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The new social frontier: Instant messaging usage jumps 12% as more people opt for closed platforms

- New report shows 55% of global internet users are on instant messaging (IM) every day
- Facebook remains the firm favourite across digital platforms globally and in Canada, though WeChat and WhatsApp are rising up the ranks
- Canada daily usage of IM is 10% higher than the US, but still lags 'mobile-first' markets
- IM offers significant opportunities for brands that successfully move to a content model

8 October 2015 - The popularity of instant messaging (IM) has soared over the past year, with a 12% uplift in daily usage as more people opt for closed messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Viber.

Over half of internet users worldwide (55%) are now using instant messaging every day, while 76% are using it on a weekly basis, according to Connected Life, a study of over 60,000 internet users worldwide from global research consultancy TNS. Despite this, social platforms are still rising in popularity with a 6% uplift in daily usage.

Instant Messaging is particularly dominant in emerging 'mobile-first' markets, with daily usage rising even higher in China (69%), Brazil (73%), Malaysia (77%) and South Africa (64%). By contrast, some Western markets are lagging behind, including Canada (46%), the UK (39%) and the US (35%).

Facebook has maintained its position as the world's favourite social platform; almost one third of global internet users (30%) say they use it every day. It is even more dominant in Canada with 56% daily users, followed by Youtube (33%) and a close between Twitter and Instagram (16% and 15% respectively). Meanwhile WeChat dominates the market in China, with 68% daily usage.

This data shows that consumers are even more connected to each other, and across multiple platforms. While IM popularity is rising, traditional social media platforms are still holding strong, allowing content to go viral more quickly. The challenge for brands is to create content that consumers actually want to share.

Whilst these newer platforms still attract a smaller audience overall, they are often far more active; 40% of Vine users and 44% of Snapchat users say they watch branded content on those platforms every week, while 43% of WeChat's user base use it to access information and services about a company.

Kris Hull, Digital Director for the Americas, said:

“Apps like Snapchat, WeChat, Line and WhatsApp are sweeping up new users every day, particularly younger consumers who want to share experiences with a smaller, specific group, rather than using public, mainstream platforms like Facebook or Twitter. As people’s online habits become ever more fragmented, brands need to tap into the growing popularity of IM and other emerging platforms. The need for a content-driven approach across IM, social and traditional channels has never been clearer.

“Yet at the same time brands need to be very careful. Instant messaging is a more closed medium, meaning it is essential to share limited content that is genuinely relevant and valuable. Starbucks recently ran a breakfast promotion campaign via WeChat, which triggered a morning alarm and rewarded customers with a half-price breakfast if they arrived at the store within the hour. This is a brilliant example of using IM to create positive word-of-mouth and build up customer loyalty.”

Further research from TNS showed that although IM users are wary of brands interrupting them, they are more concerned with how content they share impacts their own image.

Kris Hull said:

“The challenge of how to get the most out of TV used to be the biggest challenge for advertisers. Now it’s about moving from a broadcast to a content creation model that gets people talking and sharing across different platforms.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

About Connected Life

[Connected Life](#) is a leading global study of the digital attitudes and behaviours of 60,500 internet users across 50 countries, exploring how technology is transforming the lives of consumers across the world. It offers essential insight into the impact of the growing digital ecosystem on the media landscape.

Connected Life also uncovers new and exciting opportunities for marketers to connect with their consumers in this increasingly complex environment; it is a powerful tool that helps brands make better digital decisions.

The fieldwork was undertaken in all markets between May and August 2015.

For further information, visit www.tnsglobal.com/get-connected/connected-life

About TNS

TNS advises clients on specific growth strategies as they relate to brands, communications, innovation, shopper experiences and customer and employee relationships. TNS employs long-established expertise and market-leading solutions. With a presence in over 80 countries, TNS has more conversations with the world's consumers than anyone else and understands individual human behaviours and attitudes across every cultural, economic and political region of the world.

TNS is part of Kantar, the data investment management division of WPP and one of the world's largest insight, information and consultancy groups. Please visit www.tnscanada.com for more information.

About Kantar

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