

Social Media and Networking - UK - May 2012

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"Brand presence on Google+ will benefit the social network as consumers are enticed to join it to connect with brands they like, as well as using it for promotional offers ahead of other social networks. Indeed, if more internet users were to join Google+ to subscribe to offers and updates as a result of how marketers are using it currently, the cycle could see Google+ evolve into the primary engagement channel that marketers use to reach their customers."

– Cecilia Liao, Senior Technology Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- Why do consumers not want to buy from social networks?
- Why do consumers feel overwhelmed by the number of networks available?
- Do consumers make friends with brands on social networks?
- Why are consumers using social networks less?

Mintel's consumer research shows that 76% of internet users have accessed social networks in the past three months, and consumers are accessing social networks from a host of devices, including desktops, laptops, tablet computers, smartphones, and Smart TVs. In fact, 16% of social network users say they are now using mobiles to access social networks more often than from traditional computers. With smartphone ownership continuing to rise, social media becomes ever more universal and accessible at all times.

This report examines the world of social media, giving an overview of the various online services that facilitate social experiences. Social media encompasses a large collection of web technologies that foster the creation and distribution of user generated content. Social networks, an online platform that allows a user to interact with other users, are but one form of social media. It investigates the types of social media services that internet users are consuming and contributing to. In addition to examining social network users' general attitudes and behaviours towards social media, this report also takes an in-depth look at what how often they visit, what they are doing, and with whom they are connecting on social networks, focusing predominantly on the most visited networks – Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and LinkedIn.

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