

1 – Facebook



This is easily the largest social networking site in the world and one of the most widely used. And, Facebook was perhaps the first that surpassed the landmark of 1 billion user accounts.

Apart from the ability to network with friends and relatives, you can also access different Facebook apps to sell online and you can even market or promote your business, brand and products by using paid Facebook ads.

Recently Facebook has lost the trust of millions of its users by allowing 3rd parties to access over 87 million users' personal data. This is a massive breach of trust and has created a feeling of unrest amongst the social media platform's audience. So much so that there is now a #deletefacebook campaign where people are completely removing themselves from Facebook and using other networks instead. If you're concerned about what Facebook is doing with your data, then why not check out my guide on [alternatives to Facebook](#), and see if there's a better place for you to interact with family and friends.

Number of active users per month: 1.59 billion approximately

2 – WhatsApp



WhatsApp

Despite having been acquired by Facebook in 2014, this instant messaging platform exists as an independent entity.

It arrived on the scene much later than Facebook, but has been able to capture the imagination of millions of people across the world by giving them the ability to communicate and share instantly with individuals and groups. The WhatsApp call feature is just the icing on the cake!

Number of active users per month: 1 billion approximately

7 – Instagram



Instagram was launched as a unique social networking platform that was completely based on sharing photos and videos. This photo sharing social networking app thus enables you to capture the best moments of your life, with your phone's camera or any other camera, and convert them into works of art.

This is possible because Instagram allows you to apply multiple filters to your photos and you can easily post them to other popular social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. It is now part of the Facebook empire. Learn [how to grow your Instagram audience](#). [Read more on Instagram Tools](#) to help you increase social engagement and audience numbers.

Number of active users per month: 400 million approximately

8 – Twitter



This social networking site enables you to post short text messages (called tweets), containing a limited number of characters (up to 280), to convey your message to the world. With the growing craze for online shopping, Twitter also makes it possible to promote your businesses and even shop directly through tweets. Learn how to [create the perfect Twitter profile](#).

Number of active users per month: 320 million approximately

Social Networking

Social Media, Online Dating

Reviewed by Psychology Today Staff

The term "social network" refers both to a person's connections to other people in the real world and to a platform that supports online communication, such as Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter. The term is now used more often in the second sense, and the Internet provides an opportunity for anyone to create an online identity, connect with friends,

family, and strangers alike, acquire knowledge, and share ideas and information without having to be physically present. Instead, one's presence is represented on social media by shared comments, photos, videos, and other images.

Contents

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- [Why Real World Connections Matter](#)

Why Are Social Networks Important?



Expanding your social network beyond your familiar circle of friends can have surprising benefits, as social networking activities become socioeconomic opportunities, bringing fresh ideas through shared information and unexpected opportunities in the form of a job, an apartment, even a partner. Social networks provide limitless opportunities to connect with others who have cultural, political, religious, and other interests similar to your own. The Internet provides tools for cultivating, managing, and capitalizing on those networks, allowing you to form an initial relationship with someone you've never met in person, who not only enhances but could, in fact, change the direction of your life.

What are the benefits of social networking online?

Through online tools like social media, a person [can actively engage](#) with other people around the world. They can pursue their curiosity and learn, pick up hobbies, and develop new skills. They have access to a world of information, including life-saving health tips. They can practice kindness and give and receive emotional support.

Why worry about excessive time on social media platforms?

On the flip side, social media can increase loneliness, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), and cyberbullying. A tendency to compare oneself to others online can lead to a host of negative outcomes. People may feel like

their [negative feelings aren't validated](#)—like they should feel bad for feeling bad.

Do social networks prevent people from accessing objective news media?

The Importance of Real World Connections



Offline social networks differ in ways far beyond a dependence on Internet connectivity. People behave and work together differently, communicate differently, and spend different amounts of time together when they meet offline than when they connect online.

An individual's online social network does not generally represent their "real-life" social network. While a large network of friends and acquaintances is possible on social media platforms, many of these connections are weak ties; the amount of social support one has offline is likely to be more important to one's ultimate feelings of life satisfaction and psychological well-being.

How can someone make new friends and connections as an adult? Believing that it is not easy to make new friends can prevent some people from even trying. [Those who are successful](#) show up at events (both physically and emotionally), put themselves out there, and are intentional about their efforts to connect. The more visible a person is, the more chances they have of actually connecting (i.e., the "exposure effect").

Is it better to have more connections or closer ones?

It's unclear. Many believe that having more than a handful of friends means the friendships won't be as close. On the other hand, weak ties who don't share the same personal or professional spheres expose one to new ideas and job opportunities. Anthropologist Robin Dunbar calculates that the largest number of [stable social relationships](#) a person can have: 150.

The 7 Top Social Media Sites You Need to Care About in 2021



Social Media in 2021

Should you go all in on Instagram? Maybe place half of your social media budget into Facebook and split the rest between YouTube and LinkedIn? What about Pinterest? These are the kinds of questions plaguing small businesses and marketing teams alike.

To help you decide which social media platforms are going to be right for your brand this year, here are our picks for the top social media sites you should care about in 2021.

1. Instagram

Long the home of influencers, brands, bloggers, small business owners, friends and everyone in between, Instagram has topped well over 1 billion monthly users. If you're

wondering whether a meaningful segment of your audience spends time on the platform, the answer is almost surely a resounding yes.

Who's on Instagram (and Why): Instagram has become one of the most popular social media platforms for teens and young adults, especially in the U.S. Use of the app slowly drops off with age but stays consistent across both men and women, so if your customers are under 40, then Instagram can't be ignored.

The Content that Works Best on Instagram: Beautiful photography, stunning visuals, unique designs, selfie-style video that speaks directly to your audience and a cohesive theme to your content will help you stand out on Instagram.

You Should Prioritize Instagram if: Your target audience is under the age of 40, you run a lifestyle, ecommerce, or photography business.

FACEBOOK

With nearly 2.5 billion monthly users, Facebook is hands down the largest social media site in the world. While that practically ensures at least some of your audience regularly uses the platform, it's developed a somewhat negative reputation amongst younger users that are increasingly turning to other alternative sites.

Regardless, if your brand stands to benefit from sharing industry-related news, engaging (short-form) videos, graphics and other visually appealing content—especially if your primary audience is above the age of 30—then consider having a presence on Facebook. You might also consider leveraging Facebook groups to gather your customers or community in one place online. Facebook groups, unlike Facebook business pages, aren't for advertising, but they can be helpful in creating conversation.

Who's on Facebook (and Why): 68% of U.S. adults report using Facebook, with 51% saying they're active multiple times daily. Usage is spread pretty evenly amongst males and females, while users tend to get increasingly active as age increases (especially beyond the 40+ year old demographic).

The Content that Works Best on Facebook: The more interesting, engaging or even polarizing your content is, the more likely it is to go viral on Facebook. Lean heavily on short videos, eye-catching images and attention-grabbing headlines to attract an audience. For Facebook groups, interactive content and conversation-starters are the way to go. Consider live streams and polls.

You Should Prioritize Facebook if: You want to reach an audience of adults and have engaging visual (or video) content that can capture their attention, invoke an immediate

emotional response and make them excited to share with their friends. Or if you want an easy way to create an online community around a topic or business.

4. Twitter

While Twitter's monthly active user numbers have hovered consistently around 300 million for a while now, a whopping 40% of those users are active on the site multiple times daily, suggesting that if your audience uses the platform, they're likely very engaged. The popularity of this social media site remains high amongst tech-savvy users and is particularly active in B2B verticals related to business, marketing and politics today.

Who's on Twitter (and Why): 63% of Twitter users are between the ages of 35 and 65, with males making up nearly two-thirds of those people.

The Content that Works Best on Twitter: Twitter has become a very popular medium to communicate breaking news, digest bite-sized content, and communicate directly with your users in real-time. Videos and images tend to stand out best, but a well-timed written tweet still works wonders if you're hopping on trending topics and are particularly witty.

You Should Prioritize Twitter if: Your audience skews toward the demographic of mature males between the ages of 30 and 60. Experiment with a combination of content types ranging from educational videos, to gripping visuals and discussion threads that offer advice and opinions.