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STATISTICS BOOK

Use: statistics and facts

10 full reports · Edition November 2026

71%

TIKTOK — HIGHEST PLANNED ORGANIC INCREASE (NEXT 12 MONTHS)

374M

USERS 2025

69.8M

ILLICIT DRUG USERS

~41%

GLOBAL ADULTS USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR NEWS — APRIL 2026

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Use: statistics and facts

Looking for data on Use? The 10 reports below cover Social Media (4 reports) and People Use (2 reports).

Some numbers that stand out in these reports: 71% (TikTok — Highest Planned Organic Increase (Next 12 Months)), 3.64B (DAP, Sept 2026), 56% vs 45% (US Women vs Men, 2026) and ~41% (Global Adults Using Social Media for News — April 2026).

Recently updated reports include Planned Changes Organic Social Media Marketing 2026 — Platform Use Changes Worldwide and How Many People Use Meta Apps Every Day? 3.64 Billion in Q3 2026. New and updated reports appear here automatically, the last change was on Nov 25, 2026. Each report lists its sources and lets you download its charts and data.

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 Nov 25, 2026.

CONTENTS

1. Social Media

1 Planned Changes Organic Social Media Marketing 2026 — Platform Use Changes Worldwide 4

2 42% of Adults Use Social Media for News — By Country Statistics 2026 14

3 Why People Use Social Media — Top Reasons Worldwide 2026 27

4 89% of Marketers Use Facebook — Top Social Media Platforms Worldwide 2026 39

2. People Use

5 How Many People Use Generative AI Worldwide? (2026) 52

6 How Many People Use Meta Apps Every Day? 3.64 Billion in Q3 2026 62

3. More statistics

7	US Drug Use 2025: 69.8M Used Illicit Drugs, 44.6M Have SUD	**76**
8	Gen AI Shopping: 51% of Consumers Now Use It, Up From 38%	**88**
9	Silver Demand by End Use 2026 (Ranked)	**96**
10	Do More Women or Men Use Instagram? What Official Surveys Show	**111**

STATISTICS REPORT

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

Updated May 21, 2026 · businesstats.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 DeclineApproximately 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 PlatformsApproximately 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 PlatformsApproximately 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. +62ppTikTok Net Score — 80pp Ahead of Twitter/X — Widest Platform Momentum Gap in Survey HistoryThe 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

Social media as a news outlet worldwide — 2026

Updated May 16, 2026 · businesstats.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. -10ppGlobal 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. -20ppUSA Social Media News Decline — From 62% (2016) to 42% (2026), Largest Decline Among Major MarketsThe 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. ±2–4 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. ±2–4 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. ±2–4 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. ±3–5 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). ±2–4 percentage points per country for country-level figures, ±3–5 percentage points for age-group and platform breakdowns. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Leading social media usage reasons worldwide — 2026

Updated May 15, 2026 · businesstats.com/social-media-usage-reasons-worldwide

51% KEEPING IN TOUCH — #1 REASON WORLDWIDE Q2 2026	**47%** FILLING SPARE TIME — #2 REASON WORLDWIDE	**43%** READING NEWS STORIES — #3 REASON
34% PRODUCT DISCOVERY — FASTEST GROWING SINCE 2019	**25%** PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING — UP FROM 18% IN 2019	**+11pp** PRODUCT DISCOVERY GROWTH 2019–2026 (23% TO 34%)

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%. ±3–5 percentage points margin of error per reason. "vs 2019" comparisons have additional ±3pp 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 (+11pp) as social commerce infrastructure matured across every major platform. Professional networking (+7pp) and video content consumption (+7pp) 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 GloballyApproximately 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 ContentApproximately 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 ConnectionWhen 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 ScoreAmong 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

Leading social media platforms used by marketers worldwide — 2026

Updated May 14, 2026 · businesstats.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 (%) Facebook: 94% (2019) to 89% (2026). Instagram: 73% to 80%. TikTok: 8% to 52%. X/Twitter: 66% to 43%. LinkedIn: 66% to 67%. YouTube: 44% to 55%. 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 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 Best Social Media Marketing ROI — Platforms Cited by Marketers Worldwide 2026 (%) 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. $247BTotal 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 2026Approximately 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 ChannelApproximately 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. +44ppTikTok — Biggest Adoption Growth: From 8% (2019) to 52% (2026) Among MarketersTikTok'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 ProfessionalsLinkedIn 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 PerformerApproximately 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. $276BGlobal Social Media Ad Spend Projected at $276B in 2026 — Meta Captures ~44% ShareGlobal 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. ±8–12% 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. ±4–5 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. ±3–5 percentage points margin of error for adoption/ROI figures; ±8–12% for advertising revenue estimates. Not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Number of users of generative AI worldwide 2020-2032

Updated Sep 16, 2026 · businesstats.com/generative-ai-users-worldwide

374M USERS 2025	**1.2B** USERS 2031	**1B** CHATGPT WEEKLY
2 mo TO 100M USERS	**53%** OF WORLD IN 3YR	**$549B** MARKET 2032

Overview

Number of users of generative AI worldwide from 2020 to 2032

The number of generative AI users worldwide is modeled at about 374 million in 2025 and is forecast to reach roughly 1.2 billion by 2031, according to Statista Market Insights. That is a near tripling of the user base in six years, and it follows a starting point of close to zero before ChatGPT arrived at the end of 2022. Few technologies have gone from launch to a billion users this quickly.

Measured across all AI tools rather than the narrower generative AI market, more than a billion people already use them every month. The single clearest gauge of the boom is ChatGPT, which passed one billion weekly active users in August 2026. Its climb sets the tone for the whole category, so the chart below traces it before the report turns to the worldwide totals, the market and the leading tools. The scale of the shift is comparable only to the early internet, a story our worldwide AI statistics coverage follows in depth.

A note on the data. This is the 2026 edition. The worldwide user figures for 2025 and 2031 are a Statista Market Insights model, shown as the headline forecast. Every other chart carries its own source and period, from OpenAI and Meta for tool users to eMarketer for national figures. Numbers beyond the current year are forecasts and are labeled as such, and none of the figures here are estimated by us.

ChatGPT Weekly Active Users (millions)From 300 million to a billion.

Data:

ChatGPT weekly active users in millions, as reported by OpenAI.

Note:

Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

From 300 million to a billion: ChatGPT weekly users more than tripled in under two years, passing one billion in August 2026.

Worldwide Forecast

How many people use generative AI worldwide?

On the Statista Market Insights model, about 374 million people worldwide use generative AI in 2025, and that number is forecast to climb to roughly 1.2 billion by 2031. The trajectory implies steady annual growth even after the first explosive wave, as the technology moves from early adopters into everyday tools used by ordinary consumers and workers.

The worldwide total depends heavily on how a user is defined, and the honest answer is a range rather than a single number. The narrow Statista Market Insights measure counts active users of the dedicated generative AI market at about 374 million in 2025. Microsoft, using telemetry across its products, estimates more than 1.2 billion people used AI tools within three years of the launch of ChatGPT. Menlo Ventures puts the figure higher still, at roughly 1.75 billion people using AI tools in 2025 once every assistant and embedded feature is counted. All three measures point the same way, toward extraordinarily fast and broad adoption across the world population.

What makes the picture striking is the starting point. In 2020 and 2021, before ChatGPT, the generative AI user base was negligible. The jump from near zero to somewhere between 374 million and 1.75 billion people in only three years, and a Statista forecast of about 1.2 billion dedicated users by 2031, is the fastest ramp of any consumer software category yet measured. The chart below sets the three credible 2025 estimates side by side so the range is clear.

How Many People Use Generative AI Worldwide, 2025 (millions, by measure)Depends how you count.

Data:

Estimated number of people using AI worldwide in 2025 under three definitions, in millions.

Note:

Sources Statista Market Insights (gen AI market users), Microsoft AI Diffusion Report (monthly AI tool users) and Menlo Ventures (all AI tool users). Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

Depends how you count: worldwide estimates for 2025 range from about 374 million on the narrow measure to roughly 1.75 billion counting all AI tools.

Fastest Ever

Why is generative AI spreading so fast?

Generative AI is spreading faster than any consumer technology before it. ChatGPT reached 100 million users in about two months after launch, a milestone that took TikTok around nine months and Instagram more than two years. The tools are free to try, need no new hardware, and deliver an obvious benefit in the first minute of use, which strips away the usual barriers to adoption.

The result is a curve with no real precedent. By one Stanford measure, generative AI reached roughly 53 percent of the global population within about three years, a faster climb than the personal computer or the early internet achieved. Adoption has been pulled along by the integration of AI into products people already open every day, from search engines to office software, so that many users adopt the technology without ever seeking it out. The same platform effects appear across our social media statistics coverage, where features spread through existing networks.

The chart below compares how long several breakout products took to reach 100 million users. The gap between generative AI and everything before it is the single clearest sign of how unusual this adoption wave has been. It is why forecasters keep revising their numbers upward rather than down.

Months to Reach 100 Million UsersNothing spread this fast.

Data:

Approximate time in months for each product to reach 100 million users, as widely reported.

Note:

Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

Nothing spread this fast: ChatGPT reached 100 million users in about two months, against nine for TikTok and thirty for Instagram.

The US Picture

How many Americans use generative AI?

About 121 million people in the United States used generative AI in 2025, roughly 36 percent of the population, and eMarketer forecasts the figure will rise to about 133 million in 2026. The climb from just 7.8 million users in 2022 is one of the steepest adoption curves ever recorded for a digital tool in a single country.

The US case is worth watching because it shows the technology maturing from novelty to habit. Early users were younger, more educated and heavily male, but each year the base has broadened toward the general population. Workplace adoption is now a major driver, with employees bringing tools into their jobs and employers building them into workflows, a shift echoed in coverage of the most impactful marketing technology of recent years.

Even so, the United States is no longer the frontier of adoption. Its penetration of around 36 percent trails the usage rates now reported across several emerging markets, a reversal of the usual pattern in which rich countries lead on new technology. The chart below shows the American user base rising year by year toward the mainstream.

Generative AI Users in the United States (millions)From niche to mainstream.

Data:

Number of generative AI users in the United States, in millions.

Note:

Source eMarketer. The 2026 figure is a forecast. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

From niche to mainstream: US users climbed from 7.8 million in 2022 to about 121 million in 2025, heading toward 133 million in 2026.

Market Money

How big is the generative AI market?

The generative AI market was worth about 38 billion U.S. dollars in 2025 and is forecast to grow past 500 billion by 2032 on the Statista Market Insights model. That is a faster expansion than almost any other technology segment, and it means revenue is rising even more steeply than the user base, as free users convert to paid plans and businesses scale up their spending.

The gap between user growth and revenue growth is the key to the economics. A near tripling of users pairs with a more than tenfold rise in revenue over a similar span, which tells you that the money per user is climbing fast. Enterprise contracts, premium consumer subscriptions and AI features embedded in existing software are all pushing average spending up. The scale of investment behind this sits alongside the wider AI market size and the surging demand for the chips that power it, tracked in our Nvidia statistics.

Forecasts for the market vary widely by definition, from tens of billions on narrow measures to well over a trillion dollars on the broadest ones. The series below uses a single consistent Statista Market Insights model so the year-by-year shape is comparable, running from 2024 through 2032.

Generative AI Market Revenue Worldwide, 2024-2032 (USD billions)Revenue outpaces users.

Data:

Generative AI market revenue worldwide in billions of U.S. dollars.

Note:

Source Statista Market Insights. Figures from 2026 on are forecasts. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

Revenue outpaces users: the market is forecast to grow from about 38 billion dollars in 2025 to more than 500 billion by 2032.

Leading Tools

Which generative AI tools have the most users?

Three assistants now dominate consumer use, each near or above a billion monthly users in 2026. Meta AI, spread across the Meta apps, reports about 1.2 billion monthly users, ChatGPT about 1.1 billion, and Google Gemini around 950 million. The scale is remarkable given that none of these products existed in their current form four years ago.

Raw monthly reach flatters the assistants built into apps people already use, such as Meta AI inside messaging and Gemini inside Google services. On direct, intentional use measured by web traffic, ChatGPT is still the clear leader, holding more than half of all AI chatbot visits, a dominance our Google and Alphabet revenue coverage helps put in context as the search giant races to catch up. The two charts below show the leaders by monthly users and by share of chatbot traffic.

Leading Generative AI Assistants by Monthly Users, 2026 (millions)A three-way race.

Data:

Monthly users of leading generative AI assistants in 2026, in millions.

Note:

Sources Meta, OpenAI and Alphabet. Metrics vary slightly by company. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

A three-way race: Meta AI, ChatGPT and Google Gemini each sit near or above a billion monthly users in 2026.

Share of AI Chatbot Web Traffic, Early 2026ChatGPT still leads use.

Data:

Share of global AI chatbot web traffic in early 2026.

Note:

Source Similarweb. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

ChatGPT still leads use: it holds more than half of all AI chatbot web traffic, ahead of Gemini and the rest.

The ChatGPT Climb

How did ChatGPT reach a billion users?

ChatGPT reached one billion weekly active users in August 2026 through a steady series of jumps rather than one single surge. From about 300 million at the end of 2024, it added 100 million to reach 400 million by February 2025, then a further 300 million to hit 700 million by mid 2025, before climbing through 800 and 900 million to cross a billion.

Each jump had its own driver: new model releases, the spread of the mobile app, free access to more capable versions, and the habit of using the tool for work and study. The waterfall chart below breaks the climb into its stages, showing how the billion-user total was built step by step rather than overnight. It is a useful corrective to the idea that the growth was a one-off spike, since the additions kept coming quarter after quarter.

How ChatGPT Reached a Billion Weekly Users (millions added)Built step by step.

Data:

ChatGPT weekly active users, starting level and additions in millions between reported milestones.

Note:

Source OpenAI. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

Built step by step: ChatGPT added users in repeated jumps to climb from 300 million to a billion weekly.

Business Use

How many businesses use generative AI?

About 71 percent of organizations reported using generative AI in at least one business function in 2025, up from 65 percent in 2024 and just 33 percent in 2023, according to McKinsey. In two years the technology went from a minority experiment to a majority tool inside companies, one of the fastest enterprise adoption curves ever seen.

Business use matters because it is where the technology starts to pay for itself, and it is a major reason the revenue line climbs faster than the user count. Companies deploy generative AI in marketing, customer support, software development and research, and the spread into daily work is now pulling consumer adoption along with it. The impact reaches into specialized fields, from AI in finance to AI in healthcare, where early deployments are already changing how work gets done.

The chart below tracks the rise in business adoption. The steepness of the climb, from a third of firms to more than two thirds in two years, is the clearest sign that generative AI has moved past the hype stage into standard operating practice, even if measurable financial returns remain uneven across companies.

Organizations Using Generative AI, 2023-2025 (percent)A third to two thirds.

Data:

Share of organizations using generative AI in at least one function, percent.

Note:

Source McKinsey. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

A third to two thirds: business use of generative AI more than doubled between 2023 and 2025.

By Country

Which countries use AI the most?

The highest AI usage rates are found not in Silicon Valley but in emerging markets. India and Nigeria report about 92 percent AI usage among consumers, ahead of Singapore on around 73 percent and the United States on roughly 56 percent, according to a KPMG study. It is a striking reversal of the usual technology adoption pattern, in which wealthy countries lead and developing ones follow.

Several forces drive the pattern. Younger populations, a mobile-first internet, fewer legacy systems to replace and strong demand for tools that boost productivity all push adoption higher in fast-growing economies. Because generative AI runs in a browser or an app rather than requiring expensive hardware, the usual barriers that slow technology adoption in emerging markets barely apply, a dynamic our AI in China coverage explores in one of the largest of these markets.

The chart below compares reported AI usage rates across a sample of countries. The lead held by India and Nigeria over advanced economies is one of the most surprising findings in the adoption data, and it hints that the next wave of user growth will come disproportionately from the developing world rather than from the markets that led the first wave.

Reported AI Usage Rate by Country, 2025 (percent)Emerging markets lead.

Data:

Reported share of consumers using AI by country in 2025, percent.

Note:

Source KPMG and University of Melbourne. Covers AI broadly. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

Emerging markets lead: India and Nigeria report about 92 percent AI usage, ahead of Singapore and the United States.

Key Facts

Generative AI users in numbers

A handful of figures capture the scale. The worldwide user base is modeled near 374 million in 2025 and forecast toward 1.2 billion by 2031, ChatGPT alone has passed a billion weekly users, and the market is set to grow past 500 billion dollars by 2032. Together they describe a technology that has gone from launch to global mainstream in under four years.

374MUsers worldwide 2025Statista model.1.2BUsers worldwide 2031Forecast.1BChatGPT weeklyAugust 2026.53%Of world populationReached in 3 years.

The numbers matter because they mark a genuine shift in how people work and search rather than a passing trend. No technology has reached this many people this quickly, and the forecasts suggest the curve has years of steep growth still to run.

Big Picture

Generative AI users in 2026: the big picture

Taken together, the data describes the fastest technology adoption in modern history. From effectively zero users before late 2022, generative AI reached hundreds of millions within three years and is forecast to pass a billion dedicated users by the early 2030s, with more than a billion people already touching AI tools each month.

The next phase looks less like a single viral moment and more like steady absorption into daily life, as assistants embed into search, phones and workplace software, and as growth shifts toward the emerging markets that already show the highest usage rates. Whether the exact worldwide total lands nearer 374 million or well above a billion depends on how a user is counted, but the direction is not in doubt, and the story of generative AI adoption is still in its early chapters, much as the early internet companies were once only beginning to find their scale.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions: Generative AI Users

The worldwide user base is modeled at roughly 374 million in 2025 and forecast to reach about 1.2 billion by 2031, according to Statista Market Insights. Counting all AI tools, more than a billion people already use them each month.

Faster than any technology before it. ChatGPT reached 100 million users in about two months, against nine for TikTok and more than two years for Instagram, and generative AI reached about half the global population within three years.

ChatGPT passed one billion weekly active users in August 2026, up from 400 million in February 2025 and 800 million in October 2025. It remains the most used generative AI tool in the world.

About 121 million people in the United States used generative AI in 2025, around 36 percent of the population, and the figure is forecast to reach roughly 133 million in 2026, according to eMarketer.

The generative AI market was worth about 38 billion U.S. dollars in 2025 and is forecast to grow past 500 billion by 2032 on the Statista Market Insights model, expanding faster than almost any other technology segment.

By monthly users in 2026, Meta AI, ChatGPT and Google Gemini each sit near or above a billion. ChatGPT leads on web traffic, holding more than half of all AI chatbot visits.

Usage rates are highest in emerging markets. India and Nigeria report about 92 percent AI usage among consumers, ahead of Singapore on 73 percent and the United States on about 56 percent.

About 71 percent of organizations reported using generative AI in at least one business function in 2025, up from 65 percent in 2024 and 33 percent in 2023, according to McKinsey.

Worldwide user and market figures are from Statista Market Insights, tool figures from OpenAI, Meta and Alphabet, national usage from eMarketer, KPMG and Stanford, and traffic shares from Similarweb.

Forecasts point to continued rapid growth, with the worldwide user base roughly tripling between 2025 and 2031 and market revenue growing even faster as free users convert and businesses expand their use.

Sources

Statista Market Insights - Modeled number of generative AI users worldwide and generative AI market revenue.

OpenAI, Meta and Alphabet - Reported user figures for ChatGPT, Meta AI and Google Gemini.

eMarketer - Number of generative AI users in the United States.

McKinsey, Stanford and KPMG - Business adoption and national usage rates.

Statista Market Insights, Generative AI - Worldwide users and market revenue.

Figures show the number of generative AI users worldwide and related adoption data. Worldwide user and market figures are Statista Market Insights models, with values beyond the current year being forecasts. Each chart is labeled with its own source and period. This is data journalism, not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

How Many People Use Meta Apps Every Day? 3.64 Billion in Q3 2026

Meta reported 3.64 billion daily active people across Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp for September 2026, up 3 percent in a year. This page sets out all 28 official quarterly DAP figures since December 2019, the people added each quarter, the slowing growth rate, the first ever quarterly dip in early 2026 and how Meta changed its user reporting in 2024.

Updated Nov 24, 2026 · businesstats.com/facebook-product-dau

3.64B DAP, SEPT 2026	**+3%** YEAR OVER YEAR, Q3 2026	**2.26B** FIRST DAP, DEC 2019
-20M Q1 2026 DIP	**$17.72** ARPP, Q3 2026	**3.98B** LAST MAP, DEC 2023

QUICK ANSWER

3.64 billion people used at least one Meta app on an average day in September 2026

Meta Platforms reported **3.64 billion Family daily active people (DAP)** on average for September 2026, the last month of the third quarter, in its results published on 21 October 2026. That is 3 percent more than the 3.54 billion reported for September 2025 and the highest figure since Meta began publishing the metric. DAP counts unique people who were logged in to Facebook, Instagram, Messenger or WhatsApp on a given day, so someone who opens all four apps is counted once.

Since the first official reading of 2.26 billion for December 2019, DAP has grown by 1.38 billion people, or 61 percent, across 28 reported quarters. Growth has slowed sharply: Meta reported year over year gains of 15 percent through most of 2020, but only 3 percent in each of the second and third quarters of 2026. The series also recorded its first and only quarterly decline in the first quarter of 2026, when DAP slipped from 3.58 billion to 3.56 billion. Meta attributed that dip to internet disruptions in Iran and a restriction on access to WhatsApp in Russia.

This page is built only from Meta investor relations material: the quarterly earnings press releases and the 10-Q and 10-K filings Meta submits to the US Securities and Exchange Commission. For the broader picture of the Facebook app itself, including advertising audiences and engagement, see our Facebook statistics hub.

3.64B

DAP, September 2026

Average for the last month of Q3 2026.

+3%

Year over year, Q3 2026

Up from 3.54 billion in September 2025.

+1.38B

Added since December 2019

From 2.26 billion, a 61 percent rise.

-20M

Only quarterly decline

Q1 2026, Iran outages and WhatsApp limits in Russia.

QUARTERLY TREND

Every official DAP reading from December 2019 to September 2026

The chart below plots each of the 28 DAP figures Meta has published. Each value is the average number of daily active people during the final month of the quarter, which is how Meta phrases the metric in every release (for example, "on average for September 2026"). It is not an average across the full three months.

Meta Family Daily Active People (DAP), Q4 2019 to Q3 2026 (billions)

Interactive chart online: businesstats.com/facebook-product-dau

Steady climb, one dip: DAP rose in 26 of 27 quarter to quarter steps; the only fall came in Q1 2026 (3.58 billion to 3.56 billion).

Three phases stand out. The pandemic period from early 2020 to early 2021 added 460 million daily users in five quarters, as lockdowns pushed messaging and video calling onto WhatsApp, Messenger and Instagram. From mid 2021 to the end of 2022 growth slowed to an average of about 35 million people a quarter, with two quarters adding only 10 million each. A second, smaller acceleration followed in 2023 and again in 2025, before the pace dropped back to 40 million a quarter in mid 2026.

Daily reach on this scale is hard to compare with any single app, because DAP combines four services. For a ranking of individual platforms by their own user counts, see the biggest social media platforms by users, and for the size of the total market Meta draws from, our estimate of the number of social network users worldwide.

FULL DATA TABLE

Meta DAP by quarter: values, net additions and growth

The table lists every official DAP figure with the release date, the year over year growth that Meta itself reported, and two BusinessStats calculations: the change from the previous quarter and the year over year change computed from the published, rounded figures. The two growth columns can differ by up to a point because Meta calculates its percentage from unrounded internal numbers.

QUARTER	MEASURED MONTH	DAP	YOY GROWTH REPORTED BY META	CHANGE VS PREVIOUS QUARTER	YOY COMPUTED FROM PUBLISHED FIGURES	RELEASE DATE
Q3 2026	September 2026	3.64 billion	+3%	+40 million	+2.8%	21 Oct 2026
Q2 2026	June 2026	3.60 billion	+3%	+40 million	+3.4%	29 Jul 2026
Q1 2026	March 2026	3.56 billion	+4%	-20 million	+3.8%	29 Apr 2026
Q4 2025	December 2025	3.58 billion	+7%	+40 million	+6.9%	28 Jan 2026
Q3 2025	September 2025	3.54 billion	+8%	+60 million	+7.6%	29 Oct 2025
Q2 2025	June 2025	3.48 billion	+6%	+50 million	+6.4%	30 Jul 2025
Q1 2025	March 2025	3.43 billion	+6%	+80 million	+5.9%	30 Apr 2025
Q4 2024	December 2024	3.35 billion	+5%	+60 million	+5.0%	29 Jan 2025

Q3 2024	September 2024	3.29 billion	+5%	+20 million	+4.8%	30 Oct 2024
Q2 2024	June 2024	3.27 billion	+7%	+30 million	+6.5%	31 Jul 2024
Q1 2024	March 2024	3.24 billion	+7%	+50 million	+7.3%	24 Apr 2024
Q4 2023	December 2023	3.19 billion	+8%	+50 million	+7.8%	1 Feb 2024
Q3 2023	September 2023	3.14 billion	+7%	+70 million	+7.2%	25 Oct 2023
Q2 2023	June 2023	3.07 billion	+7%	+50 million	+6.6%	26 Jul 2023
Q1 2023	March 2023	3.02 billion	+5%	+60 million	+5.2%	26 Apr 2023
Q4 2022	December 2022	2.96 billion	+5%	+30 million	+5.0%	1 Feb 2023
Q3 2022	September 2022	2.93 billion	+4%	+50 million	+4.3%	26 Oct 2022
Q2 2022	June 2022	2.88 billion	+4%	+10 million	+4.3%	27 Jul 2022
Q1 2022	March 2022	2.87 billion	+6%	+50 million	+5.5%	27 Apr 2022
Q4 2021	December 2021	2.82 billion	+8%	+10 million	+8.5%	2 Feb 2022
Q3 2021	September 2021	2.81 billion	+11%	+50 million	+10.6%	25 Oct 2021
Q2 2021	June 2021	2.76 billion	+12%	+40 million	+11.7%	28 Jul 2021
Q1 2021	March 2021	2.72 billion	+15%	+120 million	+15.3%	28 Apr 2021

Q4 2020	December 2020	2.60 billion	+15%	+60 million	+15.0%	27 Jan 2021
Q3 2020	September 2020	2.54 billion	+15%	+70 million	n/a	29 Oct 2020
Q2 2020	June 2020	2.47 billion	+15%	+110 million	n/a	30 Jul 2020
Q1 2020	March 2020	2.36 billion	+12%	+100 million	n/a	29 Apr 2020
Q4 2019	December 2019	2.26 billion	+11%	n/a	n/a	29 Jan 2020

Change and computed growth columns are BusinessStats calculations from the published two decimal figures. Year over year growth for Q1 to Q3 2020 cannot be computed from published figures because Meta did not publish exact DAP values for March, June or September 2019; the column shows n/a and the reported growth column is the figure Meta stated.

The table corrects several figures that circulate online, including on the previous version of this page. December 2022 was 2.96 billion, not 3.00 billion, so the 3 billion mark was first passed in March 2023 (3.02 billion). December 2023 was 3.19 billion and December 2024 was 3.35 billion; the 3.35 billion figure is sometimes wrongly attached to 2023. There was no fall in the first quarter of 2024: DAP rose from 3.19 billion to 3.24 billion.

BEFORE Q4 2019

What Meta said before it published an exact DAP figure

Meta, then called Facebook Inc., first gave an exact Family DAP number with its fourth quarter 2019 results on 29 January 2020. Throughout 2019 its releases used rounded statements instead. These are the only official data points for the period, and they should not be read as precise quarterly values.

QUARTER	WORDING IN THE RELEASE	RELEASE DATE
Q4 2018	more than 2 billion people use at least one of the Family of services every day on average	30 Jan 2019

Q1 2019	more than 2.1 billion people use Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp or Messenger every day on average	24 Apr 2019
Q2 2019	more than 2.1 billion people	24 Jul 2019
Q3 2019	around 2.2 billion people	30 Oct 2019
Q4 2019	DAP was 2.26 billion on average for December 2019, an increase of 11% year over year	29 Jan 2020

Lists that show values such as 2.04, 2.11 or 2.18 billion for 2018 and 2019 are back calculations or estimates, not numbers Meta published. The only firm statement about December 2018 is that December 2019 was 11 percent higher.

NET ADDITIONS

How many daily users Meta added each quarter

Net additions show the momentum behind the headline figure more clearly than the total does. Because DAP is published to two decimal places in billions, every quarterly change is a multiple of 10 million people, which is the finest resolution the official data allows.

Quarter on Quarter Change in Meta DAP, Q1 2020 to Q3 2026 (million people)

Interactive chart online: businesstats.com/facebook-product-dau

Largest gains came early: Q1 2021 (+120 million) and Q2 2020 (+110 million) were the biggest single quarters; Q1 2026 (-20 million) was the only decline.

YEAR	DECEMBER DAP, START	DECEMBER DAP, END	ADDED (MILLION)	GROWTH REPORTED BY META
2020	2.26 billion	2.60 billion	+340	+15%
2021	2.60 billion	2.82 billion	+220	+8%
2022	2.82 billion	2.96 billion	+140	+5%
2023	2.96 billion	3.19 billion	+230	+8%
2024	3.19 billion	3.35 billion	+160	+5%
2025	3.35 billion	3.58 billion	+230	+7%

On a calendar year basis, 2020 was the strongest year with 340 million additional daily users. The weakest was 2022 with 140 million. 2023 and 2025 each added 230 million. In the first nine months of 2026, DAP grew by only 60 million, from 3.58 billion to 3.64 billion, including the 20 million drop in the first quarter.

GROWTH RATE

Year over year growth fell from 15 percent in 2020 to 3 percent in 2026

Meta states a year over year growth rate alongside every DAP figure. The chart uses those reported rates, which are the official numbers, rather than rates recomputed from rounded values.

Meta DAP Year over Year Growth as Reported, Q4 2019 to Q3 2026 (%)

Interactive chart online: businesstats.com/facebook-product-dau

From 15 percent to 3 percent: Growth peaked at 15 percent from Q2 2020 to Q1 2021, bottomed at 4 percent in mid 2022, recovered to 8 percent in Q3 2025, then fell to 3 percent in Q2 and Q3 2026.

The 2022 low point of 4 percent and the 2026 low of 3 percent have different causes. In 2022 Meta was coming off the pandemic peak, when many people who had joined during lockdowns were already counted. In 2026, the official explanation for the slowdown points to access problems in specific countries: the 10-Q for the third quarter of 2026 says the first quarter decline was driven by internet disruptions in Iran, which were largely restored in the second quarter, and by a restriction on access to WhatsApp in Russia. When the base is already 3.5 billion people, a single large market losing access is enough to cut growth by a point or more.

What the growth numbers show

- **Peak growth:** 15 percent, reported for four consecutive quarters from Q2 2020 to Q1 2021.
- **First post pandemic low:** 4 percent in Q2 and Q3 2022.
- **Recovery high:** 8 percent in Q4 2023 and again in Q3 2025.
- **Latest:** 3 percent in Q2 2026 and Q3 2026, the lowest rate in the series.
- **Only decline:** Q1 2026, from 3.58 billion to 3.56 billion.

MILESTONES

DAP milestones: 2.5, 3.0 and 3.5 billion

MILESTONE	FIRST QUARTER REACHED	PUBLISHED DAP	QUARTERS SINCE PREVIOUS MILESTONE
2.0 billion	Q4 2018 or earlier	more than 2 billion (rounded statement)	n/a
2.5 billion	Q3 2020	2.54 billion	n/a
3.0 billion	Q1 2023	3.02 billion	10
3.5 billion	Q3 2025	3.54 billion	10

It took ten quarters to go from 2.5 billion to 3.0 billion, and another ten to reach 3.5 billion. At the average pace of the last four quarters, about 25 million people a quarter, the next half billion would take far longer. Meta does not publish a user forecast, and this page makes none.

DEFINITION

What Meta counts as a daily active person

Meta defines a daily active person as a registered and logged in user of Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and/or WhatsApp who visited at least one of these products through a mobile application or a web or mobile browser on a given day. The reported figure is the average across the days of the last month of the quarter. Threads is not one of the four products named in the definition.

Because people often hold several accounts across the four apps, DAP is not a simple count of accounts. Meta says it uses a series of machine learning models to attribute accounts within and across products to individual people, and that these models are calibrated against user survey data. Its filings also warn that, at its scale, such attribution is very difficult, that the actual number of unique people may vary significantly from the estimates, that the timing and results of user surveys have in the past contributed to changes in reported Family metrics, and that disabling violating accounts may reduce DAP in a given period.

> **Key points about the DAP metric**
>
> - Counts unique people, not accounts, across Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp.

- Reported as the average for the final month of each quarter, not the full quarter.
- Estimated with machine learning models calibrated by surveys, so it carries a margin of error that Meta does not quantify for DAP.
- Reported only at the worldwide level. Meta does not publish DAP by region, by country or by app.

That last point matters. Any breakdown of DAP by region, such as a claim that Asia Pacific drives a fixed share of DAP growth, is not based on Meta data. Meta does publish Family of Apps revenue by user geography, which is covered on our page about Meta average revenue per user and per person. Regional reach of the Facebook app specifically, based on advertising audiences, is on our page on Facebook coverage by world region.

REPORTING CHANGES

How Meta changed what it reports, and where the old series end

Meta has changed its user metrics twice in seven years. Until the third quarter of 2019, it reported Facebook daily and monthly active users (DAUs and MAUs) with exact figures and gave only rounded estimates for the whole family of apps. With the fourth quarter 2019 results in January 2020 it added two Family metrics: daily active people (DAP) and monthly active people (MAP).

The second change came with the 2023 annual report. In its 10-K for fiscal 2023, Meta said that beginning with its 10-Q for the first quarter of 2024 it would no longer report DAUs, MAUs, ARPU and MAP in its periodic reports, but would continue reporting DAP and ARPP, the latter calculated on the basis of DAP. December 2023 is therefore the last official reading for Facebook DAUs, Facebook MAUs and Family MAP.

Family DAP and MAP vs Facebook DAU and MAU, December 2019 to December 2023 (billions)

Interactive chart online: businesstats.com/facebook-product-dau

Series that ended in 2023: Family MAP reached 3.98 billion, Facebook MAU 3.07 billion and Facebook DAU 2.11 billion in December 2023, the final published values.

MONTH	FAMILY DAP	FAMILY MAP	DAP AS % OF MAP	FACEBOOK DAU	FACEBOOK MAU
Dec 2019	2.26 billion	2.89 billion	78.2%	1.66 billion	2.50 billion

Dec 2020	2.60 billion	3.30 billion	78.8%	1.84 billion	2.80 billion
Dec 2021	2.82 billion	3.59 billion	78.6%	1.93 billion	2.91 billion
Dec 2022	2.96 billion	3.74 billion	79.1%	2.00 billion	2.96 billion
Dec 2023	3.19 billion	3.98 billion	80.2%	2.11 billion	3.07 billion

DAP as a percentage of MAP is a BusinessStats calculation. It compares a December daily average with a 30 day count at 31 December, so it is an indicator of stickiness rather than an exact ratio.

Two things follow from these figures. First, the ratio of daily to monthly people across the family of apps stayed close to 78 to 80 percent between 2019 and 2023, ending at 80.2 percent in December 2023; claims of a ratio around 91 percent do not match Meta data. Second, the Facebook app alone accounted for 2.11 billion of the 3.19 billion daily people in December 2023, so roughly a billion people a day were using Instagram, WhatsApp or Messenger without opening Facebook. For age, country and regional detail on the Facebook app, see our pages on the top 25 countries by Facebook users and Facebook users by age.

DAP AND ARPP

Fewer new users, more revenue per person

Meta pairs DAP with average revenue per person (ARPP), defined as Family of Apps revenue in a quarter divided by the average of DAP at the beginning and end of that quarter. While DAP growth slowed to 3 percent, ARPP grew 23 percent year over year to **$17.72 in the third quarter of 2026**, according to the 10-Q for that quarter. Family of Apps revenue for the quarter was $64.2 billion, up 26 percent.

QUARTER	DAP (LAST MONTH OF QUARTER)	ARPP (QUARTER)
Q3 2026	3.64 billion	$17.72
Q2 2026	3.60 billion	$16.86
Q1 2026	3.56 billion	$15.66
Q4 2025	3.58 billion	$16.56
Q3 2025	3.54 billion	$14.46
Q2 2025	3.48 billion	$13.65
Q1 2025	3.43 billion	$12.36

Q4 2024	3.35 billion	$14.25
Q3 2024	3.29 billion	$12.29

The pattern is clear: almost all of the growth in Meta advertising revenue now comes from earning more per person rather than reaching more people. ARPP is seasonal, peaking in the fourth quarter with holiday advertising. Breakdowns by region and the longer history are covered on our ARPU and ARPP page, and Meta revenue is compared with its peers in revenue of selected social media companies.

CONTEXT

What 3.64 billion daily people means for advertisers and rivals

Meta DAP is a worldwide reach figure for one company, so it is useful as a ceiling for how many people an advertiser can reach in a day across Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp. It says nothing about time spent or how often people return within a day; Meta reports those only as qualitative trends, such as the all time highs in Instagram time spent per user it described for the third quarter of 2026.

For comparison across the wider market, see our analysis of daily time spent on social media and the latest social media ad spend worldwide. Instagram on its own is profiled in our Instagram statistics report, and the share of internet users who use Facebook in selected countries is tracked in Facebook use among internet users by country.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology and data notes

How this page was compiled

- **Sources:** every DAP value comes from the Meta Platforms quarterly earnings press release for that quarter, checked on investor.atmeta.com in November 2026. The Q1 2026 explanation, the DAP definition and ARPP values come from the Meta 10-Q for the quarter ended 30 September 2026. The reporting change comes from the Meta 10-K for fiscal 2023.
- **Period:** each DAP value is an average for the last month of the quarter (March, June, September or December).

- **Calculations:** net additions, computed year over year growth, December to December changes and DAP as a share of MAP are BusinessStats calculations from published figures and are labelled as such.
- **Not included:** regional or country DAP, DAP by app and DAP forecasts, because Meta does not publish them. 2018 and 2019 values that are not in Meta releases have been removed.
- **Rounding:** Meta publishes DAP to two decimal places in billions, so quarterly changes are accurate to about 10 million people.

The previous version of this page, published in May 2026, contained values that do not match Meta releases, a regional split of DAP growth, a DAP to MAP ratio of 91 percent, a methodology adjustment in Q1 2024 that did not happen and the claim that Meta began reporting Family metrics in late 2021. All of these have been replaced with figures confirmed in Meta filings.

FAQ

Questions about Meta daily active people

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many daily active people does Meta have?

Meta reported 3.64 billion Family daily active people (DAP) on average for September 2026, in its third quarter 2026 results published on 21 October 2026. That is up 3 percent from 3.54 billion in September 2025.

What does DAP mean at Meta?

DAP stands for daily active people. Meta counts a registered and logged in user of Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and/or WhatsApp who visited at least one of these products on a given day. Each person is counted once, however many of the apps they use, and the reported figure is the average for the last month of the quarter.

Why did Meta DAP fall in the first quarter of 2026?

DAP slipped from 3.58 billion in December 2025 to 3.56 billion in March 2026. In its 10-Q for the third quarter of 2026, Meta said the slight decline was driven by internet disruptions in Iran, which were largely restored in the second quarter of 2026, and by a restriction on access to WhatsApp in Russia.

When did Meta start reporting daily active people?

Meta, then Facebook Inc., first published an exact DAP figure with its fourth quarter 2019 results on 29 January 2020, reporting 2.26 billion for December 2019. During 2019 it gave only rounded statements such as more than 2.1 billion people every day.

Does Meta still report Facebook daily and monthly active users?

No. In its 10-K for fiscal 2023 Meta said that from the first quarter of 2024 it would stop reporting Facebook DAUs, MAUs, ARPU and Family MAP. The last values were 2.11 billion Facebook DAUs and 3.07 billion Facebook MAUs for December 2023, and 3.98 billion Family MAP at 31 December 2023.

When did Meta pass 3 billion daily active people?

In the first quarter of 2023, when DAP reached 3.02 billion on average for March 2023. The December 2022 figure was 2.96 billion, so the milestone was not reached in 2022. DAP then passed 3.5 billion in the third quarter of 2025 with 3.54 billion.

Does Meta publish DAP by country or region?

No. Meta reports DAP only as a worldwide total. It publishes revenue and ARPP by user geography, but not the number of daily active people in each region or country, so regional DAP splits found online are estimates from other sources.

What is Meta average revenue per person?

Average revenue per person (ARPP) is Family of Apps revenue in a quarter divided by the average of DAP at the start and end of the quarter. Worldwide ARPP was $17.72 in the third quarter of 2026, up 23 percent from the third quarter of 2025.

SOURCES

Meta Platforms: Meta Reports Third Quarter 2026 Results, 21 October 2026 (DAP 3.64 billion for September 2026).

Meta Platforms: Meta Reports Second Quarter 2026 Results, 29 July 2026, and First Quarter 2026 Results, 29 April 2026.

Meta Platforms: Meta Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2025 Results, 28 January 2026, and the 2025 quarterly releases for Q1 to Q3 2025.

Meta Platforms: Meta Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2023 Results, 1 February 2024 (last DAU, MAU and MAP values), and the 2022 to 2024 quarterly releases.

Facebook Inc. (now Meta Platforms): Facebook Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2019 Results, 29 January 2020 (first DAP and MAP figures and definitions), and the 2019 to 2021 quarterly releases.

US Securities and Exchange Commission, Meta Platforms Form 10-Q: Quarter ended 30 September 2026 (DAP and ARPP definitions, ARPP values, Q1 2026 decline explanation, limitations of key metrics).

US Securities and Exchange Commission, Meta Platforms Form 10-K: Fiscal year 2023 (discontinuation of DAU, MAU, ARPU and MAP reporting from Q1 2024; estimation of Family metrics).

Meta Platforms: Q3 2026 earnings call prepared remarks, 21 October 2026 (Family of Apps revenue, engagement commentary).

Related reading

- Facebook statistics
- Meta ARPU and ARPP
- Social media statistics and facts
- Social media users by world region
- Social media year on year growth
- Social media topic overview

STATISTICS REPORT

Drug use in the U.S. statistics & facts

Updated Sep 30, 2026 · businesstats.com/drug-use-us

69.8M ILLICIT DRUG USERS	**24.0%** OF PEOPLE 12 AND OVER	**61.6M** MARIJUANA USERS
44.6M SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER	**16%** GOT NEEDED TREATMENT	**79,384** OVERDOSE DEATHS 2024

Overview

Drug use in America: the big picture

Drug use touches almost every community in the United States. The most important source of data on it is the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, or NSDUH, run by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, which interviews tens of thousands of people aged 12 and over every year. Its latest results, for 2025, were published in July 2026. They show that 69.8 million people, or 24.0 percent of the population aged 12 and over, used an illicit drug in the past year, most of them marijuana, and that 44.6 million people, 15.3 percent, had a substance use disorder involving alcohol, drugs or both.

The picture is changing in important ways. Marijuana use has risen as more states have legalized it, and more Americans now say they smoke marijuana than cigarettes. Misuse of prescription opioids has fallen, teen drug use remains near historic lows, and overdose deaths have dropped sharply since their 2022 peak. Yet only about one in six people who need treatment for a substance use disorder receive it. This report sets out the data on who uses which drugs, how use differs by age, the scale of addiction and treatment, the legal cannabis market, overdoses and the drug supply.

Trend

How many Americans use illicit drugs?

In 2025, 24.0 percent of people aged 12 and over used an illicit drug in the past year, down from a peak of 25.5 percent in 2024 but above the 22.2 percent recorded in 2021, the first year of the current survey methods. Marijuana accounts for most of this use: 21.2 percent of people aged 12 and over used it in the

past year, or 61.6 million people.

Past-Year Illicit Drug and Marijuana Use, People Aged 12 and Over, 2021 to 2025 (%)Share of the population who used any illicit drug, and marijuana, in the past year.

Data:

SAMHSA, Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2025 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (July 2026).

Note:

NSDUH changed its data collection methods in 2021, so 2021 to 2025 estimates should not be compared with 2020 or earlier. Illicit drugs include marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, methamphetamine and the misuse of prescription drugs. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

A plateau after years of growth: past-year illicit drug use eased to 24.0 percent in 2025 from 25.5 percent in 2024, while marijuana use slipped to 21.2 percent.

SAMHSA notes that the increases in marijuana and hallucinogen use since 2021 came entirely from adults aged 26 and older; use among adolescents and young adults declined. That is a notable shift from the historic pattern, in which drug use was concentrated among teenagers and people in their early twenties. The growing share of middle-aged and older users reflects the normalisation of legal cannabis, and a population that grew up in the era of the 1960s and 1970s drug culture now reaching retirement age. Our data on the US population by sex and age shows how the age structure of the population itself is shifting.

Substances

Which drugs do Americans use?

Marijuana is by far the most widely used illicit drug, with 61.6 million past-year users in 2025. Hallucinogens, including psilocybin mushrooms, LSD and MDMA, came a distant second with 9.1 million users, or 3.1 percent of the population, and have grown since 2021. About 6.9 million people misused prescription opioids, 4.9 million used cocaine and 2.7 million used methamphetamine.

Past-Year Use of Illicit Drugs by Type, People Aged 12 and Over, 2025 (million)Number of people who used each drug, or misused each type of prescription drug, in the past year.

Data:

SAMHSA, Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2025 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (July 2026).

Note:

people may use more than one drug. Prescription drug figures refer to misuse, meaning use in a way not directed by a doctor. Inhalant figures reflect a 2025 questionnaire change. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

Marijuana dominates: 61.6 million people used marijuana in 2025, almost seven times as many as the next most common drug type, hallucinogens.

The trends for each drug differ. Since 2021, misuse of prescription opioids has fallen from 3.0 to 2.4 percent of the population, reflecting tighter prescribing rules and prescription monitoring programmes. Misuse of prescription tranquilisers and sedatives has also fallen, from 1.7 to 1.5 percent. Cocaine, methamphetamine and prescription stimulant misuse have not changed significantly. Heroin use has become rare, with about 581,000 past-year users in 2025, as heroin has largely been replaced on the illicit market by fentanyl, which is far more potent and usually taken unknowingly or in counterfeit pills.

Among marijuana users, smoking remains the most common method, used by 74.8 percent of past-year users in 2025, but almost half, 49.2 percent, consumed marijuana in food or drinks, 39.2 percent vaped it and 14.5 percent used concentrates by dabbing. The rise of edibles and vapes, with far higher potencies than the cannabis of previous decades, is one reason health researchers are concerned about increases in cannabis use disorder.

By Age

Drug use by age group

Young adults remain the group most likely to use drugs. In 2025, 36.3 percent of people aged 18 to 25 used an illicit drug in the past year, and 33.7 percent used marijuana. Among adults aged 26 and over, the figures were 23.5 and 20.6 percent, and among adolescents aged 12 to 17, 11.2 and 8.7 percent.

Past-Year Illicit Drug and Marijuana Use by Age Group, 2025 (%)Share of each age group who used any illicit drug or marijuana in the past year.

Data:

SAMHSA, Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2025 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (July 2026). Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

Peak in the early twenties: more than a third of 18 to 25 year olds used an illicit drug in 2025, three times the share of adolescents.

Because adults aged 26 and over make up most of the population, they account for the large majority of drug users in absolute terms: 53.8 million of the 69.8 million people who used an illicit drug in 2025. Prescription opioid misuse follows a different pattern from other drugs: it was highest among adults aged 26 and over, at 2.5 percent, compared with 2.0 percent of young adults and 1.6 percent of adolescents, reflecting the role of prescribed painkillers in middle age.

Teens

Teen drug use remains low

Drug use among American teenagers fell sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic and has stayed below pre-pandemic levels since. The Monitoring the Future survey, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and run by the University of Michigan, surveyed 23,726 students in 270 schools between February and June 2025. It found that reported use of most drugs held steady compared with 2024.

Past-Year Substance Use Among US Students by Grade, 2025 (%)Share of 8th, 10th and 12th grade students who used each substance in the past year.

Data:

National Institute on Drug Abuse and University of Michigan, Monitoring the Future survey, 2025 (December 2025), 23,726 students in 270 schools. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

Alcohol still leads among teens: 41 percent of 12th graders drank alcohol in the past year, 26 percent used marijuana and 20 percent vaped nicotine.

In 2025, 26 percent of 12th graders, 16 percent of 10th graders and 8 percent of 8th graders reported using marijuana in the past year. Nicotine vaping was reported by 20 percent of 12th graders, and alcohol by 41 percent. New products are drawing attention: 9 percent of 12th graders had used hemp-derived delta-8 THC and 7 percent nicotine pouches. The survey also recorded small but statistically significant increases in heroin and cocaine use in some grades, although both remain at very low levels, below 1.5 percent. In the

NSDUH, 13.7 percent of people aged 12 to 20 drank alcohol in the past month in 2025, down from 15.6 percent in 2021.

Marijuana

Marijuana: legal, popular and growing

Marijuana has moved from the margins to the mainstream within a generation. In 1969 only 12 percent of Americans told Gallup that marijuana should be legal; support reached a record 70 percent in 2023 and stood at nearly two thirds in 2025, with a fall among Republicans. Actual use has followed. In July 2026, 17 percent of US adults told Gallup they smoke marijuana, tying the record high and exceeding the 11 percent who smoke cigarettes, and 15 percent said they consume marijuana edibles.

Share of US Adults Who Say They Smoke Marijuana, 2013 to 2026 (%)Adults answering yes to whether they smoke marijuana, Gallup Consumption Habits poll.

Data:

Gallup, U.S. Marijuana Smoking at Record High, Cigarettes at Low (August 2026), poll of 1,200 adults, 1 to 19 July 2026, and earlier Gallup releases.

Note:

selected years; the question asks about smoking and does not capture all forms of use. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

More than doubled: the share of adults who smoke marijuana rose from 7 percent in 2013 to 17 percent in 2026, now above the 11 percent who smoke cigarettes.

By April 2026, recreational cannabis was legal for adults in 24 states and Washington DC, and medical marijuana was legal in another 16 states; most of the remaining states allow only limited low-THC or CBD products. At the federal level marijuana remained a Schedule I controlled substance until April 2026, when the Drug Enforcement Administration moved FDA-approved marijuana products and marijuana covered by state medical licenses to Schedule III. Recreational marijuana remains in Schedule I, and further hearings on broader rescheduling began in June 2026.

The legal market is large but under pressure. State-legal cannabis sales were about 29.1 billion dollars in 2025, down slightly from 30.1 billion in 2024, according to an industry analysis, as oversupply pushed down prices. The industry employed about 412,500 full-time workers. Use by age varies widely: 25 percent

of adults aged 30 to 49 and 23 percent of those aged 18 to 29 told Gallup they smoke marijuana, against 5 percent of those aged 65 and over.

Psychedelics

The rise of hallucinogens

Hallucinogens are the fastest-growing category of illicit drug use after marijuana. In 2025, 9.1 million people aged 12 and over, 3.1 percent of the population, used a hallucinogen in the past year, up from 7.6 million, or 2.7 percent, in 2021. The category includes LSD, psilocybin mushrooms, MDMA, also known as ecstasy or molly, ketamine used without a prescription, PCP and DMT. As with marijuana, SAMHSA found that the growth came from adults aged 26 and over rather than from younger people.

Changing laws and attitudes help explain the trend. Oregon became the first state to create a regulated psilocybin therapy programme, which opened in 2023, and Colorado voters approved a similar natural medicine programme that began licensing services in 2025. Several cities have made enforcement of laws against natural psychedelics their lowest priority. Clinical research into psilocybin and MDMA for depression and post-traumatic stress disorder has attracted widespread media attention, although the Food and Drug Administration declined to approve MDMA-assisted therapy in 2024 and asked for further studies. Health experts warn that unsupervised use carries risks, particularly for people with a history of psychosis.

Nicotine and Alcohol

Vaping and alcohol: the legal substances

Although this report focuses on illicit drugs, the two most widely used addictive substances in the United States are legal. In 2025, 129.1 million people aged 12 and over, 44.4 percent, drank alcohol in the past month, down from 47.4 percent in 2021, and 56.8 million, 19.5 percent, engaged in binge drinking, down from 21.7 percent. The long-term decline in drinking, especially among young people, is one of the clearest trends in the national data, and alcohol use disorder, at 25.7 million people, fell from 10.6 percent of the population in 2021 to 8.9 percent in 2025.

Nicotine vaping is moving in the opposite direction. In 2025, 29.3 million people aged 12 and over, 10.1 percent, vaped nicotine in the past month, up from 8.3 percent in 2022, even as cigarette smoking continued to fall. Vapes have also become a major way to use cannabis: 37.1 percent of people who used marijuana in the past month vaped it. Together, these shifts show how the market for addictive substances

is moving from smoked products toward vapes, edibles and other new formats.

Addiction

Substance use disorders: 44.6 million people

A substance use disorder is a medical condition in which the use of alcohol or drugs causes significant problems, such as failing to meet obligations, being unable to cut down, or continuing to use despite harm. In 2025, 44.6 million people aged 12 and over, 15.3 percent of the population, had a past-year substance use disorder, down from 16.7 percent in 2021. More than half of these cases, 54.1 percent, were mild, while 22.5 percent were severe.

People With a Past-Year Substance Use Disorder by Type, 2025 (million)People aged 12 and over meeting criteria for each disorder.

Data:

SAMHSA, Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2025 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (July 2026).

Note:

people can have more than one disorder, so the categories overlap and add up to more than the 44.6 million total. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

Drugs and alcohol almost equal: 26.0 million people had a drug use disorder and 25.7 million an alcohol use disorder in 2025.

Drug use disorders affected 26.0 million people and alcohol use disorders 25.7 million, with many people having both. Marijuana use disorder was the most common drug use disorder, affecting 19.3 million people, reflecting both the large number of users and the high potency of modern cannabis products. Some 4.5 million people had a stimulant use disorder, involving cocaine, methamphetamine or prescription stimulants, and 4.0 million had an opioid use disorder. Substance use disorders often occur alongside mental illness, a link explored in our data on mental health worldwide.

Treatment

The treatment gap

The most striking finding in the national data is how few people with a substance use problem get help. In 2025, 47.2 million people aged 12 and over needed substance use treatment, but only 7.6 million, about 16 percent, received it. That left 39.6 million people who needed treatment without it. SAMHSA notes that its treatment questions changed in 2024, so this figure cannot be compared directly with earlier years.

People Who Needed Substance Use Treatment in 2025 (million)People aged 12 and over who needed treatment, by whether they received it.

Data:

SAMHSA, Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2025 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (July 2026). Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

Five in six go without: of 47.2 million people who needed substance use treatment in 2025, 39.6 million did not receive it.

The gap is even wider for medication, the most effective treatment for opioid and alcohol use disorders. According to the survey, only about 623,000 of the 4.0 million people with an opioid use disorder, 15.7 percent, received medication such as buprenorphine, methadone or naltrexone, and only 679,000 of the 25.7 million with an alcohol use disorder, 2.6 percent, received medication for it. On a more hopeful note, 22.3 million adults, 73 percent of those who said they had ever had a substance use problem, considered themselves in recovery or recovered. The development of new addiction medicines is part of the wider story of the global pharmaceutical industry.

The reasons people give for not getting treatment include not thinking they need it, cost and lack of insurance coverage, not knowing where to go, and concern about stigma. Barriers are highest in rural areas, where treatment programmes and prescribers of addiction medicines are scarce. Policy changes have tried to close the gap: since 2023, any clinician with a standard prescribing registration can prescribe buprenorphine, after Congress removed a special waiver requirement, and naloxone, the drug that reverses opioid overdoses, has been available over the counter since 2023.

Overdoses

Overdose deaths by drug

Overdose deaths are the most tragic consequence of drug use. After rising for most of two decades, they fell 26.2 percent from 105,007 in 2023 to 79,384 in 2024, according to final CDC data, and provisional data suggest about 69,100 deaths in the 12 months to January 2026. The decline was broad-based across every major drug type.

Drug Overdose Deaths by Drug Involved, 2023 vs 2024Number of deaths involving each drug type; a single death can involve more than one drug.

Data:

CDC National Center for Health Statistics, Data Brief 549, Drug Overdose Deaths in the United States, 2023 to 2024.

Note:

synthetic opioids other than methadone are mainly illicit fentanyl; psychostimulants are mainly methamphetamine. Many deaths involve several drugs, so categories overlap. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

Fentanyl deaths fell by a third: deaths involving synthetic opioids dropped from 72,776 in 2023 to 47,735 in 2024.

Deaths involving synthetic opioids other than methadone, overwhelmingly illicit fentanyl, fell 35.6 percent between 2023 and 2024 but still accounted for about six in ten overdose deaths. Deaths involving psychostimulants such as methamphetamine fell 19.8 percent to 28,722, and cocaine deaths fell 26.7 percent to 21,945; many of these deaths also involved fentanyl. Deaths involving prescription opioids fell 20.7 percent to 7,989 and heroin deaths 33.3 percent to 2,743. Men accounted for 55,076 of the 79,384 deaths in 2024, and the highest death rates were among adults aged 35 to 44, at 44.2 per 100,000.

Supply

The drug supply and the border

Changes in the illicit drug supply help explain the fall in overdose deaths. US Customs and Border Protection seized about 11,486 pounds of fentanyl in fiscal year 2025, down 46 percent from 21,308 pounds in 2024 and 57 percent from 26,629 pounds in 2023, according to US Customs and Border Protection data. Researchers and officials have linked the decline to less fentanyl crossing the border,

possibly reflecting lower potency, supply disruptions and Chinese controls on precursor chemicals. Cocaine seizures, by contrast, rose 35 percent in fiscal 2025, and more than 85 percent of drugs other than marijuana were seized at official ports of entry rather than between them. The wider border context is set out in our overview of immigration in the United States.

Marijuana seizures at the border fell 28 percent in fiscal 2025, continuing a long decline as domestic legal production has replaced smuggled cannabis. New threats keep emerging: xylazine, a veterinary sedative, has been found mixed with fentanyl in many regions, and nitazenes, a class of synthetic opioids even stronger than fentanyl, have appeared in parts of the drug supply. Drug checking services and fentanyl test strips, now legal in most states, aim to help people detect these substances before using.

Outlook

What comes next

The data point to a country in transition. Some of the most dangerous forms of drug use are declining: prescription opioid misuse is falling, heroin is rare, teen drug use is low and overdose deaths have dropped by about a third from their peak. At the same time, marijuana use among adults is at record levels and still rising in older age groups, hallucinogen use is growing, and cannabis use disorder has become the most common drug use disorder. Most people with a substance use disorder still receive no treatment.

Three questions will shape the next few years. The first is whether the fall in overdose deaths can be sustained as funding for prevention and treatment faces pressure and the illicit supply changes. The second is how federal cannabis policy evolves after partial rescheduling, and whether legalization leads to more heavy use. The third is whether the treatment gap can be narrowed, through wider access to medication, telehealth and recovery support. The answers will matter not only for public health but for families, workplaces and communities across the country.

Key Facts

Drug use in the US in numbers

A few figures summarise the state of drug use in America.

69.8MPast-year illicit drug users24.0 percent of people 12 and over, 2025.61.6MPast-year marijuana users21.2 percent, 2025.16%Share who got needed treatment7.6 of 47.2 million, 2025.79,384Overdose deaths2024, down 26.2 percent.

Together they show both the scale of drug use in the United States and the size of the gap in care.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

69.8 million people aged 12 and over, or 24.0 percent, used an illicit drug in the past year in 2025, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Most of them used marijuana.

Marijuana, used by 61.6 million people aged 12 and over, 21.2 percent, in the past year in 2025. Hallucinogens were second with 9.1 million users.

44.6 million people aged 12 and over, 15.3 percent, had a past-year substance use disorder in 2025, including 26.0 million with a drug use disorder and 25.7 million with an alcohol use disorder.

Only about one in six. In 2025, 47.2 million people needed substance use treatment but only 7.6 million received it, leaving 39.6 million without treatment.

No. The 2025 Monitoring the Future survey found teen use of most drugs held steady at historically low levels, below pre-pandemic rates, with 26 percent of 12th graders using marijuana in the past year.

17 percent of US adults said they smoke marijuana in July 2026, tying the Gallup record high and exceeding the 11 percent who smoke cigarettes.

In 24 states and Washington DC as of April 2026, with medical marijuana legal in another 16 states. In April 2026 the DEA moved medical marijuana and FDA-approved products to Schedule III.

Illicit fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, involved in 47,735 of the 79,384 overdose deaths in 2024, followed by methamphetamine and other psychostimulants at 28,722 and cocaine at 21,945.

Yes. They fell 26.2 percent from 105,007 in 2023 to 79,384 in 2024, and provisional data show about 69,100 in the 12 months to January 2026.

Sources

SAMHSA - Results from the 2025 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

National Institute on Drug Abuse - Monitoring the Future 2025.

Gallup - marijuana smoking and legalization support.

DEA - marijuana rescheduling regulatory actions.

CDC - drug overdose deaths in the United States, 2023 to 2024.

CDC - provisional drug overdose death counts.

US Customs and Border Protection - drug seizure statistics.

National survey estimates are self-reported and exclude some groups such as people in prisons, so they may understate some forms of drug use. NSDUH estimates from 2021 onward are not comparable with earlier years. All data compiled by BusinessStats.

STATISTICS REPORT

Generative AI use and awareness in online shopping 2023-2025

Updated Sep 23, 2026 · businesstats.com/generative-ai-online-shopping

51% USED GEN AI TO SHOP, 2025	**+34%** GROWTH IN A YEAR	**92%** HAVE ENCOUNTERED AI SHOPPING
63% WANT TO SHOP WITH GEN AI	**58%** USE GEN AI OVER SEARCH	**80%** PLAN TO USE IN 2026

Overview

Generative AI goes mainstream in shopping

When ChatGPT launched at the end of 2022, almost no one used generative AI to shop. Three years later it has become a normal part of how people research and buy online. Across large consumer surveys, awareness of generative AI in shopping has become near-universal, and the share of people who actually use it has climbed every year. In 2025, roughly half of consumers said they had used generative AI for at least part of their online shopping, a level of adoption that took the smartphone far longer to reach.

The numbers vary from survey to survey because researchers ask the question in different ways and cover different countries, but the direction is the same everywhere: sharply up. This report draws on several of the largest studies, including the worldwide Statista Consumer Insights survey of about 12,000 people across twelve countries, along with tracking work from Adobe, Capgemini and Capital One Shopping. Read together, they show a clear story of rising awareness, rising use and rising trust between 2023 and 2025. These tools sit on top of the same wider wave covered in our report on generative AI users worldwide, now applied directly to the checkout.

Awareness 2023-2025

Awareness and openness since 2023

The first thing to change was attitude. Even before most people had used generative AI to buy anything, they became aware of it and open to the idea. The chart shows how two measures of that openness moved between 2023 and 2025.

Openness to Generative AI in Shopping, 2023 vs 2025 (percent of consumers)Share open to AI recommendations and using AI instead of search.

Data:

Share of consumers, percent, 2023 and 2025.

Note:

Capgemini Research Institute. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

A fast shift in mindset: by 2025 most shoppers were open to AI recommendations, and a majority had swapped search engines for AI tools.

Two changes stand out. Openness to letting generative AI suggest products rose from 63 percent of consumers in 2023 to about three-quarters in 2025, meaning resistance to AI advice has faded quickly. More dramatic still, the share of people who use generative AI tools instead of a traditional search engine to find products more than doubled, from 25 percent in 2023 to 58 percent in 2025. That single shift is reshaping how shoppers begin their journey, moving the starting point away from a search box and toward a conversation with an assistant. Awareness now runs even higher than these figures suggest: around 92 percent of consumers say they have encountered AI in some form while shopping, so the open question is no longer whether people know about it, but how often they choose to use it.

Use Is Climbing

From awareness to everyday use

Attitudes have now turned into habits. The clearest single measure is the share of consumers who say they have actually used generative AI for online shopping, and it is rising fast, as the chart shows.

Consumers Who Used Generative AI for Online Shopping (percent)Reported use rose 34 percent in a single year.

Data:

Share of consumers who used generative AI for online shopping, percent.

Note:

Adobe survey data, via industry reporting. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

Half of all shoppers: reported use of generative AI for online shopping climbed from 38 percent in 2024 to 51 percent in 2025.

In 2024, about 38 percent of consumers said they had used generative AI for online shopping. A year later that had risen to 51 percent, an increase of roughly 34 percent in twelve months. To put that pace in context, generative AI is being adopted faster than the personal computer or the early internet were at the same stage after launch, a reflection of how quickly free tools such as ChatGPT reached a mass audience. The momentum has not stopped there: separate tracking found that shopping-related generative AI use grew by another 35 percent between February and November of 2025 alone, and around 80 percent of consumers say they plan to use these tools for shopping in 2026. On current trends, using AI to help shop is on its way to becoming the default rather than the exception.

How Shoppers Use It

What shoppers actually do with generative AI

Awareness and use only matter if people are doing something useful with the technology. In practice, shoppers lean on generative AI across the whole journey, from first idea to final choice. The chart shows the most common ways consumers engage with it.

How Consumers Engage With Generative AI in Shopping, 2025 (percent)Share of consumers reporting each behavior.

Data:

Share of consumers, percent, 2025.

Note:

Capital One Shopping. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

From discovery to decision: most shoppers have met AI while browsing, and a majority want it built into how they buy.

The most common uses cluster around finding and choosing products. Nearly everyone, about 92 percent, has encountered AI while shopping, whether as a recommendation, a chatbot or a search result. A clear majority, some 63 percent, actively want to shop with generative AI help, and 58 percent already use it in place of a traditional search engine to find what they need. Around 39 percent have used dedicated AI assistants for shopping tasks, and 36 percent have turned to general tools such as ChatGPT to research a purchase. Beyond these headline uses, shoppers rely on generative AI to compare options side by side, summarize reviews, hunt for discounts and codes, and narrow a long list down to a few strong candidates, tasks that used to mean opening many tabs and reading for hours.

Who Uses It Most

The generation gap in AI shopping

Adoption is not spread evenly. Younger, higher-income shoppers are well ahead, and crucially they are also the most satisfied, which tends to predict where the wider market is heading. The chart shows how the share who say AI improves their shopping experience jumped in a single year.

Say AI Improves Their Shopping Experience, 2024 vs 2025 (percent)Among AI shoppers, by generation.

Data:

Share of AI shoppers who say AI improves their experience, percent.

Note:

Capital One Shopping. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

Young and convinced: almost all Gen Z and millennial AI shoppers now say the technology makes shopping better.

Gen Z and millennials are the clear leaders. Around 53 percent of Gen Z and 48 percent of millennials say they have used AI to shop, with higher-income millennials, those earning above the median, adopting at even higher rates. What matters most for the future is satisfaction. Among Gen Z who use AI, the share saying it improves their shopping experience rose from 70 percent in 2024 to 90 percent in 2025, and among millennials it climbed from 79 percent to 95 percent. When the heaviest users are also the happiest, adoption tends to spread outward to older groups over time. Older shoppers remain more cautious, and some are uncomfortable with AI-driven personalization, but the generational pattern points to steadily rising use as younger cohorts make up more of the market.

Trust and Concerns

Trust is rising, but limits remain

For all the enthusiasm, shoppers have not handed everything over to AI. The pattern across surveys is one of growing comfort with advice and research, paired with continued caution about money. Reluctance to let AI handle purchases has fallen sharply: in one US survey the share of people unwilling to let AI handle transactions dropped from about 66 percent early in 2025 to around 32 percent later in the year, a striking swing in a matter of months.

Yet a firm limit remains around payments and personal data. Roughly 30 percent of consumers say they would never let AI handle their shopping or access their payment information, and satisfaction with the technology is not universal, having dipped in some 2024 surveys even as use rose. Shoppers also tell researchers they check AI results carefully, with many verifying recommendations before buying. The takeaway for retailers is that trust must be earned step by step: people are happy to let AI help them decide, but they still want to stay in control of the final click and their financial details.

How Retailers Respond

Retailers race to keep up

On the business side, the response has been rapid and near-universal. Retailers know that if shoppers begin their journeys inside an AI assistant, being visible and useful there is essential. The chart shows how far retailer adoption of AI has already gone.

Retailer Adoption of AI, 2025 (percent of retailers)Most are using AI; few have fully scaled it.

Data:

Share of retailers, percent, 2025.

Note:

Envive, citing industry research. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch to the table for exact figures.

Widely adopted, rarely mastered: most retailers use AI, but only a small share have scaled it across the business.

Around 89 percent of retailers are now using or assessing AI, and roughly 80 percent have built it into day-to-day operations, from product recommendations to customer service and pricing. The gap is in maturity:

about 62 percent remain stuck in experimentation, and only around 7 percent say they have fully scaled AI across the business, which means early movers still hold an advantage. The payoff can be large. Amazon attributes about 35 percent of its revenue to AI-driven product recommendations, and its shopping assistant Rufus, alongside rivals such as Walmart Sparky and Alibaba Wenwen, has pushed conversational shopping into the mainstream. Retailers are also rewriting product data so their items surface well inside large language models, a new form of search optimization aimed at AI rather than at Google. The competitive backdrop, and who is winning it, is set out in our ranking of the top online stores worldwide by net sales.

Outlook

Where AI shopping goes next

Every indicator points the same way. With about 80 percent of consumers planning to use generative AI to shop in 2026, referral traffic from AI tools to retail sites growing explosively, and satisfaction rising among the heaviest users, the technology is set to move from a helpful add-on to a core part of the buying process. Analysts increasingly describe a shift toward zero-click shopping, where an assistant researches, compares and even completes a purchase on the shoppers behalf, collapsing several steps into one conversation.

The commercial stakes are growing to match. The generative AI in e-commerce market is forecast to expand from roughly $1 billion in 2025 to nearly $4 billion by 2035 as retailers invest in assistants, personalization and AI-ready product data. That is still small next to the trillions spent online each year, but it sits at the point where every purchase now begins. For a sense of that larger prize, see our overview of e-commerce worldwide statistics and facts and the wider revenue of the e-commerce industry worldwide. The clear message from 2023 to 2025 is that consumer awareness and use of generative AI in shopping have crossed from early adoption into the mainstream, and the pace shows no sign of slowing.

Key Facts

Gen AI shopping in numbers

A handful of figures capture how far and how fast consumer awareness and use of generative AI in online shopping moved between 2023 and 2025.

51%Used Gen AI to shop, 2025Up from 38 percent in 2024.58%Use Gen AI over searchWas 25 percent in 2023.92%Encountered AI shoppingAwareness is near-universal.80%Plan to use in 2026Momentum keeps

building.

Together they mark the moment generative AI became a standard shopping tool rather than a novelty.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

About 51 percent of consumers reported using generative AI for online shopping in 2025, up from 38 percent in 2024, a rise of roughly 34 percent in a single year. Surveys suggest around 80 percent plan to use it for shopping in 2026.

Awareness is now very high. Around 92 percent of consumers say they have encountered AI while shopping online, and most are familiar with tools such as ChatGPT and retailer assistants. Awareness has climbed steadily since 2023, when the technology was still new.

Shoppers use generative AI mainly to research products, compare options, get recommendations and find deals. About 58 percent now use Gen AI tools instead of traditional search engines to find products, up from 25 percent in 2023.

Younger shoppers lead. Around 53 percent of Gen Z and 48 percent of millennials say they have used AI to shop, with higher-income millennials the most active adopters. The vast majority of young users say AI improves their shopping experience.

Trust is rising but not complete. Reluctance to let AI handle purchases has fallen sharply, and most users say AI improves their experience, but around 30 percent still say they would never let AI handle payments or access their financial information.

Yes, sharply. The share of consumers replacing traditional search with Gen AI rose from 25 percent in 2023 to 58 percent in 2025, openness to AI recommendations rose from 63 percent to about 75 percent, and reported use for shopping climbed from 38 percent in 2024 to 51 percent in 2025.

ChatGPT is the most widely used, followed by tools such as Gemini, Copilot and Perplexity. Retailers have also built their own assistants, including Amazon Rufus, Walmart Sparky and Alibaba Wenwen, which shoppers use directly on store sites.

Most are moving fast. Around 89 percent of retailers are using or assessing AI and 80 percent have integrated it into operations, though only a small share have fully scaled it. Amazon attributes about 35 percent of its revenue to AI-driven product recommendations.

Growth is expected to continue quickly. Roughly 80 percent of consumers plan to use generative AI to shop in 2026, referral traffic from AI tools is surging, and the generative AI in e-commerce market is forecast to grow from about $1 billion in 2025 to nearly $4 billion by 2035.

Sources

Statista Consumer Insights - consumer awareness and use of generative AI in online shopping.

Capgemini Research Institute - openness to and use of Gen AI in shopping, 2023 to 2025.

Capital One Shopping - AI shopping adoption, engagement and demographics.

Adobe - use of generative AI for online shopping and AI referral traffic.

Figures are the share of consumers or retailers surveyed and are drawn from several studies with different samples, definitions and countries, so numbers vary between sources. Each chart names its source. Use figures reflect 2024 and 2025 surveys; awareness and behavior figures span 2023 to 2025; market forecast figures are estimates. All data compiled by BusinessStats.

STATISTICS REPORT

Silver demand worldwide 2026, by end use

Updated Sep 8, 2026 · businesstats.com/global-silver-demand-by-purpose

58% INDUSTRIAL	**19%** INVESTMENT	**17%** JEWELRY
$100 PRICE RECORD	**6 yrs** DEFICIT	**1,130** TOTAL MOZ

Overview

Demand for silver worldwide in 2026, by end use

Industrial uses account for about 58 percent of global silver demand in 2026, by far the largest end use, driven by solar panels, electronics and electric vehicles. Physical investment, jewelry, silverware and photography make up the rest.

Silver occupies a unique place among metals, valued both as a precious metal for jewelry and investment and as an essential industrial input, and in 2026 the industrial side has become by far the larger of the two.

On the Silver Institute figures, industrial uses account for about 58 percent of demand in 2026, physical investment 19 percent, jewelry 17 percent, silverware 4 percent and photography 2 percent, out of total demand near 1,130 million ounces.

The transformation of silver from a metal prized mainly for coins, jewelry and silverware into a critical input for the green economy is one of the most important structural shifts in the commodity markets of recent years.

This overview breaks down silver demand by end use in 2026, from industry and investment to jewelry, silverware and photography, and traces the forces reshaping each part of the market. Understanding how silver is used, and how that use is changing, is essential to understanding both the metals price and its role in the global economy.

Few metals bridge the worlds of high finance, personal adornment and heavy industry as silver does, and few have been reshaped so quickly by the shift to clean energy.

Silver is now as much an industrial metal as a precious one. As a precious metal it sits alongside our luxury goods coverage of the wider market for adornment and status.

Silver Demand by End Use, 2026 (%)Industry dominates.

Data:

Demand for silver worldwide in 2026, by end use, in million ounces, from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey with Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are fabrication demand in million ounces. Investment is coin and bar demand. Compiled by BusinessStats.Switch views with the toolbar.

Industry dominates: industrial uses account for about 58 percent of silver demand in 2026, followed by physical investment on 19 percent and jewelry on 17 percent.

The shift toward industrial use reflects the green energy transition, as silver is essential to solar panels, electric vehicles and grids, a demand our biggest companies by value coverage frames through the firms driving it.

A note on the data. The figures show demand for silver in 2026 by end use, in million ounces, from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey with Metals Focus. Figures are fabrication demand, investment is coin and bar demand, and 2026 values are estimates.

Silver demand here is measured as fabrication and investment demand in million ounces, covering industrial applications, physical investment in coins and bars, jewelry, silverware and photography. Because most silver is mined as a by-product of copper, lead and zinc, its supply does not respond directly to the silver price, a feature that helps explain the persistent market deficit.

At a Glance

Silver Demand by End Use

Silver Demand by End Use, 2026Click any column to sort

END USE	DEMAND (MOZ)	SHARE
Industrial	657 Moz	58%
Physical investment	218 Moz	19%

Jewelry	189 Moz	17%
Silverware	42 Moz	4%
Photography	24 Moz	2%

The table sets out silver demand by end use in 2026, in million ounces. It shows industrial use as by far the largest, followed by physical investment and jewelry, with silverware and photography much smaller.

Reading down the end uses shows industry far ahead, investment and jewelry clustered behind, and silverware and photography much smaller, a clear hierarchy of silver demand.

Industrial

What Is the Largest Use of Silver?

Industrial demand is by far the largest use of silver, at about 657 million ounces in 2026, or 58 percent of the total. Electronics and electrical uses are the biggest part, followed by solar panels, with brazing and other uses smaller.

The dominance of industrial demand, and above all the green energy uses within it, is the single most important fact about the modern silver market, setting it apart from gold.

Industrial demand reached about 657 million ounces in 2026, or 58 percent of the total, with electronics and electrical uses the largest part, followed by solar photovoltaics on about 180 million ounces.

Within industry, electronics and electrical uses, including the electric vehicles, grids and data centres of the green economy, are the largest single application, ahead of solar panels and brazing.

The sheer scale of industrial silver demand, well over half of the total and growing, is what most clearly distinguishes silver from gold, whose demand is dominated by jewelry and investment rather than industry.

The four consecutive record years for industrial silver demand up to 2024, before a modest pullback, show how powerfully the green energy transition has reshaped the market in a short space of time. The green economy has, in effect, given an old precious metal a powerful new industrial purpose, one that now sets the direction of the entire market.

The rise of industrial silver reflects the metals unmatched conductivity, which makes it essential to solar cells, electric vehicles, grids and electronics, a demand our technology and electronics coverage frames through the sectors driving it.

Industrial Silver Demand by Use (Moz)Electronics and solar lead.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

Electronics and solar lead: within industry, electronics and electrical uses are the largest, followed by solar panels on about 180 million ounces, with brazing and other uses smaller.

Industrial demand has grown about 40 percent since 2020, driven by the green energy transition and by new uses in artificial intelligence data centres and electric vehicles, even as high prices have prompted some users to economize on silver.

The breadth of industrial silver use, from solar cells to electric vehicles, grids, electronics and data centres, makes it one of the metals most closely tied to the technologies reshaping the global economy.

Solar

How Much Silver Do Solar Panels Use?

Solar panels are the fastest-growing use of silver. Photovoltaic demand grew from about 50 million ounces in 2015 to a peak of nearly 200 million in 2024, though it eased to about 180 million in 2026 as makers used less silver per panel.

The rise of solar as a major use of silver is one of the clearest links between the green energy transition and the demand for a traditional precious metal.

Photovoltaic demand grew from about 50 million ounces in 2015 to a peak near 200 million in 2024, before easing to about 180 million in 2026 as makers reduced the silver used in each panel.

The story of solar silver, rising more than threefold in a decade before the recent plateau, captures both the power of the green energy transition and the constant pressure on manufacturers to use less of an expensive metal.

Solar now competes with electronics as the defining industrial use of silver, and the balance between rising installations and falling silver content per panel will largely decide the future of industrial demand.

The growth of solar silver reflects the boom in photovoltaic installations, though manufacturers are steadily reducing the silver in each panel, a process called thrifting, that has begun to cap demand, a shift our global markets coverage frames.

Silver Demand from Solar Panels, 2015-2026 (Moz)A green energy surge.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

A green energy surge: silver demand from solar panels grew from about 50 million ounces in 2015 to a peak near 200 million in 2024, easing to about 180 million in 2026.

Each solar panel uses about 20 grams of silver in the conductive paste that channels electricity, and with global installations still rising fast, solar remains one of the most important long-term drivers of silver demand despite the thrifting.

The tension between rising solar installations and falling silver use per panel is one of the key uncertainties in the outlook for silver, since it determines how far solar demand will keep growing.

Investment

How Much Silver Is Bought for Investment?

Physical investment, meaning silver coins and bars, is the second-largest use, at about 218 million ounces in 2026, or 19 percent of demand. It surged about 14 percent as investors bought silver as a store of value amid record prices.

The strength of physical investment demand, even as fabrication uses weakened, was the defining feature of the silver market in 2026, and the main reason total demand held up.

Physical investment reached about 218 million ounces in 2026, or 19 percent of demand, up about 14 percent, led by a surge in retail buying in India, which rose about a third.

The surge in coin and bar buying, even as fabrication demand softened, underlines silvers enduring appeal as a store of value and a cheaper entry point into precious metals than gold.

Retail investors in India, East Asia and the Middle East drove the 2026 surge in coin and bar demand, more than offsetting a sharp drop in the United States and keeping total investment strong.

The strength of silver investment reflects its appeal as a hedge and a cheaper alternative to gold, especially in India, where retail buying surged, a demand our gold as an investment coverage complements through the larger gold market.

Silver Demand vs Price, 2020-2026Demand bars, price line.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

Demand bars, price line: as the silver price surged past 100 dollars an ounce, investment demand rose while price-sensitive fabrication uses came under pressure.

Investment demand is the most volatile part of the silver market, rising and falling with sentiment and price, and in 2026 it was the main source of strength, offsetting weakness in jewelry, silverware and industrial fabrication.

The volatility of investment demand, swinging with price and sentiment, makes it the hardest part of the silver market to forecast, and the main swing factor in the balance between demand and supply.

Jewelry

How Much Silver Goes into Jewelry?

Jewelry is the third-largest use of silver, at about 189 million ounces in 2026, or 17 percent of demand, though it fell about 8 percent as high prices deterred buyers, especially in India, the largest silver jewelry

market.

The decline in silver jewelry, squeezed by record prices, mirrors the pressure on the wider luxury and jewelry markets from the sharp rise in precious metal costs. Jewelry demand was about 189 million ounces in 2026, or 17 percent of the total, down about 8 percent, while silverware fell more than a fifth to about 42 million ounces.

The retreat of silver jewelry under the weight of record prices echoes the pressure across the wider jewelry and luxury markets, where high metal costs have squeezed volumes even as values held up. India, the largest silver jewelry market, was hit hardest by the price rise, since silver there is bought by weight as much for value as for adornment.

The decline in silver jewelry reflects the sharp rise in the silver price, which pushed some buyers toward lighter pieces or away altogether, a pressure our jewelry market coverage explores across the wider industry.

Silver Jewelry & Silverware Demand (Moz)Falling on high prices.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

Falling on high prices: silver jewelry demand fell about 8 percent to 189 million ounces in 2026, while silverware fell more than a fifth, as record prices deterred buyers.

Silverware, meaning cutlery, dishes and decorative items, is a much smaller and shrinking use, at about 42 million ounces, down more than a fifth in 2026 as high prices and changing tastes eroded a once-traditional market.

The Deficit

Is Silver in Short Supply?

Silver has been in deficit for six years running, with demand exceeding supply. In 2026 the shortfall was about 46 million ounces, and the combined deficit since 2021 exceeds a billion ounces, equal to about a

year of global mine output.

The six-year run of deficits, with demand outstripping supply year after year, is the structural force underpinning the silver market and its rising prices. The silver market recorded a deficit of about 46 million ounces in 2026, the sixth in a row, with the combined shortfall since 2021 exceeding a billion ounces, about a year of global mine supply.

The persistence of the deficit, now in its sixth year, is the single most important fact about the supply side of the silver market, and the strongest structural support for higher prices.

With mine supply constrained by its dependence on other metals and recycling largely flat, the deficit has been met by drawing down above-ground stocks, a buffer that cannot last forever.

The scale of the cumulative shortfall, more than a billion ounces in six years, is equal to roughly a full year of global mine production, a striking measure of how tight the market has become.

The persistent deficit reflects flat mine supply, since most silver is a by-product of mining other metals and does not respond to the silver price, leaving supply unable to keep pace with rising demand.

Cumulative Silver Deficit, 2021-2026 (Moz)Six years of shortfall.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

Six years of shortfall: the silver market deficit has built up year after year since 2021, drawing down above-ground stocks by more than a billion ounces in total.

The structural deficit, with growing industrial demand meeting stagnant supply, is the central feature of the silver market, and it has underpinned the sharp rise in prices, drawing down above-ground stocks year after year.

The drawing down of above-ground silver stocks, year after year, cannot continue indefinitely, and it is this dwindling buffer that many analysts see as the strongest argument for higher prices ahead.

The Price

Why Has the Silver Price Risen?

Silver prices reached record highs in 2026, breaching 100 dollars an ounce for the first time in January, after their strongest annual gain since 1979 the year before. Investment demand and the deficit drove the rise.

The surge past 100 dollars an ounce in early 2026 marked a historic milestone for silver, capping its strongest run in decades and reflecting a fundamentally tight market. Silver breached 100 dollars an ounce for the first time in January 2026, after its strongest annual gain since 1979 the year before, driven by investment demand and the persistent deficit.

The breaching of the 100 dollar mark, long seen as a distant milestone, marked a historic moment for silver and confirmed its transformation into one of the strongest-performing major commodities. The record price has been both a consequence of the tight market and a cause of shifting demand, as it drew in investors while squeezing price-sensitive fabrication uses.

For long-term holders, the combination of a structural deficit and surging industrial demand has made silver one of the most closely watched of all commodities.

The surge in the silver price reflects the tightening market, strong investment demand and silvers role in the green energy transition, a rally that has run alongside the record gold price.

Silver Price, 2020-2026 (USD per ounce)A record run.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

A record run: silver breached 100 dollars an ounce for the first time in January 2026, after its strongest annual gain since 1979 the year before.

The high price has cut both ways, drawing in investors while pushing away price-sensitive jewelry, silverware and solar buyers, reshaping the balance of demand toward investment and away from traditional

fabrication uses. The two-sided effect of high prices, attracting investors while deterring fabricators, has reshaped the composition of silver demand, tilting it toward investment and away from price-sensitive uses.

By Country

Which Country Uses the Most Silver?

India is the largest single market for silver, dominating both jewelry and retail investment, followed by the United States and China. Together they account for much of global silver demand outside industry. The geography of silver demand, dominated by India for jewelry and investment and by industrial users elsewhere, reflects the dual role of silver as adornment and industrial input.

India is the largest single market for silver, dominating both jewelry and retail investment, followed by the United States and China, with Germany and the United Kingdom also among the leaders. The dominance of India in silver jewelry and investment, alongside the industrial demand of the United States and China, reflects the metals unusual position straddling adornment, savings and industry.

Beyond India, the United States and China anchor industrial and investment demand, while Germany and the United Kingdom remain significant European markets for the metal.

Indias central role reflects the deep cultural importance of silver in jewelry, gifts and savings, where it serves as an affordable store of wealth, a demand our largest economies coverage sets in context.

Silver Demand by Country, 2026 (Moz)India leads.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

India leads: India is the largest single silver market, dominating jewelry and retail investment, followed by the United States and China.

The United States and China are the next-largest markets, strong in both investment and industrial use, while Germany and the United Kingdom round out the leading national markets for silver demand.

Photography

Is Silver Still Used in Photography?

Photography, once a major use of silver, has shrunk to a multi-decade low of about 24 million ounces in 2026, just 2 percent of demand, as digital cameras replaced silver-based film across almost all of photography.

The near-disappearance of photographic silver is one of the clearest illustrations of how a technological shift can all but eliminate what was once a leading use of the metal.

The long decline of photographic silver, from the dominant use of the metal decades ago to a small niche today, is one of the clearest examples of how technology reshapes commodity demand over time.

Photographic Silver Demand (Moz)A long decline.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

A long decline: photographic silver has shrunk to a multi-decade low of about 24 million ounces in 2026, as digital replaced silver-based film.

What remains of photographic silver is concentrated in film for x-rays, specialist photography and archival uses, a small but stable market that has largely stopped declining after decades of contraction.

Forecast

What Is the Silver Demand Forecast?

The Silver Institute expects industrial demand to keep growing, potentially reaching 700 million ounces by 2030, driven by solar, electric vehicles and artificial intelligence, while jewelry and silverware remain under pressure from high prices.

The long-term outlook for silver rests on the green energy transition, which is expected to keep industrial demand high and the market in deficit for years to come. The expectation that industrial demand will keep climbing toward 700 million ounces by the end of the decade underpins most forecasts of a market that stays tight and prices that stay high.

Emerging uses in artificial intelligence data centres, electric vehicles and grid infrastructure are expected to add to industrial demand even where solar and electronics economize on silver.

The long-term outlook rests on the green energy transition, which is expected to keep industrial silver demand high and the market in deficit, a structural tightness set to persist for years.

Industrial Silver Demand Forecast to 2030 (Moz)Toward 700 million.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

Toward 700 million: the Silver Institute expects industrial demand to keep growing, potentially reaching 700 million ounces by 2030, led by solar, EVs and AI.

With industrial demand rising, supply flat and stocks drawing down, most analysts expect the silver market to remain tight and prices to stay high, though volatile, through the rest of the decade.

The combination of rising industrial demand, flat supply and shrinking stocks is why many analysts remain bullish on silver over the coming years, despite the pressure high prices place on some uses.

Key Facts

Silver Demand in Numbers

A few figures capture the picture. Industrial uses account for about 58 percent of silver demand in 2026, physical investment 19 percent and jewelry 17 percent, out of total demand of about 1,130 million ounces.

These figures together show a metal transformed, from a traditional precious metal into a critical input for the green economy, tightened by a persistent deficit and lifted to record prices. These figures together

mark a turning point in the long history of silver, as the green economy overtakes jewelry, coins and silverware as the metals principal reason for being.

These figures matter because they show how silver has become a metal of the green economy as much as a precious metal, a profound change in the metals wider role.

Silver vs Gold vs Platinum (index, 0-100)How the metals compare.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

How the metals compare: silver leads on industrial use and affordability, gold on investment demand and store of value, and platinum on scarcity, on an indexed scale.

58%IndustrialLargest use. $100Silver priceRecord, 2026. 6 yearsDeficitIn a row. 17%JewelryThird use.

Together they describe a market transformed by industrial demand, tightened by a six-year deficit, and lifted to record prices, even as traditional uses such as jewelry and silverware decline. For now, silver stands as both a precious metal and a critical industrial input, its demand dominated by industry, its market in deficit, and its price at record highs.

Big Picture

Silver Demand: The Big Picture

Taken together, silver demand in 2026 is dominated by industry, above all the green energy transition, with investment strong and traditional uses such as jewelry and silverware in retreat under the weight of record prices.

Silver Demand by End Use, 2020 vs 2026 (Moz)Industry surges ahead.

Data:

Silver demand data compiled by BusinessStats from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus.

Note:

Figures are in million ounces of fabrication demand, and 2026 values are estimates that may be revised.Switch views with the toolbar.

Industry surges ahead: industrial silver demand has grown far faster than any other use since 2020, reshaping the balance of the silver market.

Whether industrial demand keeps rising fast enough to sustain the deficit and high prices will shape the market for years, but in 2026 silver is firmly established as a metal of the green economy as much as a precious one.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions: Silver Demand

Industrial uses, which account for about 58 percent of global silver demand, driven by solar panels, electronics, electric vehicles and grids.

About 189 million ounces in 2026, or 17 percent of demand, the third-largest use, though it fell about 8 percent as high prices deterred buyers.

Because of the green energy transition. Silver is essential to solar panels, electric vehicles and electronics, whose demand has grown rapidly.

About 180 million ounces in 2026, down from a peak near 200 million in 2024, as makers use less silver per panel, though installations keep rising.

Yes. Silver has been in deficit for six years running, with a 2026 shortfall of about 46 million ounces and a combined deficit since 2021 above a billion ounces.

About 218 million ounces in 2026, or 19 percent of demand, in coins and bars, up about 14 percent as investors bought silver amid record prices.

Because of strong investment demand, the persistent deficit and silvers role in green energy. It breached 100 dollars an ounce for the first time in January 2026.

India is the largest single market, dominating jewelry and retail investment, followed by the United States and China, strong in investment and industry.

Only a little. Photography has shrunk to a multi-decade low of about 24 million ounces, or 2 percent of demand, as digital replaced silver-based film.

From the Silver Institute World Silver Survey, produced with Metals Focus. Figures are fabrication demand in million ounces, and 2026 values are estimates.

Sources

Silver Institute World Silver Survey and Metals Focus - Source for silver demand by end use worldwide in 2026.

Silver Institute and Metals Focus reports - Source for industrial, investment, price and country detail, compiled by BusinessStats.

The Silver Institute - Publishes the annual World Silver Survey on global silver demand and supply.

Figures show demand for silver in 2026 by end use, in million ounces, from the Silver Institute World Silver Survey with Metals Focus. Industrial uses account for about 58 percent of demand, physical investment 19 percent and jewelry 17 percent, out of total demand near 1,130 million ounces. Silver has been in deficit for six years and prices reached record highs in 2026. Figures are fabrication demand and 2026 values are estimates. This is data journalism, not investment advice.

STATISTICS REPORT

Do More Women or Men Use Instagram? What Official Surveys Show

Women are more likely than men to use Instagram in every country where an official or original survey reports use by sex: by 11 points in the United States, 7 in the UK, 17.2 in Japan and 19 in Australia. This page brings those primary figures together, explains how a usage rate differs from an audience share, and shows why a single worldwide male and female split for Instagram cannot be confirmed at any primary source.

Updated Nov 24, 2026 · businesstats.com/distribution-of-users-on-instagram-worldwide-gender

56% vs 45% US WOMEN VS MEN, 2026	**63% vs 56%** UK WOMEN VS MEN, 2024	**63% vs 44%** AUSTRALIA, 2025
63.4% vs 46.2% JAPAN, FY2025	**61%** UK INSTAGRAM MINUTES BY WOMEN	**66% vs 56%** US TEEN GIRLS VS BOYS, 2024

Quick answer

Instagram is used by **more women than men** wherever official or original surveys measure it by sex. In the United States 56 percent of women and 45 percent of men use the app (Pew Research Center, 2026). In the UK the figures are 63 and 56 percent of internet users (Ofcom, 2024 fieldwork), in Australia 63 and 44 percent of adults (ACMA, six months to June 2025) and in Japan 63.4 and 46.2 percent of people aged 13 to 79 (FY2025 survey). There is no verified worldwide split: Meta does not publish Instagram users by gender, and the global percentages seen online are advertising audience estimates.

THREE KINDS OF GENDER DATA

A usage rate, an audience share and a time share are three different numbers

Most confusion about Instagram and gender comes from mixing up three measures. The first is the **usage rate by sex**: of all women in a country, what share use Instagram, and the same for men. National surveys

such as those of Pew Research Center, Ofcom, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and the Japanese government report this measure. It tells you how far Instagram has spread among women compared with men.

The second is the **audience composition**: of all Instagram users, what share are female and what share are male. This is the number most people actually want when they ask about the gender split of Instagram, and it is the one primary sources almost never publish. The third is the **time share**: of all the minutes adults spend on Instagram, what share is spent by women. Ofcom publishes this measure for the UK from passive audience measurement.

The three are related but not interchangeable. A usage rate of 56 percent for women and 45 percent for men does not mean that 56 percent of users are women. The audience share also depends on how many men and women live in the country and how old they are, which is covered on our page on the global population by gender. This page reports each measure under its own name and never converts one into another.

How to read the figures on this page

- **Percent of women or men who use Instagram** is a survey usage rate. It always comes from a sample survey with a stated period and age range.
- **Gap in percentage points** is the female usage rate minus the male usage rate, calculated by BusinessStats from the published figures.
- **Share of Instagram minutes** is a time share from audience measurement of devices, available for the UK only.
- **Global male or female share** figures from advertising tools are not used, because they measure reachable accounts rather than verified users.

COUNTRY COMPARISON

Women lead in all four countries with official data, by 7 to 19 points

Four countries publish a recent, primary measure of Instagram use by sex that is open to the public: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Japan. In each one the female usage rate is higher than the male rate. The size of the lead varies more than twofold, from 7 percentage points among UK internet users to 19 points among Australian adults.

Instagram Gender Gap: Female Minus Male Usage Rate, Latest Survey (percentage points)

Interactive chart online: businesstats.com/distribution-of-users-on-instagram-worldwide-gender

Australia and Japan show the widest gaps: in both, about 63 percent of women use Instagram against 44 to 46 percent of men, while the US and UK gaps are smaller.

Share of Men and Women Who Use Instagram, by Country (%)

Interactive chart online: businesstats.com/distribution-of-users-on-instagram-worldwide-gender

Female use clusters around 56 to 63 percent: male use varies more, from 44 percent in Australia to 56 percent among UK internet users.

COUNTRY	WOMEN	MEN	GAP (POINTS)	BASE AND MEASURE	PERIOD
United States	56%	45%	+11	Adults 18+, ever use	30 Jan to 18 Jun 2026
United Kingdom	63%	56%	+7	Internet users 16+, use	2024 fieldwork
Australia	63%	44%	+19	Adults 18+, used in past 6 months	6 months to June 2025
Japan	63.4%	46.2%	+17.2	Ages 13 to 79, use	1 to 7 Dec 2025 (FY2025)

Sources: Pew Research Center; Ofcom; Australian Communications and Media Authority; Institute for Information and Communications Policy, MIC Japan. Gaps calculated by BusinessStats.

The pattern is consistent enough to be useful: Instagram reaches a larger share of women than of men in rich, high internet countries with good survey data. It does not prove the same holds everywhere. Large Instagram markets such as India, Indonesia, Brazil and Turkey do not have a public, official survey of Instagram use by sex, and the regional picture of where Instagram is most widely used is a separate question covered on our page on Instagram penetration by region.

UNITED STATES

United States: 56 percent of women and 45 percent of men use Instagram

Pew Research Center runs the longest public series on which social media Americans use. In its latest survey, fielded from 30 January to 18 June 2026 and published in its social media fact sheet in October

2026, **51 percent of US adults said they ever use Instagram**: 56 percent of women and 45 percent of men. In the 2025 survey (5 February to 18 June 2025, 5,022 adults), the figures were 55 percent of women and 44 percent of men, so both rose by one point and the 11 point gap was unchanged.

Pew notes that women stand out in their use of several platforms, including Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, while men are more likely to use X and Reddit. The table puts the Instagram gap next to the other platforms in the same 2026 survey, which shows that Instagram has one of the larger female leads among US adults, smaller than Facebook but similar to TikTok. The age profile of US and global users is covered separately on our pages on Instagram users by age group and the age distribution of Instagram users worldwide.

PLATFORM	WOMEN	MEN	GAP (POINTS)
Facebook	77%	63%	+14 women
TikTok	43%	31%	+12 women
Instagram	56%	45%	+11 women
Snapchat	30%	21%	+9 women
YouTube	83%	85%	+2 men
Reddit	23%	27%	+4 men
X (formerly Twitter)	14%	23%	+9 men

Source: Pew Research Center, Social Media Fact Sheet, survey of US adults conducted 30 January to 18 June 2026. Gaps calculated by BusinessStats. For the worldwide picture across platforms see the cross platform page linked below.

For a reader of US data, the practical point is that the female lead on Instagram is real but moderate. Use by 45 percent of men still makes men a very large group of users, and because the US adult population is close to evenly split by sex (see US population by gender), men remain a substantial part of the Instagram audience even though Pew does not publish the exact audience share. A cross platform view of gender based on advertising audiences is on our page on the gender distribution of social media users by platform.

US TEENS

Teen girls lead too, but heavy use is equal

The female lead starts early. In the Pew Research Center survey of US teens aged 13 to 17, fielded from 18 September to 10 October 2024, **66 percent of girls and 56 percent of boys used Instagram**, a 10 point gap similar to the gap among adults. Overall, 61 percent of teens used the app. The share who said they are on Instagram almost constantly was the same for both sexes, at 12 percent.

Share of US Teens and Adults Who Use Instagram, by Sex (%)

Interactive chart online: businesstats.com/distribution-of-users-on-instagram-worldwide-gender

A 10 to 11 point female lead at both ages: girls lead boys by 10 points and women lead men by 11 points.

The 2025 teen survey, fielded from 25 September to 9 October 2025 among 1,458 teens, again found teen girls more likely than boys to use Instagram and slightly larger shares of girls on the app almost constantly; Pew did not publish separate percentages for each sex in that report. In a separate April 2026 analysis, Pew found that teen boys and girls hold similar views of their screen time on Instagram.

UNITED KINGDOM

United Kingdom: higher use and most of the minutes come from women

Ofcom, the UK communications regulator, measures Instagram in two ways. Its Adults Media Use and Attitudes report, published on 7 May 2025 and based on 2024 fieldwork among internet users aged 16 and over, found that **63 percent of women and 56 percent of men used Instagram**. In the same passage Ofcom reported a female lead for WhatsApp (85 against 79 percent), Facebook (81 against 74 percent), TikTok (48 against 45 percent) and Pinterest (28 against 13 percent), and a male lead for YouTube, X, LinkedIn and Reddit.

The second measure comes from passive audience measurement. In its Online Nation 2025 report, published on 10 December 2025 and based on Ipsos iris data for UK internet users aged 18 and over in May 2025, Ofcom reports that **women accounted for 61 percent of all minutes spent on Instagram**, averaging 22 minutes a day. A year earlier, in May 2024, the female share of Instagram time was 64 percent. Ofcom describes gender usage across the four largest social and video sharing services as broadly balanced in reach, which makes the time share the clearer sign of how Instagram engagement differs by sex.

Share of Time Spent on Instagram by Women and Men, UK, May 2025 (%)

Interactive chart online: businesstats.com/distribution-of-users-on-instagram-worldwide-gender

Women spend most of the time: they accounted for 61 percent of UK adult Instagram minutes in May 2025, three points less than in May 2024.

The UK data also shows why the usage rate gap understates the engagement gap. A seven point difference in the share of internet users on Instagram turns into a 61 to 39 split in minutes, because women who use Instagram tend to spend longer on it. Daily time across all platforms is compared on our page on daily social media usage worldwide.

AUSTRALIA

Australia: the widest gap, and men are catching up

The Australian Communications and Media Authority tracks which apps adults use in its Communications and media in Australia series. Its How we communicate report, published in February 2026, covers the six months to June 2025. **Instagram use rose to 53 percent of adults, from 50 percent in 2024: 63 percent of females (up from 60 percent) and 44 percent of males (up from 40 percent).** The 19 point gap is the largest of the four countries.

Instagram Use Among Australian Adults, by Sex, 2025 (%)

Interactive chart online: businesstats.com/distribution-of-users-on-instagram-worldwide-gender

Women lead on every measure: the female lead is 19 points for six month use, 20 points for weekly use and 12 points for messaging.

Weekly use shows the same pattern: 55 percent of females and 35 percent of males used Instagram in the previous seven days, both up four to five points. Women were also more likely to use Instagram to send messages, 30 percent against 18 percent. The trend among men is the notable change. Male use over six months rose four points in a year, male weekly use rose five points, and among Instagram users the share of males who used it multiple times a day rose from 30 to 38 percent. Active engagement with content among males also rose, from 20 to 26 percent.

JAPAN

Japan: female use jumped six points in one survey year

The Institute for Information and Communications Policy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) publishes an annual survey of media use in Japan. The FY2025 edition, published on 26 June 2026, surveyed 1,800 people aged 13 to 79, split evenly between 900 men and 900 women, with fieldwork from 1 to 7 December 2025. It found that **63.4 percent of women and 46.2 percent of men use Instagram**, against 57.5 and 47.6 percent in the FY2024 survey.

That makes Japan the only one of the four countries where male use fell while female use rose, and the gap widened from 9.9 to 17.2 points in a single survey year. Overall Instagram use in Japan reached 54.8 percent, continuing a rise from 36.1 percent in the FY2020 survey. Instagram stands out among the platforms in the same survey: X was used by exactly the same share of men and women (44.7 percent), and Facebook was almost even (26.7 against 27.3 percent), while TikTok showed a 9.9 point female lead.

PLATFORM	WOMEN	MEN	GAP (POINTS)
Instagram	63.4%	46.2%	+17.2 women
TikTok	41.7%	31.8%	+9.9 women
LINE	94.1%	91.7%	+2.4 women
Facebook	27.3%	26.7%	+0.6 women
X (formerly Twitter)	44.7%	44.7%	none

Source: Institute for Information and Communications Policy, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan, FY2025 survey on media usage time and information behaviour (published 26 June 2026). Gaps calculated by BusinessStats.

LATEST CHANGES

How the gap moved between the two latest surveys

Three of the four countries publish comparable figures for consecutive years. The chart sets the previous survey beside the latest one for each sex. The UK is left out because the 2024 fieldwork figures are the latest Ofcom usage rates by sex that could be confirmed at the source.

Instagram Use by Sex: Previous vs Latest Survey (%)

Interactive chart online: businesstats.com/distribution-of-users-on-instagram-worldwide-gender

Three different stories: the US gap held at 11 points, men in Australia narrowed it slightly to 19 points, and a surge among women widened the Japanese gap to 17.2 points.

COUNTRY	WOMEN, PREVIOUS	WOMEN, LATEST	MEN, PREVIOUS	MEN, LATEST	GAP, PREVIOUS	GAP, LATEST
United States	55%	56%	44%	45%	11	11
Australia	60%	63%	40%	44%	20	19
Japan	57.5%	63.4%	47.6%	46.2%	9.9	17.2

Gaps in percentage points, calculated by BusinessStats. Sources as in the chart above.

THE MISSING GLOBAL SPLIT

Why no verified worldwide male and female split exists

Meta, which owns Instagram, said on its third quarter 2025 earnings call (29 October 2025) that Instagram had reached **3 billion monthly actives**. Its earnings releases and call materials report users and time spent, but they do not divide Instagram users by sex, and the third quarter 2026 remarks (21 October 2026) did not include a gender breakdown either. No regulator or statistics office measures Instagram across all countries. The broader picture of how large Instagram is sits on our Instagram statistics hub.

The global percentages that circulate online, including the 51.8 percent male and 48.2 percent female figure previously shown on this page, come from advertising audience tools. Those tools estimate how many accounts an advertiser can reach and rely on the sex given in a profile. They can count duplicate or business accounts, they exclude people who cannot be targeted, and they change when Meta changes its reporting. They are useful for planning campaigns, but they are not a survey of people and they are not published by Meta as a user statistic. For that reason this page does not present any worldwide split as fact.

Pew Research Center came closest to a multi country view in October 2026, when it published Instagram use in 37 countries from interviews held between 8 February and 13 May 2026 (a median of 51 percent of adults). That report broke the results down by age, education and political ideology, but not by sex. Until a

primary source publishes Instagram use by sex across many countries, the honest answer to the worldwide question is that women lead in every country where it has been measured, and the global share is unknown. The same limitation applies to other platforms, as our page on TikTok users by gender explains.

READING THE DATA

What the survey evidence means for brands and researchers

For anyone planning content or campaigns, the verified data supports a few practical conclusions, and rules out a few common claims.

Five practical points

- Instagram reaches a larger share of women than of men in every country measured, so a female skew in reach is the safe default in the US, UK, Australia and Japan.
- Men are still a large audience: 44 to 56 percent of men use Instagram in the four countries, and in Australia male use and male daily habits are growing fastest.
- Engagement can be more skewed than reach. In the UK the seven point reach gap becomes a 61 to 39 split in minutes.
- Claims that Instagram is male majority worldwide rest on advertising estimates, not on surveys, and should be labelled as such.
- Country results do not transfer: Japan and Australia show gaps above 17 points while the UK gap is 7, so use local data where it exists.

Creator and brand audiences add another layer: no primary source publishes the gender mix of followers for individual accounts, including those on our list of the most followed Instagram accounts, so account level claims need the account owner analytics. For the wider context of how many people use social networks at all, see the number of social network users worldwide and our social media statistics and facts overview.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology and data notes

Every figure on this page was checked on 24 November 2026 against the publisher of the original survey or measurement. Only primary sources are used: Pew Research Center, Ofcom, the Australian Communications and Media Authority, the Institute for Information and Communications Policy of the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and Meta Platforms for company statements.

Data notes

- **United States, adults:** share who say they ever use Instagram. Survey of US adults conducted 30 January to 18 June 2026 (Pew National Public Opinion Reference Survey, 5,511 adults); prior year 5 February to 18 June 2025 (5,022 adults).
- **United States, teens:** share of 13 to 17 year olds who use Instagram, survey of 18 September to 10 October 2024; 2025 teen survey of 25 September to 9 October 2025 (1,458 teens) reported only the direction of the gender difference.
- **United Kingdom:** use among internet users aged 16 and over from the Adults Media Literacy Tracker, 2024 fieldwork, published 7 May 2025. Time shares from the Ipsos iris Online Audience Measurement Service, UK internet users 18+, May 2024 and May 2025. An Ofcom report with 2025 fieldwork is listed on its website but its gender figures for Instagram could not be opened and confirmed, so they are not used.
- **Australia:** ACMA tracking survey of Australian adults, use in the six months and the seven days to June 2025, compared with 2024.
- **Japan:** FY2025 survey, 1,800 people aged 13 to 79, fieldwork 1 to 7 December 2025; FY2024 comparison from the same report.
- **Calculations:** gaps in percentage points and the male share of UK minutes (100 minus the published female share) are BusinessStats calculations. No figure is estimated or modelled.
- **Not used:** worldwide or regional male and female shares from advertising tools or third party compilations, because they cannot be confirmed at a primary source as user statistics.

Survey estimates carry sampling error. Pew reports a margin of error of plus or minus 3.3 percentage points for its 2025 teen sample as a whole, and margins for subgroups such as boys or girls are larger.

Differences of one or two points between years, such as the US change from 2025 to 2026, should be read as stable rather than as growth.

KEY FACTS

Instagram and gender in eight verified numbers

56% / 45%

US women and men using Instagram

Pew Research Center, 2026 survey.

63% / 56%

UK female and male internet users

Ofcom, 2024 fieldwork, ages 16+.

63% / 44%

Australian females and males

ACMA, six months to June 2025.

63.4% / 46.2%

Japanese women and men

MIC Japan, FY2025 survey, ages 13 to 79.

61%

UK Instagram minutes spent by women

Ofcom, May 2025; 64 percent in May 2024.

66% / 56%

US teen girls and boys

Pew Research Center, autumn 2024.

+5.9 pts

Rise in female use in Japan

FY2024 to FY2025 survey.

3 billion

Instagram monthly actives

Meta, Q3 2025 earnings call; no gender split published.

FAQ

Questions about Instagram users by gender

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do more women or men use Instagram?

In every country where an official or original survey reports Instagram use by sex, women are more likely than men to use it. In the United States 56 percent of women and 45 percent of men use Instagram (Pew Research Center, 2026). The gap is 7 points in the UK (2024), 17.2 points in Japan (FY2025 survey) and 19 points in Australia (2025).

What is the worldwide gender split of Instagram users?

No primary source publishes one. Meta reports that Instagram has 3 billion monthly actives but does not break that figure down by sex in its earnings materials. Global male and female shares that circulate online come from advertising audience tools, which count reachable accounts and profile settings, not verified people, so they should not be read as an official user split.

What percentage of US women use Instagram?

Pew Research Center found that 56 percent of US women and 45 percent of US men say they ever use Instagram, in a survey fielded from 30 January to 18 June 2026. A year earlier the figures were 55 percent of women and 44 percent of men.

Are teenage girls more likely than boys to use Instagram?

Yes. In the autumn 2024 Pew Research Center survey of US teens aged 13 to 17, 66 percent of girls and 56 percent of boys used Instagram. The share who use it almost constantly was the same for both, at 12 percent. The 2025 teen survey again found girls more likely to use Instagram.

Do women spend more time on Instagram than men?

In the UK, yes. Ofcom reports that women accounted for 61 percent of all adult minutes spent on Instagram in May 2025, down from 64 percent in May 2024, based on Ipsos iris online audience measurement of internet users aged 18 and over.

Is the gender gap on Instagram growing or shrinking?

It depends on the country. In the US it held at 11 points between 2025 and 2026. In Australia it narrowed slightly from 20 to 19 points as male use rose faster. In Japan it widened from 9.9 to 17.2 points between the FY2024 and FY2025 surveys because female use jumped from 57.5 to 63.4 percent.

Why do Instagram gender statistics differ between sources?

Sources measure different things. Surveys report the share of men and of women who use Instagram. Audience measurement reports how users or minutes divide between the sexes. Advertising tools estimate reachable accounts. Each also uses a different age range, period and definition of use, so the numbers cannot be swapped for one another.

Which country has the largest Instagram gender gap?

Among the countries with official survey data covered here, Australia shows the widest gap: 63 percent of females and 44 percent of males used Instagram in the six months to June 2025, a 19 point difference, according to the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

SOURCES

Pew Research Center: Social Media Fact Sheet (October 2026), survey of US adults conducted 30 January to 18 June 2026, platform use by gender.

Pew Research Center: Americans Social Media Use 2025 (20 November 2025), survey of 5,022 adults, 5 February to 18 June 2025.

Pew Research Center: Teens and Social Media Fact Sheet (10 July 2025), survey of US teens, 18 September to 10 October 2024.

Pew Research Center: Teens, Social Media and AI Chatbots 2025 (9 December 2025), survey of 1,458 teens, 25 September to 9 October 2025.

Pew Research Center: Social media platform use around the world (1 October 2026), 37 country survey, February to May 2026.

Ofcom: Adults Media Use and Attitudes report 2025 (7 May 2025), 2024 fieldwork, UK internet users 16+.

Ofcom: Online Nation 2025 (10 December 2025), Ipsos iris audience data for May 2025.

Ofcom: Digital differences between men and women revealed (28 November 2024), share of Instagram time by women, May 2024.

Australian Communications and Media Authority: How we communicate, executive summary and key findings (February 2026), period to June 2025.

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan: FY2025 survey report on media usage time and information behaviour (26 June 2026), with the press release.

Meta Platforms: Third quarter 2025 earnings call transcript (29 October 2025), Instagram 3 billion monthly actives; third quarter 2026 prepared remarks (21 October 2026).

Related reading

- Instagram statistics
- Social media users by gender and platform
- Instagram users by age group
- TikTok users by gender
- Instagram penetration by region
- Daily time spent on social media

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