

Social Media and Networking - UK - May 2011

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What is this report about?

This report considers the world of social media, giving an overview of the various online services that facilitate social experiences. In particular, this report investigates how members, as well as companies and advertisers, are using and responding to social networks.

What have we found out?

- Facebook's focus on social designs has made it the top social networking site in the UK. Mintel's research shows that 73% of internet users have used Facebook, and 57% are regular users who visit Facebook at least once a week.
- Social networking sites that offer value-added services unavailable elsewhere will thrive alongside Facebook, as 40% of users already have two or more social network profiles and this number will increase.
- Companies who use social media as a one-way advertising tool will not attract customer loyalty, as only 13% of members use social networking sites to find out more information about brands. Instead, companies should use social media to engage and interact with consumers.
- Some 58% of social network users express concerns over privacy when using social network, an attitude that will hinder the adoption of location-based services and social commerce unless social networks are more transparent about data protection.
- Accessing social networking websites via mobile is slowly gaining traction as smartphone adoption increases. Almost half (47%) of social networkers who currently access social networking on the go agrees that mobile access to social networking sites is very important to them, as compared with only 27% of all social networkers.
- The next challenge for social networks is to design smaller and more meaningful communities for their members, and with 31% of consumers willing to defect to a new social network if their friends started to use another site, top social networking sites must continue to innovate.

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