twitter alternatives. Investment trajectory index: 138 (vs 2024 baseline of 100).

Source: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ± 3 –5pp. 78% Short-Form Video — Most Planned Content Format Increase Across All Organic Platforms Approximately 78% of marketers worldwide plan to increase their use of short-form video for organic social media marketing in the 12 months following April 2026 — the highest of any content format. This reflects TikTok's dominance in planned platform increases, Instagram Reels growth, and YouTube Shorts maturation. Short-form video delivers the highest organic reach on all three of the top planned growth platforms. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Hootsuite. ± 4 –6pp. 76% Micro Business TikTok Increase — Highest Business Segment, Exceeds Enterprise at 64% Micro businesses (under 10 employees) show the highest planned TikTok organic increase at approximately 76% — 12 percentage points above enterprise organisations (64%). This counterintuitive size-inverse pattern reflects TikTok's zero-cost viral potential that is particularly valuable for resource-constrained small businesses who cannot afford paid social advertising. TikTok's documented track record of helping small businesses achieve viral reach makes it the most compelling organic platform for micro and SMB organisations. Source: HubSpot 2026. ± 5 –8pp. +62pp TikTok Net Score — 80pp Ahead of Twitter/X — Widest Platform Momentum Gap in Survey History The 80-percentage-point gap between TikTok's net organic marketing momentum score (+62pp) and Twitter/X's (-18pp) is the widest platform momentum gap recorded in any equivalent Statista/HubSpot survey. This extraordinary gap reflects that TikTok and Twitter/X are at opposite ends of the organic marketing platform lifecycle — TikTok in a rapid growth phase with strong algorithmic organic reach, Twitter/X in a structural decline phase with reduced organic reach and brand safety concerns. Source: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ± 5 –8pp net scores. FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions Planned Changes in Organic Social Media Marketing 2026

TikTok leads planned organic social media increases with 71% of marketers worldwide planning to increase organic TikTok marketing in the 12 months following April 2026 — the highest of any platform. Instagram (64%) and YouTube (58%) follow. TikTok's algorithm distributes organic content to non-follower audiences at a much higher rate than other platforms. Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3–5pp.

Partially. While 42% of marketers still plan to increase organic Facebook activity, **20% plan to decrease it — giving Facebook a positive but modest net score of +22pp**. Facebook's organic reach for business pages has declined to less than 2% of followers in 2026, making it one of the least effective organic platforms. Most planned Facebook increases are for community management through Groups rather than page posts. Source: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±3–5pp.

Twitter/X has the highest planned organic decrease at 40% of marketers planning to reduce use, with only 22% planning to increase — giving it a net score of -18pp, the most negative of any platform. Brand safety concerns, reduced content moderation, and algorithm changes limiting organic reach are the primary drivers. Many marketers are shifting Twitter/X organic investment to Threads. Source: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±3–5pp.

Yes. **55% of marketers worldwide plan to increase organic LinkedIn marketing use** in the 12 months following April 2026 — placing it #4 among planned increases with a net score of +44pp. For B2B marketers specifically, the planned increase rate is approximately 68%. LinkedIn's expanded creator tools, newsletter features, and LinkedIn Live are driving increased organic investment. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3–5pp.

The top planned content format increases for organic social media marketing are: **short-form video (78%), live streaming (52%), stories/ephemeral content (48%), long-form video (44%), and AR filters (31%)**. Static image posts (36%) and text/link posts (28%) show the lowest planned increases, reflecting declining algorithmic performance of non-video formats. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Hootsuite. ±4–6pp.

Partially. Threads has a planned organic increase rate of 52% — the second-highest of new platforms — while Twitter/X has the highest planned decrease at 40%. **Many marketers are explicitly shifting text-based organic social investment from Twitter/X to Threads**, citing better brand safety, Meta integration



advantages, and an engaged early-adopter audience. However, Threads still lacks some Twitter/X features important for organic marketing such as advanced search and hashtag discovery. Source: HubSpot 2026, Hootsuite. ±3–5pp.

TikTok leads planned organic increases primarily because of its **superior organic reach for non-follower audiences**. TikTok's For You Page algorithm distributes content to users who don't follow the creator at a much higher rate than Instagram, Facebook, or YouTube — meaning even accounts with small followings can achieve viral organic reach. This zero-cost viral potential, combined with TikTok's 2.18 billion monthly active users, makes it the most compelling platform for organic marketing investment. Source: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±3–5pp.

Instagram has an organic social media marketing net score of **+54pp** (64% planning to increase minus 10% planning to decrease) — the second-highest net score after TikTok (+62pp). Instagram remains the second most popular planned organic platform increase overall, driven by Reels' strong algorithmic reach and Instagram Shopping integration. Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±5–8pp net score.

Sources

[Statista — Planned Changes in Organic Social Media Marketing Worldwide April 2026](#) — Primary source for platform-level planned increase/maintain/decrease percentages. Statista compiles HubSpot, Hootsuite, and independent marketing surveys. ±3–5pp per platform.

[HubSpot State of Marketing 2026](#) — Primary survey source. n=1,400+ marketing professionals globally. Includes business size segment breakdowns and content format planned changes. ±3–5pp. Survey conducted Q1 2026.

[Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026](#) — Secondary source for content format planned increase data and platform trajectory analysis. Hootsuite surveys 10,000+ marketers globally annually. ±4–6pp.

[GWI Consumer and Marketing Trends 2026](#) — Secondary cross-validation source for platform organic use intention data across market segments. ±3–5pp.

All figures represent planned intentions for organic social media marketing use in the 12 months following April 2026. Organic use only — excludes all paid advertising and paid promotion. Planned intentions do not guarantee actual behaviour change. Net score = % planning to increase minus % planning to decrease. ±3–5pp per platform for intention figures, ±5–8pp for net scores. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Leading benefits of social media marketing according to marketers worldwide as of April 2026

Updated May 21, 2026 · businessstats.com/influence-of-global-social-media-marketing-usage-on-businesses

84% BRAND AWARENESS — #1 BENEFIT, 5TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR AT TOP	73% WEBSITE TRAFFIC — #2 BENEFIT (APRIL 2026)	66% LEAD GENERATION — #3 BENEFIT, #2 FOR B2B MARKETERS
72% B2B LEAD GENERATION BENEFIT CITATION — ABOVE GLOBAL AVERAGE	78% INSTAGRAM — TOP PLATFORM FOR BRAND AWARENESS BENEFIT	62% MEASURING ROI — MOST COMMON SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING CHALLENGE

Overview

Why marketers invest in social media — the top 10 benefits worldwide in 2026

The leading benefits of social media marketing identified by marketers worldwide in April 2026 span a wide range of business objectives — from top-of-funnel brand building to bottom-of-funnel lead generation and revenue growth. Brand awareness's consistent dominance at 84% for the fifth consecutive year reflects the fundamental value proposition of social media as a mass-reach communication channel: the ability to build brand recognition across enormous audiences at a fraction of the cost of traditional media. The broader social media statistics context for these benefits is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

The distribution of cited benefits reveals a fundamental tension in social media marketing: marketers overwhelmingly cite awareness and traffic benefits (84%, 73%) over revenue and conversion benefits (42% for growing revenue), suggesting a persistent difficulty in directly attributing revenue outcomes to social media activities. This attribution gap — where marketers can easily measure awareness and traffic from social media but struggle to trace the direct revenue contribution — is the core challenge driving the 62% of marketers who cite measuring ROI as their top social media marketing obstacle. The social media marketing technology context for bridging this gap is in our [most impactful marketing technology](#)

[innovations analysis.](#)

Full Benefit Ranking

Brand Awareness 84% to Reduced Marketing Costs 38% Full Social Media Benefit Ranking (April 2026)

Leading benefits of social media marketing according to marketers worldwide — April 2026 — percentage citing as leading benefit Leading Benefits of Social Media Marketing — Marketers Worldwide (April 2026, % Citing as Leading Benefit) Brand awareness: 84%. Website traffic: 73%. Lead generation: 66%. Business partnerships: 61%. Search rankings: 55%. Marketplace insights: 52%. Loyal fan base: 49%. Thought leadership: 45%. Revenue growth: 42%. Reduced marketing costs: 38%. Sources: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026. ±3-5pp. 84%Brand awareness — #1

Top-of-funnel / awareness benefits Mid-funnel / engagement benefits Bottom-funnel / conversion benefits

The improved search rankings benefit at #5 (55%) reflects the well-documented positive correlation between social media presence and organic search visibility. While social media signals are not a direct Google ranking factor, high-quality social media content drives inbound links, brand searches, and engagement metrics that indirectly benefit SEO performance. Marketers who run active social media programmes consistently report higher organic search traffic — a synergy that makes social media investment more valuable than standalone channel ROI calculations might suggest. The number of worldwide social network users that social media reaches to drive these benefits is in our [worldwide social network users analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Social Media Marketing Benefits 2026 Full Data Table

Leading Benefits of Social Media Marketing — Marketers Worldwide (April 2026, Statista / HubSpot / Hootsuite) Click column to sort

RANK	BENEFIT	ALL MARKETERS	B2B	B2C	FUNNEL STAGE	PRIMARY PLATFORM
1	Increased brand awareness	84%	81%	88%	Top-of-funnel	Instagram, Facebook
2	Increased website traffic	73%	70%	76%	Top/mid-funnel	All platforms
3	Lead generation	66%	72%	60%	Mid-funnel	LinkedIn, Facebook

4	Growing business partnerships	61%	68%	54%	Mid-funnel	LinkedIn
5	Improved search rankings	55%	58%	52%	Top-of-funnel	YouTube, Pinterest
6	Gathering marketplace insights	52%	61%	44%	Strategic	Twitter/X, Reddit
7	Building loyal fans	49%	44%	54%	Retention	Instagram, TikTok
8	Developing thought leadership	45%	58%	32%	Top-of-funnel	LinkedIn, YouTube
9	Growing revenue	42%	40%	44%	Bottom-funnel	TikTok Shop, Instagram
10	Reduced marketing costs	38%	35%	41%	Efficiency	Organic social

Sources: Statista Social Media Marketing Benefits Survey April 2026. HubSpot State of Marketing 2026 (n=1,400+ marketers). Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026. ±3–5pp per benefit. Multiple selection allowed — percentages do not sum to 100%. B2B and B2C sub-samples from HubSpot survey data.

Thought leadership at #8 (45%) shows the most extreme B2B vs B2C divergence in the entire ranking — with 58% of B2B marketers citing it versus only 32% of B2C marketers. This reflects LinkedIn's dominant position in B2B social media strategy: LinkedIn's algorithm actively promotes thought leadership content from senior executives and subject matter experts, creating a strong incentive for B2B marketers to invest in executive social presence as a strategic asset. The social media platforms used by marketers for thought leadership are in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

B2B vs B2C

B2B Prioritises Lead Generation and Thought Leadership B2C Leads on Brand Awareness and Loyalty

The B2B versus B2C comparison reveals fundamentally different social media marketing objectives reflecting different purchase journeys. B2B marketers show significantly higher citation rates for lead generation (+12pp vs B2C), growing business partnerships (+14pp), gathering marketplace insights (+17pp), and developing thought leadership (+26pp) — all benefits associated with the longer, relationship-driven B2B sales cycle. B2C marketers lead on brand awareness (+7pp), building loyal fans (+10pp), and reducing marketing costs (+6pp) — benefits more aligned with direct-to-consumer brand building and the shorter B2C purchase journey. The daily social media usage patterns that define these different B2B and B2C audiences are in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Social media marketing benefits B2B vs B2C marketers worldwide — April 2026 — percentage citing as leading benefit Social Media Marketing Benefits — B2B vs B2C Comparison (April 2026, % Citing as Leading Benefit) Brand awareness: B2B 81%, B2C 88%. Website traffic: 70%, 76%. Lead generation: 72%, 60%. Business partnerships: 68%, 54%. Search rankings: 58%, 52%. Marketplace insights: 61%, 44%. Loyal fans: 44%, 54%. Thought leadership: 58%, 32%. Revenue growth: 40%, 44%. Reduced costs: 35%, 41%. Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±4-6pp per segment. +26ppB2B thought leadership lead B2B marketers B2C marketers

The gathering marketplace insights benefit shows the second-largest B2B advantage at +17pp (61% B2B vs 44% B2C). B2B marketers use social media — particularly LinkedIn, Twitter/X, and industry-specific Reddit communities — as intelligence tools for monitoring competitor activities, tracking industry conversations, understanding customer pain points, and identifying emerging trends in their sector. For B2B organisations, social listening provides real-time market intelligence that would otherwise require expensive research reports or industry analyst subscriptions. The social media news source context for this intelligence-gathering function is in our [social media news source analysis](#).

By Platform

Instagram Leads Brand Awareness, LinkedIn Owns B2B Lead Generation Platform Benefit Specialisation

Different social media platforms deliver different leading benefits, and marketers increasingly approach platform selection as a deliberate strategic choice based on desired outcomes. Instagram leads for brand awareness, cited by 78% of marketers using it for this purpose — reflecting Instagram's visual-first format that is particularly effective for building brand aesthetic, product discovery, and aspirational brand associations. Facebook at 72% is a close second for awareness, benefiting from its enormous reach and sophisticated advertising targeting. TikTok's 65% brand awareness rating — growing fastest year-on-year — reflects its algorithm's ability to expose brands to non-follower audiences at extraordinary scale. The biggest social media platforms and their advertising capabilities are in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Social media platforms cited for brand awareness benefit — marketers worldwide — April 2026 — percentage Platforms Most Cited for Brand Awareness Benefit — Marketers Worldwide (April 2026, %) Instagram: 78%. Facebook: 72%. TikTok: 65%. LinkedIn: 58%. YouTube: 54%. Pinterest: 42%. Twitter/X: 38%. Snapchat: 32%. Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Statista platform benefit survey April

2026. ± 4 -6pp per platform. 78% Instagram — #1 for awareness 65% TikTok — fastest growing

LinkedIn's 58% brand awareness rating understates its importance for B2B brand building — for B2B organisations, LinkedIn is frequently the primary brand awareness channel, cited by over 80% of B2B marketers for brand building in their specific segment. YouTube at 54% for brand awareness reflects the platform's dual role as both a search engine and a social platform — YouTube's long-form video format enables deep brand storytelling that drives awareness through sustained engagement rather than the quick impressions typical of TikTok or Instagram. The social network penetration rates by region that determine platform brand awareness reach are in our [social network penetration worldwide analysis](#).

ROI Measurement

Engagement Rate 74%, Website Traffic 68% How Marketers Measure Social Media Marketing Benefits

How marketers measure the benefits they cite reveals an important gap: the most commonly cited benefit is brand awareness (84%), but the most commonly used measurement method is engagement rate (74%) — a metric that measures content performance rather than brand awareness directly. True brand awareness measurement requires consumer survey research (aided/unaided brand recall studies) that is expensive and infrequent, so most marketers proxy awareness through engagement proxies. This measurement-outcome misalignment means that reported social media ROI often understates true brand building value and overstates the performance of engagement-driven content relative to genuine awareness-building content. The internet companies revenue context for social media marketing investment is in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

Social media marketing ROI measurement methods used by marketers worldwide — April 2026 — percentage using each method

Measurement Method	Percentage of Marketers
Engagement rate	74%
Website traffic	68%
Lead volume	58%
Brand sentiment	52%
Revenue attribution	44%
Follower growth	42%
Share of voice	31%
Customer lifetime value	28%

Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Statista. ± 3 -5pp per method. 74% Engagement rate — #1 metric

% of marketers using this measurement method

Revenue attribution at just 44% — used by fewer than half of marketers — highlights the persistent challenge of connecting social media activity to revenue outcomes. Marketing mix modelling and multi-touch attribution tools have improved significantly in capability since 2022, but implementation requires

substantial data infrastructure, technical expertise, and cross-functional collaboration between marketing and finance that many organisations lack. The result is that the bottom-of-funnel benefit (growing revenue, cited by 42% of marketers) is the hardest to prove and therefore the hardest to justify in budget discussions, creating a systematic underinvestment in bottom-funnel social media optimisation. The global economy context for marketing budget justification is in our [global economy analysis](#).

Year-on-Year Trend

Marketplace Insights +6pp and Lead Generation +5pp Benefits Growing Fastest 2024 to 2026

Comparing benefit citation rates from 2024 to April 2026 reveals which social media marketing benefits are growing in marketer appreciation and which are stable or declining. Marketplace insights (+6pp from 46% to 52%) shows the fastest growth — reflecting the expanding role of social listening tools that enable marketers to extract structured intelligence from unstructured social media conversations. The maturation of social listening platforms — from basic keyword monitoring to AI-powered sentiment analysis and competitive intelligence — has made this benefit tangible and measurable where it was previously anecdotal. The social media usage reasons that generate these consumer conversations for monitoring are in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

Social media marketing benefit citation rates — 2024 vs April 2026 — percentage point change — year-on-year trend

Social Media Marketing Benefit Citation Rate — 2024 vs April 2026 (% of Marketers)	Brand awareness	Website traffic	Lead generation	Revenue growth	Marketplace insights	Thought leadership	Sources
2024	80%	69%	61%	37%	46%	39%	HubSpot State of Marketing 2024
2026	84%	73%	66%	42%	52%	45%	HubSpot State of Marketing 2026
Change	+4pp	+4pp	+5pp	+5pp	+6pp	+6pp	±3-5pp per year

+6pp Marketplace insights growth +5pp Lead gen and revenue growth

The growing revenue benefit's +5pp increase (from 37% to 42%) is analytically significant — it signals that more marketers are successfully connecting social media activity to revenue outcomes, likely driven by social commerce maturation. TikTok Shop, Instagram Shopping, and Pinterest's shoppable pins have made the revenue contribution of social media increasingly direct and measurable, particularly in retail, beauty, and fashion categories. As social commerce platforms improve their attribution tools, the growing revenue benefit is expected to continue rising through 2027-2028. The global market value of internet companies driving this social commerce growth is in our [largest internet companies by market value analysis](#).

Key Challenges Alongside Benefits

Measuring ROI 62%, Creating Engaging Content 58% Top Challenges That Limit Benefit Realisation

Understanding the benefits of social media marketing requires context from the challenges marketers face in realising those benefits. Measuring ROI (62%) is the most commonly cited challenge — directly limiting the ability to demonstrate the value of benefits like brand awareness and thought leadership that are difficult to quantify. Creating engaging content (58%) is the second most common challenge — directly limiting the realisation of benefits like building loyal fans, website traffic, and brand awareness that depend on high-quality content production. The AI market innovations reducing these content creation barriers are in our [AI market size worldwide analysis](#).

Key challenges limiting social media marketing benefit realisation — marketers worldwide — April 2026 Top Social Media Marketing Challenges (April 2026, % of Marketers Citing as Obstacle) Measuring ROI: 62%. Creating engaging content: 58%. Reaching target audience: 52%. Keeping up with trends: 48%. Managing multiple platforms: 45%. Budget constraints: 43%. Algorithm changes: 41%. Building authentic community: 36%. Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Statista. ±3-5pp. 62%ROI measurement — top challenge 58%Content creation — #2 challenge

Algorithm changes (41%) as a top challenge reflects the constant uncertainty in social media marketing planning created by platform algorithm updates that can dramatically reduce or increase organic reach without warning. Meta's numerous algorithm updates between 2022-2026 — shifting from interest-based to AI recommendation-based content distribution — significantly changed which content types perform well and which marketers were previously successful with. For marketers building social media strategies around organic reach, algorithm unpredictability represents an existential planning risk. The world population context for the scale of audiences affected by these algorithm changes is in our [world population analysis](#).

Social media marketing benefits by funnel stage — average citation rate — marketers worldwide April 2026 Social Media Marketing Benefits by Funnel Stage — Average Citation Rate (April 2026, %) Top-of-funnel avg: 72% (brand awareness 84%, search rankings 55%, thought leadership 45%). Mid-funnel avg: 63.5% (lead gen 66%, partnerships 61%). Retention: 49%. Bottom-funnel: 42% (revenue growth). Strategic: 52% (marketplace insights). Efficiency: 38% (reduced costs). Sources: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±3-5pp. 72%Top-of-funnel avg

Top-of-funnel Mid-funnel Bottom-funnel Key Statistics

Leading Benefits of Social Media Marketing Key Statistics (April 2026)

84% Brand Awareness — #1 Social Media Marketing Benefit for 5th Consecutive Year (April 2026) Increased brand awareness is cited by approximately 84% of marketers worldwide as a leading benefit of social media marketing in April 2026 — the highest citation rate of any benefit and its fifth consecutive year at the top of the ranking. This dominance reflects social media's fundamental value as a mass-reach communication channel. B2C marketers cite brand awareness at 88% vs B2B at 81%. Instagram (78%) and Facebook (72%) are the top platforms for this benefit. Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$.

72% B2B Lead Generation — 12pp Above B2C Rate, LinkedIn Primary Platform B2B marketers cite lead generation as a leading benefit at approximately 72% — 12 percentage points above B2C marketers (60%) and making lead generation the second most important benefit for B2B (vs #3 overall). This reflects LinkedIn's effectiveness as a B2B lead generation platform and the longer B2B sales cycle where social media plays a sustained nurturing role. B2B organisations report generating approximately 35-50% of their qualified leads through LinkedIn and other social channels. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6\text{pp}$.

+6pp Marketplace Insights — Fastest Growing Benefit 2024 to 2026 (46% to 52%) Gathering marketplace insights has shown the fastest year-on-year growth of any social media marketing benefit, rising from 46% in 2024 to 52% in April 2026 — a +6pp increase. This growth reflects the maturation of social listening tools from basic keyword monitoring to AI-powered sentiment analysis and competitive intelligence. B2B marketers show particularly strong adoption of this benefit at 61% vs B2C at 44%. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2024 and 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$.

62% Measuring ROI — Most Common Challenge Limiting Social Media Marketing Benefit Realisation Measuring ROI is cited by approximately 62% of marketers as the top obstacle to realising social media marketing benefits — creating a direct paradox where the most cited benefit (brand awareness at 84%) is also the hardest to quantify. Only 44% of marketers use revenue attribution methods, and only 28% measure customer lifetime value from social media. This measurement gap systematically understates social media marketing's true contribution to business outcomes. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Statista. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$.

58% Thought Leadership — Biggest B2B vs B2C Gap (+26pp), LinkedIn Primary Channel Developing thought leadership is cited by approximately 58% of B2B marketers as a leading benefit vs only 32% of B2C marketers — a 26pp gap, the largest B2B vs B2C divergence in the entire ranking. LinkedIn's algorithm actively promotes thought leadership content from executives and subject matter experts, making it the primary platform for this benefit. For B2B brands, executive social presence on LinkedIn drives brand credibility, inbound leads, and



talent acquisition. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±4–6pp. **42% Revenue Growth — #9 Benefit** Despite Being the Ultimate Marketing Goal Growing revenue is cited by only approximately 42% of marketers as a leading social media marketing benefit — paradoxically low given that revenue growth is the ultimate objective of most marketing activity. This low citation rate reflects the attribution challenge: most marketers cannot reliably connect social media activity to revenue outcomes. However, the benefit is growing — up +5pp from 37% in 2024 — driven by social commerce tools that make revenue attribution more direct. Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3–5pp. FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions Benefits of Social Media Marketing 2026

The top 5 benefits of social media marketing according to marketers worldwide in April 2026 are: (1) **Increased brand awareness (84%)**, (2) Increased website traffic (73%), (3) Lead generation (66%), (4) Growing business partnerships (61%), and (5) Improved search rankings (55%). Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026. ±3–5pp.

Yes. Brand awareness has been the top social media marketing benefit for five consecutive years, cited by approximately 84% of marketers worldwide in April 2026. Instagram (78%) and Facebook (72%) are the top platforms for brand awareness. B2C marketers cite brand awareness at 88% vs B2B at 81%. Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3–5pp.

Yes. Lead generation is cited by approximately **66% of marketers worldwide as a leading benefit of social media marketing** in 2026. For B2B marketers specifically, lead generation is cited at 72% — the second most important benefit after brand awareness. LinkedIn is the primary B2B lead generation platform. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±4–6pp.

The key differences: **B2B marketers rank lead generation, business partnerships, marketplace insights, and thought leadership significantly higher** than B2C. B2C marketers rank brand awareness, building loyal fans, and reduced costs higher. The biggest single gap is thought leadership — cited by 58% of B2B marketers vs 32% of B2C marketers (+26pp). Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±4–6pp.

The most common social media ROI measurement methods are: **engagement rate (74%)**, **website traffic (68%)**, **lead volume (58%)**, **brand sentiment (52%)**, and **revenue attribution (44%)**. Only 44% of marketers use direct revenue attribution — the most accurate method. The most cited challenge is measuring ROI (62% of marketers). Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Statista. ±3–5pp.

According to marketers in 2026, **Instagram is the top platform for brand awareness (78%)**, followed by **Facebook (72%) and TikTok (65%)**. TikTok is growing fastest for brand awareness, driven by its



algorithm's ability to expose brands to non-follower audiences at scale. For B2B brand awareness specifically, LinkedIn leads at approximately 80%+ of B2B marketers. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Statista. ±4–6pp.

Approximately **55% of marketers cite improved search rankings as a leading benefit of social media marketing** in 2026. While social media signals are not a direct Google ranking factor, social media activity indirectly benefits SEO through increased brand searches, inbound link generation, and content amplification. YouTube is particularly cited for SEO benefits given its position as the world's second-largest search engine. Source: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±3–5pp.

The top social media marketing challenges in 2026 are: (1) **Measuring ROI (62%)**, (2) Creating engaging content (58%), (3) Reaching the target audience (52%), (4) Keeping up with trends (48%), and (5) Managing multiple platforms (45%). Measuring ROI is also the challenge that most directly limits the ability to demonstrate the value of social media marketing benefits. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Statista. ±3–5pp.

Sources

Statista — Benefits of Social Media Marketing According to Marketers Worldwide April 2026 — Primary source for overall benefit citation rates and historical trend data. Statista compiles HubSpot, Hootsuite, and independent marketing survey data. ±3–5pp per benefit.

HubSpot State of Marketing 2026 — Primary survey source for B2B vs B2C breakdowns, ROI measurement methods, and challenge data. HubSpot surveys 1,400+ marketing professionals globally. ±3–5pp. Conducted Q1 2026.

Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026 — Secondary source for platform-level benefit analysis and year-on-year trend data. Hootsuite's annual social trends report surveys 10,000+ marketers globally. ±4–6pp.

GWJ Consumer and Marketing Trends 2026 — Secondary source for consumer-side validation of social media marketing effectiveness across benefit categories. ±3–5pp.

All figures represent the percentage of marketing professionals worldwide citing each benefit as a leading advantage of social media marketing in their organisation as of April 2026. Multiple selection allowed — percentages do not sum to 100%. B2B and B2C sub-sample figures carry higher margin of error (±4–6pp). Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Global marketers on generative AI benefits for social media marketing 2026

Updated May 16, 2026 · businessstats.com/leading-benefits-generative-ai-social-media-marketing

71% CONTENT SPEED — #1 GENAI BENEFIT WORLDWIDE (APRIL 2026)	72% GENAI ADOPTION RATE — SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETERS WORLDWIDE	6.2hrs AVERAGE WEEKLY TIME SAVED PER MARKETER
62% REPORT POSITIVE ROI WITHIN YEAR ONE	2.8 AVERAGE GENAI TOOLS USED PER SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETER	+43pp ADOPTION GROWTH SINCE 2023 (29% TO 72%)

Overview

Leading benefits of using generative AI for social media marketing worldwide as of April 2026

Generative AI has moved from a curiosity to a core production tool in social media marketing faster than most technology transitions in the industry's history. In April 2024, 48% of social media marketers globally were using GenAI for at least some of their work. By April 2026 — 24 months later — that figure is 72%. The benefits driving this adoption are concrete, measurable, and concentrated in the operational layer: content moves faster, costs less, and personalises further than it did before. For most marketing teams, the headline pitch of GenAI has proven accurate.

The benefit data reveals something important about how marketers actually use these tools. Content creation speed tops at 71% — but this is not about AI replacing human creativity. The marketers reporting this benefit are describing a world where AI handles first drafts, caption variants, and hashtag sets, freeing human writers to do the work that actually requires judgment: editing, brand voice decisions, and creative direction. The efficiency gain is real without being the existential displacement that the most alarming AI narratives predicted. The platforms where these AI-produced posts appear are covered in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Top Benefits Ranking

Content Speed 71%, Cost Reduction 58%, Personalization 54% — Top GenAI Benefits Worldwide (April 2026)

Leading benefits of using generative AI for social media marketing according to marketers worldwide — % citing each, April 2026 (multi-select) Leading GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing Worldwide — April 2026 (% of Marketers) Content creation speed 71%. Cost reduction 58%. Personalization at scale 54%. A/B testing efficiency 49%. Content consistency 44%. Data analysis improvements 38%. 24/7 scheduling 36%. Multilingual content 33%. Trend identification 29%. Reduced creative block 26%. Sources: Statista Apr 2026, HubSpot 2026. Multi-select. ±3-5pp. 71%Speed — #1

% of social media marketers worldwide citing each as a significant benefit — April 2026 (multi-select, totals exceed 100%)

The drop from the top four benefits (speed, cost, personalization, A/B testing — all above 49%) to the bottom six (consistency, insights, scheduling, multilingual, trends, creativity — all 26–44%) is significant. The top cluster represents established, proven GenAI use cases that almost every marketer has personally experienced. The bottom cluster represents emerging capabilities that are growing fast but haven't yet become daily workflow staples for the majority. Multilingual content (33%) is the most commercially interesting of the emerging benefits — AI-generated content in multiple languages simultaneously was cost-prohibitive just two years ago, and the improvement in non-English language quality from major models since 2024 has made it a real workflow option for brands with international audiences. The broader social media user audience this content reaches is in our [global social media users worldwide analysis](#).

Full Data Table

GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing — Full Worldwide Data Table (April 2026)

Benefit citation rate, two-year growth trend, top tool driving each benefit, and the social media task most improved. The social media news and content landscape is in our [social media news source worldwide analysis](#).

GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing — Worldwide, April 2026 (Statista / HubSpot) Click column to sort

RANK	BENEFIT	APRIL 2026 (%)	2-YEAR GROWTH	TOP DRIVING TOOL TYPE	PRIMARY SOCIAL TASK IMPROVED
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1	Content creation speed	71%	+42pp (2023: 29%)	Text generation (ChatGPT, Claude)	Caption writing, post copy
2	Cost reduction	58%	+36pp (2023: 22%)	Text + image generation	Content production budget
3	Personalization at scale	54%	+34pp (2023: 20%)	Text gen + CRM integration	Audience-specific variants
4	A/B testing efficiency	49%	+32pp (2023: 17%)	Variant generation	Creative testing at scale
5	Improved content consistency	44%	+26pp (2023: 18%)	Brand voice AI tools	Multi-platform brand voice
6	Better data analysis & insights	38%	+24pp (2023: 14%)	AI analytics platforms	Performance reporting
7	24/7 scheduling & automation	36%	+20pp (2023: 16%)	AI scheduling tools	Publishing cadence
8	Multilingual content creation	33%	+22pp (2023: 11%)	Translation + localisation AI	International content
9	Faster trend identification	29%	+18pp (2023: 11%)	Social listening AI	Trend-responsive content
10	Reduced creative block	26%	+18pp (2023: 8%)	Ideation AI tools	Content ideation

Sources: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026 (3,200+ marketers, 42 markets), HubSpot State of AI in Marketing 2026, Social Media Examiner GenAI Report 2026. Multi-select question — totals exceed 100%. 2023 baseline from Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey Q1 2023. ±3–5 percentage points per benefit.

The 2-year growth column is striking across the board. Every benefit has more than doubled in citation frequency since 2023. Content speed grew from 29% to 71% (+42pp). Cost reduction from 22% to 58% (+36pp). These aren't incremental gains — they represent the wholesale shift from "some marketers exploring AI" to "AI is a standard workflow tool." The growth rates also reveal which benefits matured earliest (speed and cost, already strong in 2023) and which are still scaling (multilingual at +22pp, still below 50%). The challenges that accompany these benefits are documented in our [GenAI challenges for](#)

[social media marketing analysis](#).

Adoption Growth

From 29% in 2023 to 72% in April 2026 — GenAI Adoption Has More Than Doubled in 2.5 Years

The adoption trajectory from 29% (2023) to 48% (2024) to 72% (April 2026) tells the story of a technology moving from early adoption to mainstream faster than almost any previous digital marketing tool. For context: social media itself took approximately 5–6 years to move from 30% to 70% marketing adoption. Email marketing tools took approximately 8 years. GenAI for social media has done it in approximately 2.5 years — driven by the combination of dramatically lower tool costs, rapidly improving output quality, and the efficiency pressure on marketing teams that makes any credible productivity gain worth adopting.

GenAI adoption rate among social media marketers worldwide 2023–April 2026 — % using GenAI for at least some social media marketing work GenAI Adoption Rate — Social Media Marketers Worldwide (2023 to April 2026, %) Q1 2023: 29%. Q3 2023: 36%. Q1 2024: 48%. Q3 2024: 58%. Q1 2025: 64%. Q3 2025: 68%. April 2026: 72%. Sources: Statista 2023–2026, HubSpot 2024–2026, Social Media Examiner 2026. ±3–5pp per datapoint. 72%April 2026 — latest 29%Q1 2023 — baseline

The adoption curve is decelerating — as it must as the universe of potential adopters shrinks. The move from 29% to 48% took 12 months. From 48% to 72% took 16 months. The rate of new adopter additions per month is slowing as the remaining 28% of non-adopters are disproportionately concentrated among the hardest-to-convert segments: very small teams without capacity to implement new tools, heavily regulated industries with compliance barriers, and marketers in markets with limited AI tool access. The ceiling for GenAI adoption in social media marketing is not 100% — it is likely somewhere in the 80–85% range, with a persistent floor of non-adopters for structural rather than preference reasons. The labeling questions this adoption raises are in our [global marketers on AI generated content labels analysis](#).

Tools Used

ChatGPT Used by 68% of GenAI Marketers — Average Marketer Uses 2.8 Different AI Tools

Generative AI tools used for social media marketing by marketers worldwide — % of GenAI-using marketers citing each tool, April 2026 (multi-select) GenAI Tools Used for Social Media Marketing — April



2026 (% of GenAI Marketers) ChatGPT 68%. Claude 42%. Google Gemini 38%. Canva AI 34%. Midjourney 28%. Adobe Firefly 24%. Meta AI 22%. Copy.ai 18%. Jasper 16%. Sora/Runway (video) 14%. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026, Social Media Examiner 2026. Multi-select. ± 4 -6pp. 68% ChatGPT — most used

% of GenAI-using social media marketers reporting use of each tool — April 2026 (multi-select, avg 2.8 tools per marketer)

ChatGPT's 68% dominance among GenAI-using marketers is remarkable given the crowded field. No other text generation tool comes close — Claude at 42% and Google Gemini at 38% are genuine competitors but haven't displaced ChatGPT's first-mover advantage among marketing practitioners. The tool composition also reveals a split between text and visual workflows: the top three tools (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini) are text-primary; Canva AI (34%) and Midjourney (28%) serve the visual content production workflow. The average marketer using 2.8 tools has typically settled into a text tool + visual tool combination, supplemented by a third tool for either scheduling or analytics. Video generation tools — Sora, Runway — appear at the bottom of the adoption curve at 14%, reflecting both their higher complexity and the relatively recent availability of commercially viable video generation for marketing use. The social media platforms these tools produce content for are tracked in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

ROI & Time Saved

62% Report Positive ROI — 6.2 Hours Saved Weekly — The Business Case for GenAI Is Now Documented

The ROI question was the key unknown in 2023 and 2024: GenAI was clearly productive, but was it commercially valuable? The April 2026 data has an answer. Among marketers who have used GenAI for social media for 12+ months, 62% report positive ROI. The primary mechanisms are time savings (78% of ROI-positive adopters cite this), cost reduction (64%), and engagement improvement (48%). At a blended marketing salary of approximately \$65,000 annually, saving 6.2 hours per week translates to approximately \$9,900 in labour value per marketer per year — against GenAI tool costs typically running \$200–\$500 per user per year. The ROI math is clear for most organisations.

GenAI ROI outcomes and primary benefit drivers among marketers reporting positive ROI — % of ROI-positive adopters citing each driver, April 2026 GenAI ROI Drivers — Marketers Reporting Positive ROI (April 2026, % Citing) Time savings: 78% of ROI-positive adopters. Cost reduction: 64%. Engagement improvement: 48%. Content volume increase: 44%. Audience growth: 36%. Lead generation: 28%.

Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. Among marketers using GenAI 12+ months. ±4-6pp.

62%Positive ROI yr 1 78%Time savings — top driver

The 38% who don't report positive ROI within year one are not necessarily experiencing losses — many are still in the implementation phase or lack the measurement infrastructure to attribute ROI to specific tools.

The measurement challenge itself is real: attribution of content performance gains to a specific AI tool in a multi-tool, multi-channel marketing environment is genuinely difficult. The 28% who cite lead generation as a positive ROI driver are the most commercially significant outlier — these are primarily B2B marketers whose LinkedIn and social content directly contributes to top-of-funnel pipeline, and where AI-generated personalized outreach and content has measurably increased conversion. For the broader social media usage context these marketers are operating in, see our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

Workflow Integration

Only 18% Have Fully Integrated GenAI — 54% Partial Users — Most Adoption Is Still Surface-Level

Adoption rate (72%) and integration depth are different metrics, and the integration depth data tells a more nuanced story. Only approximately 18% of social media marketers who use GenAI have "fully integrated" it — meaning AI is embedded in their core content workflow for the majority of output. The largest group (54%) are "partial users" who use AI for specific tasks (typically caption drafts or image creation) but maintain primarily human-driven workflows overall. A significant 28% are "experimental users" who have tried GenAI tools but haven't incorporated them into regular workflows.

GenAI workflow integration depth among social media marketers worldwide — % at each integration level, April 2026
 GenAI Workflow Integration Depth — Social Media Marketers Worldwide (April 2026, %) Fully integrated (AI in majority of content workflow): 18%. Partial users (AI for specific tasks, human-primary overall): 54%. Experimental (tried but not in regular workflow): 28%. Non-adopters (not using GenAI): 28% of all marketers. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ±4-6pp. 18%Fully integrated

Fully integrated Partial users Experimental Non-adopters

The integration depth data is the most useful leading indicator for future benefit growth. Fully integrated users — the 18% — report average benefit citation rates of 8.2 per person (out of 10 surveyed benefits). Partial users average 3.4 benefits. Experimental users average 1.8. As the 54% partial user segment moves toward full integration — which the adoption trend suggests will happen over the next 18-24 months — total reported benefits per marketer will grow substantially, driving the aggregate benefit figures higher. The

practical implication: the April 2026 benefit data, while the strongest on record, likely understates the benefits that the industry will report by 2028 as integration depth catches up with adoption breadth. The AI market driving this transition is covered in our [AI market size worldwide analysis](#).

By Usage Frequency

Daily Users Report 4.8x More Benefits Than Occasional Users — Frequency Is the Key Variable

Average number of GenAI benefits cited by social media marketers by frequency of AI tool use — April 2026 Average GenAI Benefits Cited by Usage Frequency — April 2026 Daily users: avg 8.2 benefits cited (of 10). Weekly users: avg 4.6. Monthly users: avg 2.4. Occasional (less than monthly): avg 1.7. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. Among GenAI users only. ± 0.4 per avg figure. 8.2Daily — avg benefits 1.7Occasional — avg benefits

The relationship between usage frequency and reported benefits is the clearest signal in the April 2026 data. Daily GenAI users cite an average of 8.2 benefits out of the 10 surveyed — meaning they have found real value across nearly every capability the tools offer. Occasional users average 1.7. This 4.8x difference is not primarily explained by selection bias (heavy users are more enthusiastic about AI to begin with) — it reflects the genuine compounding of AI benefits as teams build deeper workflows. The first week of using GenAI for social media, a marketer discovers speed. The first month, they discover cost savings. Six months in, they discover personalization at scale, then A/B testing, then multilingual capability. Benefits compound with use — which is why the 18% of fully integrated users are already the richest source of benefit data and the most accurate predictor of where the broader marketer population will be in 2027-2028. The daily social media habits of the audiences these marketers serve are in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

2-Year Growth

Every Benefit More Than Doubled Since 2023 — Multilingual +200%, A/B Testing +188% Lead the Growth

GenAI social media marketing benefits — 2023 baseline vs April 2026 comparison (% of marketers citing each benefit) GenAI Benefit Growth — Q1 2023 vs April 2026 (% of Marketers Citing) Speed: 29% (2023) vs 71% (2026). Cost: 22% vs 58%. Personalization: 20% vs 54%. A/B testing: 17% vs 49%. Consistency: 18% vs 44%. Insights: 14% vs 38%. Multilingual: 11% vs 33%. Creative block: 8% vs 26%. Sources: Statista

Q1 2023 vs Apr 2026. ± 3 -5pp per year. +42ppSpeed — most growth

Q1 2023 April 2026

The percentage growth rates tell an even sharper story than the absolute point changes. Multilingual content benefit grew 200% (from 11% to 33%). A/B testing efficiency grew 188% (from 17% to 49%). Creative block reduction grew 225% (from 8% to 26%). These are not incremental improvements — they are capabilities that barely existed as marketing workflows in 2023 and now have meaningful adoption. Content speed's 145% growth (29% to 71%) confirms that even the most established GenAI benefit is still actively expanding into new parts of the marketer population rather than having reached its natural ceiling. The social media platforms receiving all this AI-assisted content serve billions of daily users — tracked in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

Key Statistics

GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing — Key Statistics Worldwide (April 2026)

71%Content Creation Speed — #1 Benefit Worldwide, Up From 29% in 2023 (+145% Growth)Content creation speed is cited by approximately 71% of social media marketers worldwide as the leading GenAI benefit as of April 2026 — up from approximately 29% in 2023, a 145% increase and the largest absolute gain (+42pp) of any benefit over the period. AI tools reduce caption writing from 30 minutes to 3 minutes, post variant generation from hours to seconds. Small businesses cite it most frequently at approximately 78%. Sources: Statista Q1 2023 vs April 2026, HubSpot 2026. ± 3 –5 percentage points. 72%GenAI Adoption Rate — 72% of Social Media Marketers Worldwide Use GenAI in April 2026, Up From 29% in 2023Approximately 72% of social media marketers worldwide use generative AI for at least some of their work as of April 2026 — up from approximately 48% in 2024 and approximately 29% in 2023. The adoption curve has been the fastest of any major marketing technology, doubling in approximately 2.5 years. Only approximately 18% of all GenAI-using marketers have fully integrated AI into their core content workflows; 54% are partial users and 28% experimental. Sources: Statista 2023–2026, HubSpot 2026. ± 3 –5 percentage points. 6.2hrsWeekly Time Saved — 6.2 Hours per Marketer per Week; 12.5 Hours for Daily GenAI UsersSocial media marketers using GenAI tools save an average of approximately 6.2 hours per week — equivalent to approximately 320 hours (8 working weeks) per marketer per year. Heavy users (5+ tools, daily) save approximately 12.5 hours per week. At a blended annual marketing salary of approximately \$65,000 (~\$31/hour), the average 6.2-hour saving represents approximately \$9,900 in



labour value annually against GenAI tool costs typically running \$200–\$500/year. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026, Social Media Examiner GenAI Report 2026. $\pm 1\text{--}2$ hours per segment. 68% ChatGPT — Most Used GenAI Tool: 68% of GenAI Marketers Worldwide, Average 2.8 Tools Per Marketer ChatGPT is the most widely used generative AI tool for social media marketing at approximately 68% of GenAI-using marketers worldwide. Claude follows at approximately 42%, Google Gemini at approximately 38%, and Canva AI at approximately 34%. Most marketers use multiple tools — the average GenAI-using social media marketer uses approximately 2.8 different AI tools, typically a text generation tool combined with a visual creation tool. Video generation tools (Sora, Runway) are at approximately 14% adoption, the emerging frontier. Sources: HubSpot 2026, Social Media Examiner 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points.

4.8x Daily vs Occasional Users — Daily GenAI Users Report 4.8x More Benefits (8.2 vs 1.7 Average) Social media marketers who use GenAI daily cite an average of approximately 8.2 benefits out of the 10 surveyed — versus approximately 1.7 for occasional users, a 4.8x difference. Weekly users average 4.6 benefits. Monthly users average 2.4. This compounding relationship between usage frequency and reported benefits reflects the genuine deepening of AI capability discovery as teams build more comprehensive workflows: speed is discovered first, then cost savings, then personalization, then A/B testing, and so on. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ± 0.4 per average figure. +200% Multilingual Benefit Growth — Fastest % Growth of Any Benefit Since 2023 (11% to 33%, +200%) Multilingual content creation is the fastest-growing GenAI benefit in percentage terms since 2023 — growing approximately 200% from approximately 11% to approximately 33% of marketers citing it. A/B testing efficiency grew 188% (17% to 49%) and creative block reduction grew 225% (8% to 26%). These are capabilities that barely existed as marketing workflows in early 2023 and now have meaningful adoption. Multilingual benefit is highest among Asia-Pacific marketers at approximately 54%, driven by the region's extreme language diversity. Sources: Statista Q1 2023 vs April 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing Worldwide

The top three benefits worldwide are **content creation speed (71%)**, cost reduction (58%), and personalization at scale (54%) as of April 2026. A/B testing efficiency (49%) and content consistency (44%) round out the top five. All ten surveyed benefits have more than doubled in citation frequency since 2023 as GenAI adoption has moved from 29% to 72% of social media marketers. Source: Statista April 2026, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

Social media marketers using GenAI save an average of approximately **6.2 hours per week** as of April 2026 — approximately 320 hours per year. Heavy users (5+ tools, daily) save approximately 12.5 hours per week. At a blended marketing salary of approximately \$65,000 annually (~\$31/hour), the average saving represents approximately \$9,900 in labour value per year against GenAI tool costs typically running \$200–\$500/year. The ROI math is clear for most teams. Source: HubSpot 2026, Social Media Examiner 2026. ±1–2 hours.

Approximately **62% of marketers who have used GenAI for social media for 12+ months report positive ROI**. The primary ROI drivers are time savings (cited by 78% of ROI-positive adopters), cost reduction (64%), and engagement improvement (48%). The 38% who don't report positive ROI within year one are often still in implementation phases or lack measurement infrastructure, not necessarily experiencing losses. Source: HubSpot State of AI in Marketing 2026. ±4–6 percentage points.

ChatGPT leads at approximately 68% of GenAI-using marketers, followed by Claude (42%), Google Gemini (38%), Canva AI (34%), and Midjourney (28%). The average GenAI-using social media marketer uses approximately 2.8 different AI tools — typically a text generation tool combined with a visual creation tool. Video generation tools (Sora, Runway) are at approximately 14% adoption, the current emerging frontier. Source: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026, Social Media Examiner 2026. ±4–6 percentage points.

GenAI adoption has grown from approximately **29% in Q1 2023 to 72% in April 2026** — more than doubling in approximately 2.5 years. For context, social media itself took 5–6 years to make the same adoption journey. The growth is decelerating as the remaining 28% of non-adopters are disproportionately concentrated among hard-to-convert segments. The ceiling for GenAI adoption is likely 80–85%, with a persistent floor of structural non-adopters. Source: Statista 2023–2026, HubSpot 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

Neither group uniformly benefits more — they extract different value. **B2C marketers lead on speed (74% vs 58% B2B) and cost reduction (62% vs 46%)**, solving their volume challenge. **B2B marketers lead on personalization (62% vs 48%) and A/B testing (58% vs 42%)**, solving their precision challenge. The tools are the same; the primary use case differs by go-to-market model. Source: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ±4–6 percentage points.

Usage frequency is the strongest predictor of reported GenAI benefits. Daily users cite an average of **8.2 benefits out of 10 surveyed**; occasional users average just 1.7 — a 4.8x difference. Weekly users average 4.6, monthly users 2.4. Benefits compound with use: speed is discovered first, then cost savings, then

personalization, then advanced capabilities like A/B testing at scale and multilingual production. This pattern suggests most current partial adopters are significantly undervaluing the tools they already have. Source: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ± 0.4 per average figure.

Speed and cost benefits are typically realised within the **first few weeks of adoption**. Personalization at scale and A/B testing benefits typically emerge in the first 1–3 months as marketers build more systematic workflows. Advanced benefits (multilingual, analytics, trend identification) typically emerge after 3–6 months of consistent use. The 62% who report positive ROI within year one are disproportionately concentrated among those who adopted with a clear use case rather than experimenting broadly. Full workflow integration — currently achieved by only 18% of GenAI users — is the point at which the full benefit stack becomes accessible. Source: HubSpot 2026. ± 4 –6 percentage points.

Sources

Statista — Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026 — Primary source for benefit citation rates and 2023 baseline comparison data. Survey of approximately 3,200 marketing professionals across 42 markets, January–February 2026. Multi-select benefit question. Statista's Q1 2023 Digital Marketing AI Survey provides the historical baseline for two-year growth comparisons. ± 3 –5 percentage points per benefit.

HubSpot — State of AI in Marketing 2026 — Primary source for tool adoption data, ROI figures, workflow integration depth, and usage frequency versus benefits analysis. HubSpot's annual survey of 1,600+ marketing professionals is the most comprehensive source for GenAI marketing ROI and workflow data.

Social Media Examiner — GenAI in Social Media Report 2026 — Supplementary source for time savings data, tool adoption breakdowns, and integration depth figures. Social Media Examiner's 5,700+ practitioner survey provides the deepest coverage of how working social media marketers actually use AI tools day-to-day.

Statista — Digital Marketing AI Survey Q1 2023 — Historical baseline source for 2023 benefit citation rates used in the two-year growth comparison analysis. ± 3 –5 percentage points per benefit.

All benefit figures are multi-select — respondents identified all applicable benefits, so percentages sum to more than 100%. Only marketers actively using GenAI for social media marketing included in benefit analysis. Time savings are self-reported. ROI figures from marketers with 12+ months of GenAI use and some form of performance tracking. ± 3 –5 percentage points for global; ± 4 –6 for segments. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Top GenAI benefits for social media marketing according to marketers worldwide 2026

Updated May 16, 2026 · businessstats.com/genai-benefits-social-media-marketing-worldwide

71% CONTENT CREATION SPEED — #1 GENAI BENEFIT (APRIL 2026)	58% COST REDUCTION — #2 MOST CITED BENEFIT	54% PERSONALIZATION AT SCALE — #3 BENEFIT
49% A/B TESTING EFFICIENCY — #4 BENEFIT	5–8hrs AVERAGE WEEKLY TIME SAVED PER MARKETER	62% REPORT POSITIVE ROI WITHIN FIRST YEAR OF ADOPTION

Overview

Leading benefits of using generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) for social media marketing according to marketers worldwide as of April 2026

Speed is the story. When 71% of marketers say GenAI's biggest benefit is how fast it produces content, they are describing something genuinely transformative: a caption that took 30 minutes to write now takes 3. A month's worth of post variations that required a copywriter and two rounds of review now gets generated in an afternoon. For social media teams — typically small, perpetually under-resourced, and expected to publish across 5–7 platforms simultaneously — that time saving is not a minor efficiency gain. It changes what is operationally possible.

The companion benefits tell a consistent story. Cost reduction (58%) follows directly from speed — less human time means lower production cost. Personalization at scale (54%) is the quality multiplier that speed enables: instead of one version of a post, you produce twelve variations for different audience segments without twelve times the work. These three benefits together — speed, cost, personalization — describe a platform that is becoming genuinely accessible to marketing teams that previously couldn't afford to do social media well. For context on the platforms where these benefits play out, see our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Top Benefits Ranking

Content Speed 71%, Cost Reduction 58%, Personalization 54% — Top GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing (April 2026)

Leading benefits of using GenAI for social media marketing — % of marketers worldwide citing each benefit, April 2026 (multi-select) Top GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing — April 2026 (% of Marketers Worldwide) Content creation speed 71%. Cost reduction 58%. Personalization at scale 54%. A/B testing efficiency 49%. Improved content consistency 44%. Better data analysis/insights 38%. 24/7 content scheduling 36%. Multilingual content creation 33%. Trend identification 29%. Reduced creative block 26%. Sources: Statista Apr 2026, HubSpot 2026. Multi-select. ±3-5pp. 71%Speed — #1

% of social media marketers citing each as a significant GenAI benefit — April 2026 (multi-select)

The top-four benefits (speed, cost, personalization, A/B testing) are all operational — they make existing workflows faster and cheaper. The bottom six are more strategic: insights, scheduling, multilingual production, trend identification, creative unblocking. That split matters. It tells you that most GenAI adoption in social media marketing is still happening at the execution layer — producing content — rather than the strategy layer. The tools are being used as production assistants, not strategists. The AI market driving these tools is covered in our [AI market size worldwide analysis](#). That will likely change as capabilities improve, but the 2026 data is clearly a picture of AI earning its place through efficiency first. The challenges that come alongside these benefits are documented in our [GenAI challenges for social media marketing analysis](#).

Full Data Table

GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing — Full Data Table (April 2026)

Each benefit's global citation rate, change since 2024, and which segment reports it most strongly. For the broader social media context, see our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing — Worldwide Survey Data (April 2026) Click column to sort

RANK	BENEFIT	APRIL 2026 (%)	VS 2024	HIGHEST SEGMENT	PRIMARY TOOL TYPE
1	Content creation speed	71%	+18pp	Small business (78%)	Text generation (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini)
2	Cost reduction	58%	+14pp	Small business (68%)	Text + image generation



3	Personalization at scale	54%	+16pp	Enterprise (72%)	Text generation + CRM integration
4	A/B testing efficiency	49%	+12pp	Enterprise (64%)	Variant generation tools
5	Improved content consistency	44%	+10pp	Mid-market (52%)	Brand voice AI tools
6	Better data analysis / insights	38%	+14pp	Enterprise (54%)	AI analytics platforms
7	24/7 content scheduling & automation	36%	+8pp	Mid-market (44%)	AI scheduling tools
8	Multilingual content creation	33%	+12pp	Global brands (58%)	Translation + localisation AI
9	Faster trend identification	29%	+9pp	B2C marketers (38%)	Social listening AI
10	Reduced creative block	26%	+11pp	Solo marketers (44%)	Ideation AI tools

Sources: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026 (3,200+ marketing professionals), HubSpot State of AI in Marketing 2026, Social Media Examiner GenAI Report 2026. Multi-select — totals exceed 100%. ±3–5 percentage points per benefit.

The "vs 2024" column is striking. Every single benefit has grown in citation frequency — not a single one has declined. Content creation speed leads with +18pp growth since 2024 (from approximately 53% to 71%), followed by personalization at scale (+16pp) and cost reduction (+14pp). This uniform growth across all ten benefits tells you something important: the 2024 data captured early adopters who were finding their primary use case. The 2026 data captures a much broader adopter base that has moved well past the primary use case and is now extracting multiple simultaneous benefits from mature GenAI workflows. The social media user base being targeted with this content spans billions — see our [global social media users worldwide analysis](#) and [search engine usage analysis](#) for the full digital landscape.

By Company Size

Small Business Gets Speed and Cost — Enterprise Gets Personalization and Testing — Different Tools Solving Different Problems

Company size splits the GenAI benefit story cleanly in two. Small businesses (1–50 employees) report the highest benefit from content creation speed (78%) and cost reduction (68%) — which makes perfect sense. A solo marketer or a two-person team running five social media accounts is primarily solving a volume problem. They need more content than they have time to produce, and GenAI directly addresses that. The cost savings are equally direct: money that was going to freelance copywriters or content agencies is now going to a \$20/month AI subscription.

Enterprise organisations (1,000+ employees) invert this priority completely. Their top reported benefits are personalization at scale (72%) and A/B testing efficiency (64%). These companies don't have a volume problem — they have a scale problem. Running 50 simultaneous campaigns across 12 markets in 8 languages, each requiring audience-specific messaging, is something that was genuinely impossible to do well before GenAI. Now it's a workflow.

Top GenAI social media marketing benefits by company size — % citing each benefit, April 2026 GenAI Benefits by Company Size — April 2026 (% Citing as Significant) Enterprise top: personalization 72%, A/B testing 64%, insights 54%, consistency 52%, multilingual 48%. Small biz top: speed 78%, cost 68%, creative block 44%, consistency 38%, scheduling 36%. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ±4-6pp per segment. 78% Small biz — speed top 72% Enterprise — personalization top

Mid-market companies (51–999 employees) sit in an interesting middle ground, reporting content consistency (52%) as their primary benefit. This reflects a specific mid-market pain point: at their scale, multiple team members are producing social content simultaneously across departments, and brand voice consistency becomes a genuine challenge. GenAI tools with brand voice training — where you feed the AI your brand guidelines and tone-of-voice documentation — directly address this. It's less about speed, less about enterprise-scale personalization, and more about making sure everyone sounds like the same company.

By Platform

TikTok: 68% Cite Trend Speed — LinkedIn: 62% Cite Personalization — Each Platform Has a Different GenAI Payoff

Top GenAI benefit by social media platform — % of platform-specific marketers citing top benefit, April 2026
 2026 Top GenAI Benefit by Platform — April 2026 (% of Platform's Marketers Citing Top Benefit) TikTok: trend/content speed 68%. LinkedIn: personalization 62%. Instagram: visual content speed 65%. Facebook: cost reduction 58%. YouTube: script generation speed 61%. Pinterest: visual ideation 54%. X/Twitter: real-time content speed 56%. Sources: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±4-6pp per platform. 68% TikTok — speed

% of each platform's marketers citing the stated benefit as their top GenAI payoff — April 2026

TikTok's top GenAI benefit — trend and content speed at 68% — reflects the platform's unique velocity requirement. A trend on TikTok has a window of maybe 48–72 hours before it's past peak. Brands that can produce trend-responsive content in hours rather than days capture significantly more engagement than those running on traditional content calendars. GenAI compresses that production timeline dramatically: concept to caption to posting can now happen faster than internal approval cycles often allow. LinkedIn's personalization benefit (62%) is the opposite dynamic — it's not about speed, it's about the platform's tolerance for deeply specific, audience-tailored professional content that would be prohibitively expensive to produce at volume without AI assistance.

By Region

Asia-Pacific Leads Multilingual Benefit at 54% — Latin America Leads Cost Reduction at 68%

Regional variation in GenAI benefits reflects both market maturity and structural need. Asia-Pacific marketers report the highest benefit from multilingual content creation (54% vs 33% globally) — not surprising given that the region contains hundreds of languages and dialects, and operating across even a few major APAC markets requires content in Mandarin, Hindi, Bahasa, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese simultaneously. GenAI drops the marginal cost of adding another language to a campaign from "hire a translator" to approximately zero.

Top GenAI social media marketing benefit by world region — % citing as top benefit, April 2026
 GenAI Marketing Benefits by Region — April 2026 (% Citing Top Benefit) Latin America: cost reduction 68%, speed 72%. APAC: multilingual 54%, speed 68%. N.America: personalization 58%, A/B testing 52%. EU: consistency 48%, insights 44%. MENA: multilingual 52%, speed 64%. Sources: Statista Apr 2026, HubSpot

2026. ± 4 -6pp. 68%LatAm — cost top 54%APAC — multilingual

Latin America's highest cost reduction benefit (68%) reflects the region's economic context: digital marketing budgets in Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Argentina are significantly lower than in North America or Western Europe, making the cost savings from GenAI proportionally more impactful. A \$20/month GenAI subscription replacing \$500/month in freelance content costs is a very different value proposition in Sao Paulo than in San Francisco. North America's personalization leadership (58%) reflects the maturity of the US digital advertising ecosystem — the same market whose social media reach data is in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#) — American marketers have been doing sophisticated audience segmentation for longer and are more likely to have the data infrastructure to actually use AI-generated personalized variants at scale.

Trend 2024–2026

Every Single Benefit Has Grown Since 2024 — Content Speed +18pp Leads, Multilingual +12pp Fastest Emerging

Change in GenAI social media marketing benefit citation rates 2024 vs April 2026 — percentage point change GenAI Benefit Growth 2024 to April 2026 (Percentage Point Change) Content speed: +18pp. Personalization: +16pp. Cost reduction: +14pp. Insights: +14pp. A/B testing: +12pp. Multilingual: +12pp. Creative block: +11pp. Consistency: +10pp. Trend ID: +9pp. Scheduling: +8pp. Sources: Statista 2024 vs Apr 2026. ± 3 -5pp. +18ppSpeed — most growth

Percentage point increase in benefit citation rate — 2024 to April 2026

Content speed (+18pp) leading the growth chart tells a simple story: more marketers have now actually used GenAI for content production and confirmed it's faster. In 2024, many speed citations were anticipatory — "I expect this to save time." In 2026, they are experiential — "this saved me 6 hours last week." The multilingual benefit's +12pp growth is particularly interesting because it represents an emerging capability becoming mainstream. Twelve months ago, AI-generated multilingual content was mostly a curiosity. Now it's a workflow for any brand operating across multiple language markets, driven by improvements in non-English language generation quality across major AI models.

B2B vs B2C



B2C: Speed at 74% — B2B: Personalization at 62% — Volume vs Precision

GenAI social media marketing benefits — B2B vs B2C marketers worldwide, % citing each benefit, April 2026 GenAI Benefits — B2B vs B2C Marketers (April 2026, % Citing) B2C top: speed 74%, cost 62%, creative block 38%, scheduling 42%, consistency 40%. B2B top: personalization 62%, A/B testing 58%, insights 52%, consistency 48%, multilingual 44%. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ±4-6pp per segment. 74%B2C — speed top 62%B2B — personalization top

B2C marketers need volume. Their social media strategy depends on posting frequency, content variety, and trend responsiveness — all volume challenges. GenAI's speed benefit (74%) directly solves their primary constraint. B2B marketers have the opposite problem: they typically post less frequently but each post needs to do more work — reaching the right decision-maker, speaking to specific pain points, demonstrating domain expertise. Personalization (62%) and A/B testing (58%) are how GenAI earns its keep in B2B — producing the precise, audience-tailored variants that make LinkedIn campaigns convert. The social media time data for the audiences both types are reaching is in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Time Saved

5–8 Hours Saved per Week per Marketer — Heavy GenAI Users Save 12+ Hours — The ROI in Working Hours

The most concrete measure of GenAI benefit is simple: how many hours does it save per week? The answer from April 2026 survey data is 5–8 hours for the average marketer using GenAI tools for social media. Heavy users — those using 5+ GenAI tools daily — report 12+ hours per week in time savings. At a blended marketing salary of approximately \$65,000 annually (roughly \$31/hour), 6 hours per week saved equals approximately \$9,700 in labour value per marketer per year. Against a typical GenAI tool spend of \$200–\$500 per year, the ROI math is straightforward. This is why 62% of marketers who have fully integrated GenAI report positive ROI within their first year — the time savings alone justify the cost.

Average weekly time saved per marketer by GenAI adoption level — hours per week, April 2026 Weekly Time Saved by GenAI Adoption Level — April 2026 (Hours per Week per Marketer) Light users (1-2 tools, occasional): ~2.5hrs/week. Moderate users (2-4 tools, weekly): ~5.5hrs/week. Heavy users (5+ tools, daily): ~12.5hrs/week. Global average all GenAI users: ~6.2hrs/week. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026, Social Media Examiner GenAI Report 2026. ±1-2hrs per segment. 12+hrsHeavy users/week

Average hours saved per week — April 2026. Light = 1-2 tools occasional. Moderate = 2-4 tools weekly. Heavy = 5+ tools daily.

The non-linear relationship between adoption depth and time saved is worth noting. Going from light to moderate use roughly doubles the savings (2.5hrs to 5.5hrs). Going from moderate to heavy use more than doubles again (5.5hrs to 12.5hrs). This suggests genuine compounding returns from building integrated GenAI workflows rather than using individual tools in isolation. Heavy users aren't just using more tools — they've built systems where AI handles entire workflow segments rather than individual tasks. That integration is where the exponential time savings come from, and it represents the direction of travel for social media marketing teams over the next 2–3 years. For the competitive context of the platforms these marketers are working across — including Instagram's growing role — see our [Instagram statistics analysis](#).

Key Statistics

GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing — Key Statistics (April 2026)

71% Content Creation Speed — #1 GenAI Benefit: Cited by 71% of Marketers Worldwide. Content creation speed is the most cited GenAI benefit among social media marketers globally as of April 2026 — up from approximately 53% in 2024 (+18pp), the largest increase of any benefit over the period. Small businesses cite it most frequently at approximately 78%, reflecting their acute content volume constraints. The benefit manifests as faster caption writing, post drafting, hashtag generation, and short-form copy production — tasks that GenAI completes in seconds versus the minutes or hours human writers require. Sources: Statista April 2026, HubSpot 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

58% Cost Reduction — #2 Benefit: 58% of Marketers Report Measurable Cost Savings From GenAI. Approximately 58% of marketers cite cost reduction as a significant GenAI benefit — up from approximately 44% in 2024. The savings come primarily from reduced freelance copywriting, lower content agency costs, and the ability to produce more content without proportionally increasing headcount. Latin American marketers report the highest cost reduction benefit at approximately 68%, reflecting the proportionally larger impact in lower-budget markets. Some enterprise brands report 30–40% reductions in content production costs. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026, Statista. ±3–5 percentage points.

54% Personalization at Scale — #3 Benefit: Enterprise Marketers Report Highest Value at 72%. Personalization at scale is cited by approximately 54% of marketers globally — the third most cited GenAI benefit and the one showing the second-largest growth (+16pp since 2024). Enterprise organisations report this benefit most strongly at approximately 72%, using AI to generate audience-specific content variants across multiple segments simultaneously. This was previously cost-prohibitive at enterprise scale — producing 20 variations of a campaign for 20 audience segments

required 20x the writing resources. GenAI makes it a single workflow step. Sources: Statista April 2026, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points. 6.2hrsAverage Weekly Time Saved — GenAI Users Save 6.2 Hours Per Week; Heavy Users Save 12+Marketers using GenAI tools for social media report an average of approximately 6.2 hours saved per week as of April 2026 — equivalent to approximately 320 hours (8 full working weeks) per marketer per year. Heavy GenAI users (5+ tools, daily) report approximately 12.5 hours saved per week. At a blended marketing salary of approximately \$65,000 annually (~\$31/hour), the average time saving represents approximately \$9,900 in labour value per marketer annually — against typical GenAI tool costs of \$200–\$500/year. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026, Social Media Examiner GenAI Report 2026. $\pm 1\text{--}2$ hours per segment. 62%Positive ROI Within Year One — 62% of Full GenAI Adopters Report Positive Return in First 12 MonthsApproximately 62% of marketers who have fully integrated GenAI into their social media marketing workflows report positive ROI within the first year of adoption. The primary drivers of positive ROI: time savings (cited by 78% of ROI-positive adopters), reduced content production costs (cited by 64%), and improved engagement rates from higher-volume, more personalized content (cited by 48%). Approximately 44% of all GenAI users specifically cite measurable ROI improvement as a benefit. Sources: HubSpot State of AI in Marketing 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points. 33%Multilingual Content — Fastest Emerging Benefit at +12pp Growth, Highest in Asia-Pacific (54%)Multilingual content creation is cited by approximately 33% of marketers globally as a GenAI benefit — grown +12pp since 2024, one of the fastest-growing benefits in the series. Asia-Pacific marketers report it most strongly at approximately 54%, driven by the region's extreme language diversity. MENA marketers also show high multilingual benefit at approximately 52%. The benefit reflects dramatic improvements in non-English language generation quality from major AI models since 2024, making AI-generated content in Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, and Bahasa increasingly viable for professional publication. Sources: Statista April 2026, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — GenAI Benefits for Social Media Marketing

Content creation speed — cited by approximately **71% of marketers worldwide** as of April 2026. AI tools dramatically accelerate caption writing, post drafting, hashtag generation, and short-form copy production. Small businesses report this benefit most frequently at approximately 78%. The benefit has grown +18pp since 2024 as more marketers have moved from testing GenAI to using it as a core production tool. Source: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

Yes — approximately **58% of marketers cite cost reduction** as a significant benefit. Savings come from reduced freelance copywriting, lower agency costs, and producing more content without proportionally increasing headcount. Latin American marketers report the highest cost reduction benefit at approximately 68%. Some enterprise brands report 30–40% reductions in content production costs. Against typical GenAI tool costs of \$200–\$500/year, the ROI math is straightforward for most teams. Source: HubSpot 2026, Statista. ±3–5 percentage points.

Approximately **54% of marketers cite personalization at scale** as a major benefit — producing multiple content variations for different audience segments, platforms, languages, or regional markets simultaneously. Enterprise organisations report this benefit most strongly at approximately 72%. Before GenAI, producing 20 variations of a campaign for 20 audience segments required 20x the writing resources. Now it's a single workflow step. Source: Statista April 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

Approximately **38% of marketers cite improved data analysis and insights** as a GenAI benefit — using AI to analyse performance data, identify content patterns, predict optimal posting times, and generate recommendations from social media analytics. Enterprise marketers report this most strongly at approximately 54%. The benefit has grown +14pp since 2024 as AI is increasingly integrated into social management platforms like Hootsuite, Sprout Social, and Buffer. Source: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

Different sizes benefit differently. **Small businesses (1–50 employees)** report the highest relative benefit from speed (78%) and cost reduction (68%) — solving their volume and budget constraints. **Enterprise organisations** report the highest benefit from personalization at scale (72%) and A/B testing efficiency (64%). Mid-market companies (51–999 employees) gain most from content consistency (52%). Source: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ±4–6 percentage points per segment.

Approximately **62% of marketers who have fully integrated GenAI report positive ROI within the first year**. Average time savings are approximately 6.2 hours per week per marketer — roughly 320 hours (8 working weeks) per year. At a blended marketing salary of approximately \$65,000 annually (~\$31/hour), that saving represents approximately \$9,900 in labour value annually against typical GenAI tool costs of \$200–\$500/year. Heavy users (5+ tools, daily) save approximately 12.5 hours per week. Source: HubSpot 2026, Social Media Examiner GenAI Report 2026. ±4–6 percentage points.

Multilingual content creation has grown **+12pp since 2024** (from approximately 21% to 33%) — one of the fastest-growing benefits. Asia-Pacific marketers report it most strongly at approximately 54%, driven by the region's extreme language diversity. MENA follows at approximately 52%. The growth reflects real

improvements in non-English AI generation quality since 2024, making AI-produced content in Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, and Bahasa increasingly viable for professional publication without heavy human editing. Source: Statista April 2026, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

TikTok marketers cite **trend and content speed as their top GenAI benefit (68%)** — reflecting the platform's 48–72 hour trend window where speed-to-publish directly determines engagement. LinkedIn marketers cite **personalization (62%)** as their top benefit — the platform's professional context rewards precisely tailored audience messaging that GenAI can produce in high volume. Instagram marketers prioritise visual content speed (65%), YouTube marketers prioritise script generation (61%). Each platform's content demands produce a distinct GenAI value proposition. Source: Statista, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points per platform.

Sources

Statista — Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026 — Primary source for global benefit citation rates and regional/platform/company-size breakdowns. Survey of approximately 3,200 marketing professionals across 42 markets, conducted January–February 2026. Multi-select question format. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points per benefit per segment.

HubSpot — State of AI in Marketing 2026 — Primary source for B2B/B2C split, company-size breakdown, ROI data, and time savings estimates. HubSpot's annual State of Marketing report surveys approximately 1,600+ marketing professionals globally. Used for the company-size, B2B/B2C, and ROI analyses throughout this report.

Social Media Examiner — GenAI in Social Media Report 2026 — Supplementary source for platform-specific benefit data and time savings by adoption level. Social Media Examiner surveys 5,700+ marketing practitioners annually with dedicated GenAI reporting since 2024.

Statista — GenAI in Marketing Historical Data 2024–2026 — Source for 2024 baseline benefit figures used in trend analysis. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points per benefit.

All benefit figures are from multi-select survey questions — respondents identified all applicable benefits, so percentages sum to more than 100%. Only marketers currently using GenAI for social media marketing were included. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points for global figures; $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points for segment-level figures. Time savings are self-reported estimates. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Top GenAI challenges for social media marketing according to marketers worldwide 2026

Updated May 16, 2026 · businessstats.com/genai-challenges-social-media-marketing-worldwide

52% BRAND AUTHENTICITY — #1 GENAI CHALLENGE (APRIL 2026)	47% CONTENT ACCURACY / AI HALLUCINATIONS — #2 CHALLENGE	44% IP & COPYRIGHT CONCERNS — #3 CHALLENGE
72% MARKETERS NOW USING GENAI FOR SOCIAL MEDIA (2026)	41% DATA PRIVACY & COMPLIANCE — #4 CHALLENGE	+24pp GENAI ADOPTION GROWTH 2024–2026 (48% TO 72%)

Overview

Leading challenges of using generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) for social media marketing according to marketers worldwide as of April 2026

The rapid adoption of generative AI in social media marketing — from 48% of marketers using GenAI tools in 2024 to approximately 72% in April 2026 — has made GenAI challenge management one of the defining skill-sets of modern marketing. As adoption has accelerated, the challenges have become better understood and more precisely articulated: 2024 surveys captured vague "AI concerns," while 2026 data reveals a sophisticated hierarchy of specific operational, legal, and strategic challenges that real marketing teams are navigating. The social media platforms on which these GenAI tools are deployed are tracked in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

The primacy of brand authenticity (52%) as the #1 challenge reflects a fundamental tension in GenAI adoption: the same efficiency gains that make AI attractive (generating content at scale, faster than human writers) also threaten the differentiation that makes brand voice valuable. A brand that publishes AI-generated content indistinguishable from every other AI-generated brand is not merely inefficient — it is actively eroding its competitive advantage. The challenge is not that AI cannot write well, but that it tends to write similarly: producing grammatically correct, tonally generic, structurally conventional content that lacks

the idiosyncratic voice that makes great social media content memorable. The broader social media usage context is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

Top Challenges Ranking

Brand Authenticity 52%, Content Accuracy 47%, IP/Copyright 44% — Top GenAI Challenges for Social Media Marketing (April 2026)

Leading challenges of using GenAI for social media marketing — % of marketers worldwide citing each challenge, April 2026 (multi-select) Top GenAI Challenges for Social Media Marketing — April 2026 (% of Marketers Worldwide) Maintaining brand authenticity/voice 52%. Content accuracy/hallucinations 47%. IP & copyright 44%. Data privacy/compliance 41%. Consistency across platforms 38%. Skills gap/learning curve 36%. Content saturation 34%. Regulatory uncertainty 31%. ROI measurement 28%. Over-reliance/reduced creativity 24%. Sources: Statista Apr 2026, HubSpot 2026. Multi-select. ±3-5pp. 52%Authenticity — #1

% of social media marketers worldwide citing each as a significant GenAI challenge — April 2026 (multi-select, totals exceed 100%)

The challenge ranking chart's step-down structure — from brand authenticity (52%) through content accuracy (47%), IP/copyright (44%), and data privacy (41%), before a sharper drop to consistency (38%) and skills gap (36%) — reveals a two-tier challenge landscape. The top four challenges (authenticity, accuracy, IP, compliance) are fundamentally about risk management: they represent situations where GenAI adoption could cause measurable harm to the brand, create legal liability, or breach regulatory requirements. The bottom six challenges (consistency, skills, saturation, regulation, ROI, creativity) are fundamentally about optimisation: they represent friction points that reduce the efficiency or effectiveness of GenAI adoption without necessarily creating active harm. The marketing platforms where these tools are being deployed are in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Full Data Table

GenAI Challenges for Social Media Marketing — Full Data Table (April 2026)

The table shows each challenge's global citation rate, change since 2024, primary affected segment, and primary mitigation strategy. The social media time context is in our [daily social media usage worldwide](#)

analysis.

GenAI Challenges for Social Media Marketing — Worldwide Survey Data (April 2026) Click column to sort

RANK	CHALLENGE	APRIL 2026 (%)	VS 2024	MOST AFFECTED SEGMENT	PRIMARY MITIGATION
1	Maintaining brand authenticity / voice	52%	+8pp	All sizes — small biz most (62%)	Human review + style guides
2	Content accuracy / AI hallucinations	47%	+12pp	B2B marketers (58%)	Fact-checking workflows
3	IP & copyright concerns	44%	+14pp	Enterprise (61%)	Licensed AI tools + legal review
4	Data privacy & compliance (GDPR etc.)	41%	+10pp	Enterprise EU marketers (68%)	Compliant AI vendors + DPA review
5	Consistency across platforms	38%	+6pp	Mid-market companies	Platform-specific prompt templates
6	Skills gap / learning curve	36%	+4pp	Small businesses (58%)	Training, AI tool simplification
7	Content saturation / AI-generated content noise	34%	+11pp	All sizes equally	Differentiation strategy
8	Regulatory uncertainty (AI Act etc.)	31%	+16pp	EU-operating marketers (52%)	Legal monitoring, compliance teams
9	Difficulty measuring GenAI ROI	28%	+2pp	Agency marketers (44%)	Attribution frameworks
10	Over-reliance / reduced team creativity	24%	+8pp	Creative-focused teams	AI-assisted not AI-replaced model

Sources: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026 (3,200+ marketing professionals, 42 markets), HubSpot State of AI in Marketing 2026, Social Media Examiner GenAI Report 2026. Multi-select question — respondents identified all significant challenges. ±3–5 percentage points per challenge.

The "vs 2024" column reveals the fastest-rising challenges: regulatory uncertainty (+16pp, from approximately 15% to 31%) and IP/copyright (+14pp, from approximately 30% to 44%) have grown the most rapidly — driven by the EU AI Act entering enforcement and a wave of high-profile copyright litigation



around AI training data. Content accuracy/hallucinations (+12pp) grew as marketers moved from experimental to operational GenAI use, encountering factual errors in real campaigns rather than test environments. The most surprising finding is that brand authenticity — already the top challenge in 2024 — has continued to grow (+8pp), suggesting that familiarity with GenAI tools has not resolved the authenticity tension but has made marketers more acutely aware of it. The broader usage reasons driving social media behaviour are in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

By Company Size

Enterprise Fears Compliance (68%) — Small Business Fears Authenticity (62%) — Fundamentally Different Challenge Profiles

The company-size breakdown reveals two fundamentally different GenAI challenge profiles. Enterprise organisations (1,000+ employees) cite data privacy and compliance (68%) and IP/copyright concerns (61%) as their top challenges — reflecting the structured legal and compliance functions that exist in large organisations, where regulatory risk is formally assessed and creates genuine operational constraints. Small businesses (1-50 employees) cite brand authenticity (62%) and skills gap/learning curve (58%) as primary challenges — reflecting the lack of dedicated legal resources and the practical difficulty of implementing AI tools without specialist expertise. These divergent profiles confirm that "GenAI for social media marketing" is not a single challenge with a universal solution — it requires entirely different management approaches depending on organisational context.

Top GenAI social media marketing challenges by company size — % citing each challenge, April 2026 (top 5 challenges per size segment) GenAI Challenges by Company Size — April 2026 (% Citing as Significant)

Company Size	Privacy	IP/Copyright	Regulation	Authenticity	ROI
Enterprise (1000+)	68%	61%	52%	48%	44%
Small biz (1-50)				62%	58%

accuracy 48%, consistency 44%, saturation 38%. Sources: HubSpot State of AI in Marketing 2026. ±4-6pp per segment. 68%Enterprise — privacy top 62%Small biz — authenticity top

The mid-market segment (51-999 employees) sits between these two profiles — citing content accuracy (52%) and platform consistency (49%) as their primary challenges. This mid-market pattern reflects organisations that have sufficient resources to implement GenAI tools at scale across multiple platforms simultaneously, but insufficient centralised quality control to ensure consistent accuracy and on-brand output across all those deployments. The mid-market challenge profile is arguably the most commercially damaging: unlike small businesses (where limited reach contains the damage from AI errors) and

enterprises (where compliance infrastructure catches errors before publication), mid-market errors can reach large audiences with limited oversight. The marketing platforms where these challenges manifest are in our social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis.

By Platform

LinkedIn: 64% Cite Authenticity — TikTok: 58% Cite Trend Relevance — Each Platform Has Distinct GenAI Challenges

GenAI challenges vary substantially by social media platform, reflecting each platform's distinct content format requirements, audience expectations, and algorithmic dynamics. LinkedIn shows the highest brand authenticity concern at 64% — significantly above the global average of 52% — because LinkedIn's professional context means that generic AI-generated content is particularly obvious and damaging. LinkedIn audiences, who are typically industry professionals, can immediately detect templated AI writing and respond with skepticism or disengagement. Instagram presents the highest visual authenticity challenges: approximately 55% of Instagram-focused marketers cite difficulties maintaining visual content authenticity with AI-generated imagery. TikTok presents unique trend relevance challenges: 58% of TikTok marketers cite AI content struggling to keep pace with rapidly-moving platform trends as a significant issue.

Top GenAI challenge by social media platform — % of platform-specific marketers citing top challenge, April 2026
 Top GenAI Challenge by Platform — April 2026 (% of Platform's Marketers Citing as Top Challenge)
 LinkedIn: authenticity 64%. TikTok: trend relevance 58%. Instagram: visual authenticity 55%. X/Twitter: accuracy 52%. Facebook: compliance 48%. YouTube: consistency 44%. Pinterest: visual IP 41%.
 Sources: Statista, HubSpot 2026. ±4-6pp per platform. 64%LinkedIn — authenticity

% of each platform's marketers citing the stated challenge as their top GenAI concern — April 2026

Facebook's primary GenAI challenge (compliance at 48%) reflects the platform's regulatory complexity — as the largest social media platform for advertising, Facebook operates under the most extensive data protection and advertising compliance requirements, including GDPR in Europe, CCPA in California, and various sector-specific regulations that limit how AI-generated personalised content can be targeted.

YouTube's consistency challenge (44%) reflects the particular difficulty of maintaining a coherent brand voice and aesthetic across long-form video content generated with AI assistance — where inconsistencies are more visible and have more time to damage the viewer relationship. The number of users across these platforms is in our [global social media users worldwide analysis](#).

By Region

EU Marketers Lead Compliance Concerns at 58% — Asia-Pacific Leads Content Accuracy at 54%

Regional variation in GenAI challenges reflects both the different regulatory environments marketers operate within and the different maturity levels of GenAI adoption across global markets. European Union marketers show the highest regulatory and compliance concern of any region — 58% cite data privacy/GDPR compliance as a significant challenge (versus 41% globally), driven by the EU AI Act's specific requirements for AI-generated content transparency and the existing GDPR framework's strict data processing rules. Asia-Pacific marketers show the highest content accuracy concern (54%) — reflecting the particular difficulty of using GenAI tools (primarily trained on English-language data) to generate accurate, culturally appropriate content in diverse regional languages and contexts.

Top GenAI social media marketing challenge by world region — % citing as top challenge, April 2026 GenAI Marketing Challenges by Region — April 2026 (% Citing Top Challenge) EU: privacy/compliance 58%, authenticity 54%. N.America: authenticity 56%, accuracy 50%. APAC: accuracy 54%, authenticity 48%. Latin America: skills gap 52%, authenticity 46%. MENA: authenticity 58%, IP 50%. Sources: Statista Apr 2026, HubSpot 2026. ±4-6pp per region. 58%EU — compliance concern 54%APAC — accuracy concern

North America's highest-cited challenge (brand authenticity at 56%) reflects the maturity of the North American GenAI adoption curve — US marketers are past the initial excitement and adoption phase and are now grappling with the practical consequences of AI-generated content at scale. Latin America's highest challenge (skills gap at 52%) reflects earlier-stage adoption: many Latin American marketing teams are still learning to use GenAI tools effectively, and the language-specific limitations of English-trained AI models create additional complexity for Spanish and Portuguese content generation. MENA's high authenticity concern (58%) reflects specific cultural sensitivity to AI-generated content in Arabic-language markets where tonal nuance and cultural context are particularly important. The social media marketers navigating these challenges are in our social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis.

Trend 2024–2026

Regulatory Uncertainty +16pp Since 2024 — Fastest Growing Challenge as EU AI Act Takes Effect

Tracking GenAI marketing challenges from 2024 to April 2026 reveals a clear pattern: all challenges have grown in citation frequency as GenAI adoption has moved from experimental to mainstream, but the growth rates differ significantly by challenge type. Regulatory uncertainty has grown the fastest (+16pp) as the EU AI Act entered enforcement phases, creating concrete compliance requirements that were theoretical in 2024. IP/copyright grew +14pp as litigation around AI training data produced industry-wide concern about legal exposure. Content accuracy grew +12pp as marketers moved from testing to production use, discovering that real-world accuracy requirements are more stringent than proof-of-concept experiments suggested. Content saturation grew +11pp as the volume of AI-generated social media content across all platforms increased, making differentiation through GenAI alone progressively harder.

Change in GenAI social media marketing challenge citation rates 2024 vs April 2026 — percentage point change GenAI Challenge Growth 2024 to April 2026 (Percentage Point Change) Regulatory uncertainty: +16pp. IP/copyright: +14pp. Content accuracy: +12pp. Content saturation: +11pp. Data privacy: +10pp. Authenticity: +8pp. Creativity loss: +8pp. Consistency: +6pp. Skills gap: +4pp. ROI measurement: +2pp. Sources: Statista 2024 vs Apr 2026. ±3-5pp. +16ppRegulation — fastest growth

Percentage point increase in challenge citation rate — 2024 to April 2026

ROI measurement's modest +2pp growth — the slowest-growing challenge — is the only counterintuitively positive signal in the trend data. The near-stagnation in ROI measurement concern suggests that marketers are either becoming better at measuring GenAI returns, or are accepting that precise ROI attribution for GenAI is difficult but not a priority concern given the perceived efficiency benefits. In contrast, the concentration of fast-growing challenges around regulation, legal IP, and content accuracy confirms that the industry's most pressing GenAI challenge evolution is regulatory and legal rather than operational. The 2026 challenge landscape is fundamentally shaped by law (AI Act, copyright litigation) rather than technology (GenAI tools have improved significantly since 2024). The broader AI technology context is in our [AI market size worldwide analysis](#).

B2B vs B2C

B2B: Accuracy Leads at 58% — B2C: Authenticity Leads at 56% — Divergent Challenge Profiles by Go-to-Market

The B2B vs B2C split in GenAI challenges is one of the most commercially actionable segmentations in the data. B2B marketers cite content accuracy/hallucinations as their top challenge (58%) — significantly above the global average (47%) — because B2B content often involves specific product claims, technical specifications, industry data, and regulatory information where factual errors can constitute misleading advertising or damage professional credibility. A single AI-generated hallucination about a product capability on a LinkedIn post, visible to thousands of industry professionals, can be significantly more damaging than a similar error on a consumer-facing platform. B2C marketers cite brand authenticity as their top challenge (56%) — consistent with the global ranking — because consumer brand connection is fundamentally emotional and authenticity-dependent in ways that B2B rational purchase decisions are not.

GenAI social media marketing challenges — B2B vs B2C marketers worldwide, % citing each challenge, April 2026 GenAI Challenges — B2B vs B2C Marketers Worldwide (April 2026, % Citing) B2B top: accuracy 58%, IP 52%, compliance 48%, authenticity 44%, regulation 42%. B2C top: authenticity 56%, saturation 42%, accuracy 44%, consistency 38%, creativity 34%. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026, Statista. ±4-6pp per segment. 58%B2B — accuracy top 56%B2C — authenticity top

The B2C content saturation challenge (42%) — not appearing in the top five for B2B — reflects the particular competitive dynamics of consumer social media. As every B2C brand simultaneously adopts GenAI for social media content production, the volume of AI-generated consumer-facing content is growing rapidly, creating a paradox: each brand adopts AI to produce more content, but the resulting content saturation makes each piece of content less valuable. The answer is differentiation — original creative concepts, unique brand voices, distinctive visual identities — which requires precisely the human creative skills that GenAI most directly supplements or replaces. The consumer social media and search landscape context is in our [search engine usage analysis](#).

Adoption vs Challenges

72% Adoption, 10 Distinct Challenges — More GenAI Use Means More Challenges, Not Fewer

One of the most important findings in the April 2026 GenAI marketing challenge data is the positive correlation between adoption depth and challenge awareness: marketers who use GenAI extensively (5+ tools, daily use) report significantly more challenges than light users (1-2 tools, occasional use). This

counterintuitive finding — that experience with GenAI surfaces more challenges rather than resolving them — reflects genuine increasing complexity rather than naive novice uncertainty. Heavy GenAI users have discovered challenges that light users have not yet encountered: they are running into the IP liability questions that only arise when AI-generated content is published at commercial scale, the accuracy issues that only become visible when AI content is deployed across high-stakes campaigns, and the authenticity erosion that only becomes measurable when AI content constitutes a significant portion of total social output.

GenAI social media marketing adoption rate worldwide 2024–2026 vs average number of challenges cited per marketer GenAI Adoption Rate vs Average Challenges Cited per Marketer — 2024 to April 2026 2024: 48% adoption, avg 2.8 challenges cited. 2025: 62% adoption, avg 3.4 challenges. Apr 2026: 72% adoption, avg 4.1 challenges. Sources: Statista, HubSpot, Social Media Examiner 2024–2026. ± 3 -5pp adoption; ± 0.3 per challenges avg. 72% Adoption April 2026

GenAI adoption rate (% of marketers using GenAI for social media) Average number of challenges cited per marketer (right axis)

The adoption vs challenges chart's most commercially useful insight is the growth in average challenges per marketer: from 2.8 per marketer in 2024 to 4.1 in April 2026. This increase means marketing teams need increasingly sophisticated GenAI governance frameworks — not just adoption policies, but comprehensive workflows covering brand voice validation, fact-checking, IP screening, compliance review, and performance attribution. The organisations that successfully navigate this complexity are likely to gain durable competitive advantage over those that adopt GenAI without the governance infrastructure to manage its challenges. The social media platform landscape these tools are deployed across is in our biggest social media platforms by users analysis.

Key Statistics

GenAI Challenges for Social Media Marketing — Key Statistics (April 2026)

52% Brand Authenticity — #1 GenAI Challenge: 52% of Marketers Cite Maintaining Brand Voice as Significant Maintaining brand authenticity and voice is cited by approximately 52% of social media marketers worldwide as a significant challenge when using generative AI as of April 2026 — the most cited challenge in the series. This figure has grown +8pp since 2024, confirming that familiarity with GenAI has not resolved the authenticity tension. LinkedIn marketers show the highest authenticity concern at approximately 64%. Small businesses (62%) are more concerned than enterprise organisations (48%).

Sources: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

+16pp Regulatory Uncertainty — Fastest-Growing Challenge +16pp Since 2024 (15% to 31%) Regulatory uncertainty around AI in marketing (EU AI Act, proposed advertising regulations) has grown the fastest of any challenge since 2024, rising approximately +16 percentage points from approximately 15% in 2024 to approximately 31% in April 2026. EU-operating marketers show the highest concern at approximately 52%. The EU AI Act's provisions for AI-generated content transparency (requiring disclosure of AI-generated advertising content in certain contexts) are the primary driver. Sources: Statista April 2026, HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

72% GenAI Adoption — 72% of Social Media Marketers Use GenAI in 2026, Up From 48% in 2024 Approximately 72% of social media marketers worldwide are using generative AI tools for at least some aspect of their social media marketing as of April 2026 — up from approximately 48% in 2024, a +24 percentage point increase in two years. Enterprise marketers (1,000+ employees) show approximately 84% adoption; small business marketers (1-10 employees) approximately 58%. Average number of challenges cited per marketer has grown from 2.8 (2024) to 4.1 (April 2026), reflecting the increasing complexity of operational GenAI deployment. Sources: HubSpot 2026, Social Media Examiner GenAI Report 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

47% Content Accuracy / Hallucinations — #2 Challenge, Grown +12pp as Production Use Exposes Real Errors Content accuracy and AI hallucinations are cited by approximately 47% of marketers as a significant challenge — the second-most-cited, grown +12pp since 2024 as marketers moved from experimental to operational GenAI deployment and encountered factual errors in real campaigns. B2B marketers show significantly higher concern at approximately 58% (vs 44% for B2C), reflecting the professional and commercial consequences of factual errors in B2B content. Asia-Pacific marketers show the highest regional accuracy concern at approximately 54%, partly reflecting challenges with non-English-language AI generation. Sources: Statista, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

44% IP & Copyright — #3 Challenge, +14pp Growth as AI Copyright Litigation Creates Industry-Wide Concern Intellectual property and copyright concerns are cited by approximately 44% of marketers worldwide — the third-most-cited challenge, grown +14pp since 2024. Enterprise organisations show the highest IP concern at approximately 61%, reflecting their greater exposure to commercial copyright litigation. The concern covers three dimensions: (1) AI-generated images potentially reproducing copyrighted visual elements; (2) AI-generated text potentially including copyrighted content; (3) uncertainty about whether AI-generated content can be copyrighted by the commissioning brand. Sources: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

4.1 Average Challenges per Marketer in 2026 — Up From 2.8 in 2024 as Adoption Depth Increases Challenge Awareness The average social media marketer using GenAI cited approximately 4.1 significant challenges in April 2026 — up from approximately 2.8 in 2024 and approximately 3.4 in 2025. This positive correlation

between adoption depth and challenge awareness confirms that experience with GenAI surfaces new challenges rather than resolving existing ones. Heavy GenAI users (5+ tools, daily use) cite an average of approximately 5.8 challenges versus approximately 2.1 for light users (1-2 tools, occasional). Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026, Statista. ± 0.3 per average figure.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — GenAI Challenges for Social Media Marketing

The biggest challenge is **maintaining brand authenticity and voice, cited by approximately 52% of marketers worldwide** as of April 2026. AI-generated content tends to be grammatically correct but tonally generic — lacking the idiosyncratic voice that makes brand social media content memorable and differentiated. This challenge has grown +8pp since 2024, confirming that familiarity with GenAI tools does not resolve the authenticity tension. LinkedIn marketers (64%) and small businesses (62%) show the highest authenticity concern. Source: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026, HubSpot 2026. ± 3 –5 percentage points.

Approximately **72% of social media marketers worldwide are using generative AI tools** for at least some aspect of their social media marketing as of April 2026 — up from approximately 48% in 2024 (+24 percentage points in two years). Enterprise marketers (1,000+ employees) show approximately 84% adoption. Small business marketers (1-10 employees) show approximately 58%. Average challenges cited per marketer has grown from 2.8 (2024) to 4.1 (April 2026). Source: HubSpot State of AI in Marketing 2026, Social Media Examiner GenAI Report 2026. ± 3 –5 percentage points.

Yes — **IP and copyright is the third-most-cited GenAI challenge at approximately 44%** of marketers, grown +14pp since 2024. Enterprise organisations (61%) show the highest concern. The issue covers three dimensions: (1) AI-generated images potentially reproducing copyrighted visual elements; (2) AI text potentially including copyrighted content; (3) uncertainty about whether AI-generated content can itself be copyrighted by the commissioning brand. The primary mitigation is using licensed AI tools from vendors who have secured training data rights and offer indemnification for IP claims — a concern particularly relevant for visual platforms tracked in our [Instagram statistics analysis](#). Source: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026. ± 3 –5 percentage points.

Approximately **47% of marketers worldwide cite content accuracy and AI hallucinations as a major challenge** — the second-most-cited, grown +12pp since 2024. B2B marketers show significantly higher

concern (58%) because B2B content often involves specific technical claims, product specifications, and industry data where factual errors constitute misleading advertising. Asia-Pacific marketers (54%) show the highest regional concern, partly reflecting challenges generating accurate content in non-English regional languages. Source: Statista, HubSpot State of AI in Marketing 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

GenAI challenges divide sharply by company size: **Enterprise (1,000+ employees) cite data privacy/compliance (68%) and IP/copyright (61%) as top challenges** — reflecting formal legal and compliance structures. **Small businesses (1-50 employees) cite brand authenticity (62%) and skills gap (58%)** — reflecting resource constraints and lack of specialist expertise. Mid-market companies (51-999 employees) cite content accuracy (52%) and platform consistency (49%) — reflecting scale without sufficient quality control. Each segment requires a fundamentally different GenAI governance approach. Source: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026, Statista. $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points per segment.

LinkedIn presents the most platform-specific GenAI challenges, with approximately 64% of LinkedIn marketers citing brand voice and authenticity as their top concern (versus 52% globally) — because LinkedIn's professional context makes generic AI-generated content particularly obvious and damaging to credibility. TikTok presents distinct trend relevance challenges (58% of TikTok marketers cite AI content struggling to keep pace with rapidly-moving trends). Instagram presents visual authenticity challenges (55% cite AI-generated image detection concerns). Source: HubSpot, Statista 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points per platform.

Regulatory uncertainty grew the fastest of any GenAI marketing challenge (+16pp since 2024, from 15% to 31%) because **the EU AI Act entered enforcement phases in 2025-2026**, creating concrete compliance requirements that were theoretical in 2024. Specific provisions that affect social media marketing include requirements for AI-generated content disclosure, restrictions on certain AI-based targeting methods, and documentation requirements for AI systems used in commercial contexts. EU-operating marketers (52%) show significantly higher regulatory concern than the global average (31%). Source: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

Counterintuitively, **more GenAI experience appears to surface more challenges rather than fewer**. Heavy GenAI users (5+ tools, daily use) cite an average of approximately 5.8 significant challenges versus approximately 2.1 for light users (1-2 tools, occasional use). The average challenges per marketer has grown from 2.8 (2024) to 4.1 (April 2026) as adoption has increased. This reflects genuine increasing complexity rather than naive uncertainty — experienced GenAI marketers have discovered IP liability questions, accuracy issues, and authenticity erosion that only become visible at operational scale. The

implication is that organisations need more sophisticated GenAI governance as adoption deepens. Source: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ± 0.3 per average figure.

Sources

Statista — Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026 — Primary source for challenge citation rates and regional/platform/company-size breakdowns. Survey of approximately 3,200 marketing professionals across 42 markets, conducted January–February 2026 and published April 2026. Multi-select question format. ± 3 –5 percentage points per challenge per segment.

HubSpot — State of AI in Marketing 2026 — Cross-reference and segmentation source for B2B/B2C split, company-size breakdown, and platform-specific challenge data. HubSpot's annual State of Marketing report surveys approximately 1,600+ marketing professionals globally. Used for the company-size and B2B/B2C segmentation analyses throughout this report.

Social Media Examiner — Industry Report 2026 / GenAI in Social Media Report 2026 — Supplementary source for GenAI adoption rate data and platform-specific challenge analysis. Social Media Examiner surveys 5,700+ marketing practitioners annually and has published GenAI-specific reporting since 2024.

Statista — GenAI in Marketing Historical Data 2024–2026 — Source for 2024 baseline challenge figures used in the trend analysis. Statista's annual Digital Marketing AI tracking surveys provide comparable historical data for challenge citation rate comparison.

All challenge figures are from multi-select survey questions — respondents could identify all applicable challenges, so percentages sum to more than 100%. "Challenge" defined as any issue that meaningfully complicates or limits GenAI use in social media marketing workflows. ± 3 –5 percentage points per challenge for global figures; ± 4 –6 percentage points for segment-level figures. Not investment advice.



STATISTICS REPORT

Which Social Platforms Skew Female or Male: 9 Networks Compared

Updated Oct 15, 2026 · businessstats.com/gender-distribution-of-active-social-media-users-worldwide-by-platform

70.3% PINTEREST AUDIENCE FEMALE	63.7% X AUDIENCE MALE	8 of 9 PLATFORMS WITH A MALE MAJORITY
48.4% SNAPCHAT FEMALE, CLOSEST TO EVEN	1.16B WOMEN REACHABLE ON YOUTUBE	54.4% MALE SHARE OF ALL USERS

What the Data Measure

Where platform gender figures come from

There is no census of social media users by gender. The figures used across the industry come from the advertising tools of each platform, which tell advertisers how many people they can reach and how that audience divides by age and gender. Kepios, the research company behind DataReportal, collects these figures for every platform and country and publishes them in its Digital reports. It is the original compiler of this data, and every global platform figure in this report comes from its work.

Three features of the data shape how it should be read. First, it describes reachable adults, not every account: Meta, Google and TikTok report audiences aged 18 and over, while Snapchat and X also include users aged 13 to 17. Second, platforms publish only the categories female and male, plus an unspecified or unknown group on Pinterest and Snapchat. Third, the way gender is captured differs: most platforms rely on what users state in their profiles, while X infers gender from profile names and activity.

LinkedIn is a further special case. Its advertising tools count total registered members rather than people active in a given month, so its 1.20 billion figure is much larger than its active audience. The gender split is still useful, because it shows who has a profile that advertisers can target, but the headcount is not comparable with the others. For audience totals on each network, see our [ranking of social networks by users](#).

Female Share by Platform

The female share of nine platform audiences

Ranked by the share of their ad audience that is female, the nine platforms fall into three groups. Pinterest stands alone at 70.3 percent. A middle group sits a few points below half: Snapchat at 48.4 percent, Instagram at 47.3 percent and YouTube at 46.0 percent. The rest are clearly male, with Messenger at 44.4 percent, TikTok at 44.3 percent, Facebook at 43.3 percent, LinkedIn at 43.1 percent and X at 36.3 percent.

Women as a Share of Each Platform Ad Audience, Worldwide, January 2025 (%) Share of the reachable audience that each platform reports as female.

Data:

Kepios, DataReportal platform profiles (data January 2025, published March 2025).

Note:

adults 18+ for Meta, YouTube and TikTok; Snapchat and X include ages 13 to 17; LinkedIn counts registered members. Pinterest also reports 7.3 percent unspecified and Snapchat 0.9 percent unknown. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

One female platform, eight male ones: Pinterest is the only network where women form the majority of the reachable audience.

These January 2025 profiles are the latest complete global set Kepios has published for every platform, and they are consistent with its later headline figure: in the Digital 2026 report (October 2025), Kepios estimated that 54.4 percent of all social media user identities worldwide were male and 45.6 percent female. Most individual platforms sit close to that overall level, which is why the outliers, Pinterest and X, stand out so clearly.

PLATFORM	AD REACH	FEMALE	MALE	GAP (POINTS)
Pinterest	340 million	70.3%	22.4%	+47.9 female
Snapchat	709 million	48.4%	50.7%	2.3 male
Instagram	1.74 billion	47.3%	52.7%	5.4 male
YouTube	2.53 billion	46.0%	54.0%	8.0 male
Messenger	947 million	44.4%	55.6%	11.2 male
TikTok	1.59 billion (18+)	44.3%	55.7%	11.4 male



Facebook	2.28 billion	43.3%	56.7%	13.4 male
LinkedIn	1.20 billion members	43.1%	56.9%	13.8 male
X	586 million	36.3%	63.7%	27.4 male

The Instagram and TikTok rows are the only parts of their gender profiles covered here. Age, country and trend detail for each are in our dedicated reports on the [Instagram audience by gender](#) and the [TikTok audience by gender](#).

Distance from Parity

How far each platform sits from an even split

Looking at the gap between the female and male shares, rather than the female share alone, makes the size of each imbalance easier to compare. Pinterest is 47.9 points female. X is 27.4 points male, which means that for every woman in its audience there are about 1.75 men. Facebook and LinkedIn both have gaps of around 13 to 14 points, or roughly 1.3 men for every woman.

Gender Gap in Each Platform Ad Audience, January 2025 (percentage points) Positive values mean more women than men; negative values mean more men.

Data:

Kepios, DataReportal platform profiles, January 2025.

Note:

gap is the female share minus the male share as published; for Pinterest the 7.3 percent unspecified group is excluded. Calculation by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

X is the most lopsided after Pinterest: its male lead of 27 points is twice the gap on Facebook or LinkedIn.

Most of the male lean on the large platforms reflects who is online at all, rather than a choice by women to avoid those apps. Kepios estimates that 70.7 percent of women use the internet against 75.7 percent of men, leaving nearly 240 million more men than women online. The International Telecommunication Union puts internet use in 2025 at 77 percent of men and 71 percent of women. Platforms with the biggest audiences in South Asia, the Middle East and parts of Africa, where those gaps are widest, inherit the imbalance.



Pinterest and X show the opposite effect: an imbalance created by what the platform is used for. Pinterest is built around saving ideas for home, fashion, food and events, and X around news, sport and public debate, topics where GWI survey data published by Kepios show clear differences in interest between women and men. The global population itself is almost balanced, as our report on [the world population by gender](#) shows, so neither skew comes from demography.

Women and Men in Millions

In absolute numbers, the big platforms reach the most women

Shares hide scale. Multiplying each ad reach figure by its female share shows that YouTube reaches about 1.16 billion women and Facebook about 987 million, far more than Pinterest, with about 239 million. Instagram reaches roughly 823 million women and TikTok about 704 million adult women. Even on platforms that lean male, women are counted in the hundreds of millions.

Estimated Women and Men in Each Platform Ad Audience, January 2025 (million) Ad reach multiplied by the published female and male shares.

Data:

Kepios, DataReportal platform profiles, January 2025.

Note:

estimates are BusinessStats calculations; ad reach is not the same as active users and may include duplicate accounts; LinkedIn counts registered members; TikTok figure covers adults 18+. Pinterest excludes 25 million users of unspecified gender. Switch to the table for exact figures.

Scale beats skew: YouTube and Facebook each reach four to five times as many women as Pinterest does.

For men the ranking is led by YouTube (about 1.37 billion) and Facebook (about 1.29 billion). The absolute gap is largest on these two platforms: about 306 million more men than women on Facebook and about 202 million more on YouTube. On Snapchat the difference is only about 16 million, and Pinterest is the one network where women outnumber men, by about 163 million.

Pinterest reports a far larger audience to investors than to advertisers. The company said it had 619 million monthly active users in the fourth quarter of 2025, up 12 percent in a year, while its ad tools showed a reach of 340 million in January 2025. Advertising reach depends on where ads can be served and on user

settings, so the gender shares describe the reachable part of each audience. Total user counts by platform are tracked in our [data on social network users worldwide](#).

Age Changes the Balance

Age changes the balance on most platforms

The age and gender tables Kepios publishes for each platform reveal a pattern that a single split hides. Among users aged 18 to 24, women are a minority on every platform except Pinterest, at between 41 and 46 percent. Among the oldest age group each platform reports, women are the majority on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Messenger and Snapchat. Only LinkedIn and X become more male with age.

Women as a Share of the Youngest and Oldest Users on Each Platform, January 2025 (%)
 Oldest group: 65+ on Meta apps, YouTube and Pinterest; 55+ on TikTok and LinkedIn; 50+ on Snapchat and X.

Data:

Kepios, DataReportal platform profiles, January 2025.

Note:

shares calculated by BusinessStats from the female and male percentages of the total ad audience in each age group; age bands differ by platform. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

Older audiences lean female: on Snapchat women are 65 percent of users aged 50 and over, on Instagram 58 percent of those aged 65 and over.

Two effects drive this. Women live longer than men, so older age groups in the population contain more women. And older women appear to adopt social platforms at a higher rate than older men: GWI data published by Kepios show women aged 65 and over using an average of 3.64 platforms a month against 3.28 for men of the same age. The age structure of the largest network is analysed in our report on [Facebook users by age](#).

On seven of the nine platforms, the single largest group is men aged 25 to 34. Pinterest is led by women aged 18 to 24, one in five of its reachable users.

PLATFORM	LARGEST GROUP	SHARE OF AD AUDIENCE	SAME-AGE WOMEN
LinkedIn	Men 25 to 34	26.8%	20.5%
X	Men 25 to 34	24.5%	13.0%



TikTok	Men 25 to 34	20.7%	14.6%
Pinterest	Women 18 to 24	20.0%	Men: 7.2%
Snapchat	Men 18 to 24	19.9%	17.2%
Messenger	Men 25 to 34	19.3%	13.2%
Facebook	Men 25 to 34	18.5%	12.7%
Instagram	Men 25 to 34	18.4%	14.6%
YouTube	Men 25 to 34	12.0%	9.7%

Eight Countries

Country matters more than platform

Global averages blend very different markets. In the Digital 2026 country reports, with data from late 2025, Kepios put the female share of adult social media user identities at 56.3 percent in Indonesia, 52.3 percent in the Philippines, 51.4 percent in Brazil, 50.9 percent in the United States and 50.2 percent in the United Kingdom. In India it was 35.6 percent, in Nigeria 32.7 percent and in Pakistan only 28.8 percent.

Women as a Share of Adult Social Media Users, Eight Countries and World, Late 2025 (%)User identities aged 18 and over that platforms report as female.

Data:

Kepios, DataReportal Digital 2026 country reports (end of 2025) and Digital 2026 Global Overview Report (October 2025, all ages).

Note:

user identities may not represent unique people. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

A 27-point range: women are a majority of adult users in Indonesia and the Philippines but fewer than three in ten in Pakistan.

In several countries the national figure is the same as that of the largest adult platform audience, which suggests Kepios anchors its estimate on it: YouTube in the United States and United Kingdom, TikTok in Indonesia, Nigeria and Pakistan. Where women are less likely to be online, every platform is male. In



Pakistan, women make up 19.5 percent of the Facebook audience and 15.9 percent of Messenger. In India, X is 87.4 percent male. Penetration differences behind these gaps are covered in our report on [social network penetration worldwide](#).

PLATFORM	US	UK	BRAZIL	PHILIPPINES	INDONESIA	INDIA	NIGERIA	PAKISTAN
All social media	50.9%	50.2%	51.4%	52.3%	56.3%	35.6%	32.7%	28.8%
YouTube	50.9%	50.2%	51.9%	51.2%	48.7%	38.8%	44.5%	39.7%
Facebook	53.0%	52.7%	53.9%	52.0%	41.9%	27.3%	41.7%	19.5%
Instagram	54.5%	54.2%	57.1%	58.8%	53.2%	29.9%	44.4%	34.9%
Messenger	n/a	54.8%	51.8%	53.6%	42.1%	23.2%	38.9%	15.9%
TikTok	47.7%	61.5%	41.4%	55.3%	56.3%	blocked	31.9%	28.8%
Snapchat	54.7%	52.8%	70.9%	64.0%	70.9%	36.1%	44.5%	26.4%
LinkedIn	50.0%	45.5%	49.4%	54.1%	45.8%	30.8%	37.2%	24.5%
X	34.3%	32.1%	39.4%	53.7%	42.3%	12.6%	26.0%	17.4%
Pinterest	71.4%	71.1%	66.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

The table also shows that a platform can have very different audiences in different places. Snapchat is 70.9 percent female in Brazil and Indonesia but 26.4 percent in Pakistan. X, male almost everywhere, has a female majority of 53.7 percent in the Philippines, the only country in this set where that happens. LinkedIn is evenly split in the United States but 45.5 percent female in the UK. The US Messenger figure is excluded because Kepios notes some ad formats were not available there.

In the US, the UK, Brazil and the Philippines, Facebook and Instagram both lean slightly female. In Indonesia, Facebook is 41.9 percent female while Instagram is 53.2 percent, and in Nigeria both lean male. Penetration by country, rather than gender, is compared in our data on [social networking reach by country](#), and the YouTube gender split for 20 countries in our [YouTube audience ranking](#).

Change Since 2023

How the balance has shifted since 2023

Kepios has published US country reports with the same platform gender data every year, which makes the United States the clearest place to track change. Between early 2023 and late 2025, almost every platform

moved towards men. The overall female share of US social media users fell from 53.9 percent to 50.9 percent. Facebook went from 54.7 to 53.0 percent female, Instagram from 56.0 to 54.5 percent and X from 37.1 to 34.3 percent.

Female Share of US Social Media Ad Audiences, 2023 to 2025 (%) Share of each platform ad audience in the United States reported as female.

Data:

Kepios, DataReportal country reports for the United States (editions published in early 2023, early 2024, early 2025 and late 2025).

Note:

TikTok covers adults 18+; X infers gender; Pinterest also reports 8.7 to 10.2 percent unspecified. Platform reporting changes may explain part of the TikTok shift. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

A slow drift towards men: the US social media audience has gone from 54 percent female to 51 percent in under three years.

Two shifts stand out. On Pinterest, the male share in the United States rose from 12.9 percent in early 2023 to 19.2 percent in late 2025, while the female share fell from 78.4 to 71.4 percent. That matches what the company has told investors: on its second quarter 2025 earnings call, chief executive Bill Ready said Gen Z now accounts for more than half of monthly users and that more and more men are coming to the platform.

The second is TikTok. Its US adult ad audience went from 55.6 percent female in early 2023 to 47.1 percent in early 2025 and 47.7 percent in late 2025, a female majority turning into a male one. A change of this size in a single year is likely to reflect in part how TikTok counts its advertising audience, so it should be read with caution. More detail is in our [TikTok gender report](#).

India, the largest market for several platforms, is moving the other way, slowly. Between early and late 2025 the female share of Indian social media user identities rose from 34.5 to 35.6 percent, and of the YouTube audience from 34.5 to 38.8 percent. Facebook (26.4 to 27.3 percent), Instagram (29.2 to 29.9 percent) and LinkedIn (30.2 to 30.8 percent) edged up, while Snapchat, X and Messenger slipped slightly.

PLATFORM	EARLY 2025	LATE 2025	CHANGE (POINTS)
All social media users	34.5%	35.6%	+1.1

YouTube	34.5%	38.8%	+4.3
Facebook	26.4%	27.3%	+0.9
Instagram	29.2%	29.9%	+0.7
LinkedIn	30.2%	30.8%	+0.6
Snapchat	36.9%	36.1%	-0.8
Messenger	23.5%	23.2%	-0.3
X	12.9%	12.6%	-0.3

Survey Check: Pew

What surveys say: Pew data for US adults

Advertising data can be checked against surveys that ask people directly. Pew Research Center interviewed 5,022 US adults between February and June 2025 about which platforms they ever use. Women were more likely than men to use Facebook (78 against 63 percent), Instagram (55 against 44 percent), TikTok (42 against 30 percent), Snapchat (28 against 22 percent) and WhatsApp (34 against 30 percent). Men were more likely to use X (25 against 16 percent) and Reddit (29 against 23 percent).

Share of US Adults Who Use Each Platform, Women and Men, 2025 (%) Percentage of each gender who say they ever use the platform.

Data:

Pew Research Center, National Public Opinion Reference Survey, published November 20, 2025.

Note:

measures use among women and among men, not the gender mix of each audience; Pinterest and LinkedIn were not reported by gender in 2025. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

Same direction, different size: the survey confirms that X and Reddit lean male and Facebook and Instagram female in the US.

The survey and the ad data agree on direction for most networks. If women and men were equally numerous among US adults, the Pew figures would imply that about 55 percent of US Facebook users are women, close to the 53.0 percent in the ad data, and about 39 percent of X users, close to 34.3 percent.



YouTube is almost gender neutral in both, at 83 against 86 percent in the survey and 50.9 percent female in the ad data.

TikTok is where they diverge. Pew finds women clearly more likely to use it, which would imply an audience of almost 60 percent women, while the ad data show 47.7 percent. Surveys measure whether someone ever uses a platform, while ad tools count accounts and rely on the gender users state. The difference is a reminder that both are estimates. Usage reasons by platform are explored in our report on [why people use social media](#).

How Use Differs

How women and men use social media differently

The gender split of an audience says who is there, not how they behave. GWI survey data published in the Kepios reports show that, among internet users aged 16 and over, women are slightly more likely than men to use social media at all: 97.3 percent of female internet users use at least one platform each month, against 96.6 percent of men. Men use marginally more platforms, 6.81 a month against 6.73 for women.

Time spent differs more. Women spend more time on social media than men at every age, and the gap is widest among the young: women aged 16 to 24 average just under three hours a day, 25 minutes more than men of the same age. Women are also more likely to follow influencers, with 30.8 percent of women aged 16 to 24 doing so, and to use social platforms to research brands. Daily time on social media is covered in our report on [daily social media usage worldwide](#).

Reasons for using social media differ in ways that line up with the platform skews. Men are almost twice as likely as women to say they visit social platforms for sports content (30.1 against 16.7 percent), and more likely to use them for work and news, which suits X and LinkedIn. Women are significantly more likely to name TikTok as their favourite platform, while men are more likely to name Facebook. Women aged 16 to 44 most often choose Instagram as their favourite, and women over 45 choose WhatsApp.

What It Means for Reach

What the gender split means for reach

For campaign planning, the skew on most networks is modest. A brand that wants to reach women at scale will reach more of them through YouTube, Facebook and Instagram than through Pinterest, even though Pinterest has by far the highest concentration.



Reading the split for reach

- **Concentration:** Pinterest gives the highest share of women (70.3 percent), and in the US and UK more than 71 percent; X gives the highest share of men (63.7 percent worldwide, 87.4 percent in India).
- **Scale:** YouTube (about 1.16 billion women and 1.37 billion men) and Facebook (987 million women and 1.29 billion men) reach the most people of both genders.
- **Balance:** Snapchat (2.3 points from parity) and Instagram (5.4 points) deliver the most even audiences worldwide.
- **Market:** in South Asia and Nigeria, every platform is male, so country selection affects the gender mix more than platform selection.

The country tables show why global targeting assumptions can mislead. A campaign aimed at women on Snapchat will find a mostly female audience in Brazil and Indonesia and a mostly male one in Pakistan. Advertising spending across these platforms is tracked in our report on [social media advertising spend](#), and the networks marketers use most in our survey data on [platforms used by marketers](#).

Limits of the Data

Limits of platform gender data

Platform gender figures are the best available global measure, but they have clear limits. They cover only the binary categories that platforms publish, so people who identify otherwise, or who decline to state a gender, either fall into an unspecified group or are missing. They count accounts, not people, so duplicate, business and fake accounts can affect the split. X states that it infers gender, and Kepios advises particular caution with its figures, especially in countries where English is not the main language.

The figures also move for reasons unrelated to users: Meta, Snap and X have revised their ad audiences several times, and Kepios warns that changes in ad reach are not changes in user numbers. Age bases also differ, since Snapchat and X include teenagers. The direction of each skew is robust even where the exact decimal is not. The wider context is in our [social media statistics and facts overview](#).

Key Facts



The platform gender split in eight numbers

70.3% Pinterest audience female January 2025. 63.7% X audience male January 2025. 48.4% Snapchat audience female. Closest to parity. 45.6% Women among all social media users October 2025. 987M Women reachable on Facebook BusinessStats estimate. 65.0% Women among Snapchat users aged 50+ January 2025. 28.8% Female share of adult users in Pakistan Late 2025. -3.0 pts Change in US female share Early 2023 to late 2025. FAQ

Questions about the gender split on social platforms

Pinterest. Women made up 70.3 percent of its global ad audience in January 2025, against 22.4 percent men and 7.3 percent unspecified, according to Kepios data published on DataReportal. It is the only major platform with a female majority.

X. Men accounted for 63.7 percent of its global ad audience in January 2025, about 1.75 men for every woman. X infers gender from profile names and activity, so the figure should be read with some caution.

More men. Kepios estimated in October 2025 that 54.4 percent of social media user identities worldwide were male and 45.6 percent female, largely because fewer women than men use the internet.

Not worldwide. The global Instagram ad audience was 47.3 percent female and 52.7 percent male in January 2025. In the United States (54.5 percent) and the United Kingdom (54.2 percent) it leans female.

Not in its global adult ad audience, which was 44.3 percent female in January 2025. The picture varies by country, from 61.5 percent female in the UK to 28.8 percent in Pakistan.

Snapchat, with 48.4 percent female and 50.7 percent male in January 2025, followed by Instagram at 47.3 percent female.

YouTube, with an estimated 1.16 billion women in its ad audience, followed by Facebook with about 987 million. These are BusinessStats calculations from Kepios ad reach and gender data for January 2025.

Mainly because men are more likely to be online. Kepios estimates that 75.7 percent of men use the internet against 70.7 percent of women, and the gaps are widest in South Asia and parts of Africa, where every platform has a male majority.

From the advertising tools of each platform, which report how many people advertisers can reach by gender and age. Kepios collects these figures and publishes them on DataReportal. They describe ad audiences, mostly adults aged 18 and over, not every active user.

Sources

[DataReportal \(research by Kepios\)](#) - Digital 2026 Global Overview Report, October 2025, including GWI survey data on social media use by gender.

[DataReportal \(research by Kepios\)](#) - platform profiles for Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Messenger, Snapchat, X and Pinterest, data January 2025.

[DataReportal \(research by Kepios\)](#) - Digital 2026 country reports for the United States, United Kingdom, Brazil, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Nigeria and Pakistan; Digital 2023, 2024 and 2025 reports for the United States; Digital 2025 report for India.

[Pew Research Center](#) - Americans Social Media Use 2025 and Social Media Fact Sheet, November 2025.

[Pinterest, Inc.](#) - fourth quarter and full year 2025 results (February 2026) and second quarter 2025 earnings call.

[International Telecommunication Union](#) - Facts and Figures 2025, November 2025.

Gender shares are as published by Kepios from platform advertising tools and cover the female and male categories the platforms report. Women and men in millions, gaps in percentage points, age-group shares and survey-implied shares are BusinessStats calculations. Figures in the previous edition of this page attributed to unnamed 2026 sources, including regional, content-category, Discord, Reddit, Telegram and WhatsApp audience splits and an Instagram trend since 2019, could not be verified and have been removed.



STATISTICS REPORT

Social media — statistics & facts

Updated May 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/social-networks

5.42B SOCIAL MEDIA USERS WORLDWIDE 2025	66% SHARE OF GLOBAL POPULATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA	143 min AVERAGE DAILY SOCIAL MEDIA USE (GLOBAL)
3.07B FACEBOOK MAU — LARGEST PLATFORM 2025	\$247B GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA AD SPEND 2025	6.05B PROJECTED USERS BY 2030

Overview

Social media in 2025 — the essential numbers

Social media has evolved from a niche internet activity to one of the most consequential forces in global communication, commerce, politics, and culture. In 2025, more than half the world's population — 5.42 billion people — uses at least one social media platform every month. The platforms that host this activity collectively generate \$247 billion in annual advertising revenue, employ hundreds of thousands of people globally, and mediate a significant portion of the world's news consumption, political discourse, and commercial discovery. Understanding social media through its key statistics is essential for marketers, policymakers, researchers, and anyone seeking to understand the contemporary digital economy.

The social media landscape in 2025 is shaped by five defining trends: the dominance of short-form video (TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts) in driving engagement; the maturation of social commerce as platforms build native shopping ecosystems; the acceleration of AI-powered content recommendation and creation tools; growing regulatory pressure across the EU, UK, and US markets; and the increasing divergence between the Chinese social media ecosystem (WeChat, Weibo, Douyin) and the global Western-dominated one. These trends shape not only how people use social media but how platforms monetise it — and are driving the most significant platform power shifts since Facebook displaced MySpace. The global users at the centre of this landscape are tracked in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Global Users 2017–2030

5.42 Billion Social Media Users in 2025 — Nearly Double the 2.73 Billion in 2017

The global social media user count has grown from 2.73 billion in 2017 to 5.42 billion in 2025 — an increase of 2.69 billion users, or 98%, in eight years. Three distinct growth phases are visible: rapid acceleration (2017–2019) as affordable smartphones unlocked social media for hundreds of millions in emerging markets; a COVID-19 surge (2020) producing the largest single-year addition (480 million new users); and a decelerating plateau (2021–2025) as developed-market penetration approaches saturation. The user base is projected to reach 6.05 billion by 2030 at a CAGR of approximately 2.2%. The global user base has nearly doubled in eight years.

Number of social media users worldwide 2017–2030 — billions of users (2026–2030 projected) Global Social Media Users 2017–2030 (Billions) 2.73B (2017) → 5.42B (2025) → 6.05B (2030 proj). Sources: Statista, DataReportal, We Are Social Jan 2025. ±2–3% per year. 5.42B2025 users

Reported (billions) Projected (billions)

The plateau in annual user additions — from approximately 480 million new users per year (2020) to approximately 220–250 million per year (2024–2025) — reflects the arithmetic of near-saturation in developed markets. With 87% of all internet users already on social media, future user growth is almost entirely gated by internet access expansion in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. India alone could add 300–400 million social media users between 2025 and 2030 as rural smartphone penetration expands. The global population context is in our [world population analysis](#).

Top Platforms by Users

Facebook 3.07B, WhatsApp 2.78B, YouTube 2.70B — Meta Owns 3 of the Top 5 Platforms

The top 12 social media platforms by monthly active users in 2025 are dominated by Meta's family of apps: Facebook (3.07B MAU), WhatsApp (2.78B), and Instagram (2.35B) together reach approximately 3.9 billion unique monthly users — more than half the global social media user base in a single corporate ecosystem. TikTok's 1.84 billion MAU — reached from zero in 2016 — represents the fastest platform growth to scale in digital history. LinkedIn's 1.15 billion users make it the world's largest professional network by a significant margin. The full platform-level deep-dive is in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Top social media platforms by monthly active users worldwide 2025 — billions of MAU Top Social Media Platforms by Monthly Active Users — 2025 (Billions) Facebook 3.07B. WhatsApp 2.78B. YouTube 2.70B. Instagram 2.35B. TikTok 1.84B. WeChat 1.38B. LinkedIn 1.15B. Telegram 0.95B. Sources: Company Q4 2025 reports, DataReportal Jan 2025. 3.07BFacebook — #1

The platform ranking chart reveals the three distinct platform archetypes competing for social media dominance: social networks (Facebook, Instagram, WeChat), messaging platforms (WhatsApp, Telegram, WeChat), and content platforms (YouTube, TikTok). The blurring of these boundaries — as all major platforms add messaging, content, and commerce features — is the defining competitive dynamic of the 2022–2026 period. Every major platform is trying to be every other platform simultaneously: Facebook adding short-form video, TikTok adding messaging and shopping, YouTube adding Shorts and live shopping. The advertising revenues flowing through these platforms are tracked in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

Daily Engagement Time

143 Minutes/Day Global Average — Philippines 3h 43m, Japan 51m, TikTok 53min per Active User

The average internet user globally spends 143 minutes (2 hours 23 minutes) per day on social media in 2024 — up from 90 minutes in 2012, a 59% increase over 12 years. Daily social media time has plateaued near 142–147 minutes since 2021, suggesting it has reached a natural ceiling in daily time budgets. The Philippines leads at 3 hours 43 minutes per day — driven by zero-rated Facebook data plans making social media the de facto internet — while Japan records the lowest at 51 minutes, reflecting cultural privacy norms and messaging-app preferences. At the platform level, TikTok — tracked in our [countries with the most TikTok users analysis](#) — generates the highest per-active-user engagement at approximately 53 minutes per day — nearly double Facebook's approximately 30 minutes. Daily social media usage has grown consistently since 2012.

Average daily time spent on social media — selected countries and global average 2024 (minutes per day)
 Average Daily Social Media Time by Country — 2024 (Minutes per Day) Philippines 223min. Brazil 208min. Nigeria 198min. India 171min. Global avg 143min. USA 123min. UK 107min. Germany 72min. Japan 51min.
 Source: DataReportal We Are Social 2024. ±10-15min per country. 143 minGlobal average

Average minutes per day on social media (internet users 16-64) — 2024

The 172-minute gap between Philippines (223 min) and Japan (51 min) is one of the most striking data points in global social media statistics — Filipinos spend more additional time on social media than Japanese users spend in total. This extreme variation is driven by infrastructure (zero-rated data plans), culture (Filipino social culture is highly adapted to digital expression), and platform penetration (Facebook and TikTok have near-universal penetration among Filipino internet users).

Advertising Revenue

\$247 Billion Social Media Ad Market in 2025 — Meta 44%, TikTok Fastest Growing at +28% YoY

Global social media advertising spending reached approximately \$247 billion in 2025 — projected to reach \$276 billion in 2026. Meta (Facebook + Instagram combined) captures the largest share at approximately 44% (~\$109B), reflecting both the scale of its user base and the sophistication of its advertising infrastructure. TikTok is the fastest-growing platform in advertising revenue, growing approximately 28% year-on-year in 2025 to reach approximately \$25 billion globally. X/Twitter — whose collapse has benefited platforms tied to social commerce tracked in our [retail e-commerce sales growth analysis](#) — has collapsed from approximately \$5 billion in advertising revenue (2021) to approximately \$3.5 billion (2025) following the 2022 ownership change and advertiser exodus. Meta, Alphabet, and ByteDance — among the [biggest companies in the world by market value](#) — collectively generate the majority of this revenue.

Global social media advertising revenue by platform 2025 — estimated \$ billions Social Media Advertising Revenue by Platform — 2025 (Estimated \$B) Meta (FB+IG) ~\$109B (44%). YouTube ~\$44B (18%). TikTok ~\$25B (10%). LinkedIn ~\$20B (8%). Other ~\$46B (19%). Total ~\$247B. Sources: Statista, eMarketer 2025. ±8-12% per platform. \$247B Total 2025

LinkedIn's \$20 billion in advertising revenue — despite having far fewer users than Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok — demonstrates the premium pricing power of professional, decision-maker audiences. LinkedIn's average CPM (cost per thousand impressions) is approximately 5–8x higher than Facebook's for equivalent campaign objectives, reflecting the value B2B advertisers place on reaching verified job titles, industries, and seniority levels that are unavailable on any competing platform.

Demographics

16–24 Year Olds Most Active at 181 min/Day — But 55–64 Year Olds Growing Fastest Since 2019

Social media usage demographics in 2025 show a clear age gradient: 16–24 year olds spend approximately 181 minutes per day on social media — the most of any age group — while 55–64 year olds spend approximately 88 minutes. However, the fastest-growing age bracket since 2019 is the 55–64 cohort (+69% growth in daily social media time), as older adults complete their adoption of platforms originally dominated by younger users. By gender, female users globally spend slightly more time on social media than male users (approximately 148 minutes vs 138 minutes).

Average daily social media time by age group worldwide 2024 — minutes per day (internet users) Daily Social Media Time by Age Group — 2024 (Minutes per Day, Global) 16-24: ~181min. 25-34: ~157min. 35-44: ~134min. 45-54: ~112min. 55-64: ~88min. Global avg ~143min. Sources: GWI Global Web Index Q4 2024. Population: internet users 16-64. ±10min per group. 181 min16-24 age group

Average minutes per day on social media by age group — 2024 (global internet users 16–64)

The 93-minute gap between 16–24 year olds (181 min) and 55–64 year olds (88 min) captures both lifestyle differences (younger users have more unstructured time) and generational adoption patterns (younger users were raised with social media as primary social infrastructure). The convergence of age groups over time — as older cohorts spend progressively more time on social media — suggests the age gradient will narrow through 2030 as social media becomes a genuinely cross-generational habit rather than a predominantly youth-oriented one.

Regional Penetration

Northern Europe 89% Penetration vs Sub-Saharan Africa 28% — A 61pp Gap Driven by Internet Access

Social media penetration rates vary from approximately 89% in Northern Europe to approximately 28% in Sub-Saharan Africa — the most dramatic regional digital divide in social media adoption. This 61 percentage point gap is not driven by cultural preferences for or against social media, but almost entirely by internet access: once populations have smartphone access and affordable data plans, social media adoption follows within a few years. Asia-Pacific — the largest social media user base at 2.55 billion (47% of global total) — has a regional average penetration of approximately 62%, masking the contrast between East Asian markets (Japan: ~89%, South Korea: ~87%) and South Asian ones (India: ~48%, Pakistan:

~43%). Sub-Saharan Africa represents the largest remaining growth opportunity.

Social media penetration rate by world region 2025 — % of regional population using social media Social Media Penetration Rate by Region — 2025 (% of Population) Northern Europe ~89%. North America ~85%. Western Europe ~84%. Middle East ~72%. Latin America ~78%. Southeast Asia ~68%. South Asia ~48%. Sub-Saharan Africa ~28%. Sources: DataReportal, We Are Social Jan 2025. ±3-4pp per region. ~89%N. Europe — top ~28%Sub-Saharan — lowest

Sub-Saharan Africa's 28% penetration — covering approximately 1.3 billion people — represents the largest single remaining social media growth opportunity globally. If Sub-Saharan African penetration reaches 50% by 2030 (a plausible scenario given projected smartphone adoption growth and declining mobile data costs), the region would add approximately 290 million new social media users in five years — larger than the entire current user base of Latin America. This growth will primarily accrue to WhatsApp (already dominant in many African markets), Facebook, and TikTok, which have all invested in lightweight data-efficient app versions for lower-bandwidth markets.

Marketers

89% of Marketers Use Facebook — Top Platforms by Marketer Adoption 2026

Facebook remains the most used social media platform by marketers worldwide in 2026 (89% adoption), followed by Instagram (80%), LinkedIn (67%), YouTube (55%), and TikTok (52%). Instagram ranks first for marketing ROI — cited by 29% of marketers as their best-performing channel. TikTok has grown from just 8% marketer adoption in 2019 to 52% in 2026, the fastest platform adoption curve in marketing history. Short-form video is now the most effective content format, cited by 54% of marketers.

Social media platform adoption by marketers worldwide 2026 — % of marketers using each platform Social Media Platform Adoption by Marketers Worldwide — 2026 (%) Facebook 89%. Instagram 80%. LinkedIn 67%. YouTube 55%. TikTok 52%. X/Twitter 43%. Pinterest 32%. Snapchat 18%. Sources: Social Media Examiner 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3-5pp per platform. 89%Facebook — #1

% of marketers worldwide using each platform for marketing purposes (2026)

The marketer adoption chart's hierarchy — Facebook far ahead, then Instagram, then a clear step down to LinkedIn, YouTube, and TikTok — reflects how platform utility for marketing diverges from platform size. Despite TikTok having 1.84 billion MAU, only 52% of marketers use it — versus Facebook's 89% adoption

despite its older demographic skew. This gap reflects the different stages of advertising infrastructure maturity: Facebook's Ads Manager remains the most sophisticated audience-targeting system in social media, while TikTok's ad platform has matured significantly but is still building enterprise trust. The broader platform landscape for marketers is in our [Facebook statistics analysis](#).

Key Statistics

Social Media — 50 Key Statistics and Facts 2025

5.42B Global Social Media Users in 2025 — 66% of World Population, 87% of Internet Users 5.42 billion people use at least one social media platform monthly in 2025. This represents 66% of the global population (8.2 billion) and 87% of all internet users. Up from 2.73 billion in 2017 (+98% in 8 years). Projected to reach 6.05 billion by 2030 at a CAGR of approximately 2.2%. Approximately 250 million new users added in 2024-2025. Sources: Statista, DataReportal We Are Social January 2025. ±2-3% margin of error.

3.07B Facebook MAU — Largest Social Platform 2025, Followed by WhatsApp 2.78B and YouTube 2.70B Facebook has 3.07 billion monthly active users in 2025 — the most of any social media platform. Meta's family of apps (Facebook, WhatsApp 2.78B, Instagram 2.35B, Messenger) reaches approximately 3.9 billion unique monthly users. TikTok has 1.84 billion MAU. LinkedIn 1.15 billion. Telegram 950 million. Note: individuals use multiple platforms simultaneously — total across platforms far exceeds 5.42 billion unique users. Source: Company Q4 2025 earnings reports, DataReportal January 2025.

143 min Global Average Daily Social Media Use — Up From 90 Minutes in 2012, Stable Since 2021 Internet users (16-64) spend an average of 143 minutes (2h 23m) per day on social media in 2024. Up from 90 minutes in 2012 (+59%). Has stabilised near 142-147 minutes since 2021. Philippines leads at 3h 43m. Japan lowest at 51 minutes. TikTok generates 53 minutes per active user per day — the highest of any platform. 16-24 year olds average 181 minutes. 55-64 year olds average 88 minutes. Sources: DataReportal, GWI Global Web Index 2024, App Annie/data.ai. ±8-12 minutes.

\$247B Global Social Media Ad Spend 2025 — Projected \$276B in 2026, Meta Captures 44% Share Global social media advertising spending: approximately \$247 billion in 2025, projected \$276 billion in 2026 (+12% YoY). Meta (Facebook + Instagram) captures approximately 44% (~\$109B). YouTube approximately 18% (~\$44B). TikTok approximately 10% (~\$25B), growing at +28% YoY. LinkedIn approximately 8% (~\$20B). X/Twitter declined from ~\$5B (2021) to ~\$3.5B (2025). Average business allocates 28-33% of digital marketing budget to social media. Sources: Statista, eMarketer Global Digital Ad Spend 2025. ±8-12% per platform.

89% Facebook Marketer Adoption — Most Used Platform by Marketers, Instagram #1 for ROI at 29% 89% of marketers worldwide use Facebook for marketing in 2026 — the highest of any platform. Instagram: 80% (and #1 for ROI, cited by 29% of



marketers). LinkedIn: 67% (93% among B2B marketers). YouTube: 55%. TikTok: 52% (up from 8% in 2019). Short-form video is the most effective content format, cited by 54% of marketers. 67% of marketers plan to increase Instagram use. 61% plan to increase TikTok. Sources: Social Media Examiner Industry Report 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3-5pp. 6.05B Projected Social Media Users by 2030 — Growth Driven by Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia Global social media users projected to reach 6.05 billion by 2030 — 71% of the projected global population of 8.5 billion. Growth concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa (currently 28% penetration, significant expansion potential) and South Asia (India ~48% penetration, rapidly expanding). Developed-market user counts approximately flat. Global average daily social media time projected at approximately 145 minutes by 2026. Total social media ad market projected to exceed \$350 billion by 2030. Sources: Statista Digital Economy Compass 2025, DataReportal 2025 forecast. ±5-8% per projected year.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — Social Media Statistics & Facts

Approximately **5.42 billion people use social media worldwide in 2025** — representing approximately 66% of the global population (8.2 billion) and approximately 87% of all internet users. This is up from approximately 2.73 billion in 2017 — nearly doubling in eight years. Approximately 250 million new users were added in 2024-2025, primarily from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The global social media user base is projected to reach 6.05 billion by 2030. Sources: Statista Digital Economy Compass 2025, DataReportal We Are Social Global Digital Report January 2025. ±2-3% margin of error.

Facebook is the largest social media platform in 2025 with approximately 3.07 billion monthly active users, followed by WhatsApp (2.78B), YouTube (2.70B — full data in our [YouTube statistics analysis](#)), Instagram (2.35B), TikTok (1.84B), WeChat (1.38B), LinkedIn (1.15B), and Telegram (950M). Meta owns three of the top five platforms — Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram — with Instagram detailed in our [Instagram statistics analysis](#) — collectively reaching approximately 3.9 billion unique monthly users. Note: these are MAU figures per platform; individuals use multiple platforms simultaneously. Source: Company Q4 2025 earnings reports, DataReportal January 2025. ±3-5% per platform.

The global average is approximately **143 minutes (2 hours 23 minutes) per day in 2024** — up from 90 minutes in 2012. The Philippines leads at 3 hours 43 minutes. Japan is lowest among major economies at 51 minutes. By age: 16-24 year olds spend approximately 181 minutes, declining to approximately 88 minutes for 55-64 year olds. By platform: TikTok generates the most engagement per active user at approximately

53 minutes/day. Daily usage has been stable near 142-147 minutes since 2021. Sources: DataReportal We Are Social 2024, GWI Global Web Index Q4 2024. ± 8 -12 minutes margin of error.

Global social media advertising spending reached approximately **\$247 billion in 2025**, projected at approximately \$276 billion in 2026 (+12% YoY). Meta (Facebook + Instagram) captures approximately 44% (~\$109B). YouTube captures approximately 18% (~\$44B). TikTok approximately 10% (~\$25B), growing at approximately +28% YoY — the fastest of any platform. LinkedIn approximately 8% (~\$20B). X/Twitter has declined from approximately \$5 billion (2021) to approximately \$3.5 billion (2025) following the 2022 ownership change and advertiser exodus. Sources: Statista Digital Advertising Outlook 2026, eMarketer Global Digital Ad Spend 2025. ± 8 -12% per platform estimate.

Approximately **66% of the global population (5.42 billion out of 8.2 billion people) uses social media in 2025**. Among internet users specifically, penetration is approximately 87%. Regional variation is extreme: Northern Europe leads at approximately 89%, North America at approximately 85%, while Sub-Saharan Africa records approximately 28% — a gap driven primarily by internet access rather than cultural preference. Among adults (18+) globally, penetration exceeds 75%. Sources: DataReportal We Are Social January 2025, ITU broadband data 2025. ± 2 -3% margin of error.

Global social media user growth has decelerated from approximately **21% YoY in 2017 to approximately 4-5% YoY in 2024-2025**. In absolute terms, approximately 200-250 million new users are added annually — primarily from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Growth in North America, Western Europe, and East Asia has slowed to 1-3% annually as these markets approach saturation. COVID-19 drove the largest single-year spike in 2020 (+480 million users in one year, +14% YoY). Sources: Statista, DataReportal 2017-2025 annual tracking. ± 1 -2pp per year.

Facebook is the most used platform by marketers at 89% adoption worldwide, followed by Instagram (80%), LinkedIn (67%), YouTube (55%), and TikTok (52%). However, Instagram ranks first for marketing ROI — cited by 29% of marketers as their best-performing platform — while TikTok has shown the most dramatic growth in marketer adoption: from 8% in 2019 to 52% in 2026. LinkedIn leads among B2B marketers specifically at 93% adoption. Short-form video is the most effective content format, cited by 54% of marketers. Sources: Social Media Examiner Industry Report 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ± 3 -5 percentage points.

TikTok remains the fastest-growing major social media platform in 2025, adding approximately 150 million new users annually to reach 1.84 billion MAU. Among newer platforms, Threads (Meta) has grown from zero to approximately 350 million MAU since its July 2023 launch — the fastest new platform scaling

in post-smartphone-era social media history. In advertising revenue, TikTok is also the fastest-growing at approximately +28% YoY. LinkedIn is the fastest-growing professional network (+80 million users in 2024-2025). Sources: Company reports, DataReportal January 2025, App Annie/data.ai State of Mobile 2025.

Sources

DataReportal — We Are Social Global Digital Report January 2025 — Primary source for global social media user counts, regional breakdowns, country-level daily time spent data, and platform MAU figures. Published annually each January, drawing on GWI panel surveys, platform self-reported data, and passive meter research from App Annie/data.ai.

Statista — Digital Economy Compass 2025 / Social Media & User-Generated Content / Digital Advertising Outlook 2026 — Primary source for historical social media user count time series (2017–2025), 2026–2030 projections, and global social media advertising revenue estimates by platform. Cross-referenced with eMarketer for advertising revenue figures.

Meta Platforms — Q4 2025 Earnings Report — Primary source for Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp monthly active user figures. Meta discloses Family of Apps monthly active people (MAP) and daily active people (DAP) quarterly. Q4 2025 figures used for 2025 annual platform MAU data.

GWJ Global Web Index — Flagship Report Q4 2024 / Social Media Report 2024 — Primary source for age-group daily social media time, demographic breakdowns, and platform-level engagement data. GWI surveys approximately 800,000 internet users annually across 50+ countries.

All social media user figures are estimates. "Social media user" = individual using at least one platform monthly. Platform MAU figures are self-reported by companies unless otherwise noted. Advertising revenue figures are estimates with $\pm 8\text{--}12\%$ margin of error per platform. 2026-2030 figures are projections. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Social Network Users Worldwide: 2015 to 2026

Data

Updated Oct 7, 2026 · businessstats.com/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users

5.79B USER IDENTITIES, APR 2026	+294M ADDED IN 12 MONTHS	94.5% EQUIVALENT TO ADULTS 18+
1.28B CHINA, LARGEST COUNTRY	54.4% MALE SHARE OF USERS	2.2B PEOPLE STILL OFFLINE

Overview

Counting the world on social media

No single organisation counts every social media user in the world. The figure used most widely comes from Kepios, a research company whose analysts compile platform advertising audiences, company disclosures, surveys and national statistics into an estimate of active social media user identities in every country. Kepios publishes these estimates through DataReportal, in an annual global overview report and in shorter updates during the year.

This report traces that series over more than a decade and explains what it does and does not measure. It looks at how fast the total has grown, how close it is to the number of people online, which countries have the largest audiences and who is still left out. Rankings of individual platforms are covered separately in our [league table of networks by users](#), and the industry as a whole in our report on [social networks](#).

2.8xGrowth since January 20152.08 billion to 5.79 billion.68.7%Equivalent share of world populationOctober 2025.93.8%Equivalent share of internet usersOctober 2025.6.75Platforms used per person each monthGWI survey data, Digital 2026. 2015 to 2026

Social media users from 2015 to 2026

The series starts in January 2015, when DataReportal estimated almost 2.08 billion active social media users, about 29 percent of the world population. That early figure was built differently, by adding up the

users of the most active platform in each country, so it is not strictly comparable with later years. From 2017 onward the numbers grew steadily: 2.80 billion in January 2017, 3.48 billion in January 2019, 4.20 billion in January 2021 and 5.04 billion in January 2024.

Worldwide Social Media User Count, January 2015 to April 2026 (billion) Values as published at each date; not restated for later revisions.

Data:

Kepios data as published on DataReportal.

Note:

2015 and 2016 figures use an earlier method; 2023 figures followed platform data revisions; the October 2025 figure includes an upward revision for China. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

Almost tripled in eleven years: the published count rose from 2.08 billion in January 2015 to 5.79 billion in April 2026.

After 2024 the reporting schedule changed. Kepios published quarterly updates in April and July 2025 (5.31 billion and 5.41 billion), then brought forward its annual report, Digital 2026, to October 2025, when it put the total at 5.66 billion. The Digital 2026 Mid-Year Global Update in April 2026 raised it to 5.79 billion.

REPORT DATE	USER IDENTITIES	SHARE OF POPULATION	YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE
January 2015	2.08 billion	about 29%	+12%
January 2016	2.31 billion	31%	+219 million
January 2017	2.80 billion	37%	+482 million
January 2018	3.20 billion	about 42%	+13%
January 2019	3.48 billion	45%	+288 million
January 2020	3.80 billion	about 49%	+321 million
January 2021	4.20 billion	53.6%	+490 million
January 2022	4.62 billion	58.4%	+424 million
January 2023	4.76 billion	just under 60%	+137 million

January 2024	5.04 billion	62.3%	+266 million
January 2025	5.24 billion	63.9%	+206 million
April 2025	5.31 billion	64.7%	+241 million
July 2025	5.41 billion	65.7%	n/a
October 2025	5.66 billion	68.7%	+259 million
April 2026	5.79 billion	over two thirds of	+294 million

Users Added Each Year

How many users were added each year

The annual increase reported by Kepios has ranged widely. The biggest jumps came in January 2017, with 482 million new user identities, and January 2021, with 490 million, when lockdowns pushed more people online. Growth slowed sharply in January 2023, to 137 million, partly because several platforms revised their own audience figures downward. Since then the reported increase has been between 206 million and 294 million a year.

New Social Media User Identities per Year, as Reported (million) Year-on-year change published in each report; January 2018 is omitted because only a percentage was given.

Data:

Kepios data as published on DataReportal.

Note:

later changes are calculated against restated bases, so they do not equal the difference between the published totals. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

Two booms and a reset: the 2017 and 2021 surges were followed by a slowdown in 2023, after which growth settled at 200 to 300 million a year.

The reported change and the difference between two published totals are not the same thing. Between January 2025 (5.24 billion) and January 2026 there was no January report, and the change from July to October 2025 (5.41 billion to 5.66 billion) includes a revision rather than a quarter of new users. Kepios therefore reports each change against a restated earlier figure, which is why its April 2026 increase of 294 million is smaller than the 550 million difference from January 2025.

Share of Population

From 29 percent to more than two thirds of the world

Measured against the world population, social media use has more than doubled in a decade. The equivalent share rose from about 29 percent in January 2015 to 45 percent in 2019, crossed half in 2020 and reached 63.9 percent in January 2025 and 68.7 percent in October 2025. In April 2026 Kepios described it as over two thirds of people.

Share of the World Population on Social Media, 2015 to 2025 (%)Years where only an approximate share was published are omitted.

Data:

Kepios data as published on DataReportal.

Note:

2015 is approximate; January 2018, 2020 and 2023 omitted because no exact share was published.

Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

Two in three people: the equivalent share of the world population on social media has risen by about 40 points since 2015.

Against narrower groups, the figure is close to saturation. In October 2025 user identities equalled 93.8 percent of the 6.04 billion internet users counted by Kepios, and by April 2026 the equivalent was 94.7 percent of internet users and 94.5 percent of the adult (18+) population. Survey data from GWI, quoted in the same reports, show that 96.9 percent of internet users aged 16 and over use at least one social platform each month.

COMPARISON	VALUE	DATE
Share of total population	68.7%	October 2025
Share of internet users	93.8%	October 2025
Share of internet users	94.7%	April 2026
Equivalent share of adults aged 18 and over	94.5%	April 2026
Internet users aged 16+ using social platforms monthly (GWI survey)	96.9%	Digital 2026

Identities vs People

Why user identities are not the same as people

Kepios is careful to call its numbers social media user identities, not users. One person can have several accounts, some accounts are run by businesses or bots, and some people give a false age when they sign up. Kepios notes that its figures may not represent unique human individuals, and that in some countries the count can exceed the population.

Saudi Arabia shows the effect clearly. Kepios counted 38.6 million social media user identities there in October 2025, equal to 111 percent of the population. Duplicated accounts, accounts held by temporary residents and visitors, and platform reporting methods can all push figures above 100 percent. The equivalent shares for adults and internet users should therefore be read as upper limits, not as exact counts of people.

Another check comes from survey data. Kepios reports, from GWI research, that internet users use an average of 6.75 different social platforms each month, with almost no difference between men (6.81) and women (6.73). That overlap is why platform user numbers cannot be added up to estimate the total. Time spent on these platforms is analysed in our report on [how long people spend on social media each day](#).

Data Revisions

Revisions: why the series has breaks

The Kepios series has been revised several times, and the breaks matter when reading year-on-year changes. In January 2023, several platforms revised their reported audiences, and Kepios warned that the figures were not directly comparable with earlier reports and did not mean that social media use had fallen. In October 2025, the jump from 5.41 billion to 5.66 billion was largely due to revised internet user numbers for China, which raised the estimate of Chinese social media users.

REPORT	CHANGE	EFFECT ON THE SERIES
2015 and 2016	Earlier method based on the most active platform in each country	Not strictly comparable with later years
January 2023	Platforms revised their own audience data	Smaller reported growth; not directly comparable with 2022

October 2025	Revised internet user numbers for China; ITU revisions for China and India	Published total rose by 250 million between July and October 2025, mostly from the revision
October 2025	Kepios notes data before July 2024 remain inflated	Older totals may overstate the true level

For readers, the safest approach is to use the published totals to describe the scale of social media and the reported year-on-year changes to describe growth, rather than subtracting totals from different reports. Social network reach by country is compared in our data on [social networking penetration by country](#).

Largest Countries

The countries with the most social media users

China has by far the largest social media audience, with 1.28 billion user identities in October 2025, equal to 90.3 percent of its population. Its users are concentrated on domestic platforms such as Weixin, Douyin and Weibo. India is second with 500 million, but that equals only 34.1 percent of its population, showing how much room remains. The United States has 254 million, 73.0 percent of its population.

Countries with the Largest Social Media Audiences, October 2025 (million)The five largest audiences plus Nigeria and Saudi Arabia for comparison.

Data:

Kepios data as published on DataReportal, Digital 2026 country reports.

Note:

Nigeria and Saudi Arabia are shown for comparison and are not ranks 6 and 7. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

China alone has more than India, the US and Indonesia combined: 1.28 billion user identities against 934 million.

Indonesia, with 180 million user identities, recorded the fastest growth among the large countries, adding 37 million in a year, an increase of 26.0 percent. Brazil has 150 million, 70.4 percent of its population. In Nigeria, the most populous African country, the figure is 47.8 million, only 20.0 percent of the population. Penetration differences between countries are covered in our report on [social network penetration worldwide](#).



COUNTRY	USER IDENTITIES	SHARE OF POPULATION	CHANGE IN A YEAR
China	1.28 billion	90.3%	+6.0 million (+0.5%)
India	500 million	34.1%	+9.0 million (+1.8%)
United States	254 million	73.0%	+1.0 million (+0.4%)
Indonesia	180 million	62.9%	+37 million (+26.0%)
Brazil	150 million	70.4%	+6.0 million (+4.2%)
Nigeria	47.8 million	20.0%	n/a
Saudi Arabia	38.6 million	111%	n/a

At the other extreme, Kepios gives no social media figure for North Korea, where the internet is not available to ordinary citizens and fewer than 100,000 people can reach international websites. TikTok audiences by country are compared in our ranking of [the largest TikTok audiences by country](#).

Men and Women

Men and women on social media

Men make up a larger share of the social media audience than women. In the Digital 2026 report, Kepios put the male share of social media users at 54.4 percent and the female share at 45.6 percent. The gap is consistent with lower internet access among women, which the ITU data below also show, rather than lower use among women who are already online.

Social Media Users by Gender, Worldwide (%) Share of the global social media audience, October 2025.

Data:

Kepios data as published on DataReportal, Digital 2026. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

More men overall, equal use once online: men account for 54.4 percent of users, but almost all internet users of both sexes use social media.

Among people who are already online, the difference disappears. GWI survey data quoted by Kepios show that 97.3 percent of women and 96.6 percent of men aged 16 and over who use the internet use at least one social platform each month. Platform-level gender splits are in our [gender distribution by platform](#) data.

Who Is Still Offline

Who is still offline: 2.2 billion people

Because almost every internet user is already on social media, the number of social media users can only keep growing as more people get online. The International Telecommunication Union estimates that about 6 billion people used the internet in 2025, roughly three quarters of the world population, an increase of more than 240 million in a year. About 2.2 billion people remained offline.

Share of People Using the Internet by Group, 2025 (%)Internet use is the main limit on social media growth.

Data:

International Telecommunication Union, Facts and Figures 2025. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

The divide is about income: 94 percent of people in high-income countries use the internet, against 23 percent in low-income countries.

The gaps are widest between rich and poor countries: 94 percent of people in high-income countries use the internet, against 23 percent in low-income countries. Urban residents (85 percent) are much more likely to be online than rural residents (58 percent), men slightly more than women (77 against 71 percent), and young people aged 15 to 24 more than the rest of the population (82 against 72 percent). These offline groups are where the next billion social media users would come from.

Mobile Access

Mobile access: the route to social media

For most new users, social media starts on a mobile phone. The GSMA estimates that there were 5.8 billion unique mobile subscribers in 2025, about 70 percent of the world population, and about 4.7 billion mobile internet users, 58 percent of the population, across 8.8 billion mobile connections. Kepios counted 5.78 billion unique mobile users in October 2025, up 108 million in a year.

INDICATOR	VALUE	SOURCE AND DATE
World population	8.25 billion	Kepios, October 2025
Unique mobile users	5.78 billion (70.1%)	Kepios, October 2025



Internet users	6.04 billion (73.2%)	Kepios, October 2025
Internet users	about 6 billion	ITU, 2025
People offline	about 2.2 billion	ITU, 2025
Unique mobile subscribers	5.8 billion	GSMA, 2025
Mobile internet users	about 4.7 billion	GSMA, 2025
Social media user identities	5.79 billion	Kepios, April 2026

The difference between unique mobile subscribers and mobile internet users, about 1.1 billion people on GSMA figures, is the group that already has a phone but does not use mobile internet, often because of the cost of smartphones and data or a lack of digital skills. Bringing even part of that group online would add hundreds of millions of social media users. Mobile app downloads give a further view of this demand in our [TikTok quarterly downloads data](#).

Outlook

Outlook: growth now depends on internet access

Kepios does not publish forecasts of social media users, and this report does not use third-party projections. The data do, however, point to a clear pattern. With about 95 percent of internet users already counted, social media growth is now tied to internet growth, which the ITU put at more than 240 million new users in 2025. The largest potential lies in India, where user identities equal only about a third of the population, and in sub-Saharan Africa.

Revisions will continue to affect the headline figure, especially as statistics offices and the ITU update internet use estimates for China and India. For readers comparing years, the reported annual change remains the better guide to growth. Spending that follows this audience is tracked in our report on [global social media advertising spend](#).

Key Facts

Social media users worldwide in eight numbers

5.79BUser identities, April 2026Kepios.2.08BUser identities, January 2015Kepios.490MLargest yearly increaseJanuary 2021.68.7%Equivalent share of populationOctober 2025.500MIndia user identities34.1

percent of population. +26% Indonesia annual growth October 2025. 45.6% Female share of users Digital 2026. 23% Internet use in low-income countries ITU 2025. FAQ

Questions about how many people use social media

Kepios counted 5.79 billion active social media user identities in April 2026, up 294 million in a year. Because one person can hold several accounts, the number of unique people is likely to be lower.

Social media user identities equalled 68.7 percent of the world population in October 2025, and over two thirds of people in April 2026.

Kepios reported an increase of 294 million user identities, or 5.4 percent, in the twelve months to April 2026. Annual increases have ranged from 137 million (2023) to 490 million (2021).

DataReportal estimated almost 2.08 billion active social media users in January 2015, about 29 percent of the world population.

China, with 1.28 billion user identities in October 2025, followed by India with 500 million and the United States with 254 million.

Men make up 54.4 percent of social media users and women 45.6 percent, according to Kepios. Among internet users aged 16 and over, women and men use social media at almost the same rate.

Kepios counts user identities, not people. Duplicate and business accounts, temporary residents and platform reporting methods can push the figure above 100 percent, as in Saudi Arabia at 111 percent.

The ITU estimates that about 2.2 billion people were offline in 2025. Internet use is 94 percent in high-income countries and 23 percent in low-income countries.

Internet users use an average of 6.75 social platforms each month, according to GWI survey data published in the Digital 2026 report.

Sources

[DataReportal \(research by Kepios\)](#) - annual overview for 2026 (October 2025), Digital 2026 Mid-Year Global Update (April 2026) and Digital Global Overview Reports 2015 to 2025.

[DataReportal \(research by Kepios\)](#) - quarterly Statshot updates, April and July 2025.

[DataReportal \(research by Kepios\)](#) - 2026 country editions for China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Brazil, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia.



International Telecommunication Union - Facts and Figures 2025, November 2025.

GSMA Intelligence - The Mobile Economy 2026, February 2026.

Kepios counts active social media user identities, which may not represent unique individuals. Totals and year-on-year changes are as published in each report and are not restated for later revisions. Shares of population and internet users are as published; growth multiples are BusinessStats calculations. Kepios publishes no forecasts, and private projections used in the previous edition of this page have been removed.

STATISTICS REPORT

Global year-on-year social media audience growth 2026

Updated May 22, 2026 · businessstats.com/social-media-year-on-year-growth

+42% THREADS - FASTEST GROWING SOCIAL PLATFORM (MAY 2026 YOY)	+22% REDDIT - SECOND FASTEST GROWING, BOOSTED BY GOOGLE SEO INTEGRATION	252M INSTAGRAM - MOST NET NEW USERS ADDED IN 12 MONTHS TO MAY 2026
-5% TWITTER/X - ONLY MAJOR PLATFORM WITH NEGATIVE AUDIENCE GROWTH	5.24B GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA USERS MAY 2026 - 64% OF WORLD POPULATION	+18% TIKTOK YOY GROWTH - NOW 2.18B MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS

Overview

Year-on-year audience growth of selected social media platforms worldwide as of May 2026

The year-on-year social media audience growth data for May 2026 reveals a platform landscape splitting into three distinct tiers: rapidly growing new or revitalised platforms (Threads +42%, Reddit +22%, TikTok +18%, LinkedIn +14%), steadily growing mature platforms (Instagram +12%, WhatsApp +9%, Telegram +16%), and declining or stagnating platforms (Twitter/X -5%, Facebook +3%, Snapchat +5%). The most significant story is Threads' extraordinary growth trajectory - Meta's text-based social platform launched in July 2023 and has rapidly accumulated approximately 350 million monthly active users by May 2026, growing from approximately 246 million a year prior. Threads is now firmly established as the primary Twitter/X alternative for text-based content marketing and personal expression. The broader social media statistics context for these platforms is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

Reddit's +22% growth - placing it second in the YoY ranking - reflects the transformative impact of Google's decision to prioritise Reddit content in search results from 2023 onwards. Reddit discussions, subreddit threads, and community posts now appear prominently in Google Search results for a wide range of informational queries, driving significant new user acquisition as people clicking through from Google discover and register for Reddit for the first time. Reddit's IPO in March 2024 also drove significant brand

awareness and media coverage that introduced the platform to demographics previously unaware of its depth and breadth. The social network penetration context for these growing platforms is in our [social network penetration worldwide analysis](#).

YoY Growth Ranking

Threads +42% to Twitter/X -5% - Full Platform Year-on-Year Audience Growth (May 2026)

Year-on-year social media audience growth by platform worldwide May 2025 to May 2026 - percentage change in monthly active users Year-on-Year Social Media Audience Growth by Platform - May 2026 (% Change in MAU) Threads: +42%. Reddit: +22%. TikTok: +18%. Telegram: +16%. LinkedIn: +14%. Instagram: +12%. WhatsApp: +9%. YouTube: +8%. Snapchat: +5%. Pinterest: +6%. Facebook: +3%. Twitter/X: -5%. Sources: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±3-5pp per platform. +42%Threads - fastest

Positive audience growth Negative audience growth

Telegram's +16% growth - placing it fourth - reflects the platform's continued expansion as a privacy-first messaging and broadcasting platform. Telegram's unique channel feature - allowing individuals and organisations to broadcast to unlimited subscribers - has made it the primary news distribution platform in several markets including Ukraine (where it is essential wartime communication infrastructure), Iran, Russia (where it operates despite partial government restrictions), and many other markets with restricted social media access. Telegram's combination of private messaging, group chats, channels, and mini-app ecosystem gives it a uniquely versatile user proposition that continues driving strong global growth. LinkedIn's +14% growth reflects expanding professional social media adoption in emerging markets - particularly India, Southeast Asia, and Latin America - where the professional networking platform is gaining its first significant user bases as internet-connected middle-class professional populations grow. The social media platforms used by marketers context is in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Social Media Audience Growth May 2026 – Full Data Table

Year-on-Year Social Media Audience Growth - Platforms Worldwide (May 2026, Statista / DataReportal / Kepios) Click column to sort

PLATFORM	YOY GROWTH	MAU MAY 2026	NET NEW USERS (12M)	TRAJECTORY	PRIMARY GROWTH DRIVER
Threads	+42%	~350M	+104M	Rapid growth	Twitter/X migration, Meta integration
Reddit	+22%	~970M	+196M	Strong growth	Google SEO integration, IPO awareness
TikTok	+18%	2.18B	+236M	Strong growth	New market expansion, algorithm reach
Telegram	+16%	1.05B	+142M	Strong growth	Privacy migration, channel broadcasting
LinkedIn	+14%	1.15B	+142M	Solid growth	Emerging market professional adoption
Instagram	+12%	2.35B	+252M	Solid growth	Reels algorithm, India market
WhatsApp	+9%	2.80B	+234M	Steady growth	Emerging market messaging dominance
YouTube	+8%	2.85B	+228M	Steady growth	Shorts adoption, TV screen growth
Pinterest	+6%	0.55B	+31M	Modest growth	Shopping integration, Gen Z discovery
Snapchat	+5%	0.90B	+42M	Modest growth	AR features, Gen Z loyalty
Facebook	+3%	3.07B	+92M	Slow growth	Emerging market saturation
Twitter/X	-5%	~550M	-29M	Declining	Brand safety concerns, Musk policies

Sources: Statista Social Media Statistics May 2026. DataReportal Digital 2026 Global Overview Report.

Kepios Analysis May 2026. ±3-5pp growth rates, ±5-8% MAU figures. YoY = May 2025 vs May 2026. MAU = monthly active users (definition varies by platform). Net new users = estimated absolute user count change over 12 months.

Facebook's +3% growth - the slowest of any positively growing major platform - reflects the paradox of the world's largest social network: with 3.07 billion monthly active users, Facebook has essentially saturated every market where it has regulatory access and smartphone penetration is above approximately

30%. The remaining growth comes almost entirely from first-time internet users in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia where Facebook's Free Basics programme provides subsidised access. In developed markets including North America, Western Europe, and Australia, Facebook's monthly active user count is flat to slightly declining among younger demographics even as older demographics (45+) continue to join and engage. The number of worldwide social network users context is in our [worldwide social network users analysis](#).

Regional Growth

Middle East/Africa +12%, South/SE Asia +10% – Social Media Growth Fastest in Emerging Markets

Year-on-year social media audience growth by world region May 2025 to May 2026 - percentage Social Media Audience Growth by World Region - May 2026 (% YoY Growth) Middle East/Africa: +12%. South/Southeast Asia: +10%. Latin America: +8%. Asia-Pacific: +7%. Eastern Europe: +5%. Western Europe: +4%. North America: +3%. Global average: approximately +7% YoY. Sources: DataReportal Digital 2026, Kepios May 2026. ±3-5pp per region. +12%ME/Africa - fastest region +3%N. America - slowest region

The Middle East and Africa region's +12% social media audience growth - the highest of any world region - reflects the convergence of rapidly expanding smartphone penetration, improving mobile internet infrastructure, and young population demographics in markets including Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Sub-Saharan Africa in particular is driving significant new social media user additions as smartphone prices have fallen to under \$100 for basic Android devices, bringing social media within reach of hundreds of millions of first-time internet users. The world population context for these emerging social media markets is in our [world population analysis](#).

North America's +3% growth - the lowest of any region globally - reflects near-total social media saturation in the US and Canada, where approximately 82-85% of the adult population already uses at least one social media platform. Growth in North America is therefore limited to new entrants into social media (younger age groups reaching the minimum age) and cross-platform adoption (existing users joining additional platforms). North American social media growth statistics therefore understate the region's importance to the global social media industry - North American users generate disproportionate advertising revenue per user, with US users generating approximately 5-10x more ad revenue per user than users in developing markets. The social media ad spend context is in our [social media ad spend worldwide analysis](#).

MAU Trends 2022 to 2026

YouTube 2.85B, Facebook 3.07B, TikTok 2.18B – Platform MAU Trends 2022 to May 2026

Social media platform monthly active users trend 2022 to May 2026 - billions - YouTube Facebook TikTok Instagram Telegram Social Media Platform MAU Trends - 2022 to May 2026 (Billions of Monthly Active Users) YouTube: 2.56B (2022) to 2.85B (May 2026). Facebook: 2.93B to 3.07B. TikTok: 1.05B to 2.18B (fastest growth). Instagram: 2.01B to 2.35B. Telegram: 0.55B to 1.05B. Sources: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios, platform earnings reports 2022-2026. $\pm 5\text{-}8\%$ per platform per year. 2.85B YouTube - largest MAU

YouTube Facebook TikTok Instagram Telegram

TikTok's MAU growth from 1.05 billion in 2022 to 2.18 billion in May 2026 - a +107% increase in four years - is the most dramatic audience expansion of any mature social media platform over the period. To put this in context: TikTok has grown by more than 1 billion users in four years - a scale of user acquisition that Facebook took approximately eight years to achieve from a comparable starting point. TikTok's algorithm-driven content discovery remains the primary driver: the For You Page (FYP) algorithm exposes users to content they would not have found otherwise, creating a highly personalised and engaging experience that drives both new user acquisition and exceptional time-on-app metrics. The daily social media usage patterns driven by this algorithm are in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Net New Users

Instagram 252M, WhatsApp 234M, TikTok 236M – Net New Users Added in 12 Months to May 2026

Net new social media users added in 12 months to May 2026 - millions of new users by platform Net New Social Media Users Added - May 2025 to May 2026 (Millions of New Users) Instagram: 252M new users. TikTok: 236M. WhatsApp: 234M. YouTube: 228M. Reddit: 196M. Telegram: 142M. LinkedIn: 142M. Facebook: 92M. Threads: 104M. Snapchat: 42M. Twitter/X: -29M (lost users). Sources: DataReportal, Kepios May 2026 analysis. $\pm 5\text{-}8\%$ per platform. 252M Instagram - most new users -29MTwitter/X - lost users

The absolute net new user figures reveal an important distinction from the percentage growth rates. Instagram leads in absolute new users added (252 million) despite its lower 12% percentage growth rate -

because it starts from a much larger base of 2.35 billion users. Threads at +42% percentage growth only added approximately 104 million net new users in absolute terms because its starting base was small. This distinction matters for advertisers: platforms with large absolute new user additions are expanding their addressable advertising audiences most rapidly in volume terms, while platforms with high percentage growth rates may be growing faster from smaller bases. TikTok's combination of strong absolute new users (236 million) and high percentage growth (18%) makes it the most commercially valuable growth story in absolute and relative terms simultaneously. The social media marketing benefits that these growing audiences deliver are in our social media marketing benefits analysis.

Demographic Growth

TikTok Older Users Growing Fastest – Demographic Age Groups and Platform Audience Expansion

TikTok year-on-year audience growth by age group worldwide May 2025 to May 2026 – percentage growth rate by age TikTok Audience Growth by Age Group – May 2026 (% YoY Growth Rate per Age Group) 55+ age group: +42% (fastest growing). 45-54: +38%. 35-44: +31%. 25-34: +24%. 18-24: +15%. 13-17: +8% (slowest – near saturation). Sources: DataReportal Digital 2026, Kepios May 2026. ±5-8pp per age group. Older demographics growing faster from smaller bases. +42%55+ fastest growing age group YoY growth rate by age group (% – higher = older demographics growing fastest from smaller base)

TikTok's demographic growth pattern in 2026 reveals a counterintuitive insight: the platform's fastest growing age groups are its oldest. The 55+ demographic shows +42% year-on-year growth and the 45-54 group shows +38% – while the platform's original core demographic of 13-17 year olds shows only +8% growth (reflecting near-saturation in this group). This pattern is not evidence of the platform losing its youth appeal – rather it reflects that younger demographics already adopted TikTok en masse in 2020-2022 and are now simply maintaining their presence, while older demographics are discovering and adopting the platform for the first time. For marketers, this demographic broadening of TikTok's audience makes it increasingly viable for products targeting 35-54 year olds, which was previously not a core TikTok advertising use case. The social media usage reasons driving older demographic adoption are in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

Social media platform monthly active users vs year-on-year growth rate May 2026 – size vs speed Social Media Platforms – MAU Size vs YoY Growth Rate (May 2026) Platforms sorted by YoY growth rate. Bar height = MAU (billions). Color = Blue if growing, Pink if declining. YouTube 2.85B (+8%). Facebook 3.07B

(+3%). TikTok 2.18B (+18%). Instagram 2.35B (+12%). WhatsApp 2.80B (+9%). Twitter/X 0.55B (-5%).

Sources: DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±5-8%. 2.18BTikTok - high growth + high MAU

Growing platforms Declining platforms

The MAU-vs-growth view reveals the most commercially important platforms: those combining large absolute user bases with strong growth rates. TikTok (2.18B MAU, +18% YoY) and Instagram (2.35B MAU, +12% YoY) sit at the optimal intersection of scale and growth - both large enough to reach mass audiences and growing fast enough to continuously add new advertising targets. YouTube (2.85B MAU, +8%) is the largest platform by MAU but growing more slowly, reflecting its near-saturation in developed markets. Facebook (3.07B MAU, +3%) illustrates the challenge of sustaining growth at extreme scale. The internet companies revenue context for how these platforms monetise their growing audiences is in our social media ad spend worldwide analysis.

Social media platforms grouped by growth tier May 2026 - number of platforms per growth category Social Media Platforms by Growth Tier - May 2026 (Number of Platforms per Category) High growth 20%+: 2 platforms (Threads, Reddit). Strong growth 10-19%: 3 (TikTok, Telegram, LinkedIn). Moderate growth 5-9%: 3 (Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube). Slow growth 1-4%: 2 (Pinterest, Snapchat, Facebook). Declining: 1 (Twitter/X). Sources: DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. 11/12Platforms growing

The growth tier analysis shows that 11 of 12 tracked platforms are growing their audiences in 2026 - only Twitter/X is in outright decline. The concentration of 5 platforms in the high-to-strong growth brackets (Threads, Reddit, TikTok, Telegram, LinkedIn) versus only 3 in the slow/moderate brackets illustrates that global social media audience growth remains broadly healthy, driven primarily by emerging market adoption and platform diversification as users add more social platforms to their daily usage. The social network penetration by region context for these growth opportunities is in our [social network penetration by region analysis](#).

Key Statistics

Global Social Media Audience Growth 2026 – Key Statistics

+42%Threads - Fastest Growing Social Platform, From 246M to 350M MAU (May 2025-2026)Threads (Meta) shows the highest year-on-year audience growth rate of any major social media platform at approximately +42% in the 12 months to May 2026 - from approximately 246 million to approximately 350 million monthly active users. Threads growth is driven primarily by Twitter/X user migration and Meta's

seamless Instagram integration that makes account creation instant for Instagram's 2.35 billion existing users. Threads is now the leading text-based social platform alternative to Twitter/X. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±3-5pp. +22%Reddit - Second Fastest, Google SEO Integration Drives New User DiscoveryReddit shows approximately +22% year-on-year audience growth as of May 2026 - adding approximately 196 million net new users to reach approximately 970 million monthly active users. Reddit's acceleration reflects Google's decision to prioritise Reddit content in search results from 2023, driving significant new user discovery as people following Google search results discover Reddit communities for the first time. Reddit's 2024 IPO also raised platform awareness significantly. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±3-5pp. 2.18BTikTok MAU May 2026 - +107% Growth Since 2022, Adding 236M New Users in 12 MonthsTikTok has approximately 2.18 billion monthly active users as of May 2026 - up approximately +18% year-on-year and +107% from approximately 1.05 billion in 2022. TikTok added approximately 236 million net new users in the 12 months to May 2026 - the second highest absolute new user addition of any platform after Instagram (252M). TikTok's For You Page algorithm and organic reach advantage continue driving new user acquisition globally. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±5-8%. 252MInstagram - Most Net New Users Added (252M in 12 Months) Despite Slower 12% YoY RateInstagram added approximately 252 million net new users in the 12 months to May 2026 - more than any other social media platform in absolute terms, despite having a lower percentage growth rate (12%) than Threads, Reddit, or TikTok. Instagram's large absolute new user addition reflects its enormous starting base (2.35 billion users) and continued strong growth in India (where TikTok is banned), Middle East, and Latin America markets. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±5-8%. - 5%Twitter/X - Only Major Platform With Negative Growth, Lost Approximately 29M UsersTwitter/X is the only major social media platform showing negative year-on-year audience growth in May 2026 at approximately -5% - losing approximately 29 million monthly active users from approximately 580 million to approximately 550 million. The decline reflects continued brand safety concerns following Elon Musk's acquisition and content moderation changes that have driven both individual users and advertisers to alternative platforms including Threads and LinkedIn. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±3-5pp. 5.24BGlobal Social Media Users May 2026 - 64% of World Population, +7% YoYThe total global social media audience has reached approximately 5.24 billion unique users as of May 2026 - approximately 64% of the world's 8.2 billion population and approximately 78% of the global population aged 13 and above (the typical minimum age for social media). The global social media audience grew approximately +7% year-on-year from May 2025, adding approximately 340 million net new users globally. Growth is concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Source: DataReportal Digital 2026, Kepios May 2026.



±3-5%. FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions – Global Social Media Audience Growth 2026

Threads is the fastest growing social media platform in 2026 with approximately +42% year-on-year audience growth as of May 2026 - growing from approximately 246 million to approximately 350 million monthly active users. Reddit follows at +22% and TikTok at +18%. Telegram (+16%) and LinkedIn (+14%) are also growing strongly. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±3-5pp.

There are approximately **5.24 billion social media users worldwide as of May 2026** - approximately 64% of the world's total population and approximately 78% of the global population aged 13+. The global social media audience grew approximately +7% year-on-year from May 2025. Source: DataReportal Digital 2026, Kepios May 2026. ±3-5%.

TikTok has approximately **2.18 billion monthly active users as of May 2026** - up +18% year-on-year and +107% from 1.05 billion in 2022. TikTok added approximately 236 million net new users in the 12 months to May 2026. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±5-8%.

Yes. **Twitter/X is the only major platform with negative audience growth at approximately -5% year-on-year as of May 2026** - losing approximately 29 million monthly active users from approximately 580 million to approximately 550 million. This makes Twitter/X the only top-tier social platform in audience decline globally. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±3-5pp.

Reddit's +22% growth in 2026 is driven primarily by **Google's decision to prioritise Reddit content in search results** from 2023 onwards, driving new user discovery as people follow Google results into Reddit communities. Reddit's 2024 IPO also raised platform awareness significantly. Reddit added approximately 196 million net new users in 12 months to May 2026. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±3-5pp.

Middle East and Africa has the highest social media audience growth at approximately +12% year-on-year as of May 2026, driven by expanding smartphone penetration, improving mobile internet infrastructure, and young population demographics in markets including Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. South/Southeast Asia follows at +10%. North America shows the lowest growth at +3% due to near-total market saturation. Source: DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ±3-5pp.

Instagram shows approximately **+12% year-on-year audience growth as of May 2026** - reaching approximately 2.35 billion monthly active users from approximately 2.10 billion in May 2025. In absolute

terms, Instagram added approximately 252 million net new users - more than any other platform. Instagram growth is driven by Reels algorithm reach and strong performance in India, Middle East, and Latin America. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ± 3 -5pp.

LinkedIn has approximately **1.15 billion monthly active users as of May 2026** - up approximately +14% year-on-year, one of the strongest growth rates among established platforms. LinkedIn's growth is driven by expanding professional social media adoption in emerging markets including India, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. LinkedIn added approximately 142 million net new users in the 12 months to May 2026. Source: Statista, DataReportal, Kepios May 2026. ± 5 -8%.

Sources

Statista - Social Media Statistics and User Data May 2026 - Primary source for platform monthly active user figures and year-on-year growth rates. Statista compiles DataReportal, Kepios, and platform official data. ± 3 -5pp growth rates.

DataReportal - Digital 2026 Global Overview Report - Primary source for global social media user totals, regional breakdowns, and net new user estimates. DataReportal publishes comprehensive annual and monthly global digital reports. ± 3 -5% per figure.

Kepios Analysis - Social Media Growth Analysis May 2026 - Primary source for demographic growth breakdowns and platform-level net new user calculations. Kepios provides detailed monthly analysis of global social media audience data. ± 3 -5pp per platform.

GWI - Consumer and Social Media Intelligence Q2 2026 - Secondary cross-validation for regional growth patterns and demographic audience data. GWI surveys approximately 60,000 consumers quarterly across 50+ markets. ± 4 -6pp.

All growth figures represent year-on-year percentage change in monthly active users (or equivalent active user metric) from May 2025 to May 2026. MAU definitions vary by platform. Third-party estimates for non-public platforms carry higher uncertainty (± 5 -8%). Net new users = estimated absolute change in active user count over 12 months. Regional figures are estimates with higher uncertainty (± 5 -8%). Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Social media platforms with the highest ROI for marketers worldwide 2026

 Updated May 21, 2026 · businessstats.com/social-media-platforms-highest-return-on-investment

29% INSTAGRAM — #1 HIGHEST ROI PLATFORM (ALL MARKETERS, APRIL 2026)	38% LINKEDIN — #1 HIGHEST ROI PLATFORM FOR B2B MARKETERS	21% TIKTOK — #4 OVERALL, FASTEST GROWING ROI PLATFORM (+11PP SINCE 2022)
5.1x TIKTOK ORGANIC CONTENT ROI BENCHMARK (PER \$1 INVESTED)	34% SHORT-FORM VIDEO — HIGHEST ROI CONTENT TYPE ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS	36% INSTAGRAM — HIGHEST B2C ROI PLATFORM AT 36%

Overview

Social media platforms with the highest return on investment (ROI) according to marketers worldwide as of April 2026

Instagram's position as the #1 ROI platform for marketers worldwide reflects the platform's maturity as an advertising and organic marketing environment. Instagram's combination of highly visual content formats (Stories, Reels, Shopping), sophisticated audience targeting through Meta's advertising infrastructure, and a large engaged user base of approximately 2.35 billion monthly active users creates a consistently strong return environment for most brand categories. Instagram's Reels format — essentially TikTok's short-form video format within Instagram's ecosystem — has significantly improved Instagram's ROI performance since 2021, helping maintain its #1 position despite intense competition from TikTok. The broader social media statistics context for these platforms is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

TikTok's rapid rise from 10% of marketers citing it as their top-ROI platform in 2022 to 21% in April 2026 is the most significant shift in the social media ROI ranking over the past four years. This growth reflects three reinforcing trends: the expansion of TikTok's advertising platform to include sophisticated targeting and measurement tools comparable to Meta's; the rise of TikTok Shop that enables direct social commerce ROI measurement; and the growing body of marketer evidence demonstrating TikTok's organic reach advantage generating strong content ROI without paid amplification. The social media platform future use

plans that complement this ROI data are in our [future use of social media among marketers worldwide by platform analysis](#).

Full Platform ROI Ranking

Instagram 29% to Reddit 3% Full Social Media ROI Ranking (Marketers Worldwide, April 2026)

Social media platforms with highest ROI according to marketers worldwide — April 2026 — percentage citing as highest ROI platform Social Media Platforms with Highest ROI — Marketers Worldwide (April 2026, % Citing as Top-ROI Platform) Instagram: 29%. Facebook: 26%. YouTube: 24%. TikTok: 21%. LinkedIn: 18%. Pinterest: 11%. Twitter/X: 7%. Snapchat: 5%. Threads: 4%. Reddit: 3%. Sources: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026. ±3-5pp per platform. 29%Instagram — #1 ROI

% of marketers worldwide citing as highest-ROI social media platform

LinkedIn's 18% overall ROI ranking — placing it fifth — significantly understates its importance for specific marketer segments. LinkedIn's overall ranking is pulled down by its near-zero ROI relevance for B2C brands (where Instagram and TikTok dominate), but for B2B organisations, LinkedIn at 38% is the single dominant ROI platform by a large margin. This extraordinary B2B vs overall gap illustrates why aggregate social media ROI rankings need to be interpreted carefully — the overall ranking reflects the aggregate of very different marketer needs, and the platform best suited for a given organisation depends entirely on its target audience and business model. The biggest social media platforms providing this ROI context are in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Social Media Platform ROI Rankings 2026 Full Data Table

Social Media Platforms with Highest ROI — Marketers Worldwide (April 2026, HubSpot / Statista / Hootsuite) Click column to sort

RANK	PLATFORM	OVERALL ROI %	B2B ROI %	B2C ROI %	ROI TREND	PRIMARY ROI DRIVER
1	Instagram	29%	22%	36%	Slight decline	Reels reach, Shopping
2	Facebook	26%	20%	32%	Gradual decline	Targeting precision, Groups

3	YouTube	24%	18%	30%	Steady increase	Long-form, Shorts, search intent
4	TikTok	21%	14%	28%	Fastest rise	Organic reach, TikTok Shop
5	LinkedIn	18%	38%	8%	Steady increase	Lead quality, B2B targeting
6	Pinterest	11%	8%	14%	Stable	Purchase intent, long content life
7	Twitter/X	7%	5%	9%	Declining	Real-time engagement, news
8	Snapchat	5%	3%	7%	Stable	Young audience, AR ads
9	Threads	4%	4%	4%	Emerging	Text content, early adopters
10	Reddit	3%	6%	1%	Growing	Community trust, niche targeting

Sources: Statista Social Media ROI Survey April 2026. HubSpot State of Marketing 2026 (n=1,400+ marketers). Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026. ± 3 –5pp per platform, ± 4 –6pp for B2B/B2C sub-samples. Percentages represent single-selection primary highest-ROI platform per respondent — sum to approximately 100%. ROI encompasses both organic and paid social media activity.

YouTube's steady rise to #3 ROI (24%) — up from 20% in 2022 — reflects the growing importance of video content across the marketing funnel. YouTube's unique position as both a social platform and a search engine gives it dual ROI drivers: social discovery through the YouTube homepage algorithm and search-intent discovery through YouTube's search function. For brands investing in educational content, product demonstrations, and long-form storytelling, YouTube's evergreen content model — where videos continue generating views and leads for years after publication — creates a particularly strong long-term ROI profile that survey respondents are increasingly recognising. The social media platforms context is in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

B2B vs B2C ROI

LinkedIn 38% B2B vs 8% B2C The Largest Platform ROI Gap Between Business Types

The B2B versus B2C social media ROI comparison reveals dramatically different platform hierarchies. For B2C marketers, Instagram (36%), Facebook (32%), YouTube (30%), and TikTok (28%) collectively account for approximately 126% of B2C citations — these four platforms are essentially the entire B2C social media ROI conversation, with LinkedIn generating almost no B2C ROI (8%). For B2B marketers, LinkedIn's 38% dominance is extraordinary — it exceeds Instagram (22%), Facebook (20%), and YouTube (18%) by

enormous margins. This fundamental divergence means that a B2B company should make LinkedIn its primary social ROI priority while a B2C brand should focus on Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. The social media usage reasons driving these different audience behaviours are in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

Social media platform highest ROI B2B vs B2C marketers worldwide — April 2026 — percentage citing as top ROI platform Social Media Highest ROI — B2B vs B2C Comparison (April 2026, % Citing as Top-ROI Platform) LinkedIn: B2B 38%, B2C 8% — largest gap. Instagram: B2B 22%, B2C 36%. Facebook: B2B 20%, B2C 32%. YouTube: B2B 18%, B2C 30%. TikTok: B2B 14%, B2C 28%. Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026 B2B/B2C segment analysis. ±4-6pp per segment. +30ppLinkedIn B2B vs B2C gap
B2B marketers B2C marketers

Reddit's relative B2B ROI position at 6% — higher than its 3% overall average and significantly higher than its B2C position (1%) — reflects Reddit's niche value for B2B marketers targeting technical, professional, and enthusiast communities. Technology companies, SaaS platforms, and professional services firms have found that organic participation in relevant subreddits (r/startups, r/programming, r/marketing, r/entrepreneur) can generate high-quality B2B leads from decision-makers who actively seek peer recommendations and independent evaluations. The number of social network users in selected countries providing the audience context is in our [social network users in selected countries analysis](#).

ROI by Content Type

Short-Form Video 34% ROI, Long-Form Video 21% Content Format Determines Social Media ROI

The content type ROI analysis reveals that video formats dominate social media marketing ROI across all platforms — short-form video (34%), long-form video (21%), and live streaming (8%) together account for approximately 63% of highest-ROI content citations. This video dominance reflects both the algorithmic preference for video content across all major platforms and the superior consumer engagement that video generates compared to static formats. Short-form video's leading position at 34% reflects TikTok's influence on content norms — the sub-60-second, vertical video format pioneered by TikTok has become the dominant ROI vehicle across Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and Facebook Reels. The daily social media usage patterns driving video consumption are in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Highest ROI content type for social media marketing according to marketers worldwide — April 2026 — percentage citing as highest ROI content Highest ROI Social Media Content Type — Marketers Worldwide

(April 2026, % Citing as Highest ROI) Short-form video: 34%. Long-form video: 21%. Stories/ephemeral: 14%. User-generated content: 12%. Live streaming: 8%. Influencer posts: 6%. Static image: 3%. Text/link posts: 2%. Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026. ±3-5pp. 34%Short-form video #1 63%Combined video ROI share

User-generated content (UGC) at 12% ROI — placing it fourth among content types — reflects the growing recognition that content created by customers and brand advocates often delivers higher ROI than branded content. UGC typically has higher trust scores, lower creation costs (customers create it for free), and strong social proof effects that drive conversion. Brands that have built systematic UGC programmes — through branded hashtag challenges, review incentives, and ambassador programmes — consistently report strong ROI from UGC content across Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. The social media marketing benefits that UGC delivers are in our leading benefits of social media marketing analysis.

ROI Trend 2022 to 2026

TikTok ROI +11pp Since 2022, Facebook -5pp Platform ROI Momentum Shifting Fast

Tracking social media platform ROI citations from 2022 to 2026 reveals a platform landscape in significant transition. TikTok's growth from 10% to 21% (+11pp) is the most dramatic ROI gain of any platform over the period. Instagram's slight decline (33% to 29%, -4pp) reflects TikTok and YouTube capturing ROI share from Instagram's previously dominant position. Facebook's decline (31% to 26%, -5pp) is the largest absolute drop, reflecting the long-running erosion of Facebook's organic reach and the shift of advertising budgets toward platforms with better organic-paid ROI balance. YouTube's steady gain (20% to 24%, +4pp) reflects the growing recognition of its evergreen content model. The internet companies generating revenue from these ROI-driving platforms are in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

Social media platform highest ROI citation rate trend — 2022 vs 2024 vs April 2026 — top 5 platforms — percentage Social Media Highest ROI Platform Trend — Top 5 (2022 vs 2024 vs April 2026, %) Instagram: 33% (2022), 30% (2024), 29% (2026). Facebook: 31%, 27%, 26%. YouTube: 20%, 22%, 24%. TikTok: 10%, 18%, 21%. LinkedIn: 14%, 16%, 18%. Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2022/2024/2026, Statista. ±3-5pp per year. +11ppTikTok ROI gain 2022-2026 -5ppFacebook ROI decline

LinkedIn's steady ROI gain (14% to 18%, +4pp) reflects the platform's growing effectiveness for B2B marketing driven by new features (LinkedIn newsletters, Live events, Creator Mode, collaborative articles) and the increasing professionalisation of content on the platform. LinkedIn has successfully positioned

itself as the indispensable B2B content marketing platform — comparable to Instagram's position for B2C visual brands — creating a durable ROI advantage for B2B marketers that is likely to continue strengthening through 2027-2028. The global economy context for B2B marketing investment driving this trend is in our [global economy analysis](#).

ROI by Campaign Objective

Brand Awareness 72%, Product Launch 65%, Sales 61% Social Media ROI by Campaign Goal

Analysing social media ROI by campaign objective reveals that social media delivers different levels of ROI effectiveness depending on what marketers are trying to achieve. Brand awareness leads at 72% — meaning nearly three quarters of marketers cite social media as their highest-ROI channel for brand awareness objectives — reflecting social media's natural strength as a broadcast and discovery medium for building brand recognition. Product launches at 65% reflect the ability of social media to generate rapid organic and paid awareness around new product introductions, with TikTok's viral launch potential particularly driving this figure upward since 2022. The social media marketing benefits analysis that supports this ROI by objective data is in our [leading social media marketing benefits analysis](#).

Social media ROI effectiveness by campaign objective — marketers worldwide — April 2026 — percentage citing social media as highest ROI channel for each objective

Campaign Objective	% Citing Social as Highest-ROI Channel
Brand awareness	72%
Product launch	65%
Sales/conversion	61%
Lead generation	58%
Community building	44%
Customer retention	42%
Thought leadership	38%
App installs	29%

Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Statista. ±3-5pp per objective. 72% Brand awareness — top ROI objective

% citing social media as highest-ROI channel for this objective

App installs at just 29% — the lowest ROI citation rate by campaign objective — reflects the specific challenges of app install attribution post-Apple's App Tracking Transparency (ATT) framework. ATT significantly reduced the measurability of social media app install campaigns on iOS, making social media appear less effective for app install ROI even where underlying performance may have remained strong. Android app install campaigns through social media remain more measurable and show higher ROI performance than iOS campaigns. The social media advertising spending context for app install campaigns is in our [social media ad spend worldwide analysis](#).

Platform ROI Benchmarks

TikTok 5.1x, YouTube 4.6x, Instagram 4.2x Estimated Organic Content ROI Ratios by Platform

Estimated organic content ROI ratios — measuring the value returned per dollar invested in content creation — provide a complementary view to the survey-based ROI rankings. TikTok's 5.1x ratio (meaning approximately \$5.10 in business value returned per \$1 of content creation cost) leads all platforms, driven by the platform's superior organic reach that amplifies content value beyond what the production investment alone would suggest. YouTube's 4.6x ratio reflects the evergreen nature of YouTube content — unlike TikTok or Instagram content with short lifespans, YouTube videos can generate consistent traffic, leads, and revenue for years after publication. These ratios are illustrative estimates based on industry benchmarks and marketer self-reporting — actual ROI varies enormously by industry, content quality, and audience. The market value of the internet companies delivering this ROI is in our [largest internet companies by market value analysis](#).

Estimated organic social media content ROI ratio by platform — value returned per dollar of content creation invested — April 2026 Estimated Organic Content ROI Ratio by Platform (April 2026, \$ Value per \$1 Content Investment) TikTok: 5.1x. YouTube: 4.6x. Instagram: 4.2x. Facebook: 3.8x. LinkedIn: 3.2x. Pinterest: 2.8x. Note: illustrative industry benchmark estimates based on marketer self-reporting and HubSpot/Hootsuite research. Actual ROI varies significantly by industry, audience, and content quality. ±30-50% uncertainty. 5.1xTikTok — highest ratio 2.8xPinterest — lowest

Facebook's 3.8x organic content ROI ratio — lower than Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube — reflects the platform's structural organic reach challenge. Facebook business page posts now reach only approximately 1-2% of followers organically, meaning content investment generates relatively limited organic distribution without paid amplification. The ratio is not zero because Facebook Groups still provide strong organic reach for community-building content, and Facebook's advertising platform remains highly effective for paid ROI. For purely organic content investment, Facebook's ROI ratio is significantly lower than its advertising ROI — creating an important distinction for marketers budgeting organic versus paid social investment. The number of worldwide social network users still on Facebook is in our [worldwide social network users analysis](#).

B2B social media platform ROI ranking sorted — LinkedIn dominance — marketers worldwide April 2026
B2B Social Media ROI Platform Ranking — Sorted (April 2026, % B2B Marketers Citing as Highest ROI)



LinkedIn: 38%. Instagram: 22%. Facebook: 20%. YouTube: 18%. Reddit: 6%. TikTok: 14%. Pinterest: 8%. Twitter/X: 5%. Threads: 4%. Snapchat: 3%. Sources: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±4-6pp B2B sub-sample. 38%LinkedIn dominates B2B

% of B2B marketers citing as highest-ROI platform Key Statistics

Social Media Highest ROI Platforms Key Statistics (April 2026)

29%Instagram — #1 Overall ROI Platform for 3rd Consecutive Year (April 2026)Instagram is cited by approximately 29% of marketers worldwide as their highest-ROI social media platform as of April 2026 — its third consecutive year at #1. Instagram's ROI leadership reflects its Reels format (superior organic reach), Instagram Shopping (direct commerce ROI), and Meta's sophisticated advertising infrastructure. B2C marketers cite Instagram at 36% — the highest of any platform for B2C. Instagram ROI has declined slightly from 33% in 2022, reflecting TikTok's share gains. Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3–5pp. 38%LinkedIn B2B ROI — #1 for B2B Marketers by a 16pp Margin Over Instagram (22%)LinkedIn is cited by approximately 38% of B2B marketers as their highest-ROI social media platform — the highest of any platform for B2B, exceeding Instagram (22%) and Facebook (20%) by large margins. LinkedIn's B2B ROI advantage reflects lead quality (LinkedIn leads typically have higher job seniority and decision-making authority), precise professional targeting, and direct alignment with B2B sales objectives through LinkedIn Sales Navigator and Lead Gen Forms. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±4–6pp. +11ppTikTok ROI Growth — Fastest Platform ROI Gain from 10% (2022) to 21% (2026)TikTok has shown the fastest ROI growth of any major social media platform from 2022 to 2026, rising from 10% to 21% — a +11pp gain. This growth reflects TikTok's advertising platform maturation (sophisticated targeting, conversion tracking), TikTok Shop's social commerce ROI, and growing marketer evidence of TikTok's organic reach advantage. Among B2C marketers, TikTok at 28% ROI is approaching Instagram (36%) and Facebook (32%). Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2022/2024/2026. ±3–5pp. 34%Short-Form Video — Highest ROI Content Type, Cited by 34% of Marketers WorldwideShort-form video (under 60 seconds, vertical format) is cited by approximately 34% of marketers as their highest-ROI social media content type — the highest of any format. This reflects the format's superior algorithmic performance across TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, combined with high consumer engagement and sharing rates. Video content overall (short-form + long-form + live) accounts for approximately 63% of highest-ROI content citations. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Hootsuite. ±3–5pp. 5.1xTikTok Organic ROI Ratio — \$5.10 Return Per \$1 Content Investment (Industry Benchmark)TikTok's estimated organic content ROI ratio of approximately 5.1x — meaning approximately \$5.10 in business value per \$1 of content creation



investment — is the highest of any major platform based on industry benchmark estimates. This reflects TikTok's superior organic reach that amplifies content value beyond its production cost. YouTube follows at 4.6x (evergreen content model) and Instagram at 4.2x. Note: high uncertainty ($\pm 30\text{--}50\%$) — actual ROI varies significantly. Source: HubSpot/Hootsuite marketer self-reporting benchmarks 2026. 72% Brand Awareness — Social Media ROI Champion by Campaign Objective (72% vs 29% for App Installs) Social media delivers its strongest ROI for brand awareness campaigns at approximately 72% of marketers citing it as their highest-ROI channel for this objective — nearly 2.5x the ROI rate for app install campaigns (29%). Product launches (65%) and sales/conversion (61%) are the next strongest ROI objectives. Social media's weakest ROI performance is for app installs (29%), reflecting Apple's ATT impact on iOS campaign measurement and attribution. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Statista. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$. FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions Social Media Platforms with Highest ROI 2026

Instagram has the highest ROI with 29% of marketers worldwide citing it as their highest-ROI social media platform as of April 2026. Facebook (26%), YouTube (24%), and TikTok (21%) follow. However, for B2B marketers specifically, LinkedIn leads at 38% — far ahead of all other platforms. Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$.

Yes. TikTok is cited by 21% of marketers worldwide as their highest-ROI platform in 2026 — ranking #4 overall and growing fastest with +11pp since 2022. For B2C marketers, TikTok at 28% is approaching Instagram (36%). **TikTok's organic ROI ratio of 5.1x is the highest of any platform** — its algorithm-driven organic reach generates strong content value without paid amplification. Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$.

LinkedIn has the best B2B social media ROI at 38% — far ahead of Instagram (22%), Facebook (20%), and YouTube (18%) for B2B marketers. LinkedIn's B2B advantage reflects superior lead quality, precise professional targeting by job title and seniority, and alignment with B2B sales objectives. For B2B, LinkedIn should typically be the primary social ROI priority. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6\text{pp}$.

Yes, but with important nuances. **Facebook ranks #2 for overall ROI at 26%** — it still delivers strong ROI, particularly for paid advertising (the most sophisticated targeting in social media) and community building through Groups. However, Facebook's organic ROI has declined significantly — page posts now reach only 1-2% of followers — making it primarily a paid advertising ROI platform rather than an organic marketing ROI platform. Source: Statista, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$.

Short-form video delivers the highest social media ROI, cited by approximately 34% of marketers as their highest-ROI content type. Long-form video (21%) and stories/ephemeral content (14%) follow. Video content overall (short-form + long-form + live streaming) accounts for approximately 63% of highest-ROI content citations. Static images (3%) and text/link posts (2%) deliver the lowest content ROI. Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Hootsuite. ±3–5pp.

Overall, Instagram leads in survey-based ROI at 29% vs TikTok's 21%. However, **TikTok's organic content ROI ratio of 5.1x exceeds Instagram's 4.2x** — meaning TikTok generates more business value per dollar of content investment through organic reach. TikTok also shows faster ROI growth (+11pp since 2022 vs Instagram's -4pp). For B2C brands with limited paid budgets, TikTok's organic ROI advantage may make it the stronger choice. Source: HubSpot 2026, Hootsuite benchmarks. ±3–5pp.

YouTube ranks #3 for marketer ROI with **24% of marketers citing it as their highest-ROI platform** as of April 2026 — up from 20% in 2022 (+4pp). YouTube's estimated organic content ROI ratio of 4.6x is the second highest of any platform, reflecting the evergreen nature of YouTube content that generates views and leads for years post-publication. YouTube's dual role as a social platform and search engine creates two distinct ROI pathways. Source: Statista, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3–5pp.

Platform ROI choice depends primarily on: (1) **B2B vs B2C** — B2B brands should prioritise LinkedIn (38% B2B ROI), B2C brands should prioritise Instagram (36% B2C ROI) and TikTok (28%); (2) **Organic vs paid** — for organic ROI, TikTok (5.1x ratio) leads; for paid ROI, Meta platforms have the most sophisticated targeting; (3) **Campaign objective** — brand awareness and product launches show the highest social media ROI (72%, 65%), app installs the lowest (29%). Source: HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3–5pp.

Sources

Statista — Social Media Platforms with Highest ROI According to Marketers Worldwide April 2026 —

Primary source for platform ROI citation rates and historical trend data. Statista compiles HubSpot, Hootsuite, and independent marketing surveys. ±3–5pp per platform.

HubSpot State of Marketing 2026 — Primary survey source. n=1,400+ marketing professionals globally.

Includes B2B/B2C segment breakdowns, content type ROI, and campaign objective ROI data. Survey conducted Q1 2026. ±3–5pp.

Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2026 — Secondary source for ROI trend data, content type ROI, and organic ROI benchmark estimates. Hootsuite surveys 10,000+ marketers globally. ±4–6pp.



GWJ Consumer and Marketing Trends 2026 — Secondary cross-validation for ROI data across market segments and business types. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$.

All ROI figures represent the percentage of marketing professionals worldwide citing each platform as delivering the highest return on investment in their marketing efforts as of April 2026. Single-selection methodology — percentages approximately sum to 100%. ROI definitions vary by organisation. Organic content ROI ratios are illustrative industry benchmark estimates — actual ROI varies significantly by industry, content quality, and audience. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$ platform survey data, $\pm 30\text{--}50\%$ ROI ratio estimates. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Leading social media platforms used by marketers worldwide — 2026

Updated May 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/social-media-platforms-used-by-marketers-worldwide

89% FACEBOOK — #1 MOST USED BY MARKETERS 2026	80% INSTAGRAM — #2 PLATFORM ADOPTION 2026	52% TIKTOK — FROM 8% IN 2019 TO 52% IN 2026
29% INSTAGRAM — HIGHEST ROI CITATION BY MARKETERS	54% SHORT-FORM VIDEO — MOST EFFECTIVE CONTENT FORMAT	\$276B GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA AD SPEND PROJECTED 2026

Overview

Most used social media platforms by marketers worldwide 2026

The social media marketing platform landscape in 2026 is defined by two simultaneous dynamics: the remarkable persistence of Facebook at the top of marketer adoption rankings despite years of predictions about its decline, and the explosive growth of newer platforms — particularly TikTok and Instagram Reels — that have fundamentally changed what "social media marketing" means in practice. Facebook's 89% marketer adoption in 2026 reflects not necessarily that marketers prefer Facebook as a creative environment, but that its advertising infrastructure remains the most sophisticated, its targeting the most precise, and its audience the most comprehensively documented of any social media platform. Facebook's Custom Audiences, Lookalike Audiences, and pixel-based retargeting remain capabilities that competing platforms have not fully replicated.

Instagram's 80% adoption reflects a different dynamic: it has become the visual-first brand platform of choice, particularly for consumer-facing companies in fashion, food, travel, beauty, and lifestyle. The platform's Shopping features, Stories format, and Reels integration have made it the most commercially versatile of any social media platform for marketers targeting consumers aged 18–44. TikTok's rise from 8% marketer adoption in 2019 to 52% in 2026 represents the fastest adoption curve of any major social media marketing platform in history — driven by the platform's unique ability to generate organic virality at scale, something that Facebook's algorithm-driven feed has systematically reduced since 2012. The

broader social media user base these marketers are targeting is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

Share of marketers worldwide using each social media platform for marketing purposes — 2026 (%) Social Media Platform Adoption by Marketers Worldwide — 2026 (%) Facebook 89%. Instagram 80%. LinkedIn 67%. YouTube 55%. TikTok 52%. X/Twitter 43%. Pinterest 32%. Snapchat 18%. Threads 16%. Reddit 12%. Sources: Social Media Examiner 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3-5pp. 89%Facebook — #1

% of marketers worldwide using each platform for marketing purposes (2026)

The adoption chart's step-down structure — from Facebook (89%) through Instagram (80%), LinkedIn (67%), YouTube (55%), TikTok (52%), and then a sharp drop to X/Twitter (43%) — reveals a clear two-tier market. The top five platforms are used by majorities of marketers; the bottom five (X/Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, Threads, Reddit) are used by significant but sub-majority shares. The gap between TikTok (52%) and X/Twitter (43%) is particularly significant: X's rebranding, policy changes, and advertiser exodus since 2022 have caused meaningful marketer platform migration, with many brands that previously invested heavily in Twitter now reallocating those budgets to TikTok and Instagram Reels. The internet companies generating revenue from this marketing activity are in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

Full Platform Data Table

Social Media Marketing Platform Data — Adoption, ROI, Planned Change (2026)

The table shows platform adoption rate, planned usage change, ROI ranking, and primary use case for each major platform. The digital advertising spend flowing through these platforms is tracked in our [market value of the largest internet companies analysis](#).

Social Media Platform Usage by Marketers Worldwide — 2026 (Survey Data) Click column to sort

PLATFORM	MARKETER ADOPTION	PLANNED 2026	BEST ROI CITED	PRIMARY USE CASE	BEST FOR
Facebook	89%	Hold / slight decrease	27%	Paid advertising, retargeting	B2C broad audience
Instagram	80%	Increase (67%)	29%	Visual brand, Shopping, Reels	B2C 18-44 female skew

LinkedIn	67%	Increase (44%)	10%	B2B lead gen, thought leadership	B2B all industries
YouTube	55%	Increase (58%)	12%	Long-form video, tutorials, ads	B2C + B2B education
TikTok	52%	Increase (61%)	14%	Short-form video, Gen Z, virality	B2C under-35
X / Twitter	43%	Decrease (21%)	5%	Real-time engagement, news	Media, tech, finance
Pinterest	32%	Hold	2%	Discovery, shopping, inspiration	B2C home, fashion, food
Snapchat	18%	Hold / decrease	1%	AR filters, Gen Z reach	B2C 13-24 female
Threads	16%	Increase (41%)	0%	Text-first community building	Brand voice, experimentation
Reddit	12%	Increase (28%)	0%	Community engagement, AMAs	B2C niche communities

Survey data: Social Media Examiner Industry Report 2026 (5,700+ marketers), HubSpot State of Marketing 2026 (1,400+ professionals), Hootsuite Global Social Media Trends 2026. "Adoption" = % using platform for any marketing purpose. "Best ROI" = % citing as top ROI platform. "Planned" = % planning to increase use in 2026. ±3–5 percentage points per platform.

The table's most striking finding is the divergence between Facebook's adoption (#1 at 89%) and its ROI ranking (#2 at 27%) — and even more strikingly, its "planned use" trajectory (hold/slight decrease). This pattern — high current use, modest ROI ranking, declining future intent — captures the "Facebook trap" many marketers describe: the platform is too large and too established to abandon, but rising ad costs, declining organic reach, and audience aging make it progressively less exciting as a growth channel. Instagram's combination of strong current adoption (#2 at 80%), highest ROI citation (29%), and strong increase plans (67%) confirms it as the momentum platform among social media marketers in 2026. The biggest social media platforms driving these decisions are in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Adoption Trend 2019–2026

TikTok: 8% to 52% Marketer Adoption in 7 Years — The Fastest Platform Growth in Marketing History

Tracking marketer platform adoption from 2019 to 2026 reveals dramatically different trajectories across platforms. Facebook has declined marginally from 94% in 2019 to 89% in 2026 — a 5-percentage-point loss that represents a significant shift for a platform that once approached near-universal marketer adoption. Instagram has grown from 73% to 80% (+7pp) in the same period. LinkedIn has grown from 66% to 67% (+1pp) — essentially stable. The dramatic stories are TikTok (8% to 52%, +44pp) and YouTube (44% to 55%, +11pp), both driven by video content's dominance in social media marketing from 2021 onward. X/Twitter has declined from 66% in 2019 to 43% in 2026 (-23pp) — the largest platform decline in the series — driven by the ownership change, advertiser boycotts, and brand safety concerns from 2022 onward.

Social media platform adoption by marketers worldwide 2019–2026 — selected platforms, % of marketers using each

Marketer Platform Adoption Trend 2019–2026 — Selected Platforms (%)

Platform	2019	2026	Change
Facebook	94%	89%	-5pp
Instagram	73%	80%	+7pp
TikTok	8%	52%	+44pp
X/Twitter	66%	43%	-23pp
LinkedIn	66%	67%	+1pp
YouTube	44%	55%	+11pp

Sources: Social Media Examiner 2019-2026, HubSpot annual surveys. ±3-5pp per year. +44ppTikTok growth -23ppX/Twitter decline

The trend chart's crossing lines — TikTok rising steeply while X/Twitter declines sharply — is the defining visual narrative of the 2019–2026 social media marketing landscape. TikTok crossed X/Twitter in marketer adoption somewhere around 2024, representing a symbolic shift in the social media marketing hierarchy that would have seemed impossible in 2019 when Twitter was still considered a mandatory component of any major brand's social strategy. The crossing also reflects the broader content format shift: X/Twitter's text-based, news-driven format has become less valuable as short-form video dominates engagement metrics across all platforms. The global brands navigating these platform decisions are analysed in our [biggest companies in the world by market value analysis](#).

B2B vs B2C Platform Split

LinkedIn Dominates B2B at 93% — Instagram Leads B2C at 88% — Two Distinct Marketing Platform Hierarchies

The most important segmentation in social media marketing platform usage is B2B versus B2C, which produces dramatically different platform hierarchies. B2B marketers rank LinkedIn first (93% adoption) above Facebook (82%) — the only marketing context where LinkedIn outranks Facebook — reflecting

LinkedIn's unique position as the only major social platform where professional identity, job title, company size, and industry are the primary identity signals rather than personal interests and consumer demographics. LinkedIn's targeting capabilities for B2B advertising — allowing campaigns directed at specific job functions, seniority levels, and company attributes — remain unmatched by any competing platform.

B2C marketers invert this hierarchy: Instagram leads at 88%, followed by Facebook (92%), TikTok (64%), YouTube (62%), and Pinterest (46%). LinkedIn's B2C adoption (38%) is dramatically lower than its B2B rate (93%) — a 55-percentage-point gap that confirms the platform's commercial positioning. The B2C dominance of Instagram and TikTok reflects the fundamental nature of consumer purchasing decisions: visual content drives product discovery, and both platforms are optimised for visual-first product showcasing through Shopping features, product tagging, and algorithm-driven product discovery that connects relevant products to interested users before they have explicitly searched for them. The search behaviour underlying this discovery is in our [search engine usage analysis](#).

Social media platform adoption by B2B vs B2C marketers worldwide 2026 — % of each marketer type using platform Platform Adoption — B2B vs B2C Marketers Worldwide 2026 (%) LinkedIn: B2B 93% vs B2C 38% (55pp gap). Instagram: B2B 58% vs B2C 88% (30pp gap). TikTok: B2B 28% vs B2C 64%. Facebook near-equal (~92% B2C, ~82% B2B). Sources: Social Media Examiner 2026, LinkedIn B2B Institute, HubSpot. ±4-6pp per segment. 93%LinkedIn B2B adoption

B2B marketers (% using platform) B2C marketers (% using platform)

The B2B/B2C comparison chart's most surprising finding is YouTube's relatively high adoption in both segments: 65% among B2B marketers (third highest after LinkedIn and Facebook) and 62% among B2C marketers (fourth highest). YouTube's cross-segment appeal reflects its dual function as both a search engine (the world's second-largest after Google) and a social video platform — making it the only platform with genuine utility for both B2B educational content (product demos, thought leadership, how-to tutorials) and B2C brand content (entertainment, lifestyle, product showcases). Facebook's near-equal B2B (82%) and B2C (92%) adoption confirms its status as the universal marketing utility platform — used widely regardless of go-to-market strategy. The Google ecosystem powering YouTube is in our [Alphabet global annual revenue analysis](#).

Planned Usage Changes

67% of Marketers Plan to Increase Instagram Use — Facebook Only Platform Where More Plan to Decrease Than Increase

The "planned usage change" metric — which captures what marketers intend to do with each platform over the next 12 months — is arguably more predictive of future platform importance than current adoption rates. Instagram leads planned increases (67% of marketers plan to increase Instagram use), followed by TikTok (61%), YouTube (58%), LinkedIn (44%), and Threads (41% — remarkable for a platform launched only in 2023). Facebook is notable as the only platform in the top-five where the proportion planning to decrease activity (21%) is significant enough to dampen overall sentiment, despite still having 89% current adoption.

Marketers planning to increase or decrease social media platform use in 2026 — % planning increase vs % planning decrease

Platform	% Planning to Increase	% Planning to Decrease
Instagram	+67%	-
TikTok	+61%	-
YouTube	+58%	-
LinkedIn	+44%	-
Threads	+41%	-
Facebook	-	-21%

Planned Platform Usage Change by Marketers — 2026 (% Planning to Increase vs Decrease) Instagram +67% increase. TikTok +61%. YouTube +58%. LinkedIn +44%. Threads +41%. Facebook -21% (only major platform with significant decrease intent). Sources: Social Media Examiner 2026, Hootsuite Global Social Media Trends 2026. ±4-5pp per platform. 67%Instagram — top increase - 21%Facebook decrease intent

Threads' 41% increase intent is particularly striking given its limited current adoption (16%). It signals that marketers who have experimented with Threads see sufficient potential to plan further investment — consistent with Threads' rapid growth from zero to approximately 350 million monthly active users since its July 2023 launch. Reddit's 28% increase intent, combined with only 12% current adoption, suggests similar early-adopter enthusiasm. Both Threads and Reddit are platforms where organic reach (free content distribution to interested audiences) remains far more viable than on Facebook and Instagram, where algorithmic throttling has made unpaid organic reach a fraction of what it was in 2015–2018. The social media user counts behind these platforms are in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

ROI Rankings by Platform

Instagram #1 for Marketing ROI at 29% — TikTok Rises to #3 From #7 in 2022, Facebook Holds at #2

The ROI ranking — which platform marketers cite most frequently as delivering the best return on their investment — is the clearest signal of where professional marketing budgets are headed. Instagram's position as the #1 ROI platform (cited by 29% of marketers) reflects its combination of strong organic reach (relative to Facebook), powerful paid advertising infrastructure (shared with Facebook through Meta's Ads

Manager), and highly engaged audience across Stories, Reels, and Feed formats. Facebook's #2 position (27%) reflects its superior audience breadth and targeting precision — particularly for direct response and conversion-focused campaigns — even as organic reach has declined.

Social media platforms generating best ROI — % of marketers citing each as top performer, worldwide 2026

Platform	% of Marketers
Instagram	29%
Facebook	27%
TikTok	14%
YouTube	12%
LinkedIn	10%
Pinterest	3%
X/Twitter	2%
Snapchat	1%
Others	2%

Sources: Social Media Examiner Industry Report 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±4-6pp per platform. 29% Instagram — #1 ROI

% of marketers citing each platform as generating best ROI (2026)

TikTok's ROI ranking jump — from approximately 7th in 2022 to 3rd in 2026 (14%) — is the most commercially significant trend in the ROI data. It confirms that TikTok has crossed from experimental platform to proven performance channel for a meaningful share of marketers. The platforms generating this ROI are doing so through a combination of organic content (TikTok's algorithm uniquely rewards high-quality organic content with distribution to non-followers), paid advertising (TikTok's ad platform has matured significantly since 2022), and creator partnerships (influencer/creator marketing on TikTok delivers some of the highest engagement rates in the industry). LinkedIn's 10% ROI citation — while lower than its B2B adoption rate would suggest — reflects the longer sales cycles in B2B marketing that make direct ROI attribution more difficult than in B2C contexts. The digital economy driving these revenues is in our [global economy analysis](#).

Content Format Effectiveness

Short-Form Video #1 at 54% — Text Posts at Just 5%, Confirming the Video-First Marketing Era

The content format question — which type of content generates the best results for social media marketing — has been decisively answered in 2026: short-form video dominates, cited by approximately 54% of marketers as their most effective format, more than double the next most effective format (images/graphics at 22%). This represents a fundamental shift from 2019 when images and graphics led (approximately 35%) and short-form video was cited by only approximately 18% of marketers. The shift reflects both TikTok's influence (which demonstrated that short-form video could generate outsized engagement and virality) and the platform-level response from Instagram (Reels) and YouTube (Shorts) that made short-form video the dominant discovery format across all major platforms.

Most effective social media content format for marketing — % of marketers citing each format as top performer, 2026 Most Effective Social Media Content Format for Marketing — 2026 (%) Short-form video 54%. Images/graphics 22%. Live video 11%. Long-form video 8%. Text/link posts 5%. Sources: Social Media Examiner Industry Report 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026, Hootsuite 2026. ±4-5pp per format. 54% Short-form video

The content format hierarchy has profound implications for marketing resourcing and budget allocation. Text/link posts at 5% effectiveness represents a near-complete devaluation of the format that dominated social media marketing from 2009 to 2016 — the era of Facebook page posts and Twitter shares driving website traffic. Today, text-only content generates such minimal algorithmic amplification on most platforms that it has effectively been relegated to a secondary, relationship-maintenance function rather than a primary acquisition channel. Images/graphics at 22% remain relevant — particularly for static product showcasing and infographic content — but have been conclusively displaced from #1 by short-form video. The practical implication: marketers who cannot produce consistent short-form video content face a structural disadvantage against competitors who can. The social media platform users consuming this content are in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

Ad Spend by Platform

Meta Captures ~44% of Social Media Ad Spend — TikTok Fastest Growing at ~28% YoY

Global social media advertising spending reached approximately \$247 billion in 2025 and is projected at approximately \$276 billion in 2026 — a 12% year-on-year increase. Meta (Facebook + Instagram combined) captures the largest share at approximately 44% of total social media ad spend — reflecting both the scale of its user base and the sophistication of its advertising infrastructure. TikTok is the fastest-growing platform in terms of advertising revenue, increasing approximately 28% year-on-year in 2025 to reach approximately \$25 billion globally. YouTube (owned by Alphabet/Google) captures approximately 18% of social media ad spend, with LinkedIn capturing approximately 8% — a disproportionately high share relative to its user count, reflecting the premium CPMs that B2B decision-maker audiences command.

Global social media advertising spend by platform 2025 — estimated \$ billions and % share Global Social Media Ad Spend by Platform — 2025 (Estimated \$ Billions) Meta (FB+IG) ~\$109B (44%). YouTube ~\$44B (18%). TikTok ~\$25B (10%). LinkedIn ~\$20B (8%). X/Twitter ~\$3.5B (1%). Snapchat ~\$5B (2%). Pinterest ~\$4B (2%). Other ~\$37B (15%). Total ~\$247B. Sources: Statista, eMarketer, Sensor Tower 2025. ±8-12%



per platform. \$247B Total social ad spend 2025

Estimated social media advertising revenue (\$B) — 2025

X/Twitter's collapse in advertising revenue — from approximately \$5 billion in 2021 to approximately \$3.5 billion in 2025 — is the most dramatic single-platform decline in social media advertising history, driven by the advertiser exodus following the 2022 ownership change and subsequent brand safety controversies. This revenue has largely migrated to TikTok and Instagram, which have both grown advertising revenues significantly over the same period. LinkedIn's \$20 billion in advertising revenue — despite having only approximately 1.15 billion users versus Facebook's 3.07 billion — confirms that B2B decision-maker audiences command pricing power far above consumer demographics. The market value context for the companies receiving this revenue is in our [market value of the largest internet companies analysis](#).

Key Statistics

Social Media Marketing Platforms — Key Statistics 2026

89% Facebook — Most Used Social Media Platform by Marketers Worldwide in 2026 Approximately 89% of marketers worldwide use Facebook for marketing purposes in 2026 — the highest of any platform, but down from approximately 94% in 2019. Despite declining marketer enthusiasm (21% plan to decrease use), Facebook's advertising infrastructure, targeting precision, and audience scale make it impossible to abandon for most major brands. Instagram follows at 80%, LinkedIn 67%, YouTube 55%, and TikTok 52%. Sources: Social Media Examiner Industry Report 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±3–5 percentage points. 29% Instagram — #1 ROI Platform for Marketers, Cited by 29% as Their Best-Performing Channel Approximately 29% of marketers worldwide cite Instagram as the social media platform generating the best return on investment for their marketing activities — the highest ROI rating of any platform. Followed by Facebook (27%), TikTok (14%), YouTube (12%), and LinkedIn (10%). Instagram's ROI leadership reflects its combination of strong organic reach, sophisticated paid advertising through Meta Ads Manager, and high-engagement audiences across Stories, Reels, and Feed. Sources: Social Media Examiner 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±4–6 percentage points. +44pp TikTok — Biggest Adoption Growth: From 8% (2019) to 52% (2026) Among Marketers TikTok's marketer adoption has grown from approximately 8% in 2019 to approximately 52% in 2026 — a 44 percentage point increase representing the fastest platform adoption growth in social media marketing history. Among marketers targeting 18–34 year olds, TikTok adoption exceeds 70%. In 2026, 61% of marketers plan to increase TikTok activity — the second-highest "increase" intent behind Instagram (67%). Sources: Social Media

Examiner annual reports 2019–2026, eMarketer TikTok Marketing Report 2025. ± 3 –5 percentage points.

93% LinkedIn — B2B Marketer Adoption Leader at 93%, Outranking Facebook Among B2B Professionals LinkedIn achieves approximately 93% adoption among B2B marketers — the only context where it outranks Facebook (82% B2B adoption). The 55-percentage-point gap between B2B (93%) and B2C (38%) LinkedIn adoption is the largest B2B/B2C segmentation split of any major platform, reflecting LinkedIn's unique utility for decision-maker targeting, company page marketing, and thought leadership content in professional contexts. Sources: Social Media Examiner 2026, LinkedIn B2B Institute 2026. ± 4 –6 percentage points.

54% Short-Form Video — Most Effective Content Format, Cited by 54% of Marketers as Top Performer Approximately 54% of marketers worldwide cite short-form video (TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts) as the most effective social media content format in 2026 — more than double the next format (images/graphics at 22%). Short-form video's effectiveness has grown from approximately 18% in 2019 to 54% in 2026 as TikTok's algorithmic distribution model has been adopted across all major platforms. Text/link posts, once dominant, are now cited by only 5% of marketers as their top format. Sources: Social Media Examiner 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ± 4 –5 percentage points.

\$276B Global Social Media Ad Spend Projected at \$276B in 2026 — Meta Captures ~44% Share Global social media advertising spending reached approximately \$247 billion in 2025 and is projected at approximately \$276 billion in 2026 — a 12% YoY increase. Meta (Facebook + Instagram combined) captures approximately 44% of total social media ad spend (\$109B). TikTok is the fastest-growing platform at approximately +28% YoY ad revenue growth (\$25B in 2025). X/Twitter has declined from approximately \$5B (2021) to approximately \$3.5B (2025) following the 2022 ownership change and advertiser exodus. Sources: Statista, eMarketer Global Digital Ad Spend 2025–2026. ± 8 –12% per platform estimate.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — Social Media Platforms Used by Marketers 2026

Facebook is the most used social media platform by marketers worldwide in 2026, with approximately 89% of marketers reporting they use it for marketing purposes. Instagram follows at approximately 80%, LinkedIn at 67%, YouTube at 55%, and TikTok at 52%. Despite Facebook's dominant adoption rate, it is Instagram that generates the highest ROI citations (29% of marketers cite it as best ROI), and TikTok that has shown the fastest growth in marketer adoption. Sources: Social Media Examiner Industry Report 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ± 3 –5 percentage points margin of error per platform.



Instagram ranks first for marketing ROI in 2026 with approximately 29% of marketers citing it as their top-performing platform, followed by Facebook (approximately 27%), TikTok (approximately 14%), YouTube (approximately 12%), and LinkedIn (approximately 10%). TikTok's ROI ranking has risen sharply since 2022 when it ranked approximately seventh — driven by short-form video content outperforming other formats for both brand awareness and direct response. ROI perception is self-reported and reflects a combination of cost-per-result, audience quality, and attribution capability. Sources: Social Media Examiner 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. ±4–6 percentage points per platform.

B2B marketers prioritise LinkedIn above all other platforms, with approximately **93% of B2B marketers using it in 2026 — the only context where LinkedIn outranks Facebook**. Facebook follows at approximately 82%, YouTube at approximately 65%, Instagram at approximately 58%, and X/Twitter at approximately 44%. LinkedIn's B2B dominance reflects its unique targeting capabilities by job function, seniority, company size, and industry — capabilities unmatched by competing platforms for reaching business decision-makers. Sources: Social Media Examiner 2026, LinkedIn B2B Institute 2026. ±4–6 percentage points per segment.

Yes — **TikTok has grown from approximately 8% marketer adoption in 2019 to approximately 52% in 2026**, making it the fifth most-used social media platform by marketers globally and the fastest-growing major marketing platform in history. Among marketers targeting 18–34 year olds, TikTok adoption exceeds 70%. TikTok also ranks third for marketing ROI (14%) — up from approximately seventh in 2022 — and 61% of marketers plan to increase their TikTok activity in 2026 (second highest behind Instagram's 67%). Sources: Social Media Examiner 2019–2026 annual reports, eMarketer TikTok Marketing Report 2025. ±3–5 percentage points.

The platforms marketers most plan to increase use of in 2026: **Instagram (67% plan to increase), TikTok (61%), YouTube (58%), LinkedIn (44%), and Threads (41%)**. Facebook is notable as the only major platform where a significant proportion of marketers plan to decrease activity (21% plan to decrease Facebook activity) — despite it remaining the most-used platform overall. Threads' 41% increase intent is remarkable for a platform with only 16% current adoption. Sources: Social Media Examiner Industry Report 2026, Hootsuite Global Social Media Trends 2026. ±4–5 percentage points per platform.

Global social media advertising spending reached approximately **\$247 billion in 2025**, projected to reach approximately \$276 billion in 2026 (+12% YoY). Meta (Facebook + Instagram) captures approximately 44% of total social media ad spend (~\$109B). TikTok is the fastest-growing platform at approximately +28% YoY ad revenue growth (~\$25B in 2025). The average business allocates approximately 28–33% of its total

digital marketing budget to social media advertising. At the company level, the top 100 global advertisers each spend in excess of \$10 million annually on social media advertising. Sources: Statista Digital Advertising Outlook 2026, eMarketer Global Digital Ad Spend 2025. $\pm 8\text{--}12\%$ per platform estimate.

Short-form video is the most effective social media content format in 2026, cited by approximately 54% of marketers as their top-performing format — more than double the next most effective format (images/graphics at 22%). It is followed by live video (~11%), long-form video (~8%), and text/link posts (~5%). Short-form video's dominance has grown dramatically from approximately 18% in 2019 as TikTok's format was adopted across Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts. Marketers unable to consistently produce short-form video now face a structural competitive disadvantage. Sources: Social Media Examiner Industry Report 2026, HubSpot State of Marketing 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}5$ percentage points per format.

X/Twitter's value for marketing has declined significantly since 2022. Marketer adoption has fallen from approximately 66% in 2019 to approximately 43% in 2026 (-23 percentage points) — the largest adoption decline of any major platform. Only approximately 5% of marketers cite X as their best-ROI platform. Advertising revenue has declined from approximately \$5 billion (2021) to approximately \$3.5 billion (2025), with 21% of marketers planning to decrease X activity. However, X remains relevant for specific sectors (tech, finance, media, sports) where real-time engagement and news commentary have value, and for brands that rely on direct audience communication. Sources: Social Media Examiner 2026, eMarketer X/Twitter Ad Revenue Forecast 2025.

Sources

Social Media Examiner — Social Media Marketing Industry Report 2026 — Primary source for platform adoption rates, ROI rankings, planned usage changes, and content format effectiveness data. Social Media Examiner conducts the industry's largest annual survey of marketing practitioners (5,700+ respondents in 2026). The report covers platform usage, strategy, and trends across all major social media platforms.

HubSpot — State of Marketing 2026 — Cross-referenced source for platform adoption and ROI data.

HubSpot's annual State of Marketing report surveys 1,400+ marketing professionals globally and provides detailed breakdowns by company size, industry, and B2B vs B2C segment. Used to cross-validate Social Media Examiner figures throughout this report.

Hootsuite — Global Social Media Trends Report 2026 — Primary source for planned platform usage change data and emerging platform adoption trends. Hootsuite surveys social media practitioners globally and publishes annual trend reports covering platform momentum, content strategy shifts, and future investment intentions.



Statista — Digital Advertising Outlook 2026 / Social Media Advertising Revenue by Platform — Primary source for global social media advertising spend data, platform-level ad revenue estimates, and 2026 advertising expenditure projections. Cross-referenced with eMarketer Global Digital Ad Spend 2025 for platform-level revenue breakdowns.

All platform adoption, ROI, and planned usage figures are from practitioner surveys — they reflect marketers' self-reported behaviour and perceptions, not independently verified platform analytics. Adoption rates represent the share of surveyed marketing professionals using each platform for any marketing purpose. ROI ratings are self-reported perceptions, not independently audited returns. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points margin of error for adoption/ROI figures; $\pm 8\text{--}12\%$ for advertising revenue estimates. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Social media as a news outlet worldwide — 2026

Updated May 16, 2026 · businessstats.com/social-media-news-source

~41% GLOBAL ADULTS USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR NEWS — APRIL 2026	65% THAILAND — HIGHEST RATE AMONG SURVEYED MARKETS	22% JAPAN — LOWEST RATE AMONG MAJOR ECONOMIES
60% 18–24 YEAR OLDS — SOCIAL MEDIA IS THEIR #1 NEWS SOURCE	28% FACEBOOK — MOST USED SOCIAL PLATFORM FOR NEWS GLOBALLY	24% TRUST SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS — VS 52% FOR TELEVISION NEWS

Overview

Social media as a news source — why it matters and what the data shows

Social media's role as a news distribution channel is one of the most consequential and contested developments in contemporary media. The 5.42 billion social media users tracked in our [global social media users analysis](#) have fundamentally altered how news reaches audiences — bypassing traditional gatekeepers, enabling citizen journalism, accelerating the spread of breaking information, and simultaneously creating the conditions for misinformation to proliferate at unprecedented scale. The April 2026 Reuters Institute Digital News Report data reveals that approximately 40–42% of online adults worldwide now use social media as a news source — a figure that, despite declining from its 2016–2017 peak of approximately 51%, still represents billions of people receiving significant portions of their news through algorithmically curated social feeds.

The country variation in social media news usage is dramatic — from 65% in Thailand to 22% in Japan — reflecting differences in traditional media strength, internet access patterns, mobile-first adoption, and cultural attitudes toward digital information. This variation is not random: markets with weaker traditional media infrastructure, higher mobile-first internet adoption, and less established trust in institutional news sources consistently show higher social media news usage. The pattern has significant implications for media policy, news business models, and political communication in each market. The reasons people use social media generally are in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

By Country

Share of Adults Who Use Social Media as a Source of News — Selected Countries, April 2026

Thailand's 65% social media news usage rate — the highest in the April 2026 Reuters Institute survey — reflects the country's unique combination of mobile-first internet adoption, a historically fragmented traditional media landscape, and Facebook's near-universal penetration as the gateway to all online content. The Philippines (62%) shows a similar dynamic: Facebook — detailed in our [Facebook statistics analysis](#) — has been so deeply integrated into Filipino internet use through zero-rated data plans that social media and the internet are effectively synonymous for many users, making it the natural default for news discovery. Kenya (58%) and Nigeria (56%) represent the African pattern where limited traditional media infrastructure and high mobile internet adoption make social platforms the primary news channel for educated urban populations.

Share of adults who use social media as a source of news — selected countries worldwide, April 2026 (%)

Adults Using Social Media as a News Source — Selected Countries, April 2026 (%) Thailand 65%.

Philippines 62%. Kenya 58%. Nigeria 56%. Brazil 55%. India 50%. Mexico 48%. Turkey 48%. USA 42%.

Australia 38%. UK 35%. France 30%. Germany 27%. Japan 22%. Sources: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. Online adults. ±2-4pp per country. 65%Thailand — highest

% of online adults using social media as a news source in the past week — April 2026 (Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026)

Germany (27%) and Japan (22%) sit at the bottom of the rankings — not because social media is unimportant in these countries, but because traditional media remains highly trusted and used. Germany's strong public broadcasting system (ARD, ZDF) and quality print journalism (Spiegel, FAZ, Süddeutsche Zeitung) maintain credibility that reduces the relative appeal of algorithmically distributed social media news. Japan's low rate reflects both the strength of traditional media (NHK, major newspapers) and cultural patterns around social media use — Japanese users show notably lower rates of public-facing social media engagement across all activities relative to their internet penetration level. The daily social media usage context for these countries is in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Social Media as News Source — Full Country Data Table (April 2026)

The table shows the April 2026 figure, comparison vs 2022 and 2016, most-used social platform for news, and primary driver of the country's rate. The social media platforms used in these markets are tracked in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Adults Using Social Media as News Source — Country Data Table (Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026) Click column to sort

COUNTRY	APR 2026 (%)	2022 (%)	2016 (%)	TOP PLATFORM	PRIMARY DRIVER
Thailand	65%	62%	59%	Facebook	Mobile-first, FB as internet gateway
Philippines	62%	60%	57%	Facebook	Zero-rated Facebook, mobile-only users
Kenya	58%	55%	46%	Facebook / WhatsApp	Limited broadcast reach, high mobile
Nigeria	56%	52%	44%	WhatsApp / Facebook	WhatsApp news groups widely used
Brazil	55%	54%	58%	WhatsApp / Instagram	WhatsApp news forwards dominant
Mexico	48%	48%	52%	Facebook / YouTube	Declining trust in traditional media
India	50%	46%	38%	WhatsApp / YouTube	WhatsApp groups, YouTube news channels
Turkey	48%	50%	53%	Twitter / YouTube	Restricted mainstream media, Twitter use
Global avg	~41%	~44%	~51%	Facebook	Declining from 2016 peak
United States	42%	48%	62%	Facebook / YouTube	Declining from 2016 election peak
Australia	38%	40%	48%	Facebook / YouTube	Moderate decline from peak
United Kingdom	35%	36%	46%	Facebook / YouTube	Strong BBC / established press
France	30%	32%	38%	YouTube / Facebook	Public broadcasting trust remains high
Germany	27%	28%	32%	YouTube / Facebook	Strong public media (ARD/ZDF)
Japan	22%	21%	22%	YouTube / Twitter	Cultural privacy norms, NHK trust

Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026 (Oxford Internet Institute / Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, April 2026). Survey conducted January–February 2026, ~95,000 online adults across 47 markets via YouGov. "Social media as news source" = used for news in the past week (multi-select). ±2–4 percentage points per country.

The table's 2016 column shows how dramatically the landscape has shifted for developed markets. The United States has fallen from 62% in 2016 to 42% in 2026 — a 20 percentage point decline driven by Facebook's algorithmic news reduction, growing awareness of social media misinformation, and a post-2016-election backlash among news consumers who associated social media news with polarisation. Brazil's modest decline (58% to 55%) reflects WhatsApp's continued dominance in news forwarding — a specifically messaging-based news distribution model that has proven more resilient than social feed-based news distribution. Japan's near-flat trend (22% in both 2016 and 2026) confirms that its low rate is structural rather than trend-driven.

News Source by Platform

Facebook Leads at 28% — But Down from 42% in 2016 as YouTube and TikTok Gain Ground

At the platform level, Facebook remains the most used social media platform for news globally — cited by approximately 28% of online adults as a news source in April 2026 — but this represents a dramatic decline from approximately 42% in 2016. Facebook's news distribution has been deliberately reduced: in 2018, Mark Zuckerberg announced that Facebook would prioritise "meaningful social interactions" over news content in the feed, reducing news reach significantly. The resulting decline in Facebook news usage has been partially offset by YouTube (23%), which has emerged as a major news platform particularly for long-form political commentary and international news, and TikTok (9% globally, 20% among 18–24 year olds), which has grown from near-zero news usage in 2019 to a meaningful news source for younger audiences.

Social media platforms used as news source worldwide — % of online adults using each platform for news, April 2026 Social Media Platforms Used as News Source — April 2026 (% of Online Adults Worldwide)
 Facebook 28%. YouTube 23%. X/Twitter 13%. WhatsApp 12%. Instagram 11%. TikTok 9%. Facebook groups 7%. Telegram 5%. Snapchat 3%. Sources: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. Online adults. Multi-select. ±2-4pp per platform. 28%Facebook — #1 9%TikTok — fastest growing

X/Twitter's 13% global news usage — which significantly overstates its news importance relative to its 3-4% global social media market share — reflects its unique role as a professional news platform disproportionately used by journalists, politicians, and political commentators. Despite having far fewer users than Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok, Twitter/X has historically exerted outsized influence on news cycles because journalists and editors use it to discover stories. WhatsApp's 12% news usage is concentrated in specific markets (India, Brazil, Nigeria, Kenya) where private group messaging functions as a news distribution network. The platforms carrying this news activity are ranked in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

By Age Group

60% of 18–24s Use Social Media for News — Social Media Is Their #1 Source, Ahead of TV and Websites

The age-group breakdown of social media news usage reveals the most commercially and politically significant trend in the 2026 data: for adults aged 18–24 globally, social media has become the single most-used news source — exceeding online news websites, television, and all other formats. Approximately 60% of 18–24 year olds use social media for news, versus approximately 50% who use online news websites and approximately 34% who use television. This inversion — in which social media beats traditional news formats for the youngest adult cohort — is new: as recently as 2020, online news websites led for this age group.

Share of adults using social media as news source by age group worldwide — April 2026 (%) Social Media as News Source by Age Group — April 2026 (% of Online Adults) 18-24: 60%. 25-34: 52%. 35-44: 45%. 45-54: 36%. 55-64: 28%. 65+: 20%. Global avg ~41%. Sources: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. Online adults worldwide. ±3-5pp per age group. 60%18-24 — social media #1

% of online adults in each age group using social media as a news source — April 2026

The age gradient — from 60% (18-24) to 20% (65+) — has profound implications for the future of news media. As younger cohorts age into the 35-54 and 55-64 brackets, their social media news habits will likely persist at least partially, meaning the current age gap will narrow not because young people adopt traditional media but because traditional media's current older audience will be replaced by cohorts with stronger social media news habits. The news industry must either build sustainable business models on social media platforms — which has proven difficult given platform algorithm changes and revenue sharing policies — or find ways to pull social media audiences toward owned news websites and apps. The

engagement patterns driving this behaviour are in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

Trust in Social Media News

Only 24% Trust Social Media News Globally — vs 52% for TV and 44% for Online News Sites

While approximately 41% of online adults use social media as a news source, only approximately 24% say they trust news found on social media — a significant gap between usage and trust that is unique to social platforms. Television news commands approximately 52% trust, online news sites approximately 44%, and radio news approximately 42%. Social media's 24% trust score — the lowest of any news source — reflects a fundamental tension in how people relate to social media news: they use it because it is convenient, fast, and where they already are, not because they consider it reliable. The platforms that carry this news are analysed in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Trust in news by source worldwide — % of online adults who trust news from each source, April 2026

Trust in News by Source — April 2026 (% of Online Adults Worldwide) Television 52%. Online news sites 44%. Radio 42%. Print newspapers 40%. News apps 36%. Social media 24%. Search engines 32%.

Sources: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. Online adults. ±2-4pp per source. 24% Social media trust 52% TV — highest trust

The trust gap between usage (41%) and trust (24%) for social media news is the defining paradox of contemporary news consumption: people use a source they don't particularly trust. This pattern is explained by convenience — social media is where people spend 143 minutes per day on average, making news encountered there an effortless discovery — and by the absence of practical alternatives for breaking news speed. Social media news consistently reaches audiences faster than any other channel for breaking stories, creating a first-mover advantage that persists even when users know that early social media reports are often inaccurate. The low trust score for social media news also partially reflects structural issues: content moderation failures, algorithmic amplification of outrage, and the difficulty of distinguishing journalism from opinion and misinformation in social feeds.

Trend Since 2016

Social Media News Usage Peaked at ~51% in 2016–2017 — Has Declined to ~41% in 2026

The 2016–2026 trend in social media news consumption is one of the most important stories in the global media industry. The 2016 peak — approximately 51% of online adults using social media for news — coincided with the period of maximum Facebook news distribution and the heightened social media engagement around the 2016 US presidential election. Facebook's January 2018 algorithm change, which explicitly reduced news and public content in favour of "meaningful social interactions," triggered the most significant single-event decline in social media news usage — visible as a sharp drop from 2017 to 2018 in the trend data. News publishers, many of whom had built "pivot to social" strategies on Facebook distribution, saw traffic collapse almost overnight.

Share of online adults using social media as news source worldwide 2016–2026 — selected countries and global average (%) Social Media as News Source — Global Trend 2016–2026 (% of Online Adults) Global: 51% (2016 peak) to 41% (2026). USA: 62% (2016) to 42% (2026). UK: 46% to 35%. Brazil: 58% to 55% (more stable). Japan: flat ~22%. Sources: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2016–2026. ±2–4pp per year per country. -10pp Global decline since 2016

Global average United States Brazil United Kingdom Japan

Brazil's relative stability (58% in 2016 to 55% in 2026, -3pp) versus the United States' dramatic decline (62% to 42%, -20pp) illustrates how platform composition shapes news resilience. Brazil's social media news usage is dominated by WhatsApp — where news is forwarded in private and semi-private groups rather than discovered through algorithmic feeds. WhatsApp group-based news distribution was largely unaffected by Facebook's 2018 news algorithm change, making Brazil more resistant to the global decline. The US pattern — heavily Facebook-feed-dependent — felt the full impact of the algorithm change. The broader social media usage patterns are in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

Social vs Traditional Sources

Online Sites 67% — TV 55% — Social Media 41% — Social Media Is Now Third in Global News Source Rankings

Social media's position as the third-most-used news source globally — behind online news websites (67%) and television (55%) — represents a structural shift from its 2016–2017 position when it briefly challenged television for second place. The current hierarchy reflects the stabilisation of digital news consumption

patterns after the turbulence of the 2016–2019 period: online news websites have maintained their lead as the highest-traffic destination for intentional news seeking, while television retains its audience through appointment news formats (evening news, 24-hour news channels) that social media cannot fully replicate. Social media's third-place position is likely to be durable in the medium term, with TikTok and YouTube Shorts news content sustaining it even as Facebook continues to pull back from news distribution.

News sources used by online adults worldwide — % using each source for news, April 2026 (multi-select)

News Sources Used by Online Adults Worldwide — April 2026 (% Using Each) Online news sites 67%.

Television 55%. Social media 41%. Radio 29%. Print newspapers 22%. News apps 20%. Podcasts 14%.

Sources: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. Online adults worldwide. Multi-select — totals exceed 100%. ±2-4pp per source. 3rdSocial media ranking

The comparison of news sources by format reveals the ongoing fragmentation of news consumption into a multi-source world where no single channel dominates the majority of adults' news diet. Podcasts at 14% represent the fastest-growing news format by percentage since 2019 — growing from approximately 7% four years ago — driven by on-demand consumption patterns that fit into commuting and exercise routines. Print newspapers at 22% have declined from approximately 35% in 2016, with the sharpest drops in North America and Western Europe where digital subscriptions have partially compensated for print circulation losses. The retail and digital commerce context for this media consumption shift is in our [retail e-commerce sales growth worldwide analysis](#).

TikTok for News

TikTok Reaches 9% as a News Source Globally — 20% Among 18–24s — Fastest-Growing News Platform

TikTok — tracked in our [countries with the most TikTok users analysis](#) — as a news platform is one of the most significant developments in the 2026 Reuters Institute data. From near-zero news usage in 2019, TikTok has grown to 9% of all online adults globally using it as a news source — and approximately 20% among 18–24 year olds. This growth has occurred despite TikTok not designing itself as a news platform and actively de-prioritising political content in some markets following regulatory pressure. The growth reflects user-driven behaviour: news creators (journalists, commentary personalities, political figures) have migrated to TikTok to reach younger audiences, and TikTok's algorithm surfaces this content to users who engage with it. The social media platform landscape is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).



TikTok as a news source by selected country — % of online adults using TikTok for news, April 2026

TikTok as a News Source by Country — April 2026 (% of Online Adults) Thailand 22%. Philippines 20%. USA 14%. UK 11%. Brazil 19%. Australia 13%. Germany 6%. Japan 4%. Global avg 9%. 18-24 year olds globally: ~20%. Sources: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. ±2-4pp per country. 9%Global average 2026

% of online adults using TikTok as a news source — April 2026 (Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026)

TikTok's highest news usage rates are in Thailand (22%) and the Philippines (20%) — the same markets that lead overall social media news consumption — suggesting that TikTok is inheriting and accelerating the social media news consumption patterns already established by Facebook in these markets. The United States (14%) shows TikTok news usage above the global average, reflecting the platform's particular prominence in American political discourse — TikTok videos have played notable roles in political campaigns and social movements since 2020. Germany (6%) and Japan (4%) show the same resistance to TikTok news as they show to social media news broadly. The number of people using social media generally in these markets is in our [global social media users worldwide analysis](#).

Key Statistics

Social Media as News Source — Key Statistics (April 2026)

~41%Global Adults Using Social Media as News Source — 3rd Most Used Format After Online Sites (67%) and TV (55%)Approximately 40–42% of online adults worldwide use social media as a source of news as of April 2026 — the third-most-used news format globally, behind online news websites (approximately 67%) and television (approximately 55%). This is down from a peak of approximately 51% in 2016–2017, driven primarily by Facebook's 2018 news algorithm reduction and growing news avoidance on social platforms. Sources: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026, Statista. ±2–4 percentage points.

65%Thailand — Highest Social Media News Rate Among Surveyed Markets (April 2026)Thailand leads all surveyed markets at approximately 65% of online adults using social media as a news source. Followed by the Philippines (62%), Kenya (58%), Nigeria (56%), and Brazil (55%). These markets share characteristics of mobile-first internet adoption, limited traditional broadcast reach, and Facebook functioning as the primary internet gateway. Japan records the lowest rate at approximately 22%, reflecting strong public broadcasting and cultural norms around social media engagement. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. ±2–4 percentage points per country. 60%18–24 Year Olds — Social Media Is Their #1 News



Source, Ahead of Online Sites (50%) and TV (34%) Approximately 60% of online adults aged 18–24 globally use social media as a news source in April 2026 — making it the single most-used news format for this cohort, ahead of online news websites (approximately 50%) and television (approximately 34%). This is the first time social media has been recorded as the #1 news source for any major age group. TikTok reaches approximately 20% of 18–24 year olds as a news source — the platform's most significant role in any news format. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. ± 3 –5 percentage points per age group.

24% Trust in Social Media News — Lowest of All News Formats, 28pp Below Television Trust

(52%) Approximately 24% of online adults globally say they trust news found on social media — the lowest trust score of any news format. This compares to television (approximately 52%), established online news sites (approximately 44%), radio (approximately 42%), and print newspapers (approximately 40%). The 17-percentage-point gap between social media news usage (41%) and trust (24%) is the defining paradox of contemporary news consumption: audiences use a source they do not particularly trust because of convenience and speed. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. ± 2 –4 percentage points.

28% Facebook — Most Used Social Platform for News, Down From 42% in 2016 (-14pp Decline) Facebook is the most used social media platform for news globally at approximately 28% of online adults — down significantly from approximately 42% in 2016, the largest decline of any major news source. The decline reflects Facebook's January 2018 algorithm change that reduced news content distribution. YouTube follows at approximately 23%, X/Twitter at 13% (disproportionately influential among journalists), WhatsApp at 12%, Instagram at 11%, and TikTok at 9% (growing rapidly, particularly among 18–24 year olds where it reaches approximately 20%). Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. ± 2 –4 percentage points per platform.

-20pp USA Social Media News Decline — From 62% (2016) to 42% (2026), Largest Decline Among Major Markets The United States has recorded the largest social media news decline among major surveyed markets: from approximately 62% of online adults in 2016 to approximately 42% in 2026 (-20 percentage points). This decline reflects the post-2016 election backlash against social media news, Facebook's algorithm change, and growing news avoidance on social platforms in the US. Brazil, where WhatsApp private group news is dominant, has been far more stable (58% to 55%, -3pp). Japan has been essentially flat at approximately 22% throughout the period. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2016–2026. ± 2 –4 percentage points per year.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — Social Media as a News Source Worldwide

Approximately **40–42% of online adults globally use social media as a source of news as of April 2026** — making social media the third-most-used news source globally, behind online news websites (approximately 67%) and television (approximately 55%). This figure has declined from a peak of approximately 51% in 2016–2017, primarily due to Facebook's 2018 algorithm change that reduced news content distribution. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. $\pm 2\text{--}4$ percentage points margin of error.

Thailand leads with approximately 65% of adults using social media as a news source as of April 2026, followed by the Philippines (62%), Kenya (58%), Nigeria (56%), and Brazil (55%). These markets share mobile-first internet adoption, limited traditional media infrastructure, and Facebook functioning as the primary internet gateway. Japan records the lowest rate at approximately 22%, reflecting strong public broadcasting trust and cultural norms. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. $\pm 2\text{--}4$ percentage points per country.

Facebook is the most used social media platform for news globally, cited by approximately 28% of online adults as a news source in April 2026 — though this is down from approximately 42% in 2016. YouTube follows at approximately 23%, X/Twitter at approximately 13% (disproportionately influential despite its small global audience), WhatsApp at approximately 12%, Instagram at approximately 11%, and TikTok at approximately 9% (the fastest-growing news platform). For 18–24 year olds specifically, TikTok reaches approximately 20% as a news source. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. $\pm 2\text{--}4$ percentage points per platform.

Yes — significantly. Among 18–24 year olds globally, approximately **60% use social media as a news source — making it their #1 news format**, ahead of online news websites (approximately 50%) and television (approximately 34%). This compares to approximately 20% for adults aged 65+. For 18–24 year olds, social media surpassed online news websites as the top news source around 2023–2024. TikTok is especially notable among this cohort at approximately 20% news usage. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points per age group.

Social media news is the **least trusted of all major news formats**: approximately 24% of online adults globally say they trust news found on social media. This compares to television (approximately 52%), established online news sites (approximately 44%), radio (approximately 42%), and print newspapers (approximately 40%). The 17-percentage-point gap between social media usage (41%) and trust (24%) reflects a convenience-driven consumption pattern: people use social media for news because it is fast

and they are already there, not because they consider it reliable. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. ± 2 –4 percentage points.

Global social media news consumption **peaked at approximately 51% in 2016–2017 and has declined to approximately 41% in 2026** (-10pp over 10 years). The sharpest single-year decline occurred after Facebook's January 2018 algorithm change. The United States shows the largest market-level decline (-20pp, from 62% to 42%). Brazil has been most stable (-3pp, from 58% to 55%) because its news distribution is WhatsApp-based rather than Facebook-feed-based. Japan has been essentially flat at approximately 22% throughout. YouTube and TikTok have partially offset Facebook's decline. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2016–2026. ± 2 –4 percentage points per year.

The United States (approximately 42%) shows significantly higher social media news usage than the United Kingdom (approximately 35%) — a **7-percentage-point gap**. The UK's lower rate reflects its stronger public broadcasting tradition (BBC, Channel 4 News), established quality print journalism (Guardian, Times, Telegraph), and the BBC News website's dominant position as the UK's most-used online news destination. Both markets have declined from their 2016 peaks — the US more sharply (62% to 42%, -20pp) than the UK (46% to 35%, -11pp). Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2016–2026. ± 2 –4 percentage points per market.

Yes — significantly. **TikTok has grown from near-zero news usage in 2019 to approximately 9% of online adults globally using it as a news source** in April 2026 — the fastest growth rate of any news platform over this period. Among 18–24 year olds, TikTok reaches approximately 20% as a news source. Highest TikTok news usage: Thailand (22%), Philippines (20%), Brazil (19%), USA (14%). Lowest: Germany (6%), Japan (4%). TikTok news is concentrated in short-form video commentary, breaking news clips, and political content created by journalists and commentators who have migrated to the platform to reach younger audiences. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026. ± 2 –4 percentage points per market.

Sources

Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism / Oxford Internet Institute — Digital News Report 2026 —

Primary source for all data in this report. The Reuters Institute Digital News Report is the world's largest annual survey of news consumption, surveying approximately 95,000 online adults across 47 markets via YouGov. The 2026 survey was conducted January–February 2026 and published April 2026. All country figures, platform breakdowns, age-group splits, and trend data are from this report.



[Statista — Digital News Monitor 2026 / Social Media News Statistics](#) — Cross-reference source for social media news consumption figures and trend data. Statista aggregates Reuters Institute data alongside other news consumption surveys for comparison and extended demographic breakdowns.

[Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism — Digital News Report Archive 2016–2026](#) — Primary source for all historical trend data (2016–2025 figures). The Reuters Institute publishes annual Digital News Reports from 2012; the 2016–2026 series is used for the trend analysis in this report. All historical figures are from the equivalent Reuters Institute annual survey.

[DataReportal — We Are Social Global Digital Report 2026](#) — Supplementary source for social media platform usage and news-related engagement data. DataReportal's January 2026 Global Digital Report provides platform-level context for news consumption patterns. Used for cross-validation of platform-specific news usage figures.

All figures represent online adults in each surveyed country — not total adult population. In countries with lower internet penetration, the online adult population is more urban and educated than the general population. "Social media as news source" = used for news in the past week (multi-select). $\pm 2\text{--}4$ percentage points per country for country-level figures, $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points for age-group and platform breakdowns. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Leading social media usage reasons worldwide — 2026

Updated May 15, 2026 · businessstats.com/social-media-usage-reasons-worldwide


Overview

Most popular reasons for internet users worldwide to use social media as of 2nd quarter 2026

The reasons people use social media reveal what social media actually is to the people who use it — and the 2026 data tells a more complex story than the simple "keeping in touch" narrative that defined social media's early cultural positioning. While connection (51% cite keeping in touch with friends and family) remains the single most cited reason, the second-highest reason — filling spare time (47%) — is fundamentally about passive consumption and entertainment, not social connection. Combined with "finding funny or entertaining content" (42%) and "watching video content" (31%), entertainment-oriented reasons collectively dwarf connection reasons when considered as a category. Social media in 2026 is primarily an entertainment platform that also enables social connection — not primarily a social connection platform that also provides entertainment.

This reframing has significant implications for how platforms are built, monetised, and regulated. The 5.42 billion social media users tracked in our [global social media users analysis](#) are increasingly using platforms in consumption mode rather than creation mode — scrolling algorithmically curated feeds rather than posting original content or actively maintaining social connections. Product discovery (34%) has emerged as the third major usage category alongside connection and entertainment, reflecting the deep integration of social commerce into platform design from 2021 onward.

Most popular reasons to use social media worldwide Q2 2026 — % of internet users 16-64 citing each reason (multi-select) Leading Social Media Usage Reasons Worldwide — Q2 2026 (% of Internet Users) Keep in touch 51%. Fill spare time 47%. Read news 43%. Find entertaining content 42%. See trends 36%. Share photos/videos 36%. Find products 34%. Watch videos 31%. Follow influencers 26%. Network professionally 25%. Brand news 23%. Find inspiration 22%. Sources: GWI Q2 2026, DataReportal 2026. Multi-select — totals exceed 100%. ±3-5pp. 51%Keep in touch — #1

% of internet users (16–64) worldwide citing each reason — Q2 2026. Multi-select: totals exceed 100%.

The chart's top-five hierarchy — connection (51%), passive entertainment (47%), news (43%), active entertainment (42%), trend-watching (36%) — reflects the blending of social media's original social function with the entertainment and media consumption behaviours that TikTok's algorithm-driven model has normalised across all platforms. The 34% product discovery figure — placing it between entertainment and professional reasons — confirms that social commerce has achieved mainstream legitimacy as a purchasing motivation. Instagram Shopping — detailed in our [Instagram statistics analysis](#) — and TikTok Shop have transformed the "I saw it on social media" purchase pathway from an outlier experience to a routine one for a third of all social media users. The platforms hosting these behaviours are ranked in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Social Media Usage Reasons — Full Data Table Q2 2026

The table shows each reason's global citation rate, year-on-year change from Q2 2025, change since 2019, category classification, and primary platform association. Daily usage behaviour is tracked in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Social Media Usage Reasons Worldwide — Q2 2026 (GWI Global Web Index Survey) Click column to sort

REASON	Q2 2026 (%)	VS Q2 2025	VS 2019	CATEGORY	TOP PLATFORM
Keep in touch with friends/family	51%	-1pp	-3pp	Connection	WhatsApp, Facebook
Fill spare time / pass the time	47%	+1pp	+5pp	Entertainment	TikTok, Instagram
Read news stories	43%	-1pp	-6pp	News	X/Twitter, Facebook
Find funny or entertaining content	42%	+2pp	+8pp	Entertainment	TikTok, YouTube
See what is trending or in the news	36%	0pp	+2pp	News	TikTok, X/Twitter

Share photos or videos	36%	-1pp	-2pp	Creation	Instagram, Snapchat
Find products to buy / brand research	34%	+2pp	+11pp	Commerce	Instagram, TikTok
Watch video content / TV shows	31%	+1pp	+7pp	Entertainment	YouTube, TikTok
Follow celebrity / influencer content	26%	0pp	+3pp	Entertainment	Instagram, TikTok
Network for work / career purposes	25%	+1pp	+7pp	Professional	LinkedIn
Get news about brands or products	23%	0pp	+4pp	Commerce	Instagram, Facebook
Find inspiration for things to do/buy	22%	+1pp	+5pp	Commerce	Pinterest, Instagram

Source: GWI Global Web Index Q2 2026 (800,000+ respondents, 50+ countries, ages 16–64). Multi-select question — respondents choose all applicable reasons. Percentages sum to more than 100%. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points margin of error per reason. "vs 2019" comparisons have additional $\pm 3\text{pp}$ uncertainty due to question wording changes across survey waves.

The data table's most important trend column is "vs 2019" — which shows the structural shifts in social media motivation over the past seven years. News consumption has declined the most (-6pp) as major platforms including Facebook and Instagram deliberately reduced news content visibility in their algorithms following regulatory and advertiser pressure. Product discovery has grown the most ($+11\text{pp}$) as social commerce infrastructure matured across every major platform. Professional networking ($+7\text{pp}$) and video content consumption ($+7\text{pp}$) both reflect platform-level investments that have created new behaviours — LinkedIn expanding globally and YouTube/TikTok normalising social video as a substitute for traditional media. The marketer platforms driving these commerce behaviours are analysed in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Trend 2019–2026

Product Discovery +11pp Since 2019 — News -6pp as Platforms Deprioritise News Content

Tracking the top social media usage reasons from 2019 to 2026 reveals structural shifts that reflect both platform algorithm changes and evolving user behaviour. The most significant trend is the rise of product discovery (from 23% to 34%) — driven by Instagram Shopping (2019 global launch), TikTok Shop (2021 Southeast Asia, 2023 US/UK), and Pinterest Commerce integrations that have made social media a primary product discovery channel. News consumption's decline (from 49% to 43%) reflects deliberate platform

decisions to reduce news content distribution following political controversy, advertiser safety concerns, and regulatory pressure — particularly in the EU and Australia where governments pursued news bargaining codes.

Social media usage reasons trend 2019–2026 — selected reasons, % of internet users 16–64 worldwide (annual) Social Media Usage Reasons — Key Trends 2019–2026 (%) Keep in touch: 54% (2019) to 51% (2026). Fill spare time: 42% to 47%. News: 49% to 43%. Find products: 23% to 34% (biggest gain). Sources: GWI Flagship Reports 2019–2026. ±3–5pp per year per reason. +11ppProduct discovery - 6ppNews reading

The trend chart's crossing lines are commercially significant: "fill spare time" (entertainment) crossed "keep in touch" (connection) as the second-most-cited reason somewhere around 2023–2024, and the gap between entertainment reasons and connection reasons has continued to widen. This trajectory — if continued — suggests that the connection narrative will no longer accurately describe what social media is primarily used for within a few years. Platform product decisions already reflect this: TikTok's entire design prioritises entertainment discovery over social connection, and Meta's decision to invest heavily in Reels explicitly acknowledges that entertainment is now the primary engagement driver even on platforms originally built for connection. The time spent on social platforms driving these behaviours is in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Reasons by Age Group

16–24s: Entertainment Leads at 58% — 55+: Keeping in Touch at 68% — Age Completely Reverses the Priority Order

The age-group breakdown of social media usage reasons reveals that the top reason nationally (keeping in touch at 51%) is the product of two dramatically different populations being averaged together: young users who primarily use social media for entertainment, and older users who primarily use it for connection. 16–24 year olds' top reason is "finding funny or entertaining content" at 58% — significantly above their keeping-in-touch citation (44%). For 55+ year olds, the order is completely inverted: keeping in touch leads at 68% while entertainment-seeking falls to approximately 28%. The 35–54 bracket sits between these extremes, with keeping in touch (approximately 62%) still edging entertainment but the gap narrowing significantly relative to older cohorts.

Social media usage reasons by age group worldwide Q2 2026 — top 5 reasons per age bracket (% citing each reason) Social Media Usage Reasons by Age Group — Q2 2026 (%) 16–24: entertainment 58%,

trending 52%, keep in touch 44%. 25-34: keep in touch 54%, entertainment 48%, news 44%. 35-54: keep in touch 62%, news 51%, entertainment 38%. 55+: keep in touch 68%, news 54%, spare time 38%.

Sources: GWI Q2 2026. ±4-6pp per age segment per reason. 68%55+ — keep in touch

16-24 25-34 35-54 55+

The age breakdown chart's most actionable insight for platform strategy is the 16-24 cohort's high "see what is trending" citation (52%) — the single highest citation for any reason in any age group, exceeding even their entertainment seeking (58% for entertainment vs 52% for trending). Trend awareness has become a social currency for young users: being current, discovering viral content before it becomes mainstream, and participating in cultural moments in real-time is a primary social motivation in itself. This behaviour is what TikTok's algorithm is most precisely designed to serve — and is why TikTok's engagement metrics among 16-24 year olds are the strongest of any platform. The broader user base context is in our [global social media users worldwide analysis](#).

Reasons by Gender

Women Lead on Connection (+8pp) and Inspiration (+9pp) — Men Lead on News (+7pp) and Professional Networking (+8pp)

The gender breakdown of social media usage reasons shows consistent and statistically meaningful differences that reflect broader patterns in how women and men use digital platforms differently. Women are more likely than men to cite social connection reasons — keeping in touch with friends and family (women: 55%, men: 47%, +8pp female gap) — and inspiration-seeking (women: 26%, men: 17%, +9pp female gap). Men are more likely to cite news consumption (men: 47%, women: 40%, +7pp male gap) and professional networking (men: 29%, women: 21%, +8pp male gap). These patterns are consistent with broader research on offline communication and professional networking differences and have remained stable across GWI survey waves since 2019.

Social media usage reasons by gender worldwide Q2 2026 — % of male vs female internet users citing each reason Social Media Usage Reasons by Gender — Q2 2026 (% Citing Each Reason) Keep in touch: Women 55% vs Men 47%. News: Women 40% vs Men 47%. Product discovery: Women 38% vs Men 30%. Professional networking: Women 21% vs Men 29%. Inspiration: Women 26% vs Men 17%. Sources: GWI Q2 2026. ±3-5pp per reason per gender. +9ppWomen lead inspiration +8ppMen lead networking

The gender gap in product discovery (women: 38%, men: 30%, +8pp female gap) is commercially significant for social commerce platforms: women are the primary social commerce audience, and the

design of shopping features on Instagram, TikTok Shop, and Pinterest is implicitly optimised for female discovery behaviour. This creates a self-reinforcing dynamic where female users find more relevant commerce content, engage more with shopping features, and generate more social commerce revenue — which in turn attracts more commerce investment in the platforms those users prefer. The search-driven product discovery that complements social commerce is tracked in our [search engine usage analysis](#).

Regional Differences

Southeast Asia Leads Product Discovery at 52% — Western Europe Lowest for Commerce, Highest for News

Regional variation in social media usage reasons is substantial, reflecting the different maturity stages of social commerce, the different roles of social media in news ecosystems, and cultural differences in how connection is maintained digitally. Southeast Asia stands out with the highest product discovery rate (52%) — reflecting the region's highly advanced social commerce ecosystem where TikTok Shop, Shopee, and Lazada have made social-led shopping a mainstream behaviour. Latin America shows the highest entertainment citation rate (approximately 54% for finding funny or entertaining content). Western Europe shows the highest news consumption rate (approximately 51%) — reflecting social media's role as a primary news source in markets where traditional newspaper consumption has declined sharply.

Social media usage reasons by world region Q2 2026 — top reasons per region (% citing each reason)

Social Media Usage Reasons by Region — Q2 2026 (% Citing Each Reason) Product discovery: SE Asia 52%, Latin America 42%, Global 34%, North America 28%, W. Europe 24%. News: W. Europe 51%, North America 47%, Global 43%, SE Asia 36%. Keep in touch: broadly consistent 48-56% across regions.

Sources: GWI Q2 2026. ±4-6pp per region per reason. 52%SE Asia — product discovery

Southeast Asia Latin America Western Europe North America

North America's relatively low product discovery rate (28% vs global average of 34%) appears counterintuitive given the sophistication of US e-commerce. However, it reflects that American consumers have well-established search-led product discovery habits (Amazon, Google Shopping) and have been slower to adopt social-led commerce than Southeast Asian markets where traditional e-commerce infrastructure was less developed when social platforms arrived. The trajectory is shifting: TikTok Shop's US launch and Instagram Shopping's continued improvement are growing product discovery rates in North America from their lower base. The retail e-commerce context is in our [retail e-commerce sales growth worldwide analysis](#).

Reasons by Platform

WhatsApp Dominated by Connection (78%) — TikTok by Entertainment (72%) — LinkedIn by Professional (84%)

The usage reason profile of each major social media platform reveals the distinct functional niches that different platforms occupy in users' lives. WhatsApp is overwhelmingly used for connection: approximately 78% of WhatsApp users cite keeping in touch with friends and family as their primary reason — the highest connection score of any platform. TikTok is the most entertainment-oriented platform: approximately 72% of TikTok users cite finding funny or entertaining content as a primary reason, with "filling spare time" at approximately 68%. LinkedIn has the highest professional networking rate by far at approximately 84%. Instagram uniquely bridges multiple reasons simultaneously — connection, entertainment, inspiration, and product discovery — making it the most multi-purpose platform in the ecosystem.

Primary usage reasons by social media platform Q2 2026 — % of each platform's users citing top reasons
 Primary Usage Reasons by Platform — Q2 2026 (% of Platform Users Citing) WhatsApp: keep in touch 78%. TikTok: entertainment 72%, spare time 68%. LinkedIn: professional networking 84%. Instagram: multi-purpose. Facebook: keep in touch 61%, news 52%. Pinterest: inspiration 64%, products 58%.
 Sources: GWI Q2 2026. ±4-6pp per platform per reason. 84%LinkedIn — professional

The platform-by-reason chart confirms what platform design choices signal: each major platform has successfully carved a distinct functional niche, but Instagram's multi-purpose positioning makes it the most commercially valuable platform for brands that want to reach users across connection, discovery, inspiration, and entertainment moments simultaneously. Pinterest's product discovery rate (58%) is the highest of any platform — confirming that while Pinterest has fewer total users, those users are in a uniquely high commercial intent mode when using it. This platform-level insight is why Pinterest's advertising CPM for shopping campaigns is among the highest of any social media platform despite its smaller user base. The full social media marketing context is in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Reason Categories

Entertainment Reasons Collectively Outnumber Connection — When Categorised, Social Media Is Primarily an Entertainment Medium

When social media usage reasons are grouped into categories — connection, entertainment, news/information, commerce/discovery, creation, and professional — the individual rankings present a different picture than the category totals. While "keeping in touch" is the single most cited reason (51%), the entertainment category collectively represents the largest share of social media motivation: filling spare time (47%) + finding entertaining content (42%) + watching videos (31%) + following influencers (26%) = a combined entertainment score that dwarfs any other category when aggregated. This categorisation framework reveals that social media's original positioning as a "social network" increasingly misrepresents what the majority of usage time actually consists of — passive entertainment consumption in algorithmically curated feeds.

Social media usage reasons by category worldwide Q2 2026 — % of users citing at least one reason in each category

Social Media Usage by Reason Category — Q2 2026 (% Citing Any Reason in Category)

Entertainment category (any reason): ~74%. Connection: ~62%. News/Info: ~58%. Commerce/Discovery: ~48%. Creation: ~42%. Professional: ~28%. Sources: GWI Q2 2026 combined category analysis. ±3-5pp per category. ~74%Entertainment category

% of users citing at least one reason in each category — Q2 2026

The category chart's finding — entertainment leading at 74% of users citing at least one entertainment reason — has direct implications for how social media should be regulated, measured, and monetised. Regulators who focus on social media's "social" harms (anxiety from social comparison, cyberbullying, FOMO) may be targeting a diminishing portion of actual usage; the growing concern should be the entertainment harms (attention economy, addictive design, passive consumption). For marketers, the category finding confirms that entertainment-format content (short-form video, memes, live streaming) consistently outperforms information-format content (blog links, text posts, infographics) in organic reach. The full social media statistics context is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

Key Statistics

Social Media Usage Reasons — Key Statistics Q2 2026

51%Keeping in Touch — #1 Social Media Usage Reason Worldwide, Q2 2026Approximately 51% of internet users worldwide (16–64) cite keeping in touch with friends and family as a reason for using social media in

Q2 2026 — the most cited reason globally for the eighth consecutive year of GWI tracking. However, the figure has declined from approximately 54% in 2019 (-3pp) as short-form video entertainment has increasingly displaced connection as the primary engagement driver on major platforms. WhatsApp users show the highest connection rate at approximately 78%. Sources: GWI Global Web Index Q2 2026, DataReportal We Are Social 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

34%Product Discovery — Fastest Growing Reason +11pp Since 2019, Now 7th Most Cited Globally Approximately 34% of internet users worldwide cite finding products to buy or researching brands as a reason for using social media in Q2 2026 — up from approximately 23% in 2019, the largest increase of any reason in the series (+11 percentage points). Product discovery is highest in Southeast Asia (approximately 52%) and lowest in Western Europe (approximately 24%). Pinterest records the highest product discovery rate among platforms (approximately 58% of Pinterest users cite it). Sources: GWI Q2 2026, DataReportal 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

43%Reading News — #3 Reason But Declining (-6pp Since 2019) as Platforms Suppress News Content Approximately 43% of internet users worldwide cite reading news stories as a reason for using social media in Q2 2026 — down from approximately 49% in 2019 (-6 percentage points), the largest decline of any reason. The reduction reflects deliberate platform decisions to reduce news content visibility in algorithmic feeds (Facebook 2018, Instagram 2022) following advertiser safety concerns and political controversy. Western Europe shows the highest news consumption rate (approximately 51%). Men are more likely than women to cite news consumption (47% vs 40%). Sources: GWI Q2 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

~74%Entertainment Category — Most Common Category When Usage Reasons Are Grouped, Above Connection When social media usage reasons are grouped into categories, approximately 74% of users cite at least one entertainment reason (filling spare time, finding funny content, watching videos, following influencers) — above connection (approximately 62%), news/information (approximately 58%), commerce (approximately 48%), creation (approximately 42%), or professional (approximately 28%). This categorisation reveals that social media is primarily an entertainment medium for the majority of users — a fundamental reframing of what "social" media is. Sources: GWI Q2 2026 combined category analysis. ±3–5 percentage points per category.

58%16–24 Year Olds — Finding Funny Content Is Their Top Reason (58%), Not Connection (44%) Among internet users aged 16–24, finding funny or entertaining content is the most cited social media usage reason at approximately 58% — significantly above keeping in touch with friends and family (approximately 44%). This inversion of the global average (where connection leads at 51%) confirms that younger users have a fundamentally different relationship with social media than older users: it is primarily an entertainment and trend-awareness medium rather than a social connection tool. Among 55+ users, keeping in touch leads at approximately 68%. Sources: GWI Global Web Index Q2 2026. ±4–6 percentage points per age group.

84%LinkedIn — Professional Networking Cited by 84% of LinkedIn



Users, Highest Platform-Specific Score Among LinkedIn users, approximately 84% cite professional networking or career development as a reason for using the platform — the highest platform-specific single-reason citation score of any major social media platform, and the clearest evidence that LinkedIn has maintained a distinct professional identity in an era when all other platforms are converging toward entertainment. LinkedIn's 25% global networking citation (up from 18% in 2019, +7pp) reflects both LinkedIn's user growth and the increasing importance of online professional networking post-pandemic. Sources: GWI Q2 2026, LinkedIn internal data cross-reference. ±4–6 percentage points.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — Social Media Usage Reasons Worldwide

The most common reason internet users worldwide give for using social media in Q2 2026 is **keeping in touch with friends and family, cited by approximately 51%**. This has been the top reason consistently since GWI began tracking in 2018. It is followed by filling spare time (47%), reading news stories (43%), finding funny or entertaining content (42%), and seeing what is trending (36%). However, when entertainment reasons are grouped as a category, they collectively exceed connection — approximately 74% cite at least one entertainment reason versus approximately 62% for connection. Source: GWI Global Web Index Q2 2026, DataReportal We Are Social 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

Both — but when aggregated by category, **entertainment reasons collectively outweigh connection reasons**. While "keeping in touch" (51%) is the single most cited reason, the entertainment category as a whole — filling spare time (47%) + finding funny content (42%) + watching videos (31%) + following influencers (26%) — is cited by approximately 74% of users (at least one entertainment reason). Connection as a category reaches approximately 62%. The gap has widened since 2019 as short-form video has made entertainment the primary engagement driver on most major platforms. Source: GWI Q2 2026. ±3–5 percentage points per reason.

Approximately **34% of internet users worldwide cite finding products to buy or researching brands as a reason for using social media** in Q2 2026 — up from approximately 23% in 2019 (+11pp), the largest growth of any reason in the series. Product discovery is highest in Southeast Asia (approximately 52%) and lowest in Western Europe (approximately 24%). Among platforms, Pinterest records the highest rate (approximately 58% of users cite it for product discovery), followed by Instagram and TikTok. Women (38%) are more likely than men (30%) to cite this reason. Source: GWI Q2 2026, DataReportal 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

Yes — **age completely reverses the priority order**. Among 16–24 year olds, finding funny or entertaining content leads at approximately 58%, with keeping in touch a secondary reason at approximately 44%. Among 55+ year olds, keeping in touch leads at approximately 68%, with entertainment reasons falling to approximately 28%. The 25–34 bracket sits closer to the 55+ pattern (connection leading), while 35–54 year olds show a mixed profile with connection (62%) ahead of news (51%) and entertainment (38%).

Source: GWI Global Web Index Q2 2026. ± 4 –6 percentage points per age group per reason.

Approximately **43% of internet users worldwide cite reading news stories as a reason for using social media** in Q2 2026 — the third most cited reason. However, this has declined from approximately 49% in 2019 (-6pp), the largest decline of any usage reason. The decline reflects platform decisions to reduce news content visibility in algorithmic feeds. Western Europe shows the highest news consumption rate (approximately 51%). Men are more likely than women to cite news consumption (47% vs 40%). X/Twitter and Facebook — the latter covered in our [Facebook statistics analysis](#) — remain the primary news-oriented social platforms. Source: GWI Q2 2026. ± 3 –5 percentage points.

Approximately **25% of internet users worldwide cite professional networking as a reason for using social media** — up from approximately 18% in 2019 (+7pp). This rises to approximately 84% among LinkedIn users specifically, and to approximately 42% among users aged 25–44. Men are more likely to cite professional networking (29%) than women (21%). The growth in professional networking as a social media motivation reflects LinkedIn's expanding global reach and the post-pandemic increase in remote working, which has made online professional networks more important. Source: GWI Q2 2026. ± 3 –5 percentage points.

Southeast Asia leads social media product discovery at approximately 52% — significantly above the global average of 34%. This reflects the region's highly advanced social commerce ecosystem (TikTok Shop, Shopee, Lazada) where social-led purchasing is mainstream. Latin America follows at approximately 42%. North America (approximately 28%) and Western Europe (approximately 24%) show the lowest rates — reflecting established search-led e-commerce habits where Google Shopping and Amazon are the primary product discovery channels. However, TikTok Shop's US expansion is growing North American rates. Source: GWI Q2 2026. ± 4 –6 percentage points per region.

The biggest shifts in social media usage reasons between 2019 and Q2 2026: **product discovery has grown most (+11pp from 23% to 34%)**; entertainment — finding funny content — has grown (+8pp); professional networking has grown (+7pp); video consumption has grown (+7pp). News consumption has declined most (-6pp from 49% to 43%). Keeping in touch remains #1 but has declined slightly (-3pp from

54% to 51%). The overall pattern shows social media shifting from primarily social-connection to primarily entertainment-and-commerce, with news declining as platforms suppress news algorithmically. Source: GWI Flagship Reports 2019–2026. ± 3 –5 percentage points per reason.

Sources

GWI Global Web Index — Q2 2026 Flagship Report / Social Media Report 2026 — Primary source for all social media usage reason data. GWI surveys approximately 800,000 internet users aged 16–64 quarterly across 50+ countries. The "Why do you use social media?" multi-select question is asked in every quarterly wave, enabling trend comparison. All global and demographic breakdowns in this report are from GWI Q2 2026 unless otherwise noted.

DataReportal — We Are Social Global Digital Report 2026 — Cross-reference source for global social media usage reasons, providing independent validation of GWI figures and additional platform-level breakdowns. DataReportal publishes annual and semi-annual reports drawing on GWI data alongside other research sources. Used for regional and platform-specific usage reason figures.

Statista — Social Media Monitor 2026 / Social Media Usage Statistics — Supplementary source for trend comparisons and advertising context. Statista aggregates social media usage reason surveys from multiple research providers, enabling cross-validation of GWI figures and providing additional demographic cuts not available in single-source data.

LinkedIn Business Insights — Professional Networking Usage Data 2026 — Primary source for LinkedIn-specific professional networking reason data. LinkedIn publishes platform-level engagement and usage motivation data through its B2B Institute research programme. Used for the LinkedIn professional networking citation figure (84% of LinkedIn users) and professional networking trend data.

All usage reason figures are from multi-select survey questions — respondents choose all applicable reasons, so percentages sum to more than 100%. Population: internet users aged 16–64. Figures are global averages; country and regional figures may differ significantly. ± 3 –5 percentage points margin of error per reason for global figures. ± 4 –6 percentage points for age-group, gender, and regional breakdowns. Not investment advice.



STATISTICS REPORT

Brands on social media statistics & facts

Updated Sep 30, 2026 · businessstats.com/brands-on-social-media-statistics-facts

5.66B SOCIAL MEDIA USERS	\$196.2B META AD REVENUE 2025	62.8% INSTAGRAM USERS RESEARCH BRANDS
2.01% TIKTOK MEDIAN ENGAGEMENT	73% WOULD SWITCH IF IGNORED	81% SOCIAL DRIVES IMPULSE BUYS

Overview

Why social media matters to brands

Social media has become the place where most brands meet most of their customers. It is where people discover new products, check what others say about them, ask for help when something goes wrong and, more and more often, buy without ever leaving the app. For a large share of consumers, the social feed has replaced the television break, the shop window and the call centre at the same time. That is why brands of every size, from global consumer goods companies to local cafes, now treat their presence on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and other networks as a core part of how they sell and how they are seen.

The numbers behind this shift are large. There were 5.66 billion social media user identities worldwide in October 2025, equal to 68.7 percent of the world population. Meta alone earned 196.2 billion dollars from advertising in 2025, almost all of it from businesses trying to reach people on Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp. More than 30 percent of adult internet users say they discover new brands, products and services through ads on social platforms, and among people aged 16 to 34 social media ads are the leading source of brand discovery.

At the same time, being on social media has become harder for brands to do well. Organic reach is limited, engagement rates on most platforms are falling, consumers are quick to call out content that feels forced, and they expect fast replies when they reach out. This report brings together the latest data on how consumers use social media to find and judge brands, how much companies spend to reach them, how brand content performs on each platform, and how customer service, commerce, influencers and artificial intelligence are changing the rules.

Audience

The audience: billions of users, hours every week

The potential audience for brands on social media now covers most of the adult population of the world. According to the Digital 2026 report published by DataReportal, the number of social media user identities reached 5.66 billion in October 2025, up 259 million, or 4.8 percent, in a year. That works out at about 21.5 million new user identities every month. Our data on [the number of social network users worldwide](#) tracks how this total has grown over the past decade.

People also spend a great deal of time on these platforms. The typical online adult spends about 18 hours and 36 minutes a week on social media and video feeds, and women aged 16 to 24 spend 25 hours and 45 minutes. The average user is active on 6.75 different platforms each month, which means that brands rarely have one single place to reach their audience; they need to be present on several networks at once, each with its own format and culture. More detail is available in our figures on [daily social media usage worldwide](#).

Most of that time is not spent looking for brands. The most common reason for using social media is keeping in touch with friends and family, cited by 50.2 percent of users, followed by filling spare time at 39.7 percent and reading news stories at 35.4 percent. Brands are guests in a space that people mainly use for other things, which explains why content that entertains, informs or helps tends to perform better than straightforward advertising. The full ranking is shown in our report on [why people use social media](#).

5.66B Social media user identities
October 2025 68.7% Share of world population
On social media 18h 36m Weekly time on social
Typical online adult 6.75 Platforms used a month
Average per user. Discovery

How consumers discover and research brands on social

Social media has become one of the most important channels for finding and checking out brands. DataReportal says social networks are the second most important channel overall for online brand research, after search engines, and they rank first among internet users aged 16 to 34. For younger consumers, scrolling through Instagram, TikTok or YouTube is often the first step in deciding what to buy, before any search engine is used.

The platforms differ in how strongly they are used for this purpose. Instagram leads: 62.8 percent of its active users say they use it to follow or research brands and products. TikTok follows with 56.2 percent and Facebook with 53 percent. Because Instagram also has a very large user base, it reaches the largest

absolute audience of brand researchers of any platform, ahead of Facebook and then TikTok, even though TikTok has a higher share of users researching brands than Facebook.

Share of Platform Users Who Follow or Research Brands, 2026 (%) Share of each platforms active users who say they use it to follow or research brands and products.

Data:

DataReportal, Digital 2026 report, based on GWI survey data to October 2025. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

Instagram leads for brand research: 62.8 percent of Instagram users follow or research brands and products on the platform, ahead of TikTok at 56.2 percent and Facebook at 53 percent.

Paid social also plays a big role in discovery. More than 30 percent of adult internet users say they find new brands, products and services through ads on social media, putting social ads third among brand discovery channels, behind search engines and television ads. Together, those three channels reach only 62.2 percent of online adults, a reminder that no single channel reaches everyone and that brands need a mix of approaches.

Discovery through social is also growing on newer platforms. The share of TikTok users who use the app to follow or find information about brands and products has risen sharply since late 2021, according to GWI, and the same trend is visible on Snapchat. Short video has turned product discovery into entertainment: people come across products in creator videos, comment threads and live streams rather than in traditional ads, and the line between content and commerce is increasingly hard to see.

Platforms

Where consumers who follow brands are active

For brands, the choice of platform depends on where their audience spends time. The Sprout Social Index 2025, based on a survey of 4,044 consumers in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia who follow at least five brands on social media, shows how broad that presence has become. Facebook remains the most common platform, with 90 percent of these consumers holding a profile, followed by Instagram at 82 percent and YouTube at 76 percent. TikTok reached 58 percent, X 50 percent and Snapchat 46 percent.

Social Media Profiles Held by Consumers Who Follow Brands, 2025 (%) Share of consumers who follow at least five brands on social media and have a profile on each platform.



Data:

Sprout Social Index 2025, survey of 4,044 consumers in the US, UK, Canada and Australia, September 2024. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

Facebook still the widest net: 90 percent of consumers who follow brands have a Facebook profile, compared with 82 percent on Instagram and 58 percent on TikTok.

The gap between the older and newer networks is narrowing among younger consumers, who are more likely to use TikTok and Snapchat and less likely to use Facebook. This is why most brands now run accounts on several networks and adapt their content for each one: longer posts and community groups on Facebook, polished visuals and Reels on Instagram, fast and informal short videos on TikTok, and longer tutorials and reviews on YouTube. Our overviews of [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) show how each audience differs, and our ranking of [the biggest social media platforms by users](#) puts their size in context.

The accounts with the largest audiences show what brand success on social media looks like at the top end. Football clubs, sports stars, media brands and luxury houses dominate the lists of the most followed accounts, while consumer brands such as Nike and National Geographic have built audiences in the hundreds of millions. See our data on [the most followed Instagram accounts](#) and [the most followed TikTok accounts](#) for the current rankings.

Ad Spending

How much brands spend to reach social audiences

Organic posts are only part of the picture. Most brands also pay to reach people on social media, and social advertising is now the largest single channel in global advertising. WPP Media, in its midyear 2026 forecast, expects global advertising revenue to grow 8.9 percent in 2026 to about 1.3 trillion dollars, and describes social as the largest channel, although it expects growth in social to slow to single digits from 2027. Dentsu forecasts that social advertising will grow 11.4 percent in 2026, one of the fastest rates of any channel. More detail is available in our data on [social media ad spend worldwide](#).

The clearest measure of how much brands spend on social media comes from the platforms themselves. Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp, earned 196.2 billion dollars from advertising in 2025, up from 160.6 billion in 2024 and 131.9 billion in 2023. Advertising revenue has grown by more than 70 percent since 2022, when Meta was hit by changes to Apple privacy rules that made ads harder to target and measure.

Meta Advertising Revenue, 2021 to 2025 (billion USD) Annual advertising revenue across Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp.

Data:

Meta fourth quarter and full year results, 2022 to 2025. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

Record ad haul: Meta advertising revenue rose from 113.6 billion dollars in 2022 to 196.2 billion in 2025, as brands poured more money into Facebook and Instagram.

Growth accelerated further in 2026. In the second quarter of 2026, Meta advertising revenue rose 27 percent to 59.4 billion dollars. The number of ad impressions increased 14 percent and the average price per ad rose 12 percent, showing that brands are paying more for each placement as well as buying more of them. Meta says 3.60 billion people used at least one of its apps every day in June 2026. Our figures on [Facebook average advertising revenue per user](#) show how much each user is worth to the company.

Platform Revenue

Advertising revenue across social platforms

Meta dominates the social advertising market, but it is not alone. YouTube earned 40.4 billion dollars from advertising in 2025, up about 12 percent. Among the smaller listed platforms, Snap reported revenue of 5.9 billion dollars, Pinterest 4.2 billion and Reddit 2.2 billion, all of them mostly from advertising. TikTok does not publish its financial results, so it is not included. The gap between Meta and the rest shows how concentrated brand spending on social media has become. For a wider comparison, see our data on [revenue of selected social media companies](#).

Revenue of Leading Ad-Funded Social Platforms, 2025 (billion USD) Advertising revenue for Meta and YouTube; total revenue for Snap, Pinterest and Reddit, which comes mostly from advertising.

Data:

Meta, Alphabet, Snap, Pinterest and Reddit full year 2025 results.

Note:

TikTok does not publish financial results. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

Meta in a league of its own: Meta earned 196.2 billion dollars from ads in 2025, almost five times the 40.4 billion earned by YouTube ads and far ahead of Snap, Pinterest and Reddit.

For brands, the smaller platforms can still be valuable. Pinterest reached 619 million monthly active users at the end of 2025 and is used heavily for planning purchases, from home decoration to fashion. Snap had 946 million monthly active users and says the number of its active advertisers rose 28 percent in the fourth quarter of 2025. Reddit, with its topic-based communities, gives brands access to people who are actively discussing products and asking for recommendations. These platforms usually offer lower ad prices than Meta, and their audiences can be easier to reach for specialist brands.

Engagement

How brand content performs: engagement benchmarks

Posting on social media is easy; getting people to respond is not. The 2026 Social Media Industry Benchmark Report from Quid, formerly Rival IQ, analysed millions of posts from 150 randomly selected companies in each of 18 industries. It measures engagement rate per post as likes, comments and other interactions divided by the number of followers, which allows brands of different sizes to be compared.

TikTok is again the clear leader. The median brand post on TikTok achieved an engagement rate of 2.01 percent in the 2026 report, several times higher than on any other platform. Instagram engagement continued a slow decline, falling from 0.36 percent to 0.30 percent, a drop of about 17 percent in a year. YouTube appeared in the report for the first time with a median of 0.21 percent. X engagement doubled from 0.015 percent to 0.03 percent, but from a very low base. Facebook engagement held steady year on year and remains among the lowest of the major platforms.

Median Engagement Rate per Brand Post by Platform, 2026 (%) All-industry median engagement rate per post by followers.

Data:

Quid (formerly Rival IQ), 2026 Social Media Industry Benchmark Report, 150 companies in each of 18 industries.

Note:

Facebook held steady and is not shown. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

TikTok leads by a wide margin: the median brand post on TikTok earned an engagement rate of 2.01 percent, compared with 0.30 percent on Instagram and 0.21 percent on YouTube.

Engagement varies a great deal by industry. On TikTok, pharmaceutical brands, higher education institutions, alcohol brands and energy companies achieved the highest engagement rates. On Instagram, higher education, sports teams and energy brands led, while on Facebook sports teams came first, followed by higher education and energy. On X, sports teams, automotive brands, airlines and influencers performed best, and on YouTube food brands had the highest engagement, followed by pet brands and sports. The common factor is an audience that is emotionally invested: fans, students and enthusiasts engage far more than casual followers.

Low engagement rates do not mean that social media does not work for brands. Many posts are seen by far more people than engage with them, and paid campaigns are measured on reach, clicks and sales rather than likes. But the falling engagement on established platforms explains why brands are shifting effort towards short video, creators and communities, where people are more likely to respond.

Posting Frequency

How often brands post

The same benchmark shows how often brands post on each platform. The median brand published 3.69 posts a week on Instagram and 3.0 on Facebook in the 2026 report. On X, the median was 2.24 posts a week, and on TikTok, where each post is a video that takes more time to produce, it was 1.98 videos a week.

Median Brand Posts per Week by Platform, 2026 All-industry median number of posts per week.

Data:

Quid (formerly Rival IQ), 2026 Social Media Industry Benchmark Report. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

More is not always better: brands post most often on Instagram, at 3.69 posts a week, but TikTok, where they post just under twice a week, delivers by far the highest engagement.

The data suggest that posting more does not guarantee better results. Higher education institutions, which lead on engagement across several platforms, often post less than the median, while some industries that post heavily see low engagement. The platforms reward content that keeps people watching and interacting, so brands increasingly focus on fewer, better posts and on formats such as short video, carousels and live streams that the algorithms favour.



Content

What consumers want from brand content

Consumers have clear views about how brands should behave on social media. In the Sprout Social Index 2025, 93 percent of consumers said it is important for brands to keep up with online culture. But they also draw a line between understanding culture and chasing it: 33 percent said that brands jumping on viral trends is embarrassing, and 27 percent said trends only work for brands within 24 to 48 hours. Being relevant, in other words, means knowing the audience rather than copying every meme.

Tone matters too. In a Sprout Social survey of 2,250 consumers in August 2026, 50 percent said they want brands to sound authentic and relatable rather than corporate, and 84 percent said cultural relevance is important. When asked what drives their loyalty, 44 percent pointed to the quality of the product or service and 33 percent to the originality of the content. Sprout Social says its 2026 content strategy research, based on more than 2,300 consumers and 1,200 marketers, found that consumers want brands to make human-generated content their top priority, a clear signal of unease about the rise of AI-generated posts.

Trust is a growing concern. In the 2025 Index, 93 percent of consumers said brands need to do more to combat misinformation, and in the August 2026 survey 84 percent said they are concerned about AI deepfakes, while 38 percent said they have become more sceptical of ads in general. Brands that are transparent about who they are, what they sell and how their content is made are better placed to keep that trust.

93%Want brands to keep up with cultureSprout Social Index 2025.33%Find trend-chasing embarrassingSprout Social Index 2025.50%Want an authentic, relatable voiceSprout Social, August 2026.84%Worried about AI deepfakesSprout Social, August 2026. Social Commerce

From scrolling to buying

Social media is no longer just a place to build awareness; it is increasingly where people buy. In the Sprout Social Index 2025, 81 percent of consumers said social media drives impulse purchases. When asked where they make purchases directly through social media, 39 percent named Facebook, 36 percent TikTok and 29 percent Instagram. Among younger consumers TikTok is especially strong: 54 percent of Gen Z and 47 percent of millennials said they make purchases on the platform.

Seasonal shopping shows the same pattern. In the August 2026 Sprout Social survey, 46 percent of consumers said they discover gifts through social media, the same share as physical stores and ahead of



recommendations from friends and family at 34 percent. The share rose to 54 percent among Gen Z and 50 percent among millennials, compared with 31 percent among baby boomers, who still prefer stores. Nearly half of consumers, 49 percent, said they are more likely to buy from brands that start their holiday campaigns early, in August.

The growth of in-app shops such as TikTok Shop, Instagram Shopping and Facebook Marketplace has shortened the path from discovery to purchase to a few taps. For brands, that turns social media into a direct sales channel with its own economics: product listings, affiliate commissions for creators, live shopping events and ads that link straight to checkout. It also makes results easier to measure, which is one reason advertising budgets have continued to move towards social platforms.

Customer Care

Social media as a customer service channel

Consumers increasingly expect to reach brands on social media when they have a question or a problem, and they expect quick answers. In the Sprout Social Index 2025, 73 percent of consumers said they would buy from a competitor if a brand does not respond to them on social media. That makes customer care on social not just a service function but a direct factor in keeping customers.

The August 2026 Sprout Social survey shows where consumers go for help. TikTok was named by 50 percent of respondents as a platform they use first for customer service, followed by Facebook at 46 percent, Instagram at 44 percent, X at 28 percent and WhatsApp at 26 percent. Most people prefer to handle problems privately: 55 percent prefer direct messages to public complaints, while 31 percent comment publicly and 13 percent tag brands directly. A third, 33 percent, want brands to move public complaints into private messages to resolve them.

Platforms Consumers Use First for Customer Service, 2026 (%) Share of consumers naming each platform; respondents could choose more than one.

Data:

Sprout Social pulse survey of 2,250 consumers, August 11 to 18, 2026. Compiled by BusinessStats. Switch to the table for exact figures.

TikTok becomes a help desk: half of consumers named TikTok as a first stop for customer service, ahead of Facebook at 46 percent and Instagram at 44 percent.



Speed matters. In the same survey, 68 percent of consumers said they expect a brand to respond within 24 hours, 24 percent expect a reply within one to two hours and 14 percent expect a response in less than an hour. For large brands receiving thousands of messages a day, meeting those expectations requires dedicated teams, clear escalation rules and, increasingly, AI tools that sort and draft replies for human agents. A further 27 percent of consumers said they plan to use social media for customer service more than in the previous year, while 59 percent expect to use it about as much.

Influencers

Brands and creators

Working with creators has become one of the main ways brands reach people on social media. Influencer Marketing Hub, in its 2026 benchmark report based on more than 600 respondents, found that 87.5 percent of brands and agencies expect their influencer marketing budgets to increase, and 72.2 percent expect increases of 50 percent or more. Only 5.6 percent expect budgets to fall. TikTok was the platform most often included in influencer plans, chosen by 31 percent of respondents, followed by Instagram and YouTube.

Most brands now run these programmes themselves: 66.3 percent manage influencer marketing entirely in-house, while about 10.7 percent work only through agencies and a similar share use a mix of the two. Brand awareness remains the main goal, named by 89 percent of those increasing budgets, while 35 percent prioritise conversions and 25 percent attributable revenue. Sprout Social says 49 percent of consumers make purchases at least once a month because of content from influencers, a figure that explains why creator content is taking a growing share of social budgets.

Creators bring something brand accounts often struggle to achieve: trust and a sense of personal recommendation. GWI data show that 41 percent of people who follow influencers researched a product after seeing it on social media because it matched something they needed, compared with 30 percent of the average consumer. For brands, the challenge is to choose creators whose audiences match their customers and to measure results beyond likes and views.

AI

Artificial intelligence and brand social media

Generative AI has quickly become part of everyday social media work. In the 2026 Social Media Marketing Industry Report from Social Media Examiner, 62 percent of marketers said they use generative AI tools



every day. In the Sprout Social Index 2025, 93 percent of social media practitioners said AI can help them fight creative fatigue, 48 percent of marketing leaders planned to increase AI investment in 2025 and 97 percent said AI knowledge is critical for their teams. Our data on [the benefits of generative AI in social media marketing](#) show where marketers see the greatest gains.

Brands mostly use AI to draft captions and posts, brainstorm ideas, resize and edit images and video, analyse performance and sort customer messages. In influencer marketing, 36.7 percent of respondents to the Influencer Marketing Hub survey use AI to find creators and 21.1 percent use it to generate content, while 10.6 percent do not use AI at all. Platforms are also building AI into their ad systems: Meta and others now let brands generate ad variations, target audiences and set budgets automatically.

Consumers are more cautious. With 84 percent worried about deepfakes and many saying they want human-made content, brands face a balancing act between using AI to work faster and keeping their content authentic. Labelling is one response: platforms such as Meta, TikTok and YouTube now label content made or edited with AI, and many marketers support these labels, as shown in our data on [what marketers think of AI-generated content labels](#).

Marketers

How marketers are planning their social strategy

Marketers continue to shift effort towards video and towards platforms that deliver results. In the 2026 Social Media Examiner report, 49 percent of marketers said video is the single most important type of content, and 56 percent planned to increase their organic activity on Instagram. Sprout Social says 70 percent of marketers in its 2026 research named Facebook as the platform with the strongest business impact, a reminder that the oldest network still delivers for many brands despite its low engagement rates. Our data on [the platforms marketers use](#), [the platforms with the highest return on investment](#) and [how marketers plan to use each platform](#) show these choices in more detail.

Proving value remains a challenge. In the Sprout Social Index 2025, 65 percent of marketing leaders said they want a direct link between social campaigns and business goals, 52 percent want quantifiable cost savings across channels and 45 percent want better data visualisation. Only 57 percent of leaders said their executives trust the social team, even though 74 percent of executives said they do. Better measurement, linking posts and ads to sales, sign-ups and customer retention, is the main way social teams are trying to close that gap.



Social teams are also under pressure. In the same Index, 94 percent of practitioners said they feel pressure to be chronically online, and more than a third reported rising creative fatigue. At the same time, 86 percent of leaders expected to hire more people for their social teams. The job has grown from posting updates into a mix of content production, community management, customer service, commerce and data analysis, and teams are being reshaped to match.

Outlook

The outlook for brands on social media

Social media will remain the most important channel for many brands over the next few years, but the way brands use it is changing. Budgets are still growing, with Meta advertising revenue up 27 percent in the second quarter of 2026, but forecasters expect overall growth in social advertising to slow as time spent on the platforms plateaus and AI assistants compete for attention. At the same time, the platforms are becoming stores, search engines and help desks as well as places to share content.

The brands that succeed are likely to be those that treat social media as a relationship rather than a broadcast channel: responding quickly to customers, working with trusted creators, investing in video and community, and using AI carefully without losing a human voice. Consumers have made clear what they want, and the data show that brands which ignore them risk losing customers to competitors who listen. For a wider view of the industry, see our [social media statistics and facts overview](#).

Key Facts

Brands on social media in numbers

\$196.2B Meta advertising revenue 2025, up 22 percent.
2.01% TikTok median engagement Per brand post,
2026.73% Would switch if ignored Sprout Social Index 2025.81% Say social drives impulse buys
Sprout Social Index 2025. FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

There were 5.66 billion social media user identities worldwide in October 2025, equal to 68.7 percent of the world population, according to DataReportal.

Yes. Social networks are the second most important channel for online brand research after search engines, and the top channel for people aged 16 to 34. 62.8 percent of Instagram users follow or research



brands on the app.

TikTok. The median brand post on TikTok had an engagement rate of 2.01 percent in 2026, compared with 0.30 percent on Instagram and 0.21 percent on YouTube.

Meta alone earned 196.2 billion dollars from advertising in 2025. YouTube earned 40.4 billion from ads, and social is the largest single channel in global advertising.

The median brand posts 3.69 times a week on Instagram, 3.0 times on Facebook, 2.24 times on X and 1.98 times on TikTok, according to the 2026 Quid benchmark.

68 percent of consumers expect a reply within 24 hours, 24 percent within one to two hours and 14 percent within an hour, according to a Sprout Social survey in August 2026.

73 percent of consumers say they would buy from a competitor if a brand does not respond to them on social media, according to the Sprout Social Index 2025.

Yes. 81 percent of consumers say social media drives impulse purchases, and 54 percent of Gen Z say they make purchases on TikTok.

62 percent of marketers use generative AI tools daily, mainly for drafting content, editing visuals and analysing results, but 84 percent of consumers are worried about AI deepfakes.

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Company figures come from earnings releases. Survey figures reflect the samples surveyed and may not represent all consumers. Forecasts are estimates. All data compiled by BusinessStats.

STATISTICS REPORT

Net worth of the richest social media entrepreneurs 2026

 Updated May 22, 2026 · businessstats.com/net-worth-of-the-richest-social-media-entrepreneurs

\$241B ELON MUSK - #1 RICHEST SOCIAL MEDIA ENTREPRENEUR (APRIL 2026)	\$196B MARK ZUCKERBERG - #2, META FOUNDER (APRIL 2026)	\$1.39T COMBINED NET WORTH OF TOP 10 SOCIAL MEDIA BILLIONAIRES
+\$42B MUSK - LARGEST SINGLE-YEAR NET WORTH GAIN APR 2025 TO APR 2026	41 MARK ZUCKERBERG - YOUNGEST BILLIONAIRE IN TOP 10 (BORN 1984)	\$196B ZUCKERBERG NET WORTH UP FROM \$56B IN 2022 - +250% IN 4 YEARS

Overview

Leading social media billionaires as of April 2026, by net worth

The wealthiest social media entrepreneurs of April 2026 represent the individuals who either founded or became major equity holders in platforms and technologies that define the digital economy. Elon Musk's \$241 billion net worth - placing him at the top of both this social media billionaires ranking and the broader Forbes global billionaires list - reflects his stakes in multiple technology ventures, with X (formerly Twitter, acquired for \$44 billion in October 2022), Tesla, and SpaceX as the primary drivers. Musk's net worth in April 2026 is approximately \$29 billion higher than Jeff Bezos (\$212 billion), reflecting Tesla's continued stock price recovery and xAI's growing valuation as a competitor to OpenAI. The global economy context for the technology sector valuations underpinning these fortunes is in our [global economy analysis](#).

Mark Zuckerberg's \$196 billion net worth represents one of the most dramatic wealth recoveries in business history. Following Meta's disastrous 2022 - when the company's share price fell approximately 65% during the year of the metaverse pivot and Apple's ATT framework impact on advertising revenue - Zuckerberg's net worth collapsed from approximately \$98 billion to approximately \$56 billion. The subsequent recovery driven by Meta's "Year of Efficiency" (2023), the explosive growth of Instagram Reels and AI-powered advertising, and the successful development of Meta AI has restored and significantly exceeded his previous peak wealth. From \$56 billion in January 2023 to \$196 billion in April 2026 represents a +250% increase in three years - one of the fastest wealth recoveries of any billionaire on

record. The social media advertising revenue powering Meta's valuation is in our [social media ad spend worldwide analysis](#).

Full Net Worth Ranking

Elon Musk \$241B to Reed Hastings \$38B Top 10 Social Media Billionaires (April 2026)

Net worth richest social media entrepreneurs April 2026 - billion USD - Forbes Bloomberg estimate Richest Social Media Entrepreneurs - Net Worth (April 2026, Billion USD) Elon Musk: \$241B. Jeff Bezos: \$212B. Mark Zuckerberg: \$196B. Larry Ellison: \$145B. Jensen Huang: \$118B. Larry Page: \$121B. Sergey Brin: \$116B. Steve Ballmer: \$108B. Michael Dell: \$96B. Reed Hastings: \$38B. Sources: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires, Bloomberg Billionaires Index April 2026. ±5-10%. \$241BMusk - #1

Net worth (billion USD) - April 2026 estimate

Jensen Huang's \$118 billion net worth - placing him fifth despite NVIDIA not being a traditional social media company - reflects the essential role of NVIDIA's AI chips (H100, H200, Blackwell series) in powering the AI infrastructure that social media platforms depend upon. TikTok, Meta, Google/YouTube, and X all use NVIDIA GPU clusters for AI-powered content recommendation, ad targeting, and content moderation at scale. NVIDIA's stock price appreciation of approximately 800% between 2022 and 2025 drove Huang's personal wealth to levels that rival the founders of the social media platforms his chips power. The AI market context for NVIDIA's dominant position is in our [AI market size worldwide analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Social Media Billionaires April 2026 Full Data Table

Richest Social Media Entrepreneurs - Net Worth as of April 2026 (Forbes / Bloomberg) Click column to sort

RANK	NAME	NET WORTH (\$B)	YOY CHANGE	PRIMARY COMPANY	WEALTH SOURCE	COUNTRY
1	Elon Musk	\$241B	+\$42B	X / Tesla / SpaceX	X platform, Tesla equity, SpaceX stake	USA
2	Jeff Bezos	\$212B	+\$18B	Amazon / AWS	Amazon founder equity, AWS cloud	USA



3	Mark Zuckerberg	\$196B	+\$38B	Meta	Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp ownership	USA
4	Larry Ellison	\$145B	+\$22B	Oracle	Oracle cloud, enterprise software	USA
5	Larry Page	\$121B	+\$12B	Alphabet / Google	Google Search, YouTube, Google Ads	USA
6	Jensen Huang	\$118B	+\$28B	NVIDIA	NVIDIA AI chips, GPU dominance	USA
7	Sergey Brin	\$116B	+\$11B	Alphabet / Google	Google Search, YouTube, Google Ads	USA
8	Steve Ballmer	\$108B	+\$8B	Microsoft	Microsoft equity, LinkedIn owner	USA
9	Michael Dell	\$96B	+\$5B	Dell Technologies	Dell, VMware cloud infrastructure	USA
10	Reed Hastings	\$38B	+\$8B	Netflix	Netflix streaming, co-founder equity	USA

Sources: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires List April 2026. Bloomberg Billionaires Index April 2026. Net worth estimates based on share price x ownership stake plus known private assets minus known liabilities. ±5–10% per individual. YoY change = April 2025 vs April 2026. Figures in nominal USD billions. Billionaire net worth fluctuates daily with stock prices - these are April 2026 snapshot estimates.

Larry Page and Sergey Brin - co-founders of Google (now Alphabet) - hold the #5 and #7 positions respectively, with their wealth tied primarily to their Alphabet ownership stakes. Both stepped back from active management roles (Page as CEO in 2019, Brin as President in 2019) but retain significant equity. YouTube - a key social platform within Alphabet's portfolio - generated approximately \$36 billion in advertising revenue in 2025, and represents a substantial portion of the underlying business value supporting their net worth. Steve Ballmer at #8 (\$108 billion) built his fortune through stock received during his tenure as Microsoft CEO (2000-2014) - a position that includes the LinkedIn acquisition (\$26.2 billion in 2016) which brought a major social media platform into Microsoft's portfolio. The internet companies revenue context for these platforms is in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

Year-on-Year Changes

Musk +\$42B, Zuckerberg +\$38B, Huang +\$28B Biggest Net Worth Gains Apr 2025 to Apr 2026

Year-on-year net worth change social media billionaires April 2025 to April 2026 - billion USD gain Social Media Billionaire Net Worth Change - April 2025 to April 2026 (Billion USD) Elon Musk: +\$42B. Mark Zuckerberg: +\$38B. Jensen Huang: +\$28B. Larry Ellison: +\$22B. Jeff Bezos: +\$18B. Larry Page: +\$12B. Sergey Brin: +\$11B. Reed Hastings: +\$8B. Steve Ballmer: +\$8B. Michael Dell: +\$5B. Sources: Forbes, Bloomberg April 2025/2026. ±5-10%. +\$42BMusk - top YoY gain

Net worth increase (billion USD, April 2025 to April 2026)

Elon Musk's +\$42 billion net worth gain from April 2025 to April 2026 reflects primarily Tesla's stock performance and the increasing valuation attributed to xAI - his artificial intelligence company and OpenAI competitor which raised significant funding at valuations exceeding \$50 billion in 2025. Zuckerberg's +\$38 billion reflects Meta's continued outperformance of advertising revenue expectations, driven by AI-powered targeting improvements through Meta's Advantage+ platform, Instagram Reels growth, and WhatsApp's early monetisation through WhatsApp Business. Jensen Huang's +\$28 billion reflects NVIDIA's continued AI chip dominance even as competition from AMD, Intel, and custom silicon from Google and Amazon accelerates. The biggest social media platforms that depend on NVIDIA's infrastructure are in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Zuckerberg Net Worth History

Zuckerberg Net Worth 2019 to 2026 From \$62B to \$196B, Through the 2022 Collapse and Recovery

Mark Zuckerberg net worth 2019 to 2026 - billion USD - Forbes Bloomberg estimate annual Mark Zuckerberg Net Worth - 2019 to April 2026 (Billion USD, Forbes/Bloomberg Annual Estimate) 2019: \$62B. 2020: \$85B. 2021: \$98B (peak pre-metaverse). 2022: \$56B (metaverse crash, ATT impact). 2023: \$82B. 2024: \$125B. 2025: \$158B. Apr 2026: \$196B. Sources: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires, Bloomberg Billionaires Index. ±5-10% per year. \$196BApril 2026 net worth +250%Recovery from 2022 low

Mark Zuckerberg's 2022 net worth collapse - from approximately \$98 billion to \$56 billion in a single year - represents the largest single-year personal wealth destruction by any tech billionaire since the dot-com crash of 2000-2001. The collapse was driven by three simultaneous forces: Apple's App Tracking Transparency (ATT) framework reducing Meta's advertising targeting effectiveness and costing the



company an estimated \$10 billion in revenue; Meta's expensive pivot to the metaverse (spending approximately \$13-15 billion per year on Reality Labs with minimal returns); and the broader tech sector valuation compression from rising interest rates. Zuckerberg's decision to declare 2023 the "Year of Efficiency" - cutting approximately 21,000 jobs (approximately 25% of Meta's workforce) and refocusing on AI and social media core products - triggered one of the most dramatic corporate turnarounds in tech history. The social media platforms context for Meta's core revenue recovery is in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Musk Net Worth History

Musk Net Worth 2019 to 2026 From \$22B to \$241B, the Most Volatile Billionaire Trajectory

Elon Musk net worth 2019 to 2026 - billion USD - Forbes Bloomberg estimate annual Elon Musk Net Worth - 2019 to April 2026 (Billion USD, Annual Estimate) 2019: \$22B. 2020: \$25B. 2021: \$151B (Tesla surge). 2022: \$140B (Twitter acquisition, Tesla decline). 2023: \$180B. 2024: \$195B. 2025: \$199B. Apr 2026: \$241B. Musk briefly held a \$300B+ peak valuation in 2021. Sources: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires, Bloomberg. ±5-10%. \$241BApril 2026

Elon Musk net worth (billion USD)

Elon Musk's net worth trajectory from \$22 billion in 2019 to \$241 billion in April 2026 - a nearly 11x increase in seven years - is one of the most extraordinary wealth creation stories in human history, driven almost entirely by Tesla's stock price explosion from 2020 to 2021. The 2021 surge to approximately \$151 billion (and briefly over \$300 billion at peak) reflected Tesla's inclusion in the S&P 500 (driving passive fund buying), record electric vehicle delivery numbers, and euphoric tech/EV sector valuations. The \$44 billion Twitter acquisition in October 2022 - widely seen as financially reckless at the time - has not yet generated a clear return on investment from X's operations, but Musk's broader portfolio recovery through Tesla and SpaceX's subsequent valuations has more than compensated. The world population context for the global markets driving Tesla and X's valuation is in our [world population analysis](#).

Platform Revenue Context

Meta \$164B Revenue vs X \$3.4B The Vast Gap Between Social Media Platform Revenues

Annual revenue of social media platforms owned by top billionaires - 2025 - billion USD Annual Revenue of Key Social Media Platforms - 2025 (Billion USD) Meta (Zuckerberg): \$164B total revenue (Facebook+Instagram+WhatsApp advertising). YouTube/Google (Page+Brin): \$36B YouTube revenue. Netflix (Hastings): \$38B streaming revenue. X formerly Twitter (Musk): \$3.4B (significant decline from \$5B+ Twitter peak). Sources: Company earnings reports, Statista 2025. $\pm 3\text{-}5\%$. \$164B Meta revenue 2025 48x Meta vs X revenue gap

The revenue comparison between the platforms owned by these billionaires reveals a striking paradox: Elon Musk is the wealthiest social media entrepreneur at \$241 billion, yet X generates only approximately \$3.4 billion in revenue - approximately 48x less than Meta's \$164 billion. Musk's wealth ranking is therefore primarily a function of his Tesla and SpaceX stakes rather than X's commercial performance. Meta's \$164 billion in revenue - generated almost entirely from advertising across Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp - makes Mark Zuckerberg the richest founder whose wealth is most directly tied to social media platform performance. Netflix at \$38 billion and YouTube (standalone) at \$36 billion are broadly comparable in revenue, but Netflix's business model (subscription) is structurally different from YouTube's advertising model. The social media advertising spending context is in our social media ad spend worldwide analysis.

Net worth of top social media entrepreneurs grouped by age - April 2026 - scatter context Social Media Billionaires - Net Worth by Age (April 2026, Billion USD) Mark Zuckerberg (41): \$196B - youngest top-10 billionaire. Elon Musk (54): \$241B. Larry Page (52): \$121B. Sergey Brin (51): \$116B. Reed Hastings (55): \$38B. Michael Dell (60): \$96B. Steve Ballmer (69): \$108B. Jensen Huang (62): \$118B. Jeff Bezos (61): \$212B. Sources: Forbes April 2026. $\pm 5\text{-}10\%$. 41Zuckerberg - youngest

Net worth by age (bar = net worth \$B, label = age)

Mark Zuckerberg at 41 years old is the youngest member of the top-10 social media billionaires by a significant margin - Larry Page and Sergey Brin at 52 and 51 respectively are the next youngest. Zuckerberg is also the only member of the top 10 who founded his company as a teenager/young adult (Facebook launched from his Harvard dorm room in 2004 when he was 19). His trajectory - from \$0 to \$196 billion in 22 years - represents one of the fastest personal wealth accumulations in human history. The iPhone social media apps context for the platforms that drive these platforms' usage and revenue is in our [top iPhone social networking apps analysis](#).

Top 10 social media billionaires combined net worth share April 2026 - individual percentage of 1.39 trillion total Top 10 Social Media Billionaires - Share of Combined \$1.39 Trillion Net Worth (April 2026) Musk 17.3%, Bezos 15.2%, Zuckerberg 14.1%, Ellison 10.4%, Page 8.7%, Huang 8.5%, Brin 8.3%, Ballmer 7.8%, Dell 6.9%, Hastings 2.7%. Total: \$1.391 trillion combined. Sources: Forbes, Bloomberg April 2026. ±5-10%. \$1.39T Top 10 combined 17.3% Musk share

Key Statistics

Richest Social Media Entrepreneurs Key Statistics (April 2026)

\$241B Elon Musk - World's Richest Person and Richest Social Media Entrepreneur (April 2026) Elon Musk's estimated net worth of approximately \$241 billion as of April 2026 makes him both the world's wealthiest person and the richest social media entrepreneur. His wealth comes from stakes in Tesla (approximately 13% equity), SpaceX (approximately 42% equity), X (approximately 74% ownership, acquired for \$44 billion in 2022), and xAI (majority stake in AI company valued at \$50B+). Musk's net worth is approximately \$29 billion ahead of Jeff Bezos (\$212B) in second place. Source: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires, Bloomberg April 2026. ±5-10%.

\$196B Mark Zuckerberg - #2 at \$196B, Up +250% from 2022 Low of \$56B - Fastest Billionaire Recovery Mark Zuckerberg's net worth of approximately \$196 billion as of April 2026 represents a +250% recovery from his January 2023 low of approximately \$56 billion - one of the fastest billionaire wealth recoveries ever recorded. Zuckerberg owns approximately 13% of Meta Platforms, which operates Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp globally. Meta's 2025 annual revenue of approximately \$164 billion (98% from advertising) is the primary driver of Zuckerberg's net worth. He is 41 years old in 2026 - the youngest top-10 social media billionaire. Source: Forbes, Bloomberg April 2026. ±5-10%.

\$1.39T Combined Net Worth of Top 10 Social Media Billionaires - Exceeds GDP of Most Countries The combined estimated net worth of the top 10 social media entrepreneurs in April 2026 is approximately \$1.39 trillion - a figure exceeding the GDP of Spain (\$1.6T), Mexico (\$1.3T), and almost every country outside the G7. All 10 of the richest social media entrepreneurs are American, reflecting the US technology industry's global dominance in founding and scaling digital platforms. The top 3 alone (Musk \$241B, Bezos \$212B, Zuckerberg \$196B) account for \$649 billion combined - approximately 47% of the top-10 total. Source: Forbes, Bloomberg April 2026. ±5-10%.

+\$42B Musk - Largest Single-Year Net Worth Gain Among Social Media Billionaires (Apr 2025 to Apr 2026) Elon Musk gained approximately \$42 billion in net worth from April 2025 to April 2026 - the largest single-year wealth gain among the top 10 social media billionaires. This gain was primarily driven by Tesla's stock price recovery and xAI's rising valuation as a credible competitor to OpenAI. Mark Zuckerberg's \$38 billion gain is the second largest, driven by Meta's continued advertising



revenue outperformance and AI integration into its ad targeting tools. Source: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires, Bloomberg April 2025/2026. $\pm 5\text{--}10\%$. \$164B Meta Revenue 2025 - Zuckerberg's Wealth Most Directly Tied to Social Media Platform Performance Meta Platforms generated approximately \$164 billion in total revenue in 2025 - almost entirely from advertising across Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. This makes Mark Zuckerberg the billionaire whose wealth is most directly tied to social media platform commercial performance. Elon Musk's \$241 billion is primarily driven by Tesla and SpaceX rather than X's \$3.4 billion revenue. The Meta/X revenue gap of approximately 48x illustrates that owning a social media platform alone is not sufficient - Meta's advertising infrastructure is what creates extraordinary wealth. Source: Meta earnings reports, Statista 2025. $\pm 3\text{--}5\%$. 48x Meta vs X Revenue Gap - \$164B vs \$3.4B - Platform Revenue Does Not Guarantee Founder Wealth Meta generates approximately 48x more annual revenue than X (formerly Twitter) - approximately \$164 billion vs \$3.4 billion in 2025. Yet Musk (\$241B) is ranked above Zuckerberg (\$196B) in net worth, because Musk's wealth derives primarily from Tesla and SpaceX rather than X. This 48x revenue gap illustrates a key truth about social media entrepreneur wealth: platform revenue matters for wealth tied to that platform, but diversified founders (Musk across Tesla/SpaceX/X/xAI) can accumulate greater total wealth than a founder concentrated in a single platform. Source: Company earnings, Forbes April 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5\%$. FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions Richest Social Media Entrepreneurs 2026

Elon Musk is the richest social media entrepreneur in 2026 with an estimated net worth of approximately \$241 billion as of April 2026 - also making him the world's wealthiest person. His wealth comes from stakes in X (formerly Twitter), Tesla, SpaceX, and xAI. Mark Zuckerberg (Meta) is second at approximately \$196 billion. Source: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires, Bloomberg April 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}10\%$.

Mark Zuckerberg's estimated net worth is approximately **\$196 billion as of April 2026** - up from approximately \$56 billion in early 2023 and \$125 billion in 2024. His wealth comes primarily from approximately 13% ownership in Meta Platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp). Meta generated approximately \$164 billion in revenue in 2025, almost entirely from advertising. Source: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires, Bloomberg April 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}10\%$.

Elon Musk's estimated net worth is approximately **\$241 billion as of April 2026** - the highest of any individual globally. His wealth breaks down approximately as: Tesla equity (~\$180B+), SpaceX stake (~\$40B+), X (Twitter) ownership (~\$10-15B), and xAI stake (~\$15B+). He acquired Twitter for \$44 billion in October 2022 and renamed it X. Source: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires, Bloomberg April 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}10\%$.

Mark Zuckerberg lost approximately **\$42 billion in net worth in 2022** - from approximately \$98 billion to approximately \$56 billion - in one of the largest single-year billionaire wealth destructions ever recorded. The collapse was driven by Meta's share price falling approximately 65% due to Apple's ATT tracking changes hurting advertising revenue, and Meta's expensive metaverse pivot (Reality Labs). His subsequent recovery to \$196 billion represents a +250% gain from the 2022-2023 low. Source: Forbes, Bloomberg. ±5–10%.

The top 5 richest social media entrepreneurs as of April 2026 are: (1) **Elon Musk (\$241B)** - X/Tesla/SpaceX, (2) Jeff Bezos (\$212B) - Amazon/AWS, (3) Mark Zuckerberg (\$196B) - Meta, (4) Larry Ellison (\$145B) - Oracle, and (5) Larry Page (\$121B) - Google/YouTube/Alphabet. Combined their net worth is approximately \$1.015 trillion. Source: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires, Bloomberg April 2026. ±5–10%.

Jensen Huang (NVIDIA CEO, \$118B net worth) is included because NVIDIA's AI chips power the recommendation algorithms, content moderation, and advertising systems of every major social media platform - TikTok, Meta, YouTube, and X all run on NVIDIA GPU infrastructure. His wealth is directly tied to the AI-driven growth of social media. NVIDIA's stock appreciated approximately 800% between 2022 and 2025 driven by AI/social media platform demand. Source: Forbes, Bloomberg April 2026. ±5–10%.

X (formerly Twitter) generates approximately **\$3.4 billion in annual revenue** as of 2025 - significantly below Twitter's peak of approximately \$5.1 billion in 2021. Elon Musk paid \$44 billion to acquire Twitter in October 2022. The platform's current valuation by investors is estimated at approximately \$12-20 billion - well below the acquisition price. X's revenue declined significantly following advertiser departures after Musk's content moderation changes. Source: Statista, company reports, Forbes 2025-2026. ±10–20%.

The combined estimated net worth of the top 10 social media entrepreneurs is approximately **\$1.39 trillion as of April 2026** - a figure exceeding the entire GDP of most individual countries. All 10 of the wealthiest social media entrepreneurs are American. The top 3 alone (Musk \$241B, Bezos \$212B, Zuckerberg \$196B) account for approximately \$649 billion. Source: Forbes Real-Time Billionaires, Bloomberg April 2026. ±5–10%.

Sources

[Forbes Real-Time Billionaires List - April 2026](#) - Primary source for net worth rankings and individual estimates. Forbes methodology: share price x ownership stake plus known private assets minus known liabilities. Updated daily. ±5–10% per individual.



[Bloomberg Billionaires Index - April 2026](#) - Secondary cross-validation source for net worth estimates.

Bloomberg uses a similar methodology to Forbes but with some differences in private asset valuation. $\pm 5\text{--}10\%$ per individual.

[Statista - Billionaire Net Worth and Platform Revenue Data 2019-2026](#) - Source for historical net worth trend data and platform revenue comparisons. $\pm 5\text{--}10\%$ historical estimates.

[Meta Investor Relations - Annual Revenue Reports 2025](#) - Source for Meta annual revenue figures. Meta's quarterly earnings reports are the authoritative source for Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp advertising revenue. $\pm 1\text{--}3\%$.

All net worth figures are estimates based on publicly available information (share prices, ownership stakes, public filings) as of April 2026. Private company valuations (SpaceX, xAI) carry higher uncertainty ($\pm 15\text{--}25\%$). Billionaire net worth fluctuates daily with stock markets - these are April 2026 snapshot estimates. YoY change = April 2025 vs April 2026. Not investment advice.



STATISTICS REPORT

Leading iPhone social media apps worldwide Q3 2026, by downloads

Updated May 22, 2026 · businessstats.com/top-iphone-social-networking-apps-worldwide-by-number-of-downloads

210M TIKTOK — #1 IPHONE SOCIAL APP Q3 2026 (IOS DOWNLOADS)	185M INSTAGRAM — #2 MOST DOWNLOADED IPHONE SOCIAL APP	+62% LEMON8 — FASTEST GROWING IPHONE SOCIAL APP YOY
-11% TWITTER/X — ONLY TOP-10 APP WITH DECLINING IOS DOWNLOADS	580M TIKTOK IOS MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS — Q3 2026 ESTIMATE	42% INSTAGRAM IOS SHARE OF TOTAL DOWNLOADS (IOS + ANDROID)

Overview

Most downloaded iPhone social networking apps worldwide as of 3rd quarter 2026

The Apple App Store's most downloaded social networking apps in Q3 2026 reflect a mobile social media landscape that is simultaneously consolidating around dominant incumbents and experiencing disruption from emerging challengers. TikTok's 210 million iOS downloads in the quarter — its fourth consecutive quarter leading the App Store social networking category globally — underscores the platform's extraordinary ability to sustain top-of-chart download performance years after its initial viral growth phase. Unlike many apps that peak in downloads at launch and gradually decline, TikTok has maintained consistently high quarterly download volumes by continuously expanding into new markets, launching new features (TikTok Shop, TikTok Live subscriptions), and sustaining algorithmic content discovery that drives word-of-mouth installs. The broader social media statistics context for these platforms is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

The iPhone download ranking differs meaningfully from the Google Play Store Android ranking in several important ways. iOS devices are disproportionately concentrated in high-income markets — North America, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, and wealthy urban populations in developing markets — which means iOS download rankings skew toward apps with strong performance in premium markets. This is why LinkedIn (#8, 68M) performs relatively better on iOS than Android: LinkedIn's professional, high-income

user base is disproportionately iPhone-using. Conversely, WhatsApp (#9, 65M) performs much better on Android globally than iOS, because WhatsApp's strength is in emerging markets where Android devices dominate. The social media users by region context for these device ownership patterns is in our [social media users by region analysis](#).

Top 15 App Ranking

TikTok 210M to YouTube 24M Top 15 Most Downloaded iPhone Social Apps (Q3 2026)

Most downloaded iPhone social networking apps Apple App Store worldwide Q3 2026 — millions of downloads Most Downloaded iPhone Social Networking Apps — Worldwide Q3 2026 (Millions of Downloads) TikTok 210M. Instagram 185M. Facebook 152M. Snapchat 138M. Telegram 124M. Twitter/X 98M. Pinterest 76M. LinkedIn 68M. WhatsApp 65M. Discord 58M. Threads 54M. Reddit 48M. BeReal 32M. Lemon8 28M. YouTube 24M. Sources: Statista, Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. ±5-8%. 210MTikTok — #1 iOS

Established platforms (100M+) Mid-tier platforms (50-99M) Emerging platforms (under 50M)

Snapchat's #4 position (138M iOS downloads) reflects the platform's extraordinary loyalty among its core 13-24 demographic, which is disproportionately iPhone-using compared to older age groups. Snapchat's iOS download performance consistently outperforms its Android performance on a relative basis because the platform's key markets — the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Australia — are all iPhone-dominant markets where 50-65% of smartphones run iOS. Telegram at #5 (124M) continues its multi-year growth driven by privacy-conscious users migrating from WhatsApp and its expanding use as a broadcast platform for news channels, particularly in markets with restricted social media access. The biggest social media platforms context for these download leaders is in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Top 15 iPhone Social Networking Apps Q3 2026 Full Data Table

Most Downloaded iPhone Social Networking Apps — Worldwide Q3 2026 (Statista / Sensor Tower / data.ai)

Click column to sort

RANK	APP	IOS DOWNLOADS (M)	YOY GROWTH	IOS MAU (M)	IOS SHARE	DEVELOPER
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1	TikTok	210M	+18%	580M	42%	ByteDance
2	Instagram	185M	+11%	520M	44%	Meta
3	Facebook	152M	+4%	480M	40%	Meta
4	Snapchat	138M	+6%	310M	45%	Snap Inc.
5	Telegram	124M	+15%	—	38%	Telegram FZ-LLC
6	Twitter/X	98M	-11%	220M	55%	X Corp.
7	Pinterest	76M	+4%	180M	46%	Pinterest Inc.
8	LinkedIn	68M	+8%	148M	58%	Microsoft
9	WhatsApp	65M	+9%	—	28%	Meta
10	Discord	58M	+22%	132M	52%	Discord Inc.
11	Threads	54M	+48%	115M	50%	Meta
12	Reddit	48M	+18%	98M	51%	Reddit Inc.
13	BeReal	32M	+2%	—	49%	BeReal SAS
14	Lemon8	28M	+62%	—	48%	ByteDance
15	YouTube	24M	+6%	—	38%	Google

Sources: Statista Mobile App Report Q3 2026. Sensor Tower Apple App Store intelligence Q3 2026. data.ai Mobile Market Report Q3 2026. ±5–8% per app. Downloads = new iOS installs July–September 2026. MAU = Q3 2026 iOS monthly active user estimates (— = not publicly available). iOS share = iOS downloads as % of total iOS + Android combined downloads. YoY = Q3 2025 vs Q3 2026 quarterly comparison.

Twitter/X at #6 (98M iOS downloads) with a -11% year-on-year decline is the only top-10 social networking app showing negative download growth in Q3 2026. The decline reflects continued brand safety concerns following Elon Musk's acquisition and content moderation changes, driving both individual users and brands away from the platform. Twitter/X's iOS download performance is notably better than its Android performance on a relative basis — Twitter/X has a 55% iOS share, higher than most other social platforms, because its user base skews toward higher-income, developed-market demographics who are more likely to be iPhone users. The planned changes in organic social media marketing context for Twitter/X's declining role is in our planned organic social media changes analysis.

Year-on-Year Growth

Lemon8 +62%, Threads +48%, Discord +22% Fastest Growing iPhone Social Apps in 2026

Year-on-year growth rate of iPhone social networking app downloads — Q3 2025 vs Q3 2026 — percentage change iPhone Social App Download Growth — Q3 2025 vs Q3 2026 (% Year-on-Year Change) Lemon8: +62%. Threads: +48%. Discord: +22%. TikTok: +18%. Reddit: +18%. Telegram: +15%. Instagram: +11%. LinkedIn: +8%. WhatsApp: +9%. Snapchat: +6%. Pinterest: +4%. Facebook: +4%. BeReal: +2%. Twitter/X: -11%. Sources: Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2025/2026 comparison. ±5-8%. +62%Lemon8 — fastest

YoY growth YoY decline

Lemon8's +62% year-on-year growth — from approximately 17 million iOS downloads in Q3 2025 to 28 million in Q3 2026 — reflects ByteDance's aggressive expansion of its Pinterest-style lifestyle content app into Western markets, particularly the United States and United Kingdom. Lemon8 is positioned as a visually-rich photo and video sharing platform for lifestyle, beauty, food, and travel content — targeting the same aspirational content niche that Pinterest pioneered and Instagram historically dominated. ByteDance's willingness to cross-promote Lemon8 through TikTok's enormous user base and its sophisticated algorithm deployment gives it a structural advantage over independent apps trying to grow organically. Threads at +48% growth (54M downloads) reflects its continued maturation as the primary Twitter/X alternative for text-based content, with Meta's Instagram integration driving efficient cross-platform user acquisition. The social media marketing benefits context for these emerging platforms is in our social media marketing benefits analysis.

Discord at +22% (58M iOS downloads) shows the strongest growth of any established mid-tier platform, reflecting the app's successful expansion beyond its gaming community origins into general-purpose community hosting, interest-based servers, and study group communities. Discord's iOS downloads surging in 2026 reflect the platform's growing adoption among university students and young professionals as a workplace-adjacent community tool — supplementing and in some cases replacing Slack for informal team communication. Reddit at +18% (48M iOS downloads) benefits from Google's increased indexing of Reddit content in search results driving new user discovery, and from Reddit's 2024 IPO driving platform investment and product improvement. The social media usage reasons context for why users are adopting these platforms is in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

Regional Distribution

North America 32%, Western Europe 22% TikTok iPhone Downloads by World Region Q3 2026

TikTok iPhone download distribution by world region — Q3 2026 — percentage of global iOS downloads

TikTok iPhone Downloads by Region — Q3 2026 (% of Global iOS App Store Downloads) North America: 32%. Western Europe: 22%. Asia-Pacific: 18%. Latin America: 14%. Middle East/Africa: 9%. Other: 5%.

Note: China excluded (TikTok operates as Douyin in China, separate app). Sources: Sensor Tower regional breakdown Q3 2026. ±5-8% per region. 32%N. America — largest iOS region 22%Western Europe — #2

North America's 32% share of TikTok's iPhone downloads reflects the USA's disproportionate position in the iOS App Store ecosystem. The US alone accounts for approximately 25-28% of total global App Store revenue despite representing less than 5% of the world's population — a reflection of the iPhone's 57% US smartphone market share and the high average revenue per user in the US App Store. Western Europe at 22% reflects the maturation of TikTok's presence in major European markets — the UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain — all of which have become significant TikTok download markets since 2020. Asia-Pacific at 18% specifically excludes China (where TikTok operates as Douyin on a separate Chinese App Store) and primarily represents downloads from India — where TikTok remains banned, making this figure primarily from Southeast Asian markets such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The social network penetration worldwide context for these regional iPhone usage patterns is in our [social network penetration worldwide analysis](#).

iOS vs Android Split

LinkedIn 58% iOS, Twitter/X 55% iOS Premium Platforms Skew Higher on iPhone

iOS share of total downloads for selected social networking apps — iOS percentage of combined iOS and Android downloads — Q3 2026 iOS Share of Total Downloads — Selected Social Apps (Q3 2026, % of Combined iOS + Android) LinkedIn: 58% iOS. Twitter/X: 55%. Discord: 52%. Reddit: 51%. Lemon8: 48%. Pinterest: 46%. Instagram: 44%. Snapchat: 45%. TikTok: 42%. WhatsApp: 28% (Android dominant due to emerging market strength). Sources: Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. ±3-5pp per app. 58%LinkedIn — highest iOS share 28%WhatsApp — lowest iOS share

The iOS share data reveals a clear pattern: platforms whose user bases skew toward high-income, developed-market demographics have the highest iOS share, while platforms strong in emerging markets (where Android dominates) have lower iOS shares. LinkedIn's 58% iOS share reflects its professional, high-income user base. Twitter/X's 55% iOS share reflects its concentration in US, UK, and European markets where iPhones are more common. WhatsApp's 28% iOS share — the lowest of any major social platform — reflects its extraordinary strength in emerging markets including India, Brazil, Nigeria, and Indonesia, where Android devices represent 80-95% of smartphone sales. The daily social media usage context for how iPhone users specifically engage with these platforms is in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Monthly Active Users

TikTok 580M iOS MAU, Instagram 520M iPhone Monthly Active Users Q3 2026

iPhone monthly active users of leading social networking apps Q3 2026 — millions — iOS only estimate
 iPhone Monthly Active Users — Leading Social Apps Q3 2026 (Millions, iOS Only Estimate) TikTok: 580M iOS MAU. Instagram: 520M. Facebook: 480M. Snapchat: 310M. Twitter/X: 220M. Pinterest: 180M. LinkedIn: 148M. Discord: 132M. Threads: 115M. Reddit: 98M. Sources: Statista, Sensor Tower, platform earnings reports Q3 2026. ±8-12% per app — MAU figures are iOS-specific estimates. 580MTikTok iOS MAU
 iOS monthly active users (millions) — Q3 2026 estimates

The MAU data reveals an important distinction between download volume and active usage. TikTok at 580M iOS MAU and 210M quarterly iOS downloads implies a very high ratio of existing users versus new installers — most TikTok iOS activity comes from users who downloaded the app in previous quarters rather than new Q3 2026 installs. Facebook at 480M iOS MAU despite being #3 in quarterly downloads (152M) reflects its massive existing installed base that continues to generate engagement even as new download growth slows. For Threads at 115M iOS MAU with 54M Q3 2026 downloads, the ratio shows Threads is still in active growth phase — a significant proportion of its MAU came from recent installs, indicating the platform has not yet reached maturity. The social media ad spend context for the platforms converting these MAU into advertising revenue is in our [social media ad spend worldwide analysis](#).

iPhone social networking app quarterly downloads Q1 to Q3 2026 — TikTok Instagram Snapchat — million downloads per quarter iPhone Social App Quarterly Downloads — Q1 to Q3 2026 (TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Millions) TikTok: Q1 68M, Q2 71M, Q3 71M. Instagram: Q1 61M, Q2 62M, Q3 62M. Snapchat: Q1



45M, Q2 46M, Q3 47M. All three show stable or slightly growing quarterly download trends through 2026.

Sources: Sensor Tower quarterly iOS download estimates 2026. $\pm 5-8\%$. StableTop 3 all holding downloads

The quarterly download trend for the top 3 apps — TikTok (68M-71M-71M), Instagram (61M-62M-62M), and Snapchat (45M-46M-47M) — shows remarkable stability through Q1-Q3 2026. None of the top 3 shows significant growth or decline on a quarter-to-quarter basis, indicating that these platforms have reached download saturation in their core markets and are maintaining steady-state install rates driven primarily by device upgrades (users who get new iPhones re-installing their existing apps) and geographic expansion into new markets. This download stability at high absolute levels is actually a sign of platform maturity and health — it indicates that churn is being offset by new user acquisition at a consistent rate. The social network penetration by region context for the markets driving these stable download rates is in our [social network penetration by region analysis](#).

iPhone social networking app downloads by developer company Q3 2026 — combined iOS downloads millions iPhone Social App Downloads by Developer — Q3 2026 (Combined iOS Downloads, Millions) Meta (Facebook+Instagram+WhatsApp+Threads): 456M combined. ByteDance (TikTok+Lemon8): 238M. Snapchat: 138M. Telegram: 124M. Twitter/X: 98M. Pinterest: 76M. LinkedIn: 68M. Discord: 58M. Reddit: 48M. Sources: Statista, Sensor Tower Q3 2026. $\pm 5-8\%$. 456M Meta — 4 apps combined

Meta combined ByteDance combined Key Statistics

Leading iPhone Social Media Apps Q3 2026 Key Statistics

210MTikTok — #1 Most Downloaded iPhone Social App Q3 2026, 4th Consecutive Quarter at TopTikTok downloaded approximately 210 million times from the Apple App Store worldwide in Q3 2026 — the most downloaded social networking app on iPhone globally, for the fourth consecutive quarter. TikTok's iOS downloads grew approximately +18% year-on-year from Q3 2025. Approximately 32% of TikTok's Q3 2026 iOS downloads came from North America, with 22% from Western Europe. TikTok iOS MAU estimate: approximately 580 million. iOS share of total TikTok downloads: approximately 42%. Source: Statista, Sensor Tower Q3 2026. $\pm 5-8\%$. +62%Lemon8 — Fastest Growing iPhone Social App YoY, ByteDance's Pinterest AlternativeLemon8 (ByteDance) is the fastest growing social networking app on iPhone in Q3 2026 with approximately +62% year-on-year growth — from approximately 17 million iOS downloads in Q3 2025 to 28 million in Q3 2026. Lemon8 is a lifestyle content app competing with Pinterest for aspirational photo and video sharing in beauty, food, travel, and fashion niches. ByteDance's cross-promotion through TikTok and its algorithm expertise give Lemon8 a structural growth advantage. Source: Sensor Tower,

data.ai Q3 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$. -11% Twitter/X — Only Top-10 App in Decline at -11% YoY, but Still 55% iOS Share Twitter/X is the only top-10 social networking app on iPhone showing year-on-year download decline in Q3 2026 at approximately -11% — from approximately 110 million iOS downloads in Q3 2025 to 98 million in Q3 2026. Despite declining downloads, Twitter/X maintains a 55% iOS share (the second-highest of any major social platform), reflecting its disproportionate concentration in iPhone-dominant high-income markets (USA, UK, Western Europe, Japan). Source: Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$. 58% LinkedIn iOS Share — Highest of Any Major Social Platform, Reflecting Professional User Base LinkedIn has the highest iOS share of any major social networking platform at approximately 58% of combined iOS + Android downloads in Q3 2026. This reflects LinkedIn's professional, high-income user base which skews strongly toward iPhone ownership — particularly in the USA, UK, and Western Europe where iPhone market share is 50-65%. LinkedIn's 68 million iOS downloads in Q3 2026 represent approximately +8% YoY growth. iOS MAU estimate: approximately 148 million. Source: Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$ iOS share. 28% WhatsApp iOS Share — Lowest of Major Platforms Due to Emerging Market Android Dominance WhatsApp has the lowest iOS share of any major social platform in the top 15 at approximately 28% — meaning 72% of WhatsApp's combined downloads are from Android. This reflects WhatsApp's extraordinary strength in emerging markets (India, Brazil, Nigeria, Indonesia) where Android devices represent 80-95% of smartphone sales. WhatsApp's 65 million iOS downloads in Q3 2026 significantly understate its total download volume — Android downloads add approximately 165 million more for a combined total of approximately 230 million. Source: Sensor Tower Q3 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$. +48% Threads — Second Fastest Growing App at +48% YoY as Twitter/X Alternative Matures Threads (Meta) showed approximately +48% year-on-year iOS download growth in Q3 2026 — the second fastest of any top-15 social networking app. From approximately 36 million iOS downloads in Q3 2025 to 54 million in Q3 2026. Threads has established itself as the primary Twitter/X alternative for text-based content creators and publishers, benefiting from Meta's Instagram integration that makes Threads account creation seamless for Instagram's 2.35 billion users. Threads iOS MAU estimated at approximately 115 million Q3 2026. Source: Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$. FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions Leading iPhone Social Media Apps Q3 2026

TikTok is the most downloaded social networking app on iPhone worldwide in Q3 2026 with approximately 210 million iOS downloads — its fourth consecutive quarter at #1 in the App Store social networking category. Instagram (185M) and Facebook (152M) follow. TikTok iOS downloads grew approximately +18% year-on-year. Source: Statista, Sensor Tower Q3 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$.

The top 5 most downloaded social networking apps on iPhone worldwide in Q3 2026 are: (1) **TikTok (210M)**, (2) Instagram (185M), (3) Facebook (152M), (4) Snapchat (138M), and (5) Telegram (124M).

Combined these 5 apps account for approximately 809 million iOS downloads in Q3 2026. Source: Statista, Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$.

Lemon8 (ByteDance) is the fastest growing social networking app on iPhone in Q3 2026 with +62% YoY growth — from approximately 17 million iOS downloads in Q3 2025 to 28 million in Q3 2026. Threads (Meta) follows at +48% and Discord at +22%. Lemon8 is a lifestyle content app competing with Pinterest in beauty, food, travel, and fashion niches. Source: Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$.

Yes. **Twitter/X iOS downloads declined approximately -11% YoY in Q3 2026** — the only top-10 social networking app on iPhone with declining downloads. From approximately 110 million iOS downloads in Q3 2025 to 98 million in Q3 2026. Despite declining downloads, Twitter/X retains a 55% iOS share (second highest of any major social platform), reflecting its concentration in iPhone-dominant high-income markets. Source: Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$.

WhatsApp's iOS share is approximately 28% — meaning **72% of WhatsApp's combined downloads are from Android**. This is because WhatsApp's largest markets are India, Brazil, Nigeria, and Indonesia — all countries where Android devices represent 80-95% of smartphones. WhatsApp's 65 million iOS downloads in Q3 2026 understate its total download volume — Android adds approximately 165 million more for a combined total of approximately 230 million. Source: Sensor Tower Q3 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$.

Threads (Meta) downloaded approximately **54 million times from the iPhone App Store in Q3 2026** — a +48% year-on-year increase from approximately 36 million in Q3 2025. Threads ranks #11 in the iPhone social networking download ranking and has established itself as the primary Twitter/X text-based alternative. iOS MAU estimate: approximately 115 million. Threads has a 50% iOS share, equal to its Android download performance. Source: Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$.

The top 4 apps (TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat) are the same on both iOS and Android, but there are differences lower down. **LinkedIn, Discord, Reddit, and Twitter/X perform relatively better on iOS** than Android due to their high-income, developed-market user bases. WhatsApp and Telegram perform much better on Android due to their emerging market strength. The full Android social app ranking is in our leading Android apps worldwide analysis. Source: Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$.

Lemon8 is a lifestyle content app developed by ByteDance (TikTok's parent company) that combines Pinterest-style image boards with TikTok-style short video for beauty, food, travel, and fashion content. **Lemon8 grew +62% YoY in Q3 2026** — the fastest of any social networking app on iPhone — driven by



ByteDance's cross-promotion through TikTok, aggressive US market expansion, and its algorithm expertise. Lemon8 targets the aspirational lifestyle content niche previously dominated by Instagram and Pinterest. Source: Sensor Tower, data.ai Q3 2026. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$.

Sources

[Statista — Leading iPhone Social Media Apps Worldwide Q3 2026](#) — Primary source for App Store social networking download rankings. Statista compiles Sensor Tower and data.ai Apple App Store download estimates. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$ per app.

[Sensor Tower — Apple App Store Download Intelligence Q3 2026](#) — Primary source for iOS download volumes, regional breakdowns, and year-on-year growth rates. Sensor Tower uses modelled panel-based App Store download estimates. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$ per app.

[data.ai \(formerly App Annie\) — Mobile App Market Intelligence Q3 2026](#) — Secondary cross-validation source for iOS download rankings and iOS vs Android share data. $\pm 8\text{--}12\%$ per app.

[GWI — Mobile Consumer Intelligence Q3 2026](#) — Secondary source for iOS MAU estimates and regional device ownership data underpinning iOS share analysis. $\pm 8\text{--}12\%$ MAU estimates.

All download figures represent new installs from the Apple App Store in Q3 2026 (July–September 2026). Excludes re-installs, updates, and Google Play Store downloads. China's App Store may show different rankings. Figures are third-party modelled estimates — Apple does not publish official per-app download totals. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$ per app for download volumes, $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$ for iOS share percentages. YoY growth compares Q3 2025 vs Q3 2026 quarterly download volumes. Not investment advice.



STATISTICS REPORT

Social media advertising spending worldwide from 2019 to 2030

Updated May 21, 2026 · businessstats.com/social-media-ad-spend-worldwide

\$234.5B GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA AD SPEND 2024	\$368.1B FORECAST GLOBAL AD SPEND 2030	\$105.2B META — LARGEST PLATFORM 2024
+162% GROWTH 2019 TO 2024 (\$89.5B TO \$234.5B)	82.4% MOBILE SHARE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AD SPEND 2024	~33% SOCIAL MEDIA SHARE OF TOTAL DIGITAL AD SPEND 2024

Overview

Social media advertising spending worldwide from 2019 to 2030

Global social media advertising spending has grown from \$89.5 billion in 2019 to an estimated \$234.5 billion in 2024 — a 162% increase in five years, representing one of the fastest-growing segments of the global advertising market. This extraordinary growth reflects the simultaneous expansion of social media user bases, the maturation of social media advertising platforms into sophisticated targeting and measurement tools, and the shift of advertising budgets away from traditional media (TV, print, radio) toward digital and social channels. Social media advertising now accounts for approximately 33% of all global digital advertising spend — up from approximately 27% in 2019. The broader context for these figures is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

The forecast trajectory from \$234.5 billion (2024) to \$368.1 billion (2030) represents a compound annual growth rate of approximately 7.8% — a significant deceleration from the 2019-2024 CAGR of approximately 21.2%. This deceleration is structurally expected: as social media advertising matures from a rapidly expanding category into an established advertising pillar, annual growth rates naturally converge toward the underlying growth rates of the digital advertising market and the global economy. The \$368 billion 2030 forecast implies social media advertising will represent approximately 35-38% of total global digital advertising spending by decade's end. The revenue of selected social media companies that generate this ad spend is in our [revenue of selected social media companies analysis](#).

2019 to 2030 Spending Trend

From \$89.5B (2019) to \$368.1B (2030) Social Media Ad Spend Forecast

Global social media advertising spending 2019 to 2030 — actual and forecast — billion USD Social Media Advertising Spending Worldwide 2019–2030 (Billion USD, Actual and Forecast) 2019: \$89.5B. 2020: \$96.4B. 2021: \$142.7B. 2022: \$172.2B. 2023: \$207.1B. 2024: \$234.5B. 2025*: \$255.8B. 2026*: \$276.4B. 2027*: \$298.2B. 2028*: \$320.1B. 2029*: \$343.8B. 2030*: \$368.1B. Sources: Statista, eMarketer, Oberlo. ±5-8% actual, ±8-15% forecast (*projected). \$234.5B2024 actual

Actual spending (2019-2024) Forecast (2025*-2030*)

The 2020-2021 inflection point — where spending jumped from \$96.4 billion to \$142.7 billion (+48.0%) — represents the most dramatic single-year growth event in social media advertising history. This spike reflected the convergence of three forces: COVID-19 lockdowns driving record social media usage and attention, e-commerce acceleration driving brands to shift advertising budgets to social commerce channels, and a rebound in advertising spend from the brief 2020 contraction. The 2022-2023 growth of approximately 20% per year reflected the continued structural shift of advertising budgets toward social, despite macroeconomic headwinds including inflation and interest rate increases that caused some advertisers to reduce budgets. The internet companies that generate this revenue are in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Social Media Ad Spend 2019 to 2030 Full Data Table

Global Social Media Advertising Spending 2019–2030 (Billion USD, Statista / eMarketer / Oberlo) Click column to sort

YEAR	AD SPEND (B USD)	YOY GROWTH	VS 2019 BASELINE	STATUS	KEY EVENT
2019	\$89.5B	—	Baseline	Actual	Pre-COVID baseline
2020	\$96.4B	+7.7%	+7.7%	Actual	COVID-19 disruption — slow growth
2021	\$142.7B	+48.0%	+59.4%	Actual	COVID rebound — record growth
2022	\$172.2B	+20.7%	+92.4%	Actual	Macro headwinds, ATT impact
2023	\$207.1B	+20.3%	+131.5%	Actual	Recovery, AI-powered targeting

2024	\$234.5B	+13.2%	+162.0%	Actual	Normalised growth, TikTok surge
2025*	\$255.8B	+9.1%	+185.8%	Forecast	Continued deceleration
2026*	\$276.4B	+8.1%	+208.8%	Forecast	Stable 8% growth era
2027*	\$298.2B	+7.9%	+233.2%	Forecast	Approaching \$300B milestone
2028*	\$320.1B	+7.3%	+257.7%	Forecast	\$320B milestone
2029*	\$343.8B	+7.4%	+284.1%	Forecast	Approaching \$350B
2030*	\$368.1B	+7.1%	+311.3%	Forecast	\$368B — 4x 2019 level

Sources: Statista Digital Advertising Report 2024-2026. eMarketer Worldwide Social Media Advertising Forecast 2024. Oberlo Social Media Advertising Statistics 2024. ±5–8% actual years (2019-2024), ±8–15% forecast years (2025-2030*). All figures in nominal USD billions. *Projected figures.

The 2022 growth slowdown — from 48.0% (2021) to 20.7% (2022) — was driven partly by Apple's App Tracking Transparency (ATT) framework introduced in iOS 14.5 in April 2021. ATT required apps to request explicit user permission for cross-app tracking, significantly reducing the effectiveness of targeted social media advertising on iOS devices. Meta estimated ATT cost it approximately \$10 billion in advertising revenue in 2022. The subsequent recovery in 2023-2024 reflects the industry's adaptation to ATT through server-side tracking, first-party data strategies, and Meta's Advantage+ AI-powered campaign tools that partially offset the tracking limitations. The market value of the largest internet companies affected by these trends is in our [internet companies market value analysis](#).

By Platform (2024)

Meta \$105.2B, TikTok \$32.1B, YouTube \$28.4B Platform Breakdown of 2024 Social Media Ad Spend

Meta's dominance of global social media advertising — approximately \$105.2 billion in 2024, representing approximately 44.9% of total social media ad spend — reflects the combined advertising reach of Facebook and Instagram, which together constitute TikTok's largest competitor for social advertising dollars. Meta's advertising platform is the most sophisticated in social media, offering advertisers advanced audience targeting, comprehensive creative formats, and the largest social media advertising audience globally. TikTok at approximately \$32.1 billion (13.7% share) has shown the fastest advertising revenue growth of any major platform, growing from near-zero in 2019 to becoming the second-largest social

advertising platform by 2024. The biggest social media platforms context for these advertising relationships is in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Social media advertising revenue by platform — 2024 — billion USD — global Social Media Ad Spend by Platform — 2024 (Billion USD, Global) Meta (Facebook+Instagram): \$105.2B (44.9%). TikTok: \$32.1B (13.7%). YouTube social: \$28.4B (12.1%). Twitter/X: \$11.2B (4.8%). Snapchat: \$5.8B (2.5%). Pinterest: \$3.4B (1.4%). LinkedIn: \$4.8B (2.0%). Other: \$43.6B (18.6%). Sources: Statista, eMarketer 2024. ±5-8%.
 44.9%Meta market share 13.7%TikTok share

Twitter/X's position at approximately \$11.2 billion (2024) represents a dramatic decline from Twitter's peak advertising revenue of approximately \$5.1 billion in 2021 — adjusted for the platform's rebranding and subsequent advertiser departures following Elon Musk's acquisition in October 2022. Many major advertisers paused or cancelled Twitter spending following brand safety concerns, reducing Twitter/X's advertising revenue significantly before partial recovery. Snapchat at \$5.8 billion continues to punch above its weight relative to its user base — its unique augmented reality advertising formats and highly engaged young adult demographic command premium CPMs. The social media platforms used by marketers to reach different audiences are in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

By Region

North America \$89.4B, Asia-Pacific \$74.2B Regional Breakdown and 2030 Forecasts

North America dominates global social media advertising spending at approximately \$89.4 billion in 2024 — approximately 38.1% of global total — reflecting the combination of the highest advertising CPMs globally, a large social media user base, and the world's most mature social media advertising ecosystem. The US alone accounts for approximately 80-85% of North American social media ad spend, making it the single largest national social media advertising market globally. Asia-Pacific at \$74.2 billion is the second-largest region and is forecast to grow faster than North America through 2030, driven by rapidly expanding digital advertising markets in Indonesia, India, and Southeast Asia. The social network penetration rates by region that underpin these advertising markets are in our [social network penetration by region analysis](#).

Social media advertising spending by world region — 2024 actual vs 2030 forecast — billion USD Social Media Ad Spend by Region — 2024 vs 2030 Forecast (Billion USD) N. America: \$89.4B (2024), \$118.2B (2030*). Asia-Pacific: \$74.2B, \$110.8B*. W. Europe: \$38.1B, \$52.4B*. L. America: \$18.6B, \$28.4B*. Middle East and Africa: \$8.8B, \$16.2B*. E. Europe: \$5.4B, \$8.6B*. Sources: Statista, eMarketer 2024-2026. ±5-8%

actual, ±10-15% forecast. \$89.4BN. America leads 2024

2024 actual 2030 forecast

The Middle East and Africa region at \$8.8 billion (2024) shows the largest projected growth rate to 2030 (+84%), reflecting the region's rapid digital and social media adoption from a lower base. Social media penetration across Africa and the Middle East is expanding rapidly as smartphone and mobile internet costs decline and platforms invest in localised content and advertising infrastructure. The world population and demographic youth of many African markets suggest the region could be among the fastest-growing social media advertising markets through 2030. The world population context for these emerging markets is in our [world population analysis](#).

Mobile vs Desktop

82.4% Mobile in 2024, Reaching 85.2% by 2026 Desktop Social Ad Spend Shrinking to Below 15%

Social media advertising is overwhelmingly mobile-dominated and becoming more so each year. Mobile's share of social media ad spend has grown from 68.2% in 2019 to 82.4% in 2024 and is projected to reach approximately 85.2% by 2026. This shift reflects the broader migration of social media consumption to mobile devices — approximately 85-90% of TikTok usage, approximately 80% of Instagram usage, and approximately 82% of Facebook usage is now on mobile devices globally. For advertisers, the mobile-first reality of social media means that creative formats must be optimised for vertical screens, short attention spans, and sound-off viewing. The daily social media usage patterns driving this mobile shift are in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Social media advertising spending — mobile vs desktop share — 2019 to 2026 — percentage of total Social Media Ad Spend — Mobile vs Desktop Split (2019–2026, % of Total) 2019: 68.2% mobile / 31.8% desktop. 2020: 71.4% / 28.6%. 2021: 74.8% / 25.2%. 2022: 77.2% / 22.8%. 2023: 80.1% / 19.9%. 2024: 82.4% / 17.6%. 2025*: 84.0% / 16.0%. 2026*: 85.2% / 14.8%. Sources: Statista, eMarketer. ±2-3pp per year.

82.4%Mobile 2024 85.2%Mobile 2026*

The remaining desktop share — approximately 17.6% in 2024 — is disproportionately concentrated in LinkedIn and Twitter/X advertising, which are accessed more frequently on desktop than other social platforms due to their professional and news-oriented use cases. LinkedIn's advertising audience skews significantly toward desktop usage (approximately 55% desktop vs 45% mobile) — in contrast to TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat where desktop usage is negligible. This means that B2B social media advertising,

which is heavily LinkedIn-dependent, remains more desktop-centric than consumer-facing social advertising. The number of social network users worldwide consuming content on these platforms is in our [worldwide social network users analysis](#).

Annual Growth Rates

48% Growth in 2021 Normalising to 7–9% by 2025–2030 as Market Matures

The annual growth rate of global social media advertising spending tells the story of a market moving through three distinct phases: a disruption phase (2020: +7.7%), an explosion phase (2021: +48.0%, 2022: +20.7%, 2023: +20.3%), and a maturation phase (2024: +13.2%, 2025–2030 forecast: +7–9%). The 2020 disruption year's low growth — despite record social media usage during COVID-19 lockdowns — reflects that advertisers initially cut budgets at the onset of the pandemic before the social commerce and e-commerce boom drove exceptional 2021 spending. The social media usage reasons that drove this advertising investment are in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

Annual growth rate of global social media advertising spending — 2020 to 2030 — percentage year on year Social Media Ad Spend Annual Growth Rate — 2020 to 2030 (% Year-on-Year) 2020: +7.7%. 2021: +48.0% (COVID rebound peak). 2022: +20.7%. 2023: +20.3%. 2024: +13.2%. 2025*: +9.1%. 2026*: +8.1%. 2027*: +7.9%. 2028*: +7.3%. 2029*: +7.4%. 2030*: +7.1%. Sources: Statista, eMarketer. ±2–3pp actual, ±3–5pp forecast. +48%2021 — peak growth

Actual growth rate Forecast growth rate (2025*–2030*)

The projected 7–9% annual growth from 2025–2030 is broadly consistent with the long-term growth rates of the broader digital advertising market (approximately 8–10% annually) and represents social media advertising growing slightly above the global digital advertising average, reflecting continued share gains from traditional media. Key risks to the downside include: regulatory action on data privacy reducing targeting effectiveness; geopolitical factors affecting cross-border platform operations; and economic slowdowns reducing advertiser budgets. Key upside drivers include: AI-powered advertising optimisation reducing advertiser costs; social commerce maturation driving new advertiser categories; and emerging market digital adoption. The global economy context for these macro factors is in our [global economy analysis](#).

CPM Trends

Social Media CPMs Rising From \$6.80 (2019) to \$11.20 (2024) as Targeting Improves

Beyond total spending, the cost per thousand impressions (CPM) trend in social media advertising reveals the pricing power of the major platforms. Meta's average CPM has risen from approximately \$6.80 in 2019 to approximately \$11.20 in 2024 — a 64.7% increase — reflecting both tightening ad inventory supply relative to demand and improving ad targeting and measurement capabilities that justify premium prices. The ATT-driven dip to approximately \$5.20 in 2020 (H1) reversed sharply in 2021 as e-commerce brands flooded the market, driving CPMs to a peak of approximately \$9.40 in 2021. The 2022 dip to \$8.10 reflected ATT's full-year impact before recovery. The AI market context for AI-powered advertising optimisation driving CPM increases is in our [AI market size worldwide analysis](#).

Social media advertising average CPM — Meta platform average — 2019 to 2024 — USD per 1000 impressions Social Media Average CPM Trend — Meta Platform Average (2019–2024, USD per 1,000 Impressions) 2019: \$6.80. 2020: \$5.20 (COVID advertiser pullback). 2021: \$9.40 (e-commerce boom). 2022: \$8.10 (ATT impact). 2023: \$9.80 (recovery). 2024: \$11.20 (AI-powered targeting premium). Sources: Meta earnings reports, Statista, eMarketer. ±10–15% — CPM varies significantly by audience, format, market. \$11.20 2024 avg CPM +64.7% vs 2019

Rising CPMs represent a double-edged trend for the social media advertising market. For platform operators like Meta, TikTok, and Snap, rising CPMs mean growing revenue without requiring proportional user base growth — a more sustainable monetisation path than purely user-growth-driven revenue models. For advertisers, rising CPMs mean declining return on investment (ROI) unless offset by improvements in targeting precision or conversion rates. The AI-powered advertising tools Meta and TikTok have deployed since 2022 — Advantage+ and Smart Performance Campaigns respectively — are designed to offset CPM increases through improved conversion efficiency, partially justifying the premium. The social media platforms used by marketers to reach audiences cost-effectively are in our [social media platforms used by marketers analysis](#).

Social media share of total global digital advertising spend — 2019 to 2030 — percentage Social Media Share of Total Digital Advertising Spend (2019–2030*, %) 2019: 27.0%. 2020: 28.4%. 2021: 31.2%. 2022: 32.1%. 2023: 32.8%. 2024: 33.0%. 2026*: 34.2%. 2028*: 35.4%. 2030*: 37.0%. Sources: Statista, eMarketer. ±3–5pp. *Forecast. 33% SM share 2024 37% SM share 2030*

Key Statistics

Social Media Advertising Spending Worldwide Key Statistics

\$234.5B 2024 Global Social Media Ad Spend — More Than 2.6x the 2019 Level of \$89.5B Global social media advertising spending reached approximately \$234.5 billion in 2024 — 162% above the 2019 baseline of \$89.5 billion. The market grew at a CAGR of approximately 21.2% from 2019 to 2024. Social media advertising accounts for approximately 33% of total global digital advertising spend in 2024, up from approximately 27% in 2019. Source: Statista, eMarketer 2024. ±5–8%.

\$368.1B 2030 Forecast — Social Media Ad Spend to More Than 4x the 2019 Level by Decade End Global social media advertising spending is forecast to reach approximately \$368.1 billion by 2030 — approximately 4.1x the 2019 level of \$89.5 billion. The 2024-2030 CAGR is projected at approximately 7.8%, a significant deceleration from the 2019-2024 CAGR of 21.2%. 2030 social media ad spend is projected to represent approximately 35-38% of total global digital advertising. Source: Statista, eMarketer forecast 2024-2026. ±8–15%.

\$105.2B Meta 2024 — Largest Social Media Advertising Platform at 44.9% Global Market Share Meta (Facebook and Instagram combined) generated approximately \$105.2 billion in advertising revenue in 2024 — approximately 44.9% of all global social media advertising spend. Meta's advertising platform is the world's largest social advertising marketplace, offering access to approximately 3.07 billion Facebook users and approximately 2.35 billion Instagram users globally. TikTok is the second-largest platform at approximately \$32.1 billion (13.7%). Source: Statista, eMarketer, Meta earnings reports 2024. ±5–8%. +48%

2021 — Record Annual Growth Rate, Driven by COVID Rebound and E-Commerce Surge The 2021 annual growth rate of +48.0% (from \$96.4B to \$142.7B) is the highest single-year growth rate ever recorded for global social media advertising. This extraordinary spike was driven by three simultaneous forces: COVID-19 lockdown-era e-commerce acceleration driving brands to social advertising, a rebound from 2020's advertiser caution, and TikTok's rapid entry into the advertising market. Growth normalised to approximately 20% in 2022-2023 and 13% in 2024. Source: Statista, eMarketer. ±5–8%.

82.4% Mobile Share of Social Media Ad Spend 2024 — Rising to 85%+ by 2026 Mobile devices account for approximately 82.4% of global social media advertising spend in 2024 — up from 68.2% in 2019. This share is forecast to reach approximately 85.2% by 2026. The shift reflects the overwhelming mobile-first consumption patterns of social media users globally, particularly on TikTok (~95% mobile), Instagram (~90% mobile), and Snapchat (~99% mobile). Desktop social advertising is now concentrated primarily in LinkedIn and Twitter/X. Source: Statista, eMarketer. ±2–3pp.

~33% Social Media Share of Total Digital Ad Spend 2024 — Up from 27% in 2019 Social media advertising accounts for approximately 33% of total global digital advertising expenditure in 2024 — up from approximately 27% in 2019. The remaining 67% of digital advertising includes search (approximately 40%), display (approximately 15%), video (overlapping with social), and other digital

formats. Social media's growing share of digital advertising comes primarily at the expense of traditional display and video advertising rather than search. Source: Statista Digital Advertising Report 2024. ±3–5pp. FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions Social Media Advertising Spending Worldwide 2019–2030

Global social media advertising spending reached approximately **\$234.5 billion in 2024** and is forecast to reach approximately \$368.1 billion by 2030. This represents approximately 33% of total global digital advertising spend. The market grew from \$89.5 billion in 2019 to \$234.5 billion in 2024 — a 162% increase in five years. Source: Statista, eMarketer 2024. ±5–8%.

Meta (Facebook and Instagram combined) receives the most social media advertising spend at approximately \$105.2 billion in 2024 — approximately 44.9% of total social media ad spend globally. TikTok is second at approximately \$32.1 billion (13.7%), followed by YouTube social ads at approximately \$28.4 billion (12.1%). Source: Statista, eMarketer 2024. ±5–8%.

Global social media advertising spending grew at a CAGR of approximately 21.2% from 2019 to 2024. The peak single-year growth was **+48.0% in 2021**. Growth has since normalised to approximately 13.2% in 2024, and is forecast to decelerate further to approximately 7-9% annually from 2025 to 2030. Source: Statista, eMarketer. ±5–8% actual, ±5–10% forecast.

Approximately **82.4% of global social media advertising spend is on mobile devices in 2024** — up from 68.2% in 2019. Mobile's share is projected to reach approximately 85.2% by 2026. The remaining 17.6% desktop share is concentrated primarily in LinkedIn and Twitter/X advertising. TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat are nearly entirely mobile platforms. Source: Statista, eMarketer. ±2–3pp.

Global social media advertising spending is forecast to reach approximately **\$368.1 billion by 2030** — approximately 4.1x the 2019 level and a CAGR of approximately 7.8% from 2024 to 2030. This represents a significant deceleration from the 2019-2024 CAGR of 21.2%, reflecting market maturation. Note: all 2025-2030 figures are projections with ±8-15% uncertainty. Source: Statista, eMarketer forecast models 2024-2026.

The 2021 growth spike of +48.0% was driven by three simultaneous forces: (1) **COVID-19 e-commerce acceleration** — lockdowns drove record online shopping, pushing brands to social advertising; (2) **rebound effect** — advertisers who cut budgets in 2020 restored and increased spending in 2021; (3) **TikTok's advertising launch** — TikTok opened its advertising platform widely in 2021, adding significant

new ad inventory. Source: Statista, eMarketer, platform earnings reports.

North America leads regional social media advertising spend at approximately \$89.4 billion in 2024 — approximately 38.1% of the global total. Asia-Pacific is second at \$74.2 billion (31.6%), followed by Western Europe at \$38.1 billion (16.2%). The fastest-growing regions through 2030 are forecast to be the Middle East and Africa (+84%) and Latin America (+52%). Source: Statista, eMarketer 2024. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$.

Apple's App Tracking Transparency (ATT) framework — introduced in iOS 14.5 in April 2021 — **significantly reduced social media advertising effectiveness on iOS devices** by requiring explicit user consent for cross-app tracking. Meta estimated ATT cost approximately \$10 billion in advertising revenue in 2022, contributing to that year's growth slowdown. The industry has since adapted through server-side tracking, first-party data strategies, and AI-powered campaign tools. Source: Meta earnings reports 2022, Statista.

Sources

Statista — Social Media Advertising Spending Worldwide 2019–2030 — Primary source for global and regional social media advertising spending figures, platform breakdowns, and mobile/desktop splits. Statista compiles eMarketer, Oberlo, and platform earnings data. $\pm 5\text{--}8\%$ actual, $\pm 8\text{--}15\%$ forecast.

eMarketer — Worldwide Social Media Advertising Forecast 2024–2030 — Primary source for annual growth rate projections and 2025–2030 forecast figures. eMarketer's advertising forecast models are the industry standard reference. $\pm 5\text{--}10\%$ forecast years.

Oberlo — Social Media Advertising Statistics 2024 — Secondary source for platform-level ad spend breakdowns and mobile vs desktop split data. Oberlo compiles Statista and eMarketer social media advertising data.

Meta Investor Relations — Quarterly Earnings Reports 2019–2024 — Source for Meta advertising revenue figures and CPM trend data. Meta's quarterly earnings reports are the authoritative source for Facebook and Instagram advertising revenue.

All spending figures in nominal USD billions. Forecast figures (2025*–2030*) carry $\pm 8\text{--}15\%$ uncertainty and are projections — not guaranteed outcomes. Social media advertising includes paid placements on social media platforms; excludes influencer payments outside platform ad tools. CPM figures are Meta platform averages and vary significantly by audience, format, and market. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Active social network penetration in selected countries and territories in 2026

 Updated May 19, 2026 · businessstats.com/regular-social-networking-usage-penetration-worldwide-by-country

99.0% UAE — HIGHEST ACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA PENETRATION (2026)	11.8% ETHIOPIA — LOWEST IN DATASET (2026)	63.8% GLOBAL AVERAGE — APRIL 2026
87.2pp GAP — UAE VS ETHIOPIA	14 of 33 COUNTRIES ABOVE GLOBAL AVERAGE (63.8%)	3 GCC COUNTRIES LEAD TOP 3 (UAE, QATAR, KUWAIT)

Overview

Active social network penetration in selected countries and territories in 2026

Active social media penetration — the percentage of a country's total population using at least one social network monthly — varies from virtually universal in the UAE (99.0%) to a small minority in Ethiopia (11.8%) across the 33-country dataset in this analysis. The 87.2 percentage-point spread across these countries represents the full spectrum of digital development, from markets where social media is an inescapable feature of daily life to markets where it remains accessible only to a minority with smartphones and data plans. The global average of approximately 63.8% sits near the middle of this spectrum — meaning more than a third of the world's population still does not use social media, while in some markets essentially everyone does. The global penetration rate trend from 2019 to 2029 is in our [social network penetration worldwide analysis](#).

Three structural factors explain most of the variation in country-level penetration rates. First, income and infrastructure: high-income countries with near-universal smartphone internet access (GCC, Scandinavia, Australia, Canada) cluster at the top of the ranking. Second, age structure: countries with large youth populations see lower penetration because children under 13 are excluded from platform terms of service, while elderly populations have lower adoption rates regardless of access. Third, digital ecosystem maturity: countries where social media has been mainstream for a decade or more (South Korea, Singapore, UK,

USA) have had time for adoption to reach near-saturation among all willing age groups. Newly-connected markets are still in the earlier phases of the adoption S-curve. The social media usage reasons driving adoption across these markets are in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

Full Country Ranking

UAE 99.0% to Ethiopia 11.8% — Active Social Media Penetration, 33 Countries (2026)

Active social network penetration rate — % of total national population — 33 selected countries and territories — 2026 Active Social Media Penetration — 33 Selected Countries (2026, % of Total Population) UAE 99.0%. Qatar 96.4%. Kuwait 94.8%. S. Korea 89.3%. Norway 88.1%. Denmark 87.4%. Sweden 85.2%. Singapore 84.6%. Netherlands 83.9%. Saudi Arabia 82.7%. Canada 82.4%. Australia 81.8%. UK 81.3%. USA 81.1%. Spain 80.5%. Thailand 79.2%. France 79.1%. Germany 79.0%. China 74.3%. Philippines 73.1%. Vietnam 71.8%. Russia 68.2%. Brazil 67.9%. Japan 67.1%. Mexico 67.4%. Turkey 64.8%. Indonesia 59.4%. Egypt 41.2%. India 34.6%. Nigeria 33.8%. Bangladesh 27.4%. Pakistan 23.7%. Ethiopia 11.8%. Global avg: 63.8%. Sources: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026. ±2-5pp per country. 99.0%UAE — #1

Above global average (63.8%) Near global average (55–70%) Below global average

Japan's position at approximately #24 (67.1%) — below the global average despite being the world's third-largest economy and one of the most technologically advanced nations — reflects a well-documented cultural dynamic: Japanese social media usage, while widespread among younger generations, is significantly lower among adults over 50 than equivalent demographics in other high-income countries. Japan has one of the world's oldest median ages (approximately 49 years) and a large population of older adults who prefer traditional media and communication channels. Japan also has a distinct social media ecosystem with Line (messaging-social hybrid) and Twitter/X historically dominant rather than Facebook, which has lower adoption among older Japanese users than in comparable Western markets. The social media statistics context for Japan is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Active Social Media Penetration by Country — Full Data Table (33 Countries, 2026)

Active Social Network Penetration — 33 Selected Countries (2026, DataReportal We Are Social April 2026)

Click column to sort

RANK	COUNTRY / TERRITORY	PENETRATION 2026	VS GLOBAL AVG	REGION	MARKET TIER
1	UAE	99.0%	+35.2pp	Middle East	Near-saturation
2	Qatar	96.4%	+32.6pp	Middle East	Near-saturation
3	Kuwait	94.8%	+31.0pp	Middle East	Near-saturation
4	South Korea	89.3%	+25.5pp	E. Asia	Near-saturation
5	Norway	88.1%	+24.3pp	N. Europe	Near-saturation
6	Denmark	87.4%	+23.6pp	N. Europe	Near-saturation
7	Sweden	85.2%	+21.4pp	N. Europe	Near-saturation
8	Singapore	84.6%	+20.8pp	SE Asia	Near-saturation
9	Netherlands	83.9%	+20.1pp	W. Europe	Near-saturation
10	Saudi Arabia	82.7%	+18.9pp	Middle East	Near-saturation
11	Canada	82.4%	+18.6pp	N. America	Near-saturation
12	Australia	81.8%	+18.0pp	Oceania	Near-saturation
13	United Kingdom	81.3%	+17.5pp	N. Europe	Near-saturation
14	United States	81.1%	+17.3pp	N. America	Near-saturation
15	Spain	80.5%	+16.7pp	S. Europe	Near-saturation
16	Thailand	79.2%	+15.4pp	SE Asia	High
17	France	79.1%	+15.3pp	W. Europe	Near-saturation
18	Germany	79.0%	+15.2pp	W. Europe	Near-saturation
19	China	74.3%	+10.5pp	E. Asia	High
20	Philippines	73.1%	+9.3pp	SE Asia	High

21	Vietnam	71.8%	+8.0pp	SE Asia	High
22	Russia	68.2%	+4.4pp	E. Europe	High
23	Mexico	67.4%	+3.6pp	L. America	High
24	Japan	67.1%	+3.3pp	E. Asia	High
25	Brazil	67.9%	+4.1pp	L. America	High
26	Turkey	64.8%	+1.0pp	Middle East	High
27	Indonesia	59.4%	−4.4pp	SE Asia	Mid
28	Egypt	41.2%	−22.6pp	N. Africa	Emerging
29	India	34.6%	−29.2pp	S. Asia	Emerging
30	Nigeria	33.8%	−30.0pp	W. Africa	Emerging
31	Bangladesh	27.4%	−36.4pp	S. Asia	Emerging
32	Pakistan	23.7%	−40.1pp	S. Asia	Frontier
33	Ethiopia	11.8%	−52.0pp	E. Africa	Frontier

Sources: DataReportal We Are Social Global Digital Report April 2026. Statista social media statistics April 2026. ±2–5 percentage points per country. Penetration = monthly active social network users ÷ total national population × 100. Global average = 63.8%. "Near-saturation" = >80%. "High" = 65–80%. "Mid" = 50–65%. "Emerging" = 25–50%. "Frontier" = <25%.

Thailand's position at #16 (79.2%) — above France, Germany, and the United States — is one of the more counterintuitive findings in the dataset. Thailand has consistently ranked among the world's highest social media penetration countries relative to its income level, driven by a strong digital culture among Thai youth, high smartphone penetration (above 80% of the adult population), and the dominance of platforms like Facebook, LINE, TikTok, and Instagram across all age groups. Thailand also has a large tourism industry where social media plays a central commercial role — tourism and hospitality businesses drive strong social media adoption through their marketing and booking channels. The social media news context for these markets is in our [social media news source worldwide analysis](#).

Market Tiers

15 Near-Saturation Markets (>80%), 12 High/Mid (50–80%), 6 Emerging/Frontier (<50%) — Tier Analysis

Grouping the 33 countries into market development tiers reveals the structural clustering of social media adoption. Fifteen countries have crossed the 80% penetration threshold — the near-saturation tier where further growth is limited to demographic change. Twelve countries fall in the high and mid tiers (50-80%), where meaningful penetration growth is still achievable through platform expansion and demographic adoption. Six countries are in the emerging (25-50%) or frontier (below 25%) tiers, where structural barriers — infrastructure, income, and device access — prevent more than a minority of the population from connecting. The platforms competing for users in each tier face different challenges. The biggest social media platforms context for these tiers is in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Number of countries in each social media penetration tier — 33 selected countries — 2026 Social Media Penetration Market Tiers — 33 Selected Countries (2026) Near-saturation (>80%): UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, S.Korea, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Singapore, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Australia, UK, USA, Spain — 15 countries. High (65-80%): Thailand, France, Germany, China, Philippines, Vietnam, Russia, Mexico, Japan, Brazil, Turkey — 11 countries. Mid (50-65%): Indonesia, Turkey — 2 countries. Emerging (25-50%): Egypt, India, Nigeria, Bangladesh — 4 countries. Frontier (<25%): Pakistan, Ethiopia — 2 countries. 15Near-saturation countries 6Emerging/frontier markets

The six emerging and frontier market countries in this dataset — Egypt, India, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Ethiopia — collectively contain approximately 3.1 billion people, representing approximately 38% of the world's population. Despite this population weight, their combined social media user base is approximately 490-520 million — less than the total for the 15 near-saturation countries (approximately 650-700 million users) despite the former group having nearly five times the population. This inversion — smaller populations generating larger absolute social media user counts because of near-saturation penetration — is the core commercial dynamic of the global social media industry in 2026. The social media usage reasons that would drive adoption in frontier markets are in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

GCC — Near-Saturation Leaders

UAE 99.0%, Qatar 96.4%, Kuwait 94.8%, Saudi Arabia 82.7% — Why GCC Leads the World

The Gulf Cooperation Council countries occupy four of the top ten positions in the global social media penetration ranking — a dominance that reflects a unique combination of structural factors. The UAE's 99.0% penetration is the highest of any major territory globally: virtually every UAE resident uses social media monthly, from the youngest permitted users to the oldest. This reflects the UAE's exceptional smartphone penetration (above 98%), one of the world's highest per-capita incomes, a predominantly young and tech-native resident population (median age approximately 33), and a massive expatriate workforce (approximately 88% of UAE residents are foreign nationals) who rely on social media as their primary tool for maintaining connections with home countries, family, and social networks. The Facebook coverage by region context for these markets is in our [Facebook coverage by world region analysis](#).

Active social media penetration — GCC countries and selected comparison markets — 2026 vs 2022 (%)

GCC Social Media Penetration vs Selected Markets — 2022 vs 2026 (% of Total Population)

Country/Region	2022 (%)	2026 (%)
UAE	98.4%	99.0%
Qatar	93.8%	96.4%
Kuwait	91.2%	94.8%
Saudi Arabia	79.3%	82.7%
South Korea	87.8%	89.3%
Norway	85.4%	88.1%
USA	77.9%	81.1%
Global avg	58.4%	63.8%

Sources: DataReportal 2022 and April 2026. ±2-3pp. 99.0%UAE 2026 — highest globally

Saudi Arabia's 82.7% penetration — 4th in the GCC sub-group but still near-saturation globally — reflects both the country's large size (approximately 37 million people, significantly larger than UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait combined) and the slower penetration of social media into older generations and more conservative rural communities. Saudi Arabia has, however, undergone dramatic social media growth since 2018 when social reforms (including allowing women to drive, mixed-gender events, and entertainment sector liberalisation) dramatically expanded social media use cases and reduced barriers to adoption for women and older demographics. The social media penetration data for the broader region is in our [social network penetration by region analysis](#).

Europe and North America

Norway 88.1%, Denmark 87.4%, Sweden 85.2% Lead Europe — Germany 79.0%, France 79.1% Near Bottom

Within Europe and North America, a 9-percentage-point spread separates the highest-penetration Northern European countries (Norway 88.1%, Denmark 87.4%, Sweden 85.2%) from the Continental European markets (France 79.1%, Germany 79.0%). This gap reflects the historically stronger digital adoption culture in Scandinavia — these countries had among the world's highest internet penetration rates in the late 1990s, and built social media adoption from a stronger base. Germany in particular shows lower social media penetration than its income level and infrastructure quality would predict, due to a historically stronger privacy culture, greater skepticism of US technology platforms, and the dominance of offline communication channels among older German demographics. The US at 81.1% sits roughly in the middle of the North American/European cluster. The daily social media usage data for these markets is in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Active social media penetration in Europe and North America — selected countries — 2026 (%) Social Media Penetration — Europe and North America (2026, % of Total Population) Norway 88.1%. Denmark 87.4%. Sweden 85.2%. Netherlands 83.9%. Canada 82.4%. Australia 81.8%. UK 81.3%. USA 81.1%. Spain 80.5%. France 79.1%. Germany 79.0%. Global avg 63.8%. Sources: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026. ±2-3pp. 88.1%Norway — European #1 79.0%Germany — lowest in group

Canada and Australia — both at approximately 82% — track closely with the UK (81.3%) and USA (81.1%), consistent with their shared Anglophone cultural and digital ecosystem characteristics. All four countries use the same set of dominant platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest), have similar demographic profiles in terms of social media adoption rates by age group, and benefit from the same advertising-driven platform investment decisions that keep English-language content creation economically attractive. The slight differences between them reflect primarily demographic factors: Canada's younger median age (approximately 42 vs USA's 38) and Australia's strong youth social media culture both contribute to marginally higher penetration than the US despite having smaller absolute user bases. The number of worldwide social network users providing the global context is in our [worldwide social network users analysis](#).

Emerging and Frontier Markets



India 34.6%, Nigeria 33.8%, Bangladesh 27.4%, Pakistan 23.7%, Ethiopia 11.8% — The Growth Frontier

The six emerging and frontier market countries in this dataset — Egypt (41.2%), India (34.6%), Nigeria (33.8%), Bangladesh (27.4%), Pakistan (23.7%), and Ethiopia (11.8%) — represent the future growth engine of global social media adoption. Together they contain approximately 3.1 billion people but only approximately 490-520 million social media users — a penetration gap of approximately 2.6 billion potential users who could theoretically adopt social media if structural barriers were resolved. India alone contains approximately 920-940 million non-social-media users, representing by far the world's largest single-country growth opportunity. The social media platforms used by marketers to reach these emerging audiences are in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Active social media penetration — emerging and frontier market countries — 2026 vs 2022 vs 2018 (%)
Emerging Market Social Media Penetration — 2018 vs 2022 vs 2026 (% of Total Population) India: 15.2% (2018) → 28.0% (2022) → 34.6% (2026). Nigeria: 16.8% → 26.2% → 33.8%. Egypt: 27.4% → 34.8% → 41.2%. Bangladesh: 12.6% → 21.2% → 27.4%. Pakistan: 10.4% → 18.6% → 23.7%. Ethiopia: 3.8% → 8.2% → 11.8%. Sources: DataReportal 2018, 2022, April 2026. ±3-5pp. +19.4pp India gain 2018–2026

2018 2022 2026

India's trajectory from 15.2% in 2018 to 34.6% in 2026 — a +19.4 percentage-point gain in eight years — is one of the most significant social media adoption stories globally. This growth was driven almost entirely by Reliance Jio's 4G network launch in September 2016, which dramatically reduced data costs and made affordable smartphone internet access available across rural and lower-income populations for the first time. The subsequent rollout of sub-\$50 Android smartphones by Chinese manufacturers (Xiaomi, Realme, Tecno) completed the infrastructure picture. Pakistan's slower trajectory (10.4% → 23.7%) reflects higher remaining infrastructure barriers — Pakistan's 4G coverage is more limited than India's and data costs relative to income are higher. Ethiopia at 11.8% reflects the early stages of digital connectivity, with 4G coverage expanding gradually across a vast rural territory. The Facebook-specific penetration data for India is in our [Facebook penetration by country analysis](#).

Southeast Asia Spotlight

Singapore 84.6%, Thailand 79.2%, Philippines 73.1%, Vietnam 71.8%, Indonesia 59.4% — SE Asia Spread

Southeast Asia presents one of the most diverse penetration distributions of any world region — spanning from Singapore's near-saturation 84.6% to Indonesia's still-growing 59.4%, a 25.2 percentage-point spread within a single geographic region. Singapore's high penetration mirrors its developed-world characteristics: high income, excellent infrastructure, small land area with high urban concentration, and a digitally native population that adopted social media en masse in the late 2000s. Indonesia at 59.4% — despite being one of the most social-media-active populations globally in terms of time spent per day — reflects its large and diverse geography (17,000+ islands), significant rural populations with limited 4G access, and a very young median age (approximately 30) that includes a large cohort of children below social media age. The daily social media usage worldwide context for these high-engagement markets is in our daily social media usage worldwide analysis.

Active social media penetration — Southeast Asian countries — 2026 (% of total population) Southeast Asia Social Media Penetration — 2026 (% of Total Population) Singapore: 84.6%. Thailand: 79.2%. Philippines: 73.1%. Vietnam: 71.8%. Indonesia: 59.4%. Global avg: 63.8%. Sources: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026. ±2-4pp per country. 84.6%Singapore — SE Asia #1 59.4%Indonesia — SE Asia lowest

The Philippines' 73.1% penetration — placing it 20th in the full ranking — is particularly striking because the Philippines is one of the world's most engaged social media populations. Filipinos consistently rank in the top 3 globally for average daily time spent on social media (approximately 3.5-4 hours per day), and social media is central to Filipino national culture, political discourse, and commercial activity. The 73.1% penetration rate (below the near-saturation threshold of 80%) reflects primarily the significant rural population with limited access, and children in a country with a median age of approximately 25. Philippines is among the most commercially interesting social media markets globally for advertisers targeting digital-native, highly-engaged consumers. The social media news source context for these high-engagement markets is in our social media news source worldwide analysis.

Penetration vs Income Relationship

High Income = High Penetration — But Thailand and Philippines Are Outliers Above Their Income Level

Plotting social media penetration against per-capita income confirms the strong but imperfect income-penetration relationship across the 33-country dataset. High-income countries (GCC, Scandinavia, US, UK,

Australia, Canada) cluster at high penetration. Lower-income countries (India, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ethiopia) cluster at low penetration. The exceptions are analytically interesting: Thailand (79.2%) and the Philippines (73.1%) sit significantly above their income-predicted penetration level — both are classified as upper-middle-income economies but have penetration rates comparable to high-income Western European countries. Japan, conversely, sits below its income-predicted penetration rate — its high income would suggest 85%+ penetration, but its aging demographics and cultural patterns produce only 67.1%. These outliers confirm that income is the primary but not the only structural driver of social media penetration. The global economy context for this income-penetration relationship is in our [global economy analysis](#).

Social media penetration grouped by per-capita income tier — selected countries — 2026 average by income group Social Media Penetration by Income Tier — Selected Countries (2026 Average by Group)

Income Group	Avg Penetration (%)	Countries
Very high income (>\$40K GNI p.c.)	~84.6%	UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Singapore, Netherlands, Canada, Australia, UK, USA
High income (\$12-40K)	~75.8%	Saudi Arabia, Spain, S.Korea, France, Germany, Japan
Upper-mid (\$4-12K)	~69.8%	Brazil, China, Mexico, Thailand, Brazil, Turkey
Lower-mid (\$1-4K)	~41.4%	India, Nigeria, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Egypt, Bangladesh
Low income (<\$1K)	~17.8%	Ethiopia, Pakistan

Sources: World Bank income classification, DataReportal April 2026. ±3-5pp per group. ~45ppGap: high vs low income

Very high income High income Upper-middle income Lower-middle income Low income

The approximately 45 percentage-point gap between the very-high-income group average (~84.6%) and the low-income group average (~17.8%) defines the digital divide in social media penetration terms. This gap has been narrowing — it was approximately 60+ percentage points in 2018 — as affordable smartphones and lower data costs have driven emerging market adoption faster than any structural income-driven model would have predicted. The continued diffusion of Chinese smartphone brands (Xiaomi, Realme, Tecno, Infinix) into sub-\$100 price points, combined with ongoing 4G network investment, is the primary mechanism driving this convergence. The internet companies facilitating this expansion are in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

Key Statistics

Active Social Media Penetration by Country — Key Statistics (2026)

99.0%UAE — Highest Active Social Media Penetration Globally (April 2026)The United Arab Emirates has the highest active social media penetration rate of any major country or territory at approximately 99.0% in

2026 — virtually every UAE resident uses at least one social platform monthly. This reflects near-universal smartphone ownership (>98%), one of the world's highest per-capita incomes, a predominantly young population (median age ~33), and an approximately 88% expatriate workforce who rely on social media for home-country communication. Qatar (96.4%) and Kuwait (94.8%) follow, all Gulf Cooperation Council nations. Source: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026. ±2pp.

11.8% Ethiopia — Lowest in 33-Country Dataset, Representing the Frontier Digital Divide Ethiopia has the lowest active social media penetration in the 33-country dataset at approximately 11.8% — meaning approximately 88% of Ethiopians do not use social media. With a population of approximately 130 million (growing rapidly) and limited 4G infrastructure coverage, Ethiopia represents the extreme end of the frontier digital divide. Social media access in Ethiopia is concentrated in urban centres (primarily Addis Ababa). At the current growth trajectory, Ethiopia's penetration is growing approximately 1.5-2 percentage points annually. Source: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026. ±3-5pp.

87.2pp Global Penetration Gap — UAE (99.0%) to Ethiopia (11.8%) in 2026 The 87.2 percentage-point gap between the highest-penetration territory (UAE, 99.0%) and the lowest (Ethiopia, 11.8%) in the 33-country dataset represents the full extent of the social media penetration digital divide as of 2026. This gap has been narrowing gradually — it was approximately 94 points in 2018 — as frontier markets grow faster than near-saturation markets. However, at current growth rates, full convergence would take several decades. Source: DataReportal April 2026 vs 2018 comparison. ±3-5pp.

81.1% United States — #14 in 33-Country Dataset, Below 13 Countries Including GCC, Scandinavia The United States has an active social media penetration rate of approximately 81.1% in 2026 — placing it #14 in the 33-country dataset, behind the three GCC nations, South Korea, all three Scandinavian countries, Singapore, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Australia, and the UK. The US penetration of 81.1% represents approximately 270-280 million active social media users. Despite not leading on penetration, the US generates the most social media advertising revenue per user of any country globally. Source: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026. ±2pp.

34.6% India — 2nd Largest User Base Globally Yet Only 34.6% Penetration — ~930M Not Yet Connected India's active social media penetration of approximately 34.6% in 2026 means approximately 500-515 million Indians use social media — the world's second-largest national user base — while approximately 930-940 million Indians do not. This paradox of being both the second-largest market and a low-penetration market reflects India's 1.45 billion population. India's penetration has grown from approximately 15.2% in 2018 to 34.6% in 2026 — the largest absolute population-weighted adoption story of any country. Source: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026. ±3pp.

15 Near-Saturation Countries (>80%) in Dataset — Including All GCC, Scandinavia, US, UK, Canada, Australia Fifteen of the 33 countries in this dataset have crossed the 80% penetration threshold — the near-saturation tier where further growth is limited primarily to demographic change (new teenagers reaching

platform age, partially offset by elderly users aging out). These 15 countries collectively have approximately 650-700 million social media users from approximately 850 million total population. All further meaningful global user growth will come from the remaining 18 countries in the dataset (primarily India, Nigeria, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and Egypt). Source: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026 analysis. ±2-3pp.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — Active Social Media Penetration by Country 2026

The UAE has the highest active social media penetration at approximately 99.0% in 2026 — virtually every UAE resident uses social media monthly. Qatar (96.4%) and Kuwait (94.8%) follow. All three are Gulf Cooperation Council nations with near-universal smartphone ownership, high incomes, and predominantly young populations. South Korea (89.3%) is the highest outside the Middle East. Source: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026. ±2pp.

The United States has an active social media penetration rate of approximately **81.1% in 2026** — placing it #14 in the 33-country dataset. This represents approximately 270-280 million active social media users. Despite not ranking highest in penetration, the US generates the most social media advertising revenue per user globally — US social media ARPU is approximately 6-10× higher than the global average. Source: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026. ±2pp.

India's active social media penetration is approximately **34.6% in 2026** — meaning approximately 500-515 million Indians use social media monthly, while approximately 930 million do not. Despite this low penetration rate, India is the world's second-largest social media market by absolute users. India's penetration has grown from approximately 15.2% in 2018 to 34.6% in 2026 — a +19.4pp gain driven primarily by Jio's 4G network and affordable smartphone availability. Source: DataReportal We Are Social April 2026. ±3pp.

The UAE's approximately 99% penetration reflects four compounding factors: (1) **Near-universal smartphone ownership** (>98%); (2) **Very high per-capita income** — data and device costs are negligible relative to income; (3) **Young demographics** — median age approximately 33, with the bulk of residents in the prime 18-45 social media adoption age range; (4) **Expatriate population** (~88% of residents) who rely on social media as their primary tool for maintaining home-country connections. The combination makes social media adoption essentially universal. Source: DataReportal April 2026.

Germany's 79.0% social media penetration — similar to but marginally below France (79.1%) and Spain (80.5%) — reflects **Germany's historically stronger data privacy culture**. Germany has among the EU's most active privacy enforcement (multiple GDPR enforcement actions against major platforms), higher public skepticism of US technology companies, and a significant population of older adults who prefer offline communication. Germany also has a later median age (~46) than France (~42) or Spain (~45). These cultural and demographic factors produce slightly lower social media adoption than Germany's infrastructure and income alone would predict. Source: DataReportal April 2026. ±2pp.

Japan's 67.1% penetration — below the global average despite being the world's third-largest economy — reflects Japan's **very high median age (~49 years)**, the world's oldest of any large country. Japan has large cohorts of adults over 60 with significantly lower social media adoption than younger generations, even among smartphone owners. Japan also has a distinct social media culture centred on Line (messaging-social hybrid) and Twitter/X rather than the globally dominant Facebook/Instagram, and Japanese users tend to use social platforms less publicly than Western users. Source: DataReportal April 2026. ±2pp.

Among the 33 countries in this dataset, **Ethiopia has the lowest active social media penetration at approximately 11.8% in 2026**, followed by Pakistan (23.7%) and Bangladesh (27.4%). Ethiopia's very low penetration reflects limited 4G infrastructure (coverage concentrated in urban areas), low per-capita income (among the world's lowest), and a very young population (median age approximately 19) with a large cohort of children below social media age. Globally, some smaller countries have even lower penetration rates, but among major population countries, Ethiopia and Pakistan are the lowest. Source: DataReportal April 2026. ±3-5pp.

Social media penetration and internet penetration are **closely correlated but not identical**. In high-income countries, social media penetration is typically 5-10 percentage points below internet penetration — the gap represents internet users who choose not to use social media. In emerging markets, social media penetration sometimes nearly equals or even approaches internet penetration, because social media (especially Facebook and WhatsApp) is often users' primary reason for getting internet access and the first thing they do online. Globally in 2026, internet penetration is approximately 67% while social media penetration is approximately 63.8%. Source: DataReportal April 2026, ITU global internet statistics 2026.

Sources

DataReportal — We Are Social Global Digital Report April 2026 (Country-Level Data) — Primary source for all country-level active social media penetration rates. DataReportal compiles national social network



user estimates from platform disclosures, national survey data, and modelled estimates. April 2026 edition. ±2–5pp per country.

Statista — Active Social Media Penetration by Country 2026 — Secondary source for country-level penetration cross-validation. Statista's social media penetration by country dataset draws from the same primary sources as DataReportal with independent compilation methodology.

DataReportal — Digital 2022 and Digital 2018 Global Reports — Historical comparison source for 2022 and 2018 country-level penetration data used in trend charts. Same methodology across all periods.

United Nations — World Population Prospects 2024 Revision — National population denominators used in all penetration rate calculations. 2026 population estimates used for current figures.

All penetration rates represent monthly active social network users ÷ total national population × 100, as per DataReportal's standard methodology. "Total population" includes children under 13 and non-internet users, producing lower rates than "% of internet users" or "% of adults" metrics. ±2–5 percentage points per country for 2026 figures. Historical figures (2018, 2022) ±3–5pp. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Social media revenue of selected companies

2026

Updated May 18, 2026 · businessstats.com/revenue-of-selected-social-media-companies

\$164.5B META REVENUE — 2024 (RECORD HIGH)	~\$205B META REVENUE — 2026 ESTIMATE	\$36.2B YOUTUBE ADVERTISING REVENUE — 2024
\$5.36B SNAP REVENUE — 2024	~30× META VS SNAP REVENUE MULTIPLE (2026E)	~93% META REVENUE FROM ADVERTISING — 2024

Overview

Revenue of selected social media companies from 2014 to 2026

The revenue history of social media companies from 2014 to 2026 is, in many ways, the revenue history of a single company: Meta Platforms. Meta's \$164.5 billion in 2024 revenue is approximately 19× larger than YouTube advertising (\$36.2 billion), approximately 31× larger than Snap (\$5.36 billion), and approximately 45× larger than Pinterest (\$3.65 billion). To put Meta's dominance in perspective: in 2014, Meta's revenue was \$12.47 billion while Snap's was approximately \$60 million — Meta was already approximately 208× larger. Over the subsequent decade, Meta grew by approximately 13× while Snap grew by approximately 89× — and yet despite Snap's dramatically faster percentage growth, Meta in 2024 is still 31× larger in absolute revenue. The full internet company revenue landscape is in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

The 2022 year is the most analytically interesting in the dataset: it is the only year in which Meta's revenue declined year-on-year — falling from \$117.9 billion in 2021 to \$116.6 billion in 2022, a -1.1% decline that triggered a major management restructuring, mass layoffs, and a cost-reduction programme dubbed the "Year of Efficiency." The revenue decline was driven by the dual impact of Apple's iOS 14.5 ATT (App Tracking Transparency) changes — which restricted Meta's advertising targeting capabilities — and a broader digital advertising market slowdown. Meta responded by restructuring its cost base and refocusing on AI-driven advertising products. The subsequent recovery was dramatic: 2023 grew +15.7% and 2024

grew +21.9% — making Meta's 2024 revenue the largest single-year absolute gain in the company's history (+\$29.6 billion YoY). The broader market value context is in our [largest internet companies by market value analysis](#).

Revenue Trend 2014–2026

Meta \$12.5B in 2014 to \$164.5B in 2024 — All Companies' Revenue Trend 2014–2026

Annual revenue of selected social media companies — USD billions — 2014 to 2026 (2025-2026 estimated) Social Media Company Revenue — 2014 to 2026 (USD Billions, Annual) Meta: \$12.5B (2014) → \$117.9B (2021) → \$164.5B (2024) → ~\$205B (2026E). YouTube ads: N/A → \$28.9B (2021) → \$36.2B (2024) → ~\$44.5B (2026E). Snap: \$0.06B (2015) → \$4.12B (2021) → \$5.36B (2024) → ~\$6.8B (2026E). Pinterest: \$0.47B (2017) → \$2.58B (2021) → \$3.65B (2024) → ~\$4.8B (2026E). X/Twitter: \$1.41B (2014) → \$5.08B (2021) → ~\$3.2B (2026E). Sources: Company reports 2014-2024. Statista / analyst estimates 2025-2026. \$164.5B Meta — 2024 record

Meta YouTube ads Snap Pinterest X / Twitter

X/Twitter's revenue trajectory is the starkest counter-narrative in this dataset. From a 2021 peak of \$5.08 billion — close to Snap's current level — Twitter's revenue fell to approximately \$4.40 billion in 2022 (its last year of public reporting before Elon Musk's acquisition), and is estimated to have declined further to approximately \$3.0–3.4 billion in 2023 and approximately \$3.2 billion in 2024. The post-acquisition revenue declines reflect advertiser withdrawals triggered by content moderation policy changes, brand safety concerns, and platform instability. X/Twitter is the only major social platform in this dataset with lower revenue in 2024 than in 2021. The social media platforms context for advertisers is in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Social Media Company Revenue — Full Annual Data 2014 to 2026 (USD Billions)

Social Media Company Annual Revenue — 2014 to 2026 (USD Billions) Click column to sort

YEAR	META (USD B)	YOUTUBE ADS (USD B)	SNAP (USD B)	PINTEREST (USD B)	X/TWITTER (USD B)	TYPE
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2014	\$12.47	N/A	~\$0.03	N/A	\$1.41	Actual
2015	\$17.93	N/A	\$0.06	N/A	\$2.22	Actual
2016	\$27.64	N/A	\$0.40	N/A	\$2.53	Actual
2017	\$40.65	~\$8.15	\$0.82	\$0.47	\$2.44	Actual
2018	\$55.84	~\$11.15	\$1.18	\$0.76	\$3.04	Actual
2019	\$70.70	~\$15.15	\$1.72	\$1.14	\$3.46	Actual
2020	\$85.97	\$19.77	\$2.51	\$1.69	\$3.72	Actual
2021	\$117.93	\$28.85	\$4.12	\$2.58	\$5.08	Actual
2022	\$116.61	\$29.24	\$4.60	\$2.80	\$4.40	Actual
2023	\$134.90	\$31.51	\$4.61	\$3.05	~\$3.40	Actual/Est.
2024	\$164.50	\$36.15	\$5.36	\$3.65	~\$3.20	Actual/Est.
2025E	~\$185.0	~\$40.0	~\$6.0	~\$4.2	~\$3.0	Estimate
2026E	~\$205.0	~\$44.5	~\$6.8	~\$4.8	~\$3.2	Estimate

Sources: Meta Platforms Inc. annual reports 2014-2024. Snap Inc. annual reports 2016-2024. Pinterest Inc. annual reports 2017-2024. Alphabet Inc. (YouTube advertising segment) annual reports 2020-2024; 2017-2019 estimated. X/Twitter annual reports 2014-2022; 2023-2026 estimates (company private, no public filings). 2025-2026 figures are consensus analyst estimates. ±5-10% for estimates.

Pinterest's revenue trajectory is one of the quieter success stories in this dataset. From \$0.47 billion in its first full reporting year (2017) to approximately \$3.65 billion in 2024, Pinterest has grown at a consistent but unspectacular pace — building a durable advertising business around its visual discovery and shopping intent format without the viral peaks and valleys of other platforms. Pinterest's ARPU is actually competitive with Meta's in the US market (approximately \$7–8 per quarter for US users versus Meta's approximately \$20), reflecting that Pinterest attracts high-intent shoppers whose attention commands premium advertising rates. The platform's global user base context is in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Meta — Dominant Position

Meta's \$164.5B Revenue is Larger Than YouTube + Snap + Pinterest + X/Twitter Combined by ~3.5×

The scale of Meta's financial dominance over the social media revenue landscape is best understood through comparison: in 2024, Meta's \$164.5 billion in revenue exceeded the combined revenues of YouTube advertising (\$36.2B), Snap (\$5.4B), Pinterest (\$3.7B), and X/Twitter (~\$3.2B) — a combined \$48.5 billion — by approximately 3.4×. Meta is not just the largest social media company; it is a company in a different financial category from all other social media businesses, more comparable in scale to Amazon, Alphabet, or Microsoft than to its nominal social media competitors. This position was not inevitable — in 2014, while Meta (\$12.5B) was already the dominant social media revenue generator, the gap to Twitter (\$1.4B) was approximately 9×, not 50×. The decade of divergence reflects Meta's superior advertising technology, its ownership of multiple high-reach platforms, and its superior monetisation of each user. The Meta user metrics context is in our [Meta daily active people analysis](#).

Meta revenue vs all other selected social media companies combined — 2014 to 2026 (USD billions) Meta Revenue vs All Others Combined — 2014 to 2026 (USD Billions) Meta: \$12.5B (2014) → \$86.0B (2020) → \$117.9B (2021) → \$116.6B (2022) → \$164.5B (2024) → ~\$205B (2026E). Others combined (YouTube+Snap+Pinterest+Twitter): ~\$5.0B (2014) → ~\$27.7B (2020) → ~\$40.6B (2021) → ~\$41.0B (2022) → ~\$48.5B (2024) → ~\$59.5B (2026E). Sources: Company reports. Estimates ±5-10%.

Year	Meta (USD Billions)	Others combined (USD Billions)
2014	\$12.5B	~\$5.0B
2020	\$86.0B	~\$27.7B
2021	\$117.9B	~\$40.6B
2022	\$116.6B	~\$41.0B
2024	\$164.5B	~\$48.5B
2026E	~\$205B	~\$59.5B

The 2022 dip in Meta's revenue — the first and only annual decline in the company's public history — actually narrowed the gap between Meta and the others-combined figure, but only temporarily. The others-combined figure (\$41.0 billion in 2022) came within approximately 2.8× of Meta (\$116.6B), the closest the gap has been since 2019. Meta's accelerated recovery from 2023 onwards — driven by AI-enhanced advertising targeting that compensated for the iOS ATT disruption — pushed the ratio back out: by 2024, Meta was approximately 3.4× the others combined. The 2026 estimate of approximately \$205 billion versus others combined of approximately \$59.5 billion suggests a ratio of approximately 3.4× continuing to persist — Meta's dominance is structural rather than cyclical. The Facebook user base statistics are in our [Facebook statistics analysis](#).

Company Comparison 2026

Meta ~\$205B, YouTube ~\$44.5B, Snap ~\$6.8B, Pinterest ~\$4.8B, X ~\$3.2B — Revenue by Company (2026E)

Selected social media company annual revenue estimates — 2026 (USD billions) Social Media Company Revenue — 2026 Estimates (USD Billions) Meta: ~\$205B. YouTube ads: ~\$44.5B. Snap: ~\$6.8B. Pinterest: ~\$4.8B. X/Twitter: ~\$3.2B. Sources: Company guidance, consensus analyst estimates. ±5-10%.
~\$205B Meta — 2026 estimate

Meta YouTube ads Snap Pinterest X / Twitter

The 2026 revenue comparison illustrates the scale discontinuity between social media companies more vividly than any other period in the dataset. Meta at approximately \$205 billion is nearly 5× larger than the second-largest entrant (YouTube advertising at ~\$44.5 billion), and approximately 30× larger than the third-largest (Snap at ~\$6.8 billion). Note that YouTube advertising revenue is part of Alphabet's total revenue — it is not a standalone social media company in the same sense as Meta or Snap, but is included in this analysis as the social media advertising revenue of the world's second-most-visited website. If TikTok's global advertising revenue were included (estimated at approximately \$25-35 billion in 2026), it would rank second — but TikTok's revenue is consolidated within ByteDance's private financials without sufficient public detail for precise historical comparison. The social media usage reasons that drive all this advertising demand are in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#).

YoY Growth Rates

Meta +21.9% in 2024 After -1.1% in 2022 — The Growth Rate Volatility of Social Media Revenue

Year-on-year revenue growth rates across social media companies reveal the volatility that characterises digital advertising markets. Meta's growth story is particularly striking: from +54.7% in 2016 (the year it truly emerged as a mature digital advertising powerhouse) to -1.1% in 2022 (the first-ever decline) to +21.9% in 2024 (one of its strongest post-IPO growth years). The volatility reflects Meta's sensitivity to two factors: macroeconomic advertising budget cycles (which cause all ad-dependent businesses to fluctuate together) and platform-specific disruptions (the iOS ATT changes were Meta-specific in their intensity). Snap's growth rate history is even more volatile — from +72.4% in 2021 to +11.6% in 2022 to +0.2% in 2023 — reflecting the dual challenges of a smaller advertiser base (more concentrated risk) and the same iOS ATT disruption that hit Meta but at a scale that Snap found harder to absorb. The daily social media usage that drives this advertising demand is in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

Year-on-year revenue growth rate for selected social media companies — 2015 to 2024 (%) Social Media Company Revenue — YoY Growth Rates (2015–2024, %) Meta: +43% (2015) → +54% (2016) → +47% (2017) → +37% (2018) → +27% (2019) → +22% (2020) → +37% (2021) → -1% (2022) → +16% (2023) → +22% (2024). Snap: N/A → +557% (2016) → +104% (2017) → +44% (2018) → +46% (2019) → +46% (2020) → +64% (2021) → +12% (2022) → +0.2% (2023) → +16% (2024). Sources: Company annual reports. ±2-3pp. +21.9%Meta 2024 — strong recovery

Meta Snap Pinterest

Pinterest's growth rate trend is the most consistent in the comparison: from +28.6% in 2018 to +50.1% in 2021 to +8.6% in 2022 (sharp slowdown) to +8.9% in 2023 to +19.7% in 2024, Pinterest has maintained positive YoY growth in every year except none — not even experiencing the 2022 decline that hit Meta. This consistency reflects Pinterest's more defensible revenue base: its advertising is dominated by retail and shopping discovery campaigns that are less affected by brand safety concerns and more insulated from platform disruption than awareness advertising. Pinterest's ARPU in the US is among the highest of any social platform for retail categories, making its revenue stream relatively sticky. The social media advertising context is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

Revenue Per User (ARPU)

Meta Global ARPU ~\$40/Year, YouTube ~\$20, Pinterest ~\$7, Snap ~\$4 — Revenue Efficiency Comparison

Revenue per user (ARPU) — annual revenue divided by monthly active users — is the most revealing measure of monetisation efficiency across social media companies. Meta's global ARPU of approximately \$40 per user per year in 2024 is approximately 2× YouTube's (~\$20), approximately 5.7× Pinterest's (~\$7), and approximately 10× Snap's (~\$4). These ratios are more surprising than the raw revenue figures because Meta's user base (approximately 3.07 billion Family MAU) is only approximately 3× Snap's (approximately 450 million DAU) and approximately 8× Pinterest's (approximately 530 million MAU). Meta's vastly higher ARPU reflects its superior advertising targeting technology, broader data footprint, larger advertiser base, and the commercial maturity of its advertising products. The Meta ARPU data by region is in our [Meta ARPU statistics analysis](#).

Annual revenue per user (ARPU) for selected social media companies — global average USD — 2024 Social Media Company Revenue Per User (ARPU) — Global Average 2024 (USD per User per Year) Meta: ~\$40/user/year (global avg). YouTube: ~\$20/user/year. Pinterest: ~\$7/user/year. Snap: ~\$4/user/year.

X/Twitter: ~\$7/user/year. Sources: Company revenue ÷ reported user bases. ±10-15% per company due to user count definition differences. ~\$40Meta ARPU — 2024

Global annual revenue per monthly active user (USD) — 2024. Revenue ÷ user base; different user count definitions per platform. ±10-15%.

The ARPU gap between Meta's US performance (~\$230/user/year) and its global average (~\$40/user/year) reveals the geographic revenue concentration within Meta's financial structure. Meta generates approximately 44% of its total revenue from North America while North American users represent approximately 9% of its total Family MAU — a 4.9× revenue density premium for American users versus the global average. This North American concentration is both a strength (the US advertising market is the world's highest-CPM digital advertising environment) and a risk factor (any slowdown in US advertising spending disproportionately affects Meta's total revenue). Snap faces the same geographic concentration challenge: approximately 40% of its revenue from North America despite that market representing approximately 10-12% of its DAU base. The social network penetration context that drives this global user distribution is in our [social network penetration worldwide analysis](#).

Advertising Revenue Share

Meta 93%, Snap 99%, Pinterest 97% — All Heavily Advertising-Dependent Social Media Businesses

Social media company revenue is almost entirely advertising revenue — a structural feature that makes these businesses acutely sensitive to digital advertising market conditions and to any disruption to their targeting capabilities. Meta's approximately 93% advertising revenue share (the 7% from Reality Labs hardware and other products is the primary exception) reflects that the platform has not successfully diversified its revenue base despite years of attempting to do so. Snap's approximately 99% advertising share is the highest of any major platform — Snap's Spectacles hardware and subscription offerings remain negligible in revenue terms. Pinterest at approximately 97% advertising similarly reflects near-total advertising dependence. The digital advertising market context is in our internet companies revenue analysis.

Share of total revenue from advertising — selected social media companies — 2024 vs 2020 (%)

Advertising Revenue as % of Total Revenue — Social Media Companies (2024 vs 2020) Snap: 99% (2024) vs 99% (2020). Pinterest: 97% vs 99%. Meta: 93% vs 97%. X/Twitter: ~85% vs 90% (est.). YouTube: ~95% vs 97%. Sources: Company annual reports 2020 and 2024. ±2-3pp. 99%Snap — most ad-

dependent 93%Meta — most diversified

Meta's 4-percentage-point decline in advertising revenue share — from approximately 97% in 2020 to approximately 93% in 2024 — reflects the growth of its Reality Labs (VR/AR hardware and software) segment, which grew from approximately \$1.1 billion in 2020 to approximately \$2.1 billion in 2024 despite persistent operating losses. Meta's investment in the metaverse and AR glasses (primarily the Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses) has created a small but growing non-advertising revenue stream — the only social media company in this analysis that has made meaningful progress in revenue diversification beyond advertising. Pinterest's shift toward shopping integration and "Shop on Pinterest" commerce tools represents a potential future revenue diversification path, though commerce revenue remains a small fraction of total in 2024. The broader social media usage data is in our daily social media usage worldwide analysis.

Revenue Growth — Indexed to 2019

Pinterest +220% from 2019 to 2024, Meta +133%, Snap +211% — Revenue Growth Since Pre-Pandemic Baseline

Indexing all company revenues to 2019 as a pre-pandemic baseline reveals the relative growth trajectories on a comparable scale. Pinterest shows the highest 2019-to-2024 revenue growth at approximately +220% (from \$1.14B to \$3.65B), followed by Snap at approximately +211% (from \$1.72B to \$5.36B), then Meta at approximately +133% (from \$70.7B to \$164.5B), then YouTube advertising at approximately +139% (from ~\$15.2B to \$36.2B). X/Twitter declined approximately -7% over the same period (from \$3.46B to ~\$3.2B). The 2022 dip-and-recovery pattern is visible in all advertising-dependent companies simultaneously — confirming that the 2022 slowdown was a market-wide digital advertising correction, not a company-specific failure, while the subsequent recoveries reflect platform-specific strengths in navigating the iOS ATT disruption. The market context for these internet companies is in our largest internet companies by market value analysis.

Social media company revenue indexed to 2019 = 100 baseline — 2019 to 2024 growth comparison Social Media Company Revenue — Indexed Growth (2019 = 100, 2019 to 2024) Pinterest: 100 → 148 (2020) → 226 (2021) → 245 (2022) → 267 (2023) → 320 (2024). Snap: 100 → 146 → 239 → 267 → 268 → 311. Meta: 100 → 122 → 167 → 165 → 191 → 233. YouTube: 100 → 130 → 190 → 193 → 208 → 238. X/Twitter: 100 → 107 → 147 → 127 → ~98 → ~93. Sources: Company reports. 2019 = base year. 320Pinterest index 2024 93X/Twitter index 2024

X/Twitter's index of approximately 93 in 2024 — meaning its revenue is approximately 7% lower than in 2019 — is the starkest divergence from the group. All other companies in this analysis have at least doubled their 2019 revenue by 2024; X/Twitter has declined. This is not simply a reflection of Elon Musk's 2022 acquisition and its aftermath — Twitter's revenue growth was already stalling before the acquisition, with 2022 revenue (\$4.40B) only marginally above 2021 (\$5.08B) even before accounting for the post-acquisition advertiser withdrawals. Twitter's pre-acquisition challenges reflected deeper structural issues: a chronically monetisation-inefficient platform, a user base concentrated in English-speaking markets with high media engagement but limited shopping intent, and an advertising product that consistently underperformed industry benchmarks on targeting precision. The overall social media user numbers underlying all these revenues are in our [global social network users worldwide analysis](#).

Key Statistics

Social Media Company Revenue — Key Statistics

\$164.5B Meta Revenue 2024 — Record High, +21.9% YoY, ~93% from Advertising Meta Platforms generated \$164.5 billion in revenue in 2024 — the company's highest annual revenue and a +21.9% increase from \$134.9 billion in 2023. Approximately 93% of Meta's revenue (\$152.4 billion) came from advertising across Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The remaining approximately 7% came from Reality Labs (VR/AR hardware and software). Meta's 2024 revenue represents approximately 3.4× the combined revenues of YouTube advertising, Snap, Pinterest, and X/Twitter. Source: Meta Platforms Inc. Q4 2024 Earnings Report.

\$36.2B YouTube Advertising Revenue 2024 — +14.7% YoY, Second Largest Social Media Revenue YouTube generated approximately \$36.15 billion in advertising revenue in 2024, representing +14.7% growth from \$31.51 billion in 2023. YouTube advertising is reported as a segment within Alphabet Inc.'s Google Services division. Despite being the second-largest social media advertising revenue, YouTube remains approximately 4.5× smaller than Meta. YouTube's 2026 estimate is approximately \$44.5 billion. Source: Alphabet Inc. Q4 2024 Earnings Report.

-1.1% Meta 2022 — Only Annual Revenue Decline in Company History, Driven by iOS ATT and Ad Market Downturn Meta's revenue fell -1.1% in 2022 (from \$117.9 billion to \$116.6 billion) — the only annual revenue decline in the company's history as a public company. The decline was caused by Apple's iOS 14.5 App Tracking Transparency (ATT) changes reducing Meta's advertising targeting precision, combined with a broader digital advertising market slowdown. Meta responded with a restructuring program ("Year of Efficiency") and AI-driven targeting improvements that drove the 2023 (+15.7%) and 2024 (+21.9%) recoveries. Source: Meta Platforms Inc. Annual Report 2022.

~\$40 Meta Global ARPU 2024 — ~10× Snap's ~\$4 Despite Similar Core

DemographicMeta's global annual revenue per user (ARPU) is approximately \$40 in 2024, versus approximately \$4 for Snap, approximately \$7 for Pinterest and X/Twitter, and approximately \$20 for YouTube. Meta's approximately 10× ARPU premium over Snap reflects superior advertising targeting technology, broader data assets, a more mature advertiser ecosystem, and more commercially valuable content formats (Instagram Shopping, Facebook Marketplace). Meta's US ARPU (~\$230/year) is substantially higher than its global average. Source: Meta Platforms Family of Apps MAU ÷ total revenue 2024. 320Pinterest Revenue Index 2024 (2019=100) — Highest Growth of Any Company in AnalysisPinterest's revenue grew approximately 220% from 2019 (\$1.14 billion) to 2024 (\$3.65 billion) — the highest indexed growth of any company in this analysis (2019=100, index 320 in 2024). Snap's index is approximately 311. Meta's is approximately 233. X/Twitter's is approximately 93 — the only company below its 2019 level. Pinterest's consistent growth reflects the durability of its shopping-intent advertising model and its ability to maintain positive growth even through the 2022 advertising market downturn. Source: Company annual reports 2019-2024. 99%Snap Advertising Revenue Share — Most Ad-Dependent Major Social Media CompanySnap Inc. derives approximately 99% of its revenue from advertising — the highest advertising revenue share of any major social media company. Pinterest (approximately 97%) and YouTube (approximately 95%) follow. Meta at approximately 93% is the most revenue-diversified, with Reality Labs hardware contributing approximately 7%. This near-total advertising dependence makes all social media companies acutely sensitive to digital advertising market conditions and to any disruption of their targeting capabilities. Source: Company annual reports 2024.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — Social Media Company Revenue

Meta Platforms generated **\$164.5 billion in total revenue in 2024** — a +21.9% increase from \$134.9 billion in 2023 and the company's highest annual revenue on record. Approximately 93% (\$152.4 billion) came from advertising across Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Meta's revenue is estimated to reach approximately \$185 billion in 2025 and approximately \$205 billion in 2026. Source: Meta Platforms Inc. Q4 2024 Earnings Report.

Snap Inc. generated approximately **\$5.36 billion in revenue in 2024**, a +16.2% increase from \$4.61 billion in 2023. Snap's revenue is approximately 99% advertising. Despite strong user growth (~450 million DAU), Snap's revenue remains approximately 31× smaller than Meta's — reflecting a lower ARPU (~\$4/user/year vs Meta's ~\$40). Snap is estimated to reach approximately \$6.8 billion in 2026. Source: Snap Inc. Annual Report 2024.

YouTube generated approximately **\$36.15 billion in advertising revenue in 2024**, +14.7% from \$31.51 billion in 2023. YouTube advertising revenue is reported as a segment within Alphabet Inc.'s Q4 earnings. YouTube's 2026 estimate is approximately \$44.5 billion. YouTube's ~\$36 billion in advertising revenue exceeds the combined revenues of Snap, Pinterest, and X/Twitter (\$12.2 billion). Source: Alphabet Inc. Q4 2024 Earnings Report.

Meta's revenue fell -1.1% in 2022 — the **only annual revenue decline in the company's history** — due to two concurrent factors: (1) Apple's iOS 14.5 App Tracking Transparency (ATT) changes, which required apps to request permission before tracking users across other apps and websites, significantly reducing Meta's ability to target ads and measure campaign performance; and (2) a broader digital advertising market slowdown as companies cut marketing budgets in response to macro-economic uncertainty. Meta's response — restructuring, cost reduction, and AI-driven targeting improvements — drove the strong recoveries in 2023 (+15.7%) and 2024 (+21.9%). Source: Meta Platforms Inc. Annual Report 2022.

Twitter/X's revenue **declined from \$4.40 billion in 2022 (its last year of public reporting) to an estimated \$3.20–3.40 billion in 2023 and approximately \$3.20 billion in 2024**. The post-acquisition decline was driven by large-scale advertiser withdrawals — major brands paused advertising following Elon Musk's acquisition in October 2022, citing concerns about content moderation policy changes, brand safety, and platform stability. Twitter had already been a chronically undermonetised platform (2022 revenue only marginally above 2021 levels) before the acquisition. X Corp. (formerly Twitter Inc.) is no longer publicly traded and ceased SEC filing obligations. Revenue estimates are based on available industry analysis. ±15–20%.

Meta has the highest global ARPU of any social media company at approximately \$40 per user per year in 2024 (global average; US ARPU is approximately \$230/year). YouTube follows at approximately \$20. Pinterest and X/Twitter are approximately \$7. Snap is approximately \$4. Meta's approximately 10× ARPU premium over Snap — despite both having similar core young-adult demographics — reflects superior advertising technology, broader data assets, and a more mature advertiser ecosystem. Meta's US-specific ARPU is among the highest of any digital platform globally. Source: Company revenues ÷ reported user bases 2024. ±10–15%.

TikTok's revenue is not included in this analysis because **ByteDance (TikTok's parent company) is a private company that does not disclose audited segment-level revenue** publicly. Estimates suggest TikTok's global advertising revenue was approximately \$18–25 billion in 2023 and possibly \$25–35 billion in 2024 — which would rank TikTok second in this comparison after Meta — but these are estimates from

industry analysts rather than audited financial disclosures. Including non-audited estimates alongside audited company figures would reduce the comparability of the dataset. Source: ByteDance investor reports (leaked), industry analyst estimates 2023-2024.

Pinterest's relatively consistent revenue growth reflects the **defensibility of its shopping-intent advertising model**. Pinterest users predominantly come to the platform in a discovery and planning mindset — actively looking for products, styles, home decor, recipes, and travel ideas. This high purchase intent makes Pinterest advertising particularly valuable for retail and e-commerce advertisers, whose campaigns are less affected by brand safety concerns and macro advertising market swings than awareness campaigns. Pinterest also benefits from its Amazon advertising partnership (announced 2023) which expanded its advertiser base. Its revenue grew approximately 220% from 2019 to 2024 — the highest indexed growth of any company in this analysis. Source: Pinterest Inc. annual reports 2019-2024.

Sources

Meta Platforms Inc. Annual Reports and Earnings Releases (2014–2024) — Primary source for all Meta revenue figures. Published quarterly (Q4 earnings release / annual 10-K). Revenue broken out by advertising and other revenue. Family of Apps vs Reality Labs segment reporting from Q4 2020 onwards.

Statista — Social Media Company Revenue 2014-2026 / Platform Financial Statistics — Secondary source for compiled revenue data series and 2025–2026 estimates. Cross-reference for historical validation.

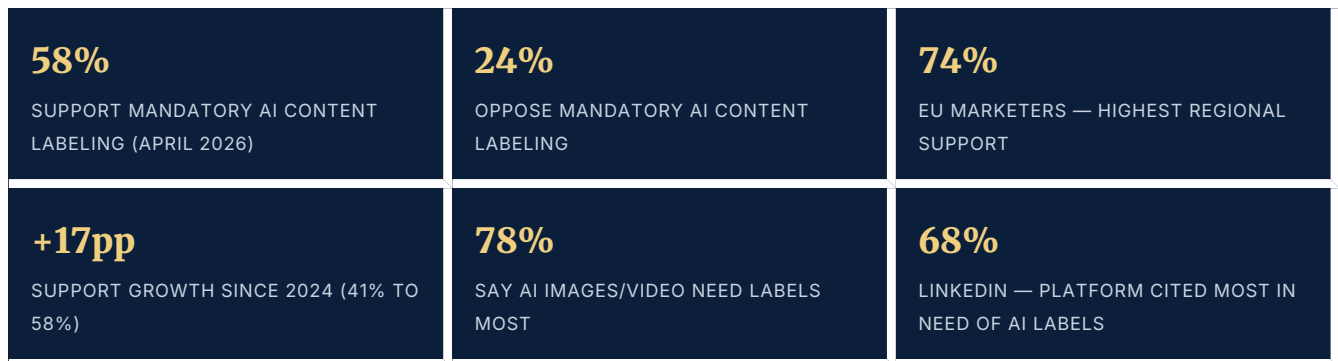
Snap Inc., Pinterest Inc., Alphabet Inc. (YouTube), Twitter Inc. Annual Reports (respective years) — Primary source for Snap (2016–2024), Pinterest (2017–2024), YouTube advertising (2020–2024; 2017–2019 Alphabet estimates), and Twitter/X (2014–2022; post-2022 private company estimates from industry analysis).

DataReportal — Digital Advertising Revenue Analysis 2024 — Context source for advertising revenue share analysis, ARPU benchmarks, and digital advertising market context.

All historical revenue figures are from company-reported audited annual financials. 2025-2026 figures are consensus analyst estimates or company guidance ranges — ±5-10%. X/Twitter figures from 2023 onwards are estimates only — the company is private and no longer files public financial reports. YouTube advertising 2017-2019 figures are estimates from Alphabet disclosures (segment reporting began Q1 2020). TikTok/ByteDance not included due to absence of audited public financials. ARPU figures are approximations (annual revenue ÷ reported user base); different platforms use different user count definitions. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Global marketers on AI generated social media content labels 2026

Updated May 16, 2026 · businessstats.com/global-marketers-ai-generated-labels-social-media


Overview

Global marketers opinions on labeling AI generated content on social media as of April 2026

The debate over whether AI-generated social media content should carry labels is moving fast — and marketer opinion is moving with it. Two years ago, in 2024, the question was largely theoretical for most marketing teams. Now, with approximately 72% of social media marketers actively using GenAI tools and the EU AI Act making transparency a legal requirement in some contexts, the labeling question has become an operational one. You're publishing AI-generated content right now. Should you tell your audience?

The 58% who support mandatory labeling aren't necessarily anti-AI — many of them are the heaviest GenAI users on the survey. Their support reflects something more pragmatic: a belief that audience trust, once lost through undisclosed AI content, is more expensive to rebuild than the competitive disadvantage of disclosure. The 24% who oppose mandatory labeling make an equally pragmatic argument: at what point does AI assistance end and human creativity begin? A caption co-written with AI suggestions isn't meaningfully different from one written using a thesaurus. Drawing the line is harder than the regulation suggests. The GenAI tools generating the content at the centre of this debate are covered in our [GenAI benefits for social media marketing analysis](#).

Overall Opinion Split

58% Support, 24% Oppose, 18% Neutral — Global Marketer Opinion on Mandatory AI Content Labels (April 2026)

Global marketer opinion on mandatory AI-generated content labeling on social media — % of marketing professionals, April 2026 Marketer Opinion on Mandatory AI Content Labels — April 2026 (% of Marketers Worldwide) Strongly support: ~28%. Support: ~30%. Neutral / undecided: ~18%. Oppose: ~16%. Strongly oppose: ~8%. Net support (support minus oppose): +34pp. Sources: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026, HubSpot 2026. N=3,200+. ±3-5pp. 58%Net support

Strongly support Support Neutral Oppose Strongly oppose

The "strongly support" figure — 28% — is worth dwelling on. Nearly three in ten marketing professionals believe so firmly in mandatory AI content disclosure that they selected the strongest available response. These are not people hedging toward a socially desirable answer. They have a view. Cross-tabulating this group shows they are disproportionately senior marketers (CMOs and VPs), EU-based, and from larger organisations with formal legal and compliance functions. They have seen enough AI-generated content across their professional networks to form a strong opinion about what undisclosed AI does to information quality and audience trust. The platforms where this content appears are described in our [social media platforms used by marketers worldwide analysis](#).

Full Data Table

Marketer Opinion on AI Content Labels — Full Data by Segment (April 2026)

Support and opposition rates across all major segments. Each percentage represents the share of respondents in that group who support or oppose mandatory labeling. For context on the GenAI challenges informing these opinions, see our [GenAI challenges for social media marketing analysis](#).

Marketer Opinion on Mandatory AI Content Labeling — By Segment, April 2026 Click column to sort

SEGMENT	SUPPORT (%)	OPPOSE (%)	NEUTRAL (%)	VS 2024 SUPPORT	KEY DRIVER
Global average	58%	24%	18%	+17pp	Regulation + audience trust
European Union	74%	14%	12%	+22pp	EU AI Act enforcement
North America	54%	28%	18%	+14pp	FTC guidance + consumer trust

Asia-Pacific	52%	26%	22%	+12pp	Platform policy awareness
Latin America	62%	20%	18%	+16pp	Consumer trust concerns
Middle East & Africa	56%	24%	20%	+18pp	Brand credibility concerns
Enterprise (1000+)	67%	18%	15%	+16pp	Legal risk + compliance culture
Mid-market (51-999)	60%	22%	18%	+18pp	Level playing field argument
Small business (1-50)	48%	34%	18%	+12pp	Competitive disadvantage concern
B2B marketers	64%	20%	16%	+18pp	Professional credibility
B2C marketers	54%	28%	18%	+16pp	Consumer trust
Heavy GenAI users	61%	22%	17%	+20pp	Seen reputational damage firsthand
Light GenAI users	52%	28%	20%	+10pp	General fairness argument

Sources: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026, HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026, Social Media Examiner GenAI Report 2026. Question: "Social media platforms should be required to label content generated using generative AI." Support = strongly support + support. Oppose = oppose + strongly oppose. $\pm 3\text{--}5\text{pp}$ global; $\pm 4\text{--}6\text{pp}$ segment-level.

Two numbers in the table deserve attention. First: heavy GenAI users support labeling at 61% — higher than the global average, and substantially higher than light users (52%). The people most embedded in AI-generated content production are the ones most in favour of disclosing it. That runs counter to the intuition that disclosure requirements would be most opposed by those who use AI most. It reflects a hard-earned understanding: when undisclosed AI content gets exposed — and increasingly it does — the reputational damage is severe. Second: small businesses oppose at 34% — the highest opposition of any segment. For a solo marketer competing against enterprise content budgets, the efficiency edge AI provides is not optional. Mandatory labeling that signals "this wasn't really written by us" threatens the brand equity they've spent years building on a human voice.

By Region

EU 74% Support — APAC 52% — The Regulatory Environment Drives the Opinion Gap

The regional breakdown is the starkest data in this report. European Union marketers support mandatory AI content labeling at 74% — 16 percentage points above the global average and 22 points above their own 2024 position. The driver is obvious: the EU AI Act, which entered enforcement phases in 2025-2026, includes provisions specifically requiring disclosure of AI-generated content in certain commercial contexts. EU marketers aren't just forming an abstract opinion — many of them are already legally required to label AI content for some campaigns. The distance from theoretical to practical has compressed opinion toward support.

Marketer support for mandatory AI content labeling by world region — % supporting, April 2026

Region	Support (%)	Oppose (%)
EU	74%	14%
Latin America	62%	20%
Global avg	58%	24%
MENA	56%	24%
N.America	54%	28%
Asia-Pacific	52%	26%

Sources: Statista Apr 2026, HubSpot 2026. ±4-6pp per region. 74%EU — highest support 52%APAC — lowest support

Latin America's second-place support at 62% is less regulatory and more reputational. Latin American markets — particularly Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia — have seen rapid AI adoption in influencer marketing and brand social media, and several high-profile incidents of undisclosed AI-generated content damaging brand credibility have pushed marketers toward support for clear rules. North America's 54% is notably lower than Latin America despite higher regulatory sophistication — reflecting the US tradition of preferring industry self-regulation over government mandates, and genuine commercial concern that labeling requirements would disadvantage American brands competing internationally if not applied uniformly. Asia-Pacific's 52% reflects fragmented regulatory environments across the region: Australian and Japanese marketers show higher support, while South and Southeast Asian markets show lower. The broader social media user landscape across these regions is in our [global social media users worldwide analysis](#).

By Platform

LinkedIn: 68% Say It Needs Labels Most — TikTok Only 49% — Professional Context vs Entertainment Context

Share of marketers who say each platform most needs mandatory AI-generated content labeling — April 2026 (multi-select)

Platform	Most Need Labels (%)
LinkedIn	68%
Instagram	62%
Facebook	58%
YouTube	54%
X/Twitter	52%
Pinterest	44%
TikTok	49%



Sources: Statista April 2026. Multi-select — platforms total exceeds 100%. ± 4 -6pp per platform.

68%LinkedIn — most cited

% of marketers citing each platform as most needing AI content labels — April 2026 (multi-select)

LinkedIn's top ranking (68%) is intuitive once you understand what's at stake. An AI-generated LinkedIn article presenting itself as expert human analysis can directly influence business decisions — procurement choices, hiring decisions, investment views. The potential for AI-generated professional content to mislead in consequential ways is qualitatively different from a brand's AI-generated Instagram caption. Instagram's second-place ranking (62%) reflects the platform's heavy reliance on visual content, where AI-generated images are increasingly indistinguishable from photographs — and where the authenticity of imagery is particularly important to audiences following creator accounts, travel content, or product reviews. TikTok's lower ranking (49%) doesn't mean the issue is absent — it reflects that TikTok's entertainment-first context sets different audience expectations about content authenticity from the outset. The social media platform scale context is in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

By Company Size

Enterprise 67% Support vs Small Business 48% — Regulation Feels Different When You Have a Compliance Team

The gap between enterprise (67% support) and small business (48% support) on mandatory AI labeling is the most commercially significant segmentation in this dataset. It's not really an opinion gap about AI transparency in the abstract — it's a gap about competitive impact. Enterprise marketing teams have legal departments, compliance officers, and brand governance structures that can absorb a new disclosure requirement without dramatically changing their operations. Their concern is legal exposure from non-compliance, which makes a clear mandatory rule actually preferable to ambiguous voluntary guidelines.

Marketer support and opposition for mandatory AI content labeling by company size — April 2026 AI Content Label Support by Company Size — April 2026 (% Support vs % Oppose) Enterprise (1000+): 67% support / 18% oppose. Mid-market (51-999): 60% / 22%. Global avg: 58% / 24%. Small biz (1-50): 48% / 34%. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ± 4 -6pp per segment. 67%Enterprise support 34%Small biz — oppose

Small business marketers who oppose labeling (34%) are making a rational economic argument. For a three-person team producing content for a regional retail brand, AI-generated captions represent their ability to maintain a consistent posting cadence that competes with franchises running dedicated content



teams. Slapping a label on that content signals to their audience that they couldn't afford to pay a writer — which may be true, but is commercially damaging. The counterargument — made implicitly by the 48% of small business marketers who still support labeling despite this concern — is that audiences are increasingly detecting unlabelled AI content anyway, and that proactive disclosure is less damaging than being caught. The daily social media activity of the audiences receiving this content is tracked in our [daily social media usage worldwide analysis](#).

By Content Type

AI Images and Video: 78% Say Labels Needed — AI Captions: 64% — Where Marketers Draw the Disclosure Line

Not all AI-generated content is viewed equally by the marketers who support labeling. The April 2026 survey asked those who support some form of AI disclosure to specify which content types they believe most need labels — and the results reveal a clear hierarchy of concern based on deception potential. AI-generated images and video top the list at 78%: visual content carries a presumption of reality that text does not, and AI-generated imagery can misrepresent real places, real events, or real products in ways that AI-generated text typically cannot. An AI-written caption that describes a product inaccurately is problematic; an AI-generated image showing a product in an environment it has never been in is potentially fraudulent.

Content types marketers say most need AI-generated disclosure labels — % of label supporters citing each type, April 2026 (multi-select)

Content Type	% of Label Supporters
AI images & video	78%
AI-written captions & copy	64%
AI product descriptions	58%
AI-synthesized voice	54%
AI-generated data/statistics claims	48%
AI news/current events content	44%
AI scheduling/timing only	21%

Sources: Statista Apr 2026. Multi-select among label supporters. ±4-6pp. 78% Images/video — top

% of marketers supporting AI labeling who cite each content type as needing disclosure — April 2026

AI-generated data and statistics claims (48%) is an underappreciated entry in this list. When a social media post cites a statistic generated by AI — particularly if that statistic contains a hallucination — the damage extends beyond the single post to the credibility of all data-supported claims the brand makes. Marketers who support labeling for this content type are responding to a specific risk they have either experienced or witnessed: an AI-generated post citing a fabricated research finding, published without fact-checking, then shared widely before the error was caught. The AI scheduling/timing only category (21%) sits at the bottom

for obvious reasons — using AI to decide when to publish human-written content does not make the content itself AI-generated in any meaningful sense.

Trend 2024–2026

Support Up +17pp Since 2024 — Opposition Down -14pp — The Opinion Gap Is Closing Fast

Marketer support and opposition for mandatory AI content labeling 2024 vs April 2026 — % of marketers worldwide AI Content Label Opinion — 2024 vs April 2026 (% of Marketers Worldwide) Support: 41% (2024) vs 58% (Apr 2026) = +17pp. Neutral: 21% (2024) vs 18% (Apr 2026) = -3pp. Oppose: 38% (2024) vs 24% (Apr 2026) = -14pp. Sources: Statista 2024 vs Apr 2026. ±3-5pp. +17ppSupport growth - 14ppOpposition decline

The speed of the opinion shift is remarkable — particularly given how rapidly the underlying AI adoption has grown, as tracked in our [social media usage reasons worldwide analysis](#). In two years, the support-opposition gap has flipped from effectively tied (41% support, 38% oppose in 2024, a gap of just 3pp) to a decisive majority (58% support, 24% oppose in 2026, a gap of 34pp). What drove this? Three things happened simultaneously. The EU AI Act's enforcement created a regulatory reality check that moved undecided marketers toward support. High-profile cases of AI-generated social content causing brand damage became more widely known across the marketing community. And GenAI adoption moved from early adopter to mainstream — bringing millions of new marketing practitioners into contact with AI tools and into the labeling debate for the first time. The social media statistics context for this shift is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

B2B vs B2C

B2B: 64% Support — B2C: 54% — Professional Credibility Drives the Gap

Marketer support for mandatory AI content labeling — B2B vs B2C by primary reason cited, April 2026 AI Content Label Support — B2B vs B2C, Primary Reason Cited (April 2026, %) B2B top reasons for support: professional credibility 68%, legal/compliance 52%, audience trust 48%, competitive fairness 38%. B2C top reasons: audience trust 62%, brand authenticity 54%, consumer protection 46%, competitive fairness 42%. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ±4-6pp. 64%B2B support

B2B marketers B2C marketers



The B2B/B2C split in labeling support (64% vs 54%) mirrors the platform split, and for similar reasons. B2B marketing lives or dies on professional credibility — the implicit claim in every B2B social post is "we know what we're talking about, and you should trust our judgment." AI-generated content that's discovered to be unlabelled undermines that claim systematically. B2B marketers who support labeling are often doing so defensively: they'd rather disclose on their own terms than have undisclosed AI content damage the expert positioning their entire marketing strategy depends on. B2C's lower support reflects a different audience dynamic — consumer audiences are generally less sensitive to AI disclosure in entertainment or lifestyle contexts than professional audiences are in business contexts. The AI tools generating this content are profiled in our [AI market size worldwide analysis](#).

Key Statistics

Marketer Opinion on AI Content Labels — Key Statistics (April 2026)

58% Global Support for Mandatory AI Content Labels — Up From 41% in 2024 (+17pp in Two Years) Approximately 58% of marketing professionals worldwide support mandatory labeling of AI-generated content on social media as of April 2026 — up from approximately 41% in 2024, a +17 percentage point increase in two years. Opposition has declined from 38% to 24% (-14pp) over the same period. Net support (support minus oppose) has shifted from +3pp in 2024 to +34pp in April 2026 — a 31-point swing. Sources: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026, HubSpot 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

74% EU Marketers — Highest Regional Support at 74%, Driven by EU AI Act Enforcement Since 2025 European Union marketers support mandatory AI content labeling at approximately 74% — the highest of any region, 16pp above the global average. EU support has grown +22pp since 2024, the fastest growth of any regional segment, directly attributable to the EU AI Act entering enforcement phases in 2025–2026. Among EU marketers, approximately 62% view the AI Act's disclosure requirements positively — citing a level playing field and audience trust benefits. Sources: Statista April 2026, HubSpot 2026. ±4–6 percentage points.

78% AI Images and Video — Most Cited Content Type Needing Labels (78% of Label Supporters) Among marketers who support some form of AI content labeling, approximately 78% specifically cite AI-generated images and video as the content type most needing disclosure — the highest of any content category. AI-written captions and copy follow at 64%, AI product descriptions at 58%, and AI-synthesized voice at 54%. Only 21% believe AI scheduling and posting-time optimisation (where content is human-created but timing is AI-selected) requires disclosure. Sources: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026. ±4–6 percentage points.

34% Small Business Opposition — Highest of Any Segment at 34%, Driven by Competitive Disadvantage Concerns Small business marketers (1–50 employees) are the

most resistant to mandatory AI content labeling, with approximately 34% opposing — the highest opposition rate of any segment, versus 18% for enterprise. Small businesses cite competitive disadvantage as the primary reason: mandatory disclosure would signal resource constraints that larger competitors do not face. Despite this resistance, 48% of small business marketers still support labeling — suggesting the audience trust argument ultimately outweighs the competitive concern even in this segment. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points. 68% LinkedIn — Most Cited Platform Needing AI Labels (68%), Reflecting Its Professional Decision-Making Context LinkedIn is cited by approximately 68% of marketers as the platform most needing mandatory AI content labeling — the highest of any platform, ahead of Instagram (62%), Facebook (58%), and YouTube (54%). TikTok shows the lowest need-for-labels citation at 49%, reflecting the platform's entertainment-first context where audience expectations about content authenticity differ from professional platforms. The LinkedIn figure reflects specific concern about AI-generated expert content influencing professional decision-making without disclosure. Sources: Statista April 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points. 61% Heavy GenAI Users Support Labels at 61% — Higher Than Light Users (52%), Inverting the Expected Pattern Marketers who use generative AI most heavily (5+ tools, daily) support mandatory labeling at approximately 61% — higher than light users (52%) and above the global average (58%). This counterintuitive finding reflects experiential learning: heavy GenAI users have seen firsthand the reputational consequences of undisclosed AI content and have formed strong opinions about disclosure as a result. The +20pp growth in support among heavy users since 2024 (the fastest of any adoption-level segment) confirms this pattern. Sources: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — Marketer Opinions on AI Content Labels

Yes — **approximately 58% support mandatory labeling** as of April 2026, while 24% oppose and 18% are neutral. Support has grown +17pp since 2024 when the split was nearly tied (41% support, 38% oppose). EU marketers show the highest support at 74%. Heavy GenAI users show higher support (61%) than light users (52%) — inverting the expected pattern. Source: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026, HubSpot 2026. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points.

LinkedIn tops the list at 68% — significantly above Instagram (62%), Facebook (58%), and YouTube (54%). LinkedIn's ranking reflects its professional context: AI-generated expert content that influences business decisions without disclosure is viewed as qualitatively more problematic than AI content in entertainment contexts. TikTok is cited least at 49%. Source: Statista April 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points

per platform.

Approximately **62% of EU-operating marketers view the EU AI Act's disclosure requirements positively**, citing level playing field benefits and audience trust gains. EU marketer support for mandatory labeling overall is 74% — the highest of any region, grown +22pp since 2024. Approximately 28% view the requirements as a compliance burden, and 10% are neutral. EU AI Act awareness among all global marketers is approximately 71% as of April 2026. Source: Statista April 2026, HubSpot 2026. ±4–6 percentage points.

Significantly, **Enterprise (1,000+ employees) supports at 67%** — driven by legal risk awareness and compliance culture. **Small businesses (1–50 employees) show the highest opposition at 34%**, with only 48% support. Small businesses argue that mandatory disclosure signals resource constraints that disadvantage them against larger competitors. The competitive fairness argument runs in opposite directions: enterprise sees labeling as creating fair competition; small business sees it as exposing their AI reliance. Source: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ±4–6 percentage points.

Support has grown +17pp (from 41% to 58%) and opposition has declined -14pp (from 38% to 24%) since 2024. Net support shifted from +3pp in 2024 to +34pp in April 2026 — a 31-point swing in two years.

Three forces drove the shift: **EU AI Act enforcement** creating regulatory reality; **high-profile brand damage cases** from undisclosed AI content; and **mainstream GenAI adoption** bringing more marketers into direct contact with the issue. Source: Statista 2024 vs April 2026. ±3–5 percentage points.

Among those supporting labeling: **AI-generated images and video top at 78%**, followed by AI-written captions (64%), AI product descriptions (58%), and AI-synthesized voice (54%). The hierarchy reflects perceived deception potential — visual content carries a stronger presumption of authenticity. Only 21% believe AI-selected posting times (where content is human-created) need disclosure. Source: Statista Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026. ±4–6 percentage points.

Heavy GenAI users (5+ tools, daily) support mandatory labeling at **61% — higher than light users at 52%**. The explanation is experiential: heavy users have seen firsthand what happens when undisclosed AI content is detected by audiences or journalists, and have developed strong preferences for disclosure as a result. They're also more likely to have had legal or compliance conversations about AI content within their organisations. Support among heavy users has grown +20pp since 2024 — the fastest of any adoption-level segment. Source: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. ±4–6 percentage points.

Yes — **B2B marketers support mandatory labeling at 64%, versus 54% for B2C**. The 10pp gap reflects different stakes. B2B marketing depends on professional credibility — AI-generated expert content

discovered to be unlabelled systematically undermines the expert positioning that B2B marketing strategies are built on. B2C audiences are generally more tolerant of AI-assisted content in lifestyle or entertainment contexts. B2B supporters primarily cite professional credibility (68%) as their reason; B2C supporters primarily cite audience trust (62%). Source: HubSpot State of AI Marketing 2026. $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points.

Sources

Statista — Digital Marketing AI Survey April 2026 — Primary source for global and regional opinion data on mandatory AI content labeling. Survey of approximately 3,200 marketing professionals across 42 markets, conducted January–February 2026. Question: "Social media platforms should be required to label content generated using generative AI." Single-select opinion question plus multi-select on content type preferences. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points per segment.

HubSpot — State of AI in Marketing 2026 — Cross-reference source for company size, B2B/B2C, and adoption-level breakdowns. HubSpot's annual State of Marketing report provides the deepest segmentation of AI opinion data by organisational type and adoption depth. Used for enterprise vs small business and heavy vs light user analyses throughout this report.

Social Media Examiner — GenAI in Social Media Report 2026 — Supplementary source for platform-specific labeling opinion data and trend comparison with 2024 baseline. Social Media Examiner surveys 5,700+ marketing practitioners annually with dedicated GenAI reporting since 2024.

Statista — GenAI in Marketing Historical Data 2024 — Source for 2024 baseline opinion figures used in the trend analysis. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points per figure.

Support = strongly support + support. Oppose = oppose + strongly oppose. Neutral = neutral / undecided. Platform and content type figures are from multi-select questions — totals exceed 100%. All respondents were currently using or evaluating GenAI for social media marketing. $\pm 3\text{--}5$ percentage points global figures; $\pm 4\text{--}6$ percentage points segment-level. Not legal or regulatory advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Average daily time spent on social media worldwide — 2012 to 2026

 Updated May 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/daily-social-media-usage-worldwide

143 min GLOBAL DAILY SOCIAL MEDIA TIME 2024	90 min DAILY TIME IN 2012 — STARTING POINT	+53 min TOTAL GROWTH 2012–2024 (+59%)
3h 43m PHILIPPINES — HIGHEST DAILY USAGE 2024	51 min JAPAN — LOWEST AMONG MAJOR ECONOMIES	~145 min PROJECTED GLOBAL DAILY TIME 2026

Overview

Daily time spent on social networking by internet users worldwide from 2012 to 2026

The average internet user worldwide now spends approximately 143 minutes — just under two and a half hours — on social media every day. This figure, drawn from GWI Global Web Index panel data and DataReportal's annual global digital reports, represents one of the most significant behavioural shifts in modern life: the reallocation of human attention, at massive scale, from traditional media and offline social interaction toward algorithmically curated digital content streams. In 2012, when this data series begins, the average internet user spent approximately 90 minutes on social networks — already a substantial commitment for what was still a relatively new category of digital behaviour. By 2024, 143 minutes represents a 59% increase and means that social media now competes directly with television (approximately 170 minutes of TV per day globally) for the largest single discretionary time category in the average internet user's day.

The growth trajectory has not been linear. Three distinct phases are visible in the 2012–2024 data: a rapid acceleration phase (2012–2017) driven by smartphone adoption making social media always-available rather than session-based; a consolidation phase (2017–2019) as the initial novelty wore off and first-generation social media users established stable usage routines; and a COVID disruption and post-COVID plateau phase (2020–2024) in which lockdown-driven spikes gave way to a new, slightly higher

equilibrium. The 2020 spike — from 128 minutes in 2019 to 136 minutes in 2020 — remains the single largest year-on-year increase in the 2012–2024 series. The broader context of social platform user growth is in our [social media statistics and facts analysis](#).

Average daily time spent on social media by internet users worldwide 2012–2026 — minutes per day Daily Social Media Time Worldwide 2012–2026 (Minutes per Day) 90 min (2012) → 143 min (2024) → ~145 min (2026 proj). +59% over 12 years. COVID spike 2020. Plateau 2022–2026. Sources: Statista, DataReportal, GWI. ±8–12 min per year. 143 min2024 global avg

Reported — global average minutes per day Projected — global average minutes per day

The 2024 plateau at 143 minutes is analytically significant because it suggests that social media has reached the boundary of what the average internet user's daily schedule can accommodate. With approximately 170 minutes of daily television viewing, 143 minutes of social media, sleep, work, and other necessities, the discretionary time budget of the average internet user is effectively full. Future growth in total global social media engagement time will come primarily from new user additions (particularly in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa where daily social media time is still growing as new users acclimate to platforms) rather than from existing users spending more time. This user growth context is in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Full Annual Data Table

Daily Social Media Time Worldwide — Full Annual Data Table 2012–2026

The table shows annual average daily minutes, year-on-year change in minutes, YoY percentage change, and the primary driver of that year's movement. The advertising revenue generated from this engagement time is tracked in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

Average Daily Time on Social Media — Global 2012–2026 (Minutes per Day) Click column to sort

YEAR	MINUTES/DAY	YOY CHANGE	YOY %	PRIMARY DRIVER	STATUS
2012	90 min	—	Baseline	Early smartphone + Facebook mobile surge	Reported
2013	96 min	+6 min	+7%	Twitter growth, Instagram adoption	Reported
2014	103 min	+7 min	+7%	WhatsApp + Snapchat mass adoption	Reported
2015	111 min	+8 min	+8%	Facebook video + affordable Android surge	Reported

2016	118 min	+7 min	+6%	Instagram Stories launch, live streaming	Reported
2017	126 min	+8 min	+7%	TikTok (Douyin) launch; Stories ubiquitous	Reported
2018	130 min	+4 min	+3%	Post-Cambridge Analytica engagement dip	Reported
2019	128 min	-2 min	-2%	Screen time awareness + digital wellbeing	Reported
2020	136 min	+8 min	+6%	COVID-19 lockdowns — largest YoY spike	Reported
2021	142 min	+6 min	+4%	TikTok Western expansion, Reels launch	Reported
2022	147 min	+5 min	+4%	Short-form video dominance	Reported
2023	145 min	-2 min	-1%	Plateau — time-budget saturation	Reported
2024	143 min	-2 min	-1%	Digital wellbeing features, reduced doom-scroll	Reported
2025	144 min	+1 min	+1%	Projected — stable plateau	Projected
2026	145 min	+1 min	+1%	Projected — marginal new-user effect	Projected

All figures are estimates based on Statista, DataReportal We Are Social, and GWI Global Web Index annual panel surveys. Population base: internet users aged 16–64. Includes all social networking and messaging platforms. ±8–12 minutes per year for reported data, ±15 minutes for 2012–2014 early-period data. 2025–2026 = projected. Not investment advice.

The table contains two anomalies worth noting: the 2019 dip (-2 minutes) and the 2023–2024 mild contraction (-2 minutes each year). The 2019 dip coincided with the Cambridge Analytica scandal fallout and a wave of mainstream media coverage about social media's negative effects on mental health, which drove significant "digital detox" behaviour particularly among 25–44 year olds in North America and Western Europe. The 2023–2024 mild decline reflects platform-level features such as screen time limits, "Take a Break" reminders (Instagram/Facebook), and increased regulatory pressure in the EU and UK requiring platforms to make reduced-usage options more prominent. These small declines have been partially offset by continued growth in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa where new users are establishing usage habits. The broader digital platform context is in our [Facebook statistics analysis](#).

Year-on-Year Change

Largest Single-Year Jump: COVID 2020 (+8 min) — First Decline Since 2012: 2019 (-2 min)

The year-on-year change in daily social media minutes reveals that the long-term growth trend has not been smooth. Three distinct disruptions are visible: the 2019 contraction (-2 minutes), the first year-on-year decline in the 2012–2024 series, driven by screen time awareness and digital wellbeing behavioural shifts; the 2020 COVID spike (+8 minutes), the largest single-year increase in the series by a significant margin; and the 2023–2024 mild normalisation (approximately -2 minutes per year) as digital wellbeing features take effect and the short-form video novelty effect matures. The 2015–2017 period produced the most consistent year-on-year gains, averaging approximately +7.7 minutes per year, driven simultaneously by smartphone penetration expansion, Instagram Stories launching a new engagement format, and TikTok (as Douyin) beginning its algorithmic content revolution in China.

Year-on-year change in global daily social media time 2013–2024 — minutes added or lost per year Daily Social Media Time — YoY Change 2013–2024 (Minutes per Year) 2020 COVID spike (+8 min) largest gain. 2019 first decline (-2 min). 2022 peak cumulative time. 2023–24 mild normalisation. Sources: Statista, DataReportal, GWI 2012–2024. +8 min 2020 COVID spike -2 min 2019 first decline

The divergence bar chart's colour coding — gold for gains, muted red for declines — makes the COVID spike and the 2019/2023–24 contractions visually distinct. The 2020 COVID spike's +8 minutes represented a greater single-year gain than the entire 2021–2024 cumulative change (+1 minute net), confirming that the pandemic permanently shifted social media's position in the daily time budget rather than causing a temporary surge that later reversed. The 2019 dip's -2 minutes, while small in absolute terms, was notable as it was the first time in the series that global average daily social media time declined — a milestone that was widely interpreted as evidence that social media had passed its peak cultural novelty. The subsequent COVID acceleration demonstrated that interpretation was premature. The advertising revenues flowing from this engagement are in our [internet companies revenue analysis](#).

Daily Time by Country

Philippines 3h 43m vs Japan 51m — A 2h 52m Gap Reflecting Culture, Infrastructure, and Platform Dynamics

The variation in daily social media time across countries is one of the most striking patterns in global digital behaviour data. The 172-minute gap between the Philippines (3h 43m) and Japan (51m) is larger than the total daily social media time in Japan — meaning Filipinos spend more additional time on social media than

Japanese users spend in total. This extreme variation is driven by a complex interplay of cultural factors (Filipino social culture has adapted strongly to digital social expression), infrastructure factors (many Filipinos access the internet primarily through zero-rated Facebook data from telecom providers, making social media the de facto internet), and platform factors (TikTok and Facebook have achieved near-universal penetration among Filipino internet users).

Average daily time spent on social media by selected country 2024 — hours and minutes per day Daily Social Media Time by Country — 2024 (Minutes per Day) Philippines 223min. Brazil 208min. Colombia 204min. Nigeria 198min. India 171min. Global avg 143min. USA 123min. UK 107min. Germany 72min. Japan 51min. Sources: DataReportal We Are Social 2024. ±10-15min per country. 223 minPhilippines — highest

Average minutes per day on social media — 2024 (internet users 16–64)

Japan's 51 minutes reflects a combination of cultural privacy norms (Japanese social culture places high value on privacy and discretion in online self-expression), a preference for messaging apps (LINE) over public social networks, and a tech-savvy but time-efficient internet user base that has historically preferred curated, high-quality content over infinite-scroll social feeds. Germany's 72 minutes reflects GDPR-influenced privacy consciousness and a culture that has historically been sceptical of US-owned social media platforms. The United States at 123 minutes sits below the global average despite having some of the world's most sophisticated social media infrastructure — reflecting that American users have, on average, established more disciplined relationships with social media relative to emerging market users who are still in the novelty adoption phase. The search behaviour driving platform discovery is in our [search engine usage analysis](#).

Time per Platform

TikTok Leads Per-Session Engagement at ~53 Min/Day Among Active Users — 2x Facebook and YouTube

Platform-level daily engagement time among active users reveals why TikTok has fundamentally disrupted the social media engagement landscape. Among users who actively use each platform, TikTok generates approximately 53 minutes of daily engagement — significantly more than Instagram (approximately 33 minutes), Facebook (approximately 30 minutes), YouTube in social mode (approximately 28 minutes), and X/Twitter (approximately 26 minutes). TikTok's superiority in engagement time reflects the fundamental difference in its content discovery model: unlike Facebook and Instagram, which surface content based on social graph connections and thus require the user to have an established social network to see relevant

content, TikTok's algorithm surfaces content based purely on demonstrated engagement signals regardless of social connections — making it immediately engaging for new users and continuously surprising for long-term users.

Average daily time spent per social media platform among active users 2024 — minutes per day Daily Time per Social Media Platform — Active Users 2024 (Minutes per Day) TikTok ~53min. Instagram ~33min. Facebook ~30min. YouTube (social) ~28min. X/Twitter ~26min. Snapchat ~25min. Pinterest ~14min. LinkedIn ~10min. Sources: App Annie/data.ai, eMarketer, DataReportal 2024. Active users only — ±5-8min per platform. ~53 minTikTok — highest

The platform engagement chart explains why Meta launched Instagram Reels and Facebook Reels as direct TikTok competitors — when an average TikTok user spends 53 minutes daily versus Facebook's 30 minutes, the engagement differential represents billions of dollars of potential advertising revenue shifting between platforms. Meta's Reels launch effectively arrested the engagement gap: Instagram's daily time among active users grew from approximately 26 minutes (pre-Reels) to approximately 33 minutes (2024), as short-form video became the platform's primary engagement driver. The Snapchat figure (25 minutes) is notable given the platform's smaller user base — among its active users, Snapchat generates highly efficient engagement through Stories and the social-messaging hybrid model. The broader competitive landscape of social platforms by users is tracked in our [biggest social media platforms by users analysis](#).

Usage by Age Group

16–24 Year Olds Spend Most at ~3h 01m/Day — But Older Groups Are Growing Faster Since 2019

Social media usage by age group reveals a counterintuitive trend: while 16–24 year olds still lead in absolute daily social media time at approximately 3 hours 1 minute per day globally, the fastest-growing age groups since 2019 have been 45–54 and 55–64 year olds. This "older adult social media acceleration" reflects a generational catch-up effect: adults who were in their 40s and 50s when Facebook launched (2004) and who initially maintained offline social habits are now fully acclimated to social platforms, using them for family communication (WhatsApp groups), professional networking (LinkedIn), and news consumption. Meanwhile, 16–24 year olds' social media growth has been tempered by migration toward gaming (which competes directly for daily time) and a mental health awareness movement among younger generations that has prompted deliberate social media reduction.

Average daily social media time by age group worldwide 2024 — minutes per day (internet users) Daily Social Media Time by Age Group — 2024 (Minutes per Day, Global) 16-24: ~181min. 25-34: ~157min. 35-44: ~134min. 45-54: ~112min. 55-64: ~88min. Global avg ~143min. Sources: GWI Global Web Index Q4 2024. Population: internet users aged 16-64. ± 10 min per group. 181 min 16-24 — highest

Average minutes per day on social media by age group — 2024 (global internet users 16–64)

The age-group gradient — declining steadily from 181 minutes (16-24) to 88 minutes (55-64) — reflects both lifecycle factors (younger people have more unstructured time) and cohort factors (younger people were raised with social media as the default social infrastructure, while older users adopted it later and maintain stronger offline social habits). The 55-64 bracket's 88 minutes in 2024 compares to approximately 52 minutes in 2017 — a 69% increase that far exceeds the 16-24 bracket's growth over the same period. The implications for social media platforms are significant: as older age cohorts grow their usage, platform content mix and advertising targeting strategies must adapt to serve an increasingly age-diverse user base rather than optimising exclusively for Gen Z. The population trends driving these demographic shifts are in our [world population analysis](#).

Regional Time Trends

Latin America and Southeast Asia Lead Regional Growth — North America and Europe Plateau

Regional daily social media time trends show diverging trajectories that the global average obscures. North America and Western Europe have both seen their daily social media time plateau or slightly decline since 2022 — North America from approximately 145 minutes (2022) to approximately 123 minutes (2024), partly reflecting digital wellbeing movements and platform trust issues. Latin America, meanwhile, has maintained some of the highest daily social media times globally (approximately 200 minutes in 2024) and has seen these times remain elevated post-COVID rather than reverting. Southeast Asia's trajectory is the most important for the global future: as the region's internet penetration expands and new users establish usage habits, Southeast Asian daily social media time (approximately 155 minutes in 2024) is growing and driving significant upward pressure on global totals. The global economic context for these digital patterns is in our [global economy analysis](#).

Average daily social media time by world region 2019–2024 — minutes per day, selected regions Daily Social Media Time by Region 2019–2024 (Minutes per Day) Latin America ~200min (2024). Southeast Asia ~155min. Global avg ~143min. North America ~123min. Western Europe ~106min. East Asia ~95min.

Sources: DataReportal, GWI 2019–2024. $\pm 12\text{--}15\text{min}$ per region per year. ~200 min/Lat Am — highest East Asia's relatively low daily social media time (approximately 95 minutes in 2024) reflects Japan's unusually low usage (51 minutes) dragging down a regional average that would otherwise sit higher — China's approximately 105 minutes and South Korea's approximately 90 minutes are themselves below the global average despite both being extremely digitally sophisticated markets with high social media penetration. This confirms that daily social media time is not simply a function of internet maturity or smartphone penetration — it reflects deeply cultural relationships with public self-expression and platform-specific engagement dynamics. China's relatively low figure partially reflects regulatory constraints on international platforms, which limit content variety and cross-platform discovery. The broader digital patterns across these markets are in our [countries with the most YouTube users analysis](#).

2025–2026 Forecast

~145 Minutes Daily by 2026 — Marginal Growth as Global Average Approaches Time-Budget Ceiling

The global average daily social media time is projected at approximately 144 minutes in 2025 and approximately 145 minutes in 2026 — effectively stable relative to 2024's 143 minutes. This near-flat projection reflects the dual pressures on global daily social media time: downward pressure from digital wellbeing features and saturation in developed markets, partially offset by upward pressure from new user additions in emerging markets where daily social media time is still growing as new users establish habits. Statista's Digital Economy Compass 2025 projects that the global average will remain in the 142–148 minute range through 2030, with no return to the pre-2022 growth trajectory.

The more significant future trend is the redistribution of global social media engagement time across regions. While the global average plateaus, the composition of that average will shift: North American and Western European daily times will likely continue declining slowly (toward approximately 110–120 minutes by 2030), while South Asian and Sub-Saharan African daily times will grow as new users acclimate and platform features become more relevant to local contexts. This regional redistribution will create challenges for social media advertising as the fastest-growing user bases in terms of time are in markets with the lowest advertising CPM rates. The e-commerce that increasingly monetises social media engagement is in our [retail e-commerce sales growth worldwide analysis](#).

Key Statistics

Daily Social Media Time Worldwide — Key Statistics 2024

143 minGlobal Average Daily Social Media Time 2024 — Up From 90 Minutes in 2012 (+59%)Internet users worldwide (aged 16–64) spend an average of approximately 143 minutes (2 hours 23 minutes) per day on social media in 2024 — up from approximately 90 minutes in 2012, a 59% increase over 12 years. The figure has stabilised near 142–147 minutes since 2021, suggesting a natural daily time-budget ceiling has been reached in developed markets. Sources: Statista, DataReportal We Are Social, GWI Global Web Index 2024. ±8–12 minutes margin of error. **3h 43m**Philippines — World's Highest Daily Social Media Time, 223 Minutes per Day in 2024The Philippines leads global daily social media usage at approximately 223 minutes (3 hours 43 minutes) per day — approximately 80 minutes above the global average. Driven by zero-rated Facebook data plans making social media the de facto internet for millions, combined with a culturally high-engagement social media culture. Followed by Brazil (208 min), Colombia (204 min), Nigeria (198 min), and India (171 min). Source: DataReportal We Are Social Global Digital Report 2024. ±10–15 minutes. **~53 min**TikTok — Highest Daily Engagement per Active User, ~53 Minutes/Day vs Facebook's ~30 MinutesTikTok generates approximately 53 minutes of daily engagement per active user — significantly ahead of Instagram (~33 min), Facebook (~30 min), YouTube social mode (~28 min), and X/Twitter (~26 min). TikTok's algorithm-driven content discovery — which surfaces relevant content without requiring an established social network — creates uniquely sticky engagement loops. This engagement advantage drove Meta to launch Reels and raised Instagram active-user daily time from ~26 min (pre-Reels) to ~33 min (2024). Sources: App Annie/data.ai, eMarketer, DataReportal 2024. ±5–8 minutes per platform. **+8 min**COVID-19 2020 — Largest Single-Year Increase in Daily Social Media Time (2012–2024 Series)Global average daily social media time jumped from approximately 128 minutes in 2019 to approximately 136 minutes in 2020 — an 8-minute increase driven by COVID-19 lockdowns globally. This was the largest single-year increase in the 2012–2024 data series. Crucially, the increase was sustained: post-lockdown usage did not revert to 2019 levels, confirming that pandemic-era social media habits became permanent. The 2019 figure itself represented the first year-on-year decline in the series (-2 minutes). Sources: Statista, DataReportal, GWI 2019–2021. ±8–12 minutes margin of error. **181 min**16–24 Year Olds — Most Active Age Group at 181 Minutes/Day, But Growing Slowest Since 2019Adults aged 16–24 spend approximately 181 minutes (3 hours 1 minute) per day on social media globally — the most of any age group. However, the 55–64 age group (+69% growth since 2017) has grown its daily social media time far faster than 16–24 year olds (modest growth), as older cohorts catch up to digital social norms. The 25–34 bracket spends approximately 157 minutes/day; 35–44 approximately 134 minutes; 45–54 approximately 112 minutes; 55–64 approximately 88 minutes. Sources: GWI Global Web Index Q4 2024. ±10 minutes per

age group. ~145 minProjected Global Daily Social Media Time 2026 — Near-Flat From 2024's 143 MinutesGlobal average daily social media time is projected at approximately 144 minutes in 2025 and approximately 145 minutes in 2026 — effectively stable near the 142–147 minute plateau established since 2021. Future growth in total global social media engagement will come from new user additions in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, not from increased per-user daily time. Developed-market daily times are projected to decline slowly toward 110–120 minutes by 2030. Sources: Statista Digital Economy Compass 2025. ±15 minutes per projected year.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — Daily Social Media Time Worldwide

Internet users worldwide spend an average of approximately **143 minutes (2 hours 23 minutes) per day on social media in 2024**. This is up from approximately 90 minutes in 2012 — a 59% increase over 12 years. The figure covers all social networking and messaging platforms including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube (social mode), WhatsApp, Telegram, and others. Daily usage has been stable near 142–147 minutes since 2021. Sources: Statista, DataReportal We Are Social 2024, GWI Global Web Index. ±8–12 minutes margin of error.

The **Philippines leads global daily social media usage at approximately 223 minutes (3 hours 43 minutes) per day in 2024** — the highest of any country. Followed by Brazil (208 min), Colombia (204 min), Nigeria (198 min), Ghana (192 min), and India (171 min). The Philippines' leadership reflects zero-rated Facebook data plans that make social media the de facto internet for millions, combined with a culturally high-engagement digital social culture. Japan records the lowest among major economies at approximately 51 minutes per day. Source: DataReportal We Are Social Global Digital Report 2024. ±10–15 minutes per country.

Global average daily social media time grew from approximately **90 minutes in 2012 to approximately 143 minutes in 2024 — an increase of 53 minutes (+59%) over 12 years**. Growth was fastest in 2015–2017 (averaging +7.7 minutes/year) driven by smartphone adoption and Instagram Stories. The 2019 contraction (–2 minutes) was the first annual decline in the series. COVID-19 lockdowns drove the largest single-year spike in 2020 (+8 minutes). Since 2022, daily time has stabilised near 142–147 minutes as developed-market saturation bites. Sources: Statista, DataReportal, GWI annual surveys 2012–2024.

Social media usage by age group in 2024 (global average): **16–24 year olds approximately 181 minutes/day**, 25–34 approximately 157 minutes, 35–44 approximately 134 minutes, 45–54 approximately

112 minutes, 55–64 approximately 88 minutes. Counterintuitively, the 55–64 group has grown its daily social media time by approximately 69% since 2017 — far faster than the 16–24 group — as older cohorts complete their adoption of social platforms. The 16–24 group's growth has been tempered by migration toward gaming and mental health-driven deliberate reduction. Sources: GWI Global Web Index Q4 2024. ± 10 minutes per age group.

TikTok generates the highest average daily engagement per active user at approximately 53 minutes per day — significantly above Instagram (~33 min), Facebook (~30 min), YouTube social mode (~28 min), and X/Twitter (~26 min). TikTok's algorithm-driven discovery model — which surfaces relevant content without requiring an established social network — creates uniquely sticky engagement. This engagement advantage prompted Meta to launch Reels, which successfully increased Instagram's daily active-user time from ~26 minutes (pre-Reels, 2020) to ~33 minutes (2024). Sources: App Annie/data.ai, eMarketer 2024. ± 5 –8 minutes per platform.

Yes — **COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020 drove the largest single-year increase in global daily social media time in the 2012–2024 data series:** from approximately 128 minutes in 2019 to approximately 136 minutes in 2020, a gain of approximately 8 minutes in one year. The increase was sustained — usage did not return to pre-COVID levels after lockdowns ended, confirming that pandemic-era social media habits became permanent. The 2019 figure itself represented the first annual decline in the series (-2 minutes from 2018). Sources: Statista, DataReportal, GWI 2019–2022.

Global average daily social media time is projected at approximately **144 minutes in 2025 and approximately 145 minutes in 2026** — effectively stable relative to 2024's 143 minutes. Growth is expected to be minimal (approximately 1–2 minutes per year) as the daily time budget for social media approaches a ceiling in developed markets. Future growth in total global social media time will come from new user additions in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, not from increased per-user daily time. Sources: Statista Digital Economy Compass 2025. ± 15 minutes per projected year.

Global average daily social media time (143 minutes in 2024) is approaching — but has not yet surpassed — daily television viewing time (approximately 165–170 minutes globally). However, the gap has narrowed dramatically from approximately 120 minutes in 2012 (TV: ~210 min, social: ~90 min) to approximately 27 minutes in 2024 (TV: ~170 min, social: ~143 min). Among 16–24 year olds specifically, social media time (approximately 181 minutes) already exceeds TV time (approximately 85 minutes among this age group) — a complete inversion of the media consumption pattern of a decade ago. Sources: DataReportal, Nielsen, Statista Media Usage Surveys 2024.

Sources

DataReportal — We Are Social Global Digital Report (Annual, 2012–2024) — Primary source for country-level daily social media time data and regional breakdowns. DataReportal publishes annual Global Digital Reports each January drawing on GWI panel surveys, platform self-reported data, and passive meter research. All country figures cited in this report are from the most recent available DataReportal We Are Social annual report.

Statista — Daily Time Spent on Social Networking by Internet Users Worldwide 2012–2026 — Primary source for the global annual time series from 2012 to 2024 and the 2025–2026 projections. Statista aggregates GWI survey data and cross-validates with platform passive measurement for the global daily time series used throughout this report.

GWJ Global Web Index — Flagship Report Q4 2024 — Primary source for age-group breakdowns of daily social media time. GWI surveys approximately 800,000 internet users annually across 50+ countries, enabling robust demographic sub-group analysis unavailable from aggregate platform or device data. Age-group daily time figures drawn from GWI Q4 2024 Flagship Report.

App Annie / data.ai — State of Mobile 2024 — Primary source for platform-level daily engagement time among active users. App Annie's passive measurement panel tracks actual in-app time across Android and iOS globally, providing device-measured engagement data that corrects for self-report bias in survey-based methods. Platform engagement figures are from data.ai State of Mobile 2024.

All daily time figures are estimates from panel surveys and device measurement studies. Methodology varies across sources — self-reported survey data (GWI) tends to underestimate actual usage versus passive panel measurement (App Annie); global averages are blended from multiple sources. ± 8 –12 minutes margin of error for reported global averages, ± 10 –15 minutes for country figures, ± 15 minutes for projections. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Social Media — Statistics & Facts 2026

Updated Jun 13, 2026 · businessstats.com/social-media-statistics-facts

5.24B GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA USERS 2026	64% OF WORLD POPULATION ON SOCIAL	\$260B TOTAL SOCIAL MEDIA REVENUE 2025
2h 24m AVERAGE DAILY TIME SPENT	6.7 AVG PLATFORMS PER USER	\$1.3T SOCIAL COMMERCE SALES 2025

Executive Summary

Social Media in 2026 — 5.24 Billion Users, \$260 Billion in Revenue, and the AI-Powered Feed Revolution

Social media has evolved from a niche internet phenomenon — Facebook launched in a Harvard dorm room in 2004 with zero users — to the **dominant communication, entertainment, and commerce infrastructure** for 64% of humanity in just two decades. The **5.24 billion people** who use social media in 2026 spend a collective **12.6 billion hours per day** on these platforms — the equivalent of 1.44 million years of human attention consumed daily. This attention is monetized through the most sophisticated advertising technology ever created: AI-powered recommendation algorithms that predict user behavior with extraordinary precision, enabling advertisers to reach precisely targeted audiences at scale. The result is a **\$260 billion annual revenue machine** dominated by two companies — Meta Platforms (\$165B) and Alphabet/YouTube (\$45B from YouTube) — that collectively capture approximately 80% of global social media ad spending. The market valuations of these social media giants place them among the world's most valuable companies, with Meta's \$1.5 trillion market cap making it the seventh most valuable company globally.

The defining trend of 2024–2026 is the **AI transformation of the social media experience**. Every major platform has rebuilt its core feed algorithm around advanced AI recommendation systems that prioritize content based on predicted engagement rather than social connections. TikTok pioneered this approach with its “For You” feed — and Meta, YouTube, and others have followed. The result is that users increasingly see content from strangers and creators rather than friends and family, fundamentally shifting social media from a “social networking” tool to an “entertainment and discovery” platform. AI is also

transforming content creation (AI-generated images, text, and video), content moderation (automated detection of harmful content at scale), and advertising (predictive targeting, creative optimization). This AI revolution in social media is powered by the same foundational technology driving the broader [global artificial intelligence market's explosive growth to \\$298 billion](#).

5.24 billion people use social media in 2026, spending an average of 2 hours 24 minutes per day across 6.7 platforms. The social media industry generates \$260 billion annually, with Meta Platforms and Alphabet capturing approximately 80% of global social advertising revenue.

Global Users Growth

Social Media Users Worldwide — From 970 Million in 2010 to 5.24 Billion in 2026

The growth of global social media adoption over the past 16 years represents one of the most rapid technology adoption curves in human history. Social media users grew from approximately **970 million in 2010** (14% of world population) to **2.07 billion in 2015** (28%), **3.6 billion in 2020** (46%), and **5.24 billion in 2026** (64%). The growth rate has naturally decelerated as penetration approaches saturation in developed markets — North America (82% penetration), Western Europe (80%), and East Asia (78%) are approaching ceiling levels, while growth continues in Sub-Saharan Africa (35% penetration, adding ~50M users/year), South Asia (45%), and Southeast Asia (72%). By 2030, social media users are projected to reach approximately **6.0–6.3 billion** — representing nearly 75% of the estimated 8.5 billion global population. The relationship between social media adoption and broader population trends is explored in detailed analysis of [US population statistics and demographic shifts](#).

Social Media Users Worldwide Global Social Media Users — 2010 to 2030* Billions of users · Year-end figures · DataReportal, We Are Social 5.24BUsers · 2026 ActualProjected

CAGR ~11% · 2010–2026 Sources: DataReportal · We Are Social · Statista · *2028–2030 projected

Top Platforms Ranked

Top Social Media Platforms by Monthly Active Users — 2026 Rankings

The social media platform landscape in 2026 is dominated by a small number of mega-platforms — each with over one billion monthly active users — while hundreds of smaller, niche platforms compete for specific demographics and use cases. **Facebook** retains its position as the world's largest social network

with 3.07 billion MAUs despite persistent narratives about its decline among younger users. **YouTube** (2.70B) and **WhatsApp** (2.78B) round out the top three. The most significant platform story of the decade has been **TikTok's explosive rise** to 1.92 billion MAUs — growing from zero users in 2017 to nearly 2 billion in less than a decade, fundamentally disrupting the attention economy and forcing every competitor to adopt short-form video formats.

Top 10 Social Media Platforms by MAU — Q1 2026

Revenue & Advertising

Social Media Revenue and Advertising — A \$260 Billion Industry

The social media industry's \$260 billion annual revenue is generated almost entirely through **digital advertising** — the business model where platforms provide free services to users and monetize user attention and data through targeted advertising. **Meta Platforms dominates** with approximately \$165 billion in 2025 revenue (63% market share), followed by Alphabet's YouTube segment (~\$45 billion), ByteDance/TikTok (~\$35 billion), Snap (~\$5.5 billion), Pinterest (~\$3.8 billion), and X/Twitter (~\$2.5 billion). The advertising model means that social media's true customers are advertisers, not users — a structural dynamic that shapes every product decision, algorithm change, and platform feature. Institutional investors like [BlackRock and other major asset managers](#) hold significant positions in social media companies through index funds and ETFs, making social media platform performance a key driver of broader stock market returns.

Social Media Platform Revenue & Users — 2025/2026

Click column to sort

RANK	PLATFORM	PARENT COMPANY	MAUS (B)	REVENUE 2025	AD REV SHARE	PRIMARY FORMAT
1	Facebook	Meta Platforms	3.07B	\$165B*	~63%	Feed / Groups / Marketplace
2	YouTube	Alphabet (Google)	2.70B	\$45B	~17%	Long & Short Video
3	WhatsApp	Meta Platforms	2.78B	~\$2B	<1%	Messaging / Status
4	Instagram	Meta Platforms	2.35B	~\$65B*	~25%	Photos / Reels / Stories
5	TikTok	ByteDance	1.92B	~\$35B	~13%	Short-Form Video
6	WeChat	Tencent	1.36B	~\$12B	~5%	Super App / Messaging

7	Telegram	Telegram FZ-LLC	950M	~\$1B	<1%	Messaging / Channels
8	Snapchat	Snap Inc.	850M	\$5.5B	~2%	Stories / AR / Messaging
9	X (Twitter)	X Corp (xAI)	~620M	~\$2.5B	~1%	Microblogging / News
10	Pinterest	Pinterest Inc.	540M	\$3.8B	~1.5%	Visual Discovery / Shopping

Engagement & Time Spent

Daily Time Spent on Social Media — 2 Hours 24 Minutes and the Attention Economy

The average social media user spends approximately **2 hours 24 minutes per day** across platforms in 2026 — a figure that has remained remarkably stable since 2020, when it peaked at approximately 2 hours 30 minutes during COVID-19 lockdowns. This translates to approximately **876 hours per year** — or 36.5 full days — spent on social media. Multiplied across 5.24 billion users, the global social media attention economy consumes approximately **12.6 billion human-hours daily**. TikTok leads in per-session engagement at an average of **58 minutes per day** among active users, followed by YouTube (48 minutes), Instagram (33 minutes), Facebook (30 minutes), and Snapchat (28 minutes).

DAILY TIME SPENT BY COUNTRY 2026 Average Daily Social Media Time by Country Minutes per day · All platforms combined · DataReportal, GWI · 2026 Time spent among internet users aged 16–64. Sources: DataReportal Digital 2026, GWI, We Are Social.

Social Media Users Growth by Platform — 2015 to 2026

The line chart below tracks the monthly active user growth of the five largest social media platforms from 2015 to 2026. Facebook's dominance is clear, maintaining a steady growth trajectory from 1.5 billion to 3.07 billion users. Instagram and TikTok show the most dramatic growth curves: Instagram tripled from 400 million to 2.35 billion, while TikTok exploded from effectively zero in 2017 to 1.92 billion in 2026, the fastest user acquisition in platform history.

Platform Users Growth · 2015–2026 Social Media Platform MAUs — 2015 to 2026 Billions of monthly active users · Company reports, DataReportal 3.07B Facebook MAUs 2026

TikTok: 0 to 1.92B in 8 Years Sources: Meta SEC Filings · ByteDance · Alphabet · DataReportal · Sensor Tower

User Demographics

Social Media Demographics — Who Uses What Platform in 2026

The demographic composition of social media users varies dramatically by platform, age group, gender, income level, and geography — and understanding these demographic splits is essential for advertisers, marketers, researchers, and policymakers. The most consequential demographic shift in social media over the past decade has been the **generational divergence in platform preference**: while Facebook remains the world's largest platform by total users (3.07B MAUs), its user base skews increasingly older — approximately **65% of Facebook's daily active users are over 30**, and only 23% of US teens (13–17) consider Facebook their "main" social network, down from 71% in 2014. Meanwhile, **TikTok has captured the youth demographic**: approximately 67% of US teens and 60% of 18–24 year-olds use TikTok, making it the dominant platform for Generation Z and increasingly for Generation Alpha (born 2010+).

Instagram occupies the middle ground — popular across Millennials (25–40) and Gen Z, with approximately 60% of users aged 18–34. **YouTube** has the most evenly distributed age profile, reaching over 80% of every age group from 13 to 64 in the United States. **LinkedIn** (310 million MAUs) dominates the professional demographic, with users averaging higher income (\$75K+ household income) and education levels (60%+ college-educated) than any other major platform. **Snapchat** retains strong Gen Z loyalty (75% of US 13–34 year-olds), while **Pinterest** skews female (60%+ of users are women) and is particularly popular for shopping inspiration and home décor. The **gender split** across social media is roughly 54% male / 46% female globally, though this varies by platform — Reddit and X skew heavily male (65%+), while Pinterest and TikTok skew slightly female.

Generation Z (Born 1997–2012) — The TikTok Generation Primary: TikTok (67%), Instagram (62%), Snapchat (59%) · 3h 10m daily average Gen Z is the first generation to grow up entirely in the social media era. They prefer short-form video content, value authenticity over polish, and are the primary drivers of creator economy growth. Approximately 54% of Gen Z say they've purchased a product after seeing it on TikTok. Facebook usage among Gen Z has declined to approximately 35% — they see it as "their parents' platform."

Millennials (Born 1981–1996) — The Multi-Platform Generation Primary: Instagram (72%), Facebook (68%), YouTube (82%) · 2h 30m daily average Millennials are the most platform-diverse generation, maintaining active accounts across an average of 7.2 platforms. They dominate Instagram engagement and are the primary demographic for social commerce — approximately 47% have made a purchase through a social media platform in the past year. LinkedIn usage is highest among Millennials (45%) for career networking and professional content.

Generation X (Born 1965–1980) — The Facebook

LoyalistsPrimary: Facebook (76%), YouTube (78%), WhatsApp (52%) · 1h 45m daily averageGen X remains the most loyal Facebook demographic, using the platform primarily for family connections, news consumption, and community groups. They are increasingly adopting Instagram (48%) but have lower TikTok penetration (28%). Gen X represents the highest per-user advertising value due to higher disposable income and purchase intent.

Baby Boomers (Born 1946–1964) — The Fastest Growing SegmentPrimary: Facebook (70%), YouTube (68%), WhatsApp (42%) · 1h 12m daily averageBoomers represent the fastest-growing social media demographic by percentage increase — adoption among US adults 65+ grew from 35% in 2018 to approximately 58% in 2026. They primarily use Facebook and YouTube, with growing adoption of WhatsApp for family communication. Boomers are disproportionately vulnerable to misinformation — studies show adults 65+ share fake news articles approximately 7x more than younger users.

Social Commerce

Social Commerce — \$1.3 Trillion in 2025 and the Future of Shopping

Social commerce — the purchase of products directly within social media platforms — reached approximately **\$1.3 trillion in global sales in 2025**, representing approximately 17% of all e-commerce and growing at approximately 25% annually. China dominates with approximately 50% of global social commerce (\$650 billion), driven by deeply integrated shopping experiences within WeChat, Douyin (TikTok's Chinese version), and Taobao Live. In Western markets, **TikTok Shop** has emerged as the fastest-growing social commerce platform, generating approximately \$20 billion in gross merchandise value in 2025. Instagram Shop, Facebook Marketplace, YouTube Shopping, and Pinterest's shoppable pins are also significant channels. The convergence of social media and e-commerce represents a fundamental shift in how consumers discover and purchase products — a trend explored in [comprehensive analysis of global retail e-commerce sales growth and its structural acceleration](#).

\$1.3TGlobal Social Commerce Sales 2025 \$2.9TProjected Social Commerce 2030 ~17%Share of All E-Commerce \$650BChina Social Commerce (50%) \$20BTikTok Shop GMV 2025 25%Annual Growth Rate

Social media has evolved from a social networking tool to the dominant entertainment, commerce, and information platform for 5.24 billion users worldwide. AI-powered recommendation algorithms now determine what billions of people see, read, and buy every day.

TikTok Deep Dive

TikTok in 2026 — 1.92 Billion Users, \$35 Billion Revenue, and the Regulatory Storm

TikTok's trajectory from a Chinese music lip-syncing app (Musical.ly, 2014) to the world's most culturally influential social media platform with **1.92 billion monthly active users** is the most disruptive platform story of the 2020s. TikTok reached 1 billion users faster than any social platform in history — achieving in approximately **5 years** what took Facebook 8 years, Instagram 8 years, and YouTube 7 years. Its parent company ByteDance is now valued at approximately **\$300 billion**, making it the most valuable private company in the world. TikTok's advertising revenue reached approximately **\$35 billion in 2025**, a 10x increase from \$3.4 billion in 2021, and **TikTok Shop** generated approximately \$20 billion in gross merchandise value — making it a significant e-commerce player in addition to a social media platform.

TikTok's core innovation — the **algorithmically curated "For You" feed** — fundamentally disrupted social media's business model. Unlike Facebook and Instagram, which historically ranked content based on social connections (friends, follows), TikTok's recommendation algorithm surfaces content from any creator based on predicted engagement, regardless of follower count. This means a first-time creator can have a video reach millions of people — a democratization of content distribution that legacy platforms could not match. The algorithm's effectiveness at capturing attention (average session: 58 minutes among active users) forced Meta to create Reels, YouTube to launch Shorts, and Snapchat to develop Spotlight — effectively making TikTok the template for all social media product development since 2020.

However, TikTok faces **existential regulatory threats** in its largest Western markets. The US government has pursued legislation (RESTRICT Act, TikTok ban provisions in the 2024 appropriations bill) requiring ByteDance to divest TikTok's US operations or face a ban, citing national security concerns about Chinese government access to 170 million Americans' data. The EU's Digital Services Act imposes stringent content moderation and data transparency requirements. India banned TikTok entirely in 2020, removing 200 million users overnight. The resolution of TikTok's regulatory status — whether through divestiture, operational restructuring, or potential ban — represents the most consequential platform-level policy decision in social media history.

Market Impact TikTok Accounts for 32% of Global Social Media Time Among 18–24 Year-Olds — More Than Any Other Single Platform

TikTok's dominance among young users is reshaping the entire media landscape. Among US adults 18–24, TikTok captures approximately 32% of total social media time, compared to Instagram (22%), YouTube (20%), and Snapchat (14%). This attention shift has redirected approximately \$15 billion in annual

advertising spend from legacy platforms to TikTok since 2021. Music discovery has moved to TikTok (75% of Billboard Hot 100 hits in 2025 gained initial traction on TikTok), news consumption is increasingly TikTok-mediated (43% of Gen Z say they "regularly" get news from TikTok), and product discovery for Gen Z is now TikTok-first rather than Google-first — a structural shift that threatens Google's search advertising moat.

AI & Content Moderation

AI in Social Media — Algorithmic Feeds, Content Moderation, and Synthetic Media

Artificial intelligence is the invisible infrastructure powering every aspect of the modern social media experience — from the feed algorithm that determines what 5.24 billion people see every day, to the content moderation systems that review billions of posts for policy violations, to the advertising targeting technology that enables \$248 billion in annual ad spending. In 2026, AI's role in social media has expanded dramatically across three dimensions: **AI-powered recommendation algorithms** (the core revenue engine), **AI content moderation at scale** (automated review of 95%+ of flagged content), and the emerging challenge of **AI-generated synthetic content** (deepfakes, AI-written posts, synthetic influencers).

Meta's recommendation AI has been the company's most significant product evolution since News Feed. Mark Zuckerberg disclosed that approximately **30% of Facebook feed content** and **50% of Instagram feed content** in 2025 came from AI recommendations of accounts the user does not follow — up from effectively 0% before 2022. This shift to "unconnected recommendations" has increased engagement metrics by approximately 7–8% but has fundamentally changed the platform's character from a social networking tool to an entertainment discovery platform. Meta's AI investment — approximately \$35–40 billion in capital expenditure in 2025 on AI data centers — reflects the company's conviction that AI recommendation quality is the primary driver of competitive advantage. On **content moderation**, Meta reports that its AI systems proactively detect and remove approximately **95% of violating content** before any user reports it across categories including hate speech, violence, and spam. TikTok's moderation AI reviews approximately **100 million videos per day**. However, AI moderation remains imperfect — false positives (legitimate content removed), cultural context failures, and adversarial evasion remain significant challenges.

The most destabilizing AI trend in social media is the rise of **AI-generated content and synthetic media**. Generative AI tools (Midjourney, DALL-E, Sora, ChatGPT) enable the creation of photorealistic images,

convincing fake videos, and human-quality text at near-zero cost and unlimited scale. An estimated **10–15% of new content** posted to major social platforms in 2026 involves some form of AI generation or assistance — a figure projected to reach 50%+ by 2030. This raises fundamental questions about authenticity, trust, and information integrity that platforms are only beginning to address through content labeling, provenance standards (C2PA), and watermarking requirements.

Regulation & Privacy

Social Media Regulation — The Global Crackdown on Platform Power

The era of largely unregulated social media is ending. Between 2020 and 2026, virtually every major jurisdiction has enacted or proposed comprehensive social media regulation — driven by concerns about **child safety, misinformation, data privacy, competition, and platform accountability**. The EU's **Digital Services Act (DSA)**, fully effective since February 2024, is the most comprehensive social media regulatory framework globally — requiring platforms with 45M+ EU users to conduct systemic risk assessments, implement transparent content moderation, provide algorithm transparency, and face fines of up to 6% of global revenue for violations. The EU has opened formal investigations into X (Twitter), TikTok, and Meta under the DSA. The **UK's Online Safety Act** (2023) imposes legal duties on platforms to protect users — particularly children — from harmful content, with criminal liability for senior executives. **Australia's** 2024 social media age verification law bans children under 16 from social media platforms entirely — the strictest age-based restriction globally.

In the **United States**, federal social media regulation remains politically fragmented, but state-level action is accelerating. Over **35 states** have introduced or passed social media legislation targeting child safety, age verification, algorithm transparency, or data privacy. The Supreme Court's pending decisions on Florida and Texas social media laws (which restrict platforms' ability to moderate content) could fundamentally reshape the legal framework for social media in America. Bipartisan support exists for the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) and the American Privacy Rights Act (APRA), though neither had been enacted as of Q1 2026. Meanwhile, the FTC's \$5 billion privacy penalty against Meta (2019) and ongoing antitrust cases against both Meta and Google represent the most significant enforcement actions in social media history.

EU — Digital Services Act (DSA) Fully effective Feb 2024 · 45M+ user threshold · Up to 6% global revenue fines The most comprehensive social media law globally. Requires risk assessments, algorithm transparency, advertising archives, and researcher data access. Investigations opened against X, TikTok, AliExpress, and Meta. Has become the global template — similar to GDPR's influence on privacy law

worldwide. United States — Fragmented Federal, Active States 35+ states with social media bills · KOSA pending · Section 230 debate ongoing No comprehensive federal social media law. Section 230 (liability shield) remains under debate. State laws on child safety and content moderation face constitutional challenges. FTC enforcement actions (\$5B Meta penalty). TikTok divestiture legislation advancing. Supreme Court rulings on state content moderation laws pending. UK — Online Safety Act Royal Assent Oct 2023 · Criminal liability for executives · Ofcom enforcement Imposes legal duties on platforms to protect users from illegal and harmful content, with special protections for children. Senior executives face criminal prosecution for non-compliance. Ofcom (communications regulator) empowered to require technology solutions for content detection, including potential client-side scanning of encrypted messages — raising significant privacy concerns. Australia — Social Media Age Ban Under-16 ban enacted 2024 · Platform-enforced age verification required The world's strictest social media age restriction — banning children under 16 from social media platforms entirely. Platforms (not parents) bear responsibility for enforcement through age verification technology. Fines up to AUD \$50 million for non-compliance. The law has sparked global debate about age-based social media restrictions, with France, Spain, and several US states considering similar legislation.

Social Media Advertising Revenue Share by Platform — 2025

AD REVENUE MARKET SHARE 2025 Social Media Advertising Revenue by Platform Total ~\$248B ad spend · Insider Intelligence · 2025

Ad revenue market share estimates. Meta revenue includes Facebook + Instagram combined. YouTube = Google social/video ad segment.

2030 Outlook

Social Media 2030 — 6+ Billion Users, \$400B Revenue, and the Spatial Web

The social media landscape through 2030 will be shaped by the convergence of several transformative forces: **AI-generated content** (deepfakes, synthetic media, AI influencers), **spatial computing** (AR/VR social experiences via Meta Quest, Apple Vision Pro), **regulatory fragmentation** (EU DSA, potential US TikTok restrictions, India's data localization), and the continued rise of **social commerce** as a \$2.9 trillion channel. The platforms that thrive will be those that successfully balance engagement maximization with content quality, privacy compliance, and societal responsibility.

Social Media 2030 Projections Key Forecasts for the Social Media Industry 6.0–6.3B
Global Social Users 2030 \$400B+
Total Social Revenue 2030 \$2.9T
Social Commerce 2030 75%
Global Population on Social 90%+
AI-Moderated Content 50%+
Video Share of All Social Content

Five Forces Reshaping Social Media Through 2030

AI-Generated Content Will Exceed Human-Created Content by 2028–2030 Generative AI is approaching the capability to produce text, images, and video indistinguishable from human-created content at effectively zero marginal cost. By 2030, an estimated 50–80% of content on social media feeds may be AI-generated or AI-assisted — from brand advertisements and influencer posts to news summaries and entertainment clips. This will collapse the production cost of content creation, enable hyper-personalized content at individual user level, and create unprecedented challenges for authenticity and trust. Platforms will be forced to implement AI content labeling, provenance verification, and synthetic media detection at scale.

Spatial Social Media — AR/VR Experiences via Meta Quest and Apple Vision Pro The convergence of social media and spatial computing represents the next major platform paradigm. Meta has invested over \$50 billion in Reality Labs since 2019, building Horizon Worlds and social VR experiences accessed through Quest headsets. Apple's Vision Pro has introduced spatial computing to the premium market. By 2030, early-stage "spatial social" — virtual hangouts, shared AR experiences, spatial video calls — could reach 200–500 million users, though mass adoption depends on hardware cost reduction, compelling social use cases, and content ecosystem development.

The Creator Economy — From \$250 Billion to \$500 Billion+ The creator economy — the ecosystem of approximately 200 million content creators monetizing through brand partnerships, fan subscriptions, tipping, merchandise, and platform revenue sharing — reached approximately \$250 billion in 2025. By 2030, the creator economy is projected to exceed \$500 billion as platforms compete for top creators with better monetization tools, AI creative assistants enable higher-quality content production at lower cost, and social commerce provides direct product sales channels. The top 1% of creators (approximately 2 million people) earn 90%+ of creator economy revenue, creating a power-law distribution similar to traditional entertainment.

Decentralized Social Media — Bluesky, Mastodon, and the Fediverse The backlash against centralized platform power has fueled growth in decentralized alternatives. Bluesky (the AT Protocol) reached approximately 30 million users by Q1 2026, Mastodon and the Fediverse reached approximately 15 million active users, and Farcaster (crypto-native social) reached approximately 500K active users. While these platforms remain small relative to incumbents, they represent a philosophically distinct approach to social media — user ownership of data, algorithmic choice, portable identity, and censorship resistance. If any major platform faces a catastrophic trust failure or regulatory ban, decentralized alternatives could absorb millions of displaced users rapidly.



Mental Health Regulation — The Coming Reckoning for Engagement-Maximizing AlgorithmsThe growing body of research linking social media use to adolescent mental health challenges — particularly anxiety, depression, body image issues, and sleep disruption — is driving regulatory action globally. The US Surgeon General's 2023 advisory on social media and youth mental health, Australia's under-16 ban, the UK Online Safety Act's child protection provisions, and proposed algorithm transparency requirements all point toward a future where engagement-maximizing algorithms are either restricted for minors, require parental consent, or must demonstrably avoid harmful content amplification. These regulatory pressures could fundamentally alter the ad-supported business model for users under 18.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions — Social Media Statistics 2026

5.24 billion people — 64% of the global population. Up from 3.6B in 2020. Average user has 6.7 platform accounts and spends 2h 24m daily on social media.

Facebook (3.07B MAUs), YouTube (2.70B), WhatsApp (2.78B), Instagram (2.35B), TikTok (1.92B). Meta owns 3 of the top 4 platforms.

~\$260 billion in 2025. Meta leads (\$165B), YouTube (\$45B), TikTok (\$35B), Snap (\$5.5B). 95%+ from advertising. Social ad spend = 33% of all digital advertising.

Global average: **2 hours 24 minutes/day**. Gen Z averages 3h 10m. TikTok leads engagement (58 min/day). Philippines has highest national average (3h 53m).

\$1.3 trillion in 2025, projected \$2.9T by 2030. China leads (50%, \$650B). TikTok Shop generated \$20B GMV in 2025. Growing 25% annually.

1.92B MAUs in 2026 — fastest to 1B users (5 years vs. Facebook's 8). \$35B revenue in 2025. ByteDance valued at ~\$300B. Faces US regulatory risk.

Projected **6.0–6.3B users, \$400B+ revenue, \$2.9T social commerce**. AI-generated content dominant. AR/VR social experiences emerging. 90%+ content AI-moderated. Video exceeds 50% of all content.

Data Sources & References

Primary: [DataReportal — Digital 2026 Global Overview Report](#)

Primary: [We Are Social — Digital Report Series](#)

Primary: Meta Platforms SEC Filings (10-K/10-Q) · Alphabet SEC Filings · Snap Inc. Investor Reports



Additional: Statista · Insider Intelligence · Sensor Tower · data.ai · Comscore · GWI (Global Web Index) · Morgan Stanley TMT Research · Grand View Research

Data Transparency Note:

MAU figures are from company-reported data where available, supplemented by third-party estimates. Revenue figures for privately held companies (ByteDance, Telegram) are estimates based on industry reports. Platform user counts may include overlap (same person on multiple platforms). *Meta revenue includes Facebook + Instagram + WhatsApp combined. This report is for informational purposes only.

[Social Media Statistics 2026](#) [Social Media Users Worldwide](#) [Facebook Users 2026](#) [TikTok Statistics](#) [Instagram Users](#) [Social Media Revenue](#) [Social Media Advertising](#) [Social Commerce](#) [Daily Time on Social Media](#) [Social Media Platforms Ranked](#)



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