

For immediate release

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Social media 'growing up' in the UK

Fresh research from YouGov's Media Consulting team reveals that though uptake and usage of social media services remains very high, the restless British public are now demanding more from these kinds of services. In fact, two in five (41%) of the UK online population claim to be getting bored of social media.

Facebook is still King

Almost two thirds (65%) of the UK online population have used Facebook within the last month, making it the social media site with the highest percentage of active users. Perhaps unsurprisingly, usage of Facebook amongst younger generations is practically ubiquitous, with a staggering 95% of 16-20 year olds and 74% of 21-24 year olds accessing the social networking site within the last month. YouTube is the closest social media site behind Facebook with half (50%) of all UK internet users using the site within the last month. The other big hitters in terms of active users are Twitter (23%), Windows Live (14%), LinkedIn (13%), Google + (12%) and Spotify (10%).

Interestingly, moneysavingexpert.com, the expert consumer financial advice site, now has as many active users as Twitter. As well as articles on financial products, users of the site can create profiles, leave comments and interact in similar ways to other social media sites. This points towards a new phase - the rise of social sites with slightly more purpose than just connecting to people for the sake of it.

Take for example Spotify, primarily a music service, which has recently bolted on social media functions (users have the ability to view their friends' listening habits and share music via Facebook Connect). One in ten (10%) active Spotify users now spends more than 14 hours per week using the service.

Future outlook for social media sites

Facebook's usage, though still leaps and bounds ahead of the competition, might finally be starting to plateau. Just under a quarter (23%) of the British online population, who actively use Facebook, state that they now use the networking site less compared with 12 months ago. Furthermore, 19% expect to use Facebook less in one year's time.

However, over half (53%) of the British online population, who actively use LinkedIn, claim to now use the site more compared with 12 months ago. Further good news for LinkedIn is that 30% expect to use it more in one year's time.

Social is not always the advertiser's friend

Though social media services can provide a wealth of engagement opportunities for brand marketers, it seems that there is less benefit for brands than was originally thought. For example, just under half (44%) of the British online population would not be more positive about a product their friends have followed and/or liked and 43% are unlikely to talk about a brand on a social media site even if they heard something positive about it.

In addition, brand marketers and media owners need to be mindful of new targeting models with just under half (47%) of the UK online population, who use social media services, stating that they positively *do* mind seeing ads on social media services that are based on their profile activities.

Dan Brilot, Media Consulting Director says, "It appears that whilst social media can be a key tool in the brand marketer's armoury, in particular to maximise commitment amongst those already highly engaged with the brand, it has not quite reached the effectiveness necessary to be considered as a truly mass media marketing tool"

"With the ability to share, tweet and interact on any kind of site, almost a given, social media services increasingly need to have an extra *raison d'être* beyond merely being 'social' to make an impact in today's crowded market."

- ENDS-

Notes to editors:

Figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.

Total sample size was 1275. Fieldwork was undertaken between the 1st and the 10th of February. The survey was carried out online. Survey data was weighted to correctly represent the UK online population.

*Definition of 'active user': a user who has used the site within the last month

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YouGov is considered a pioneer of online market research and has a panel of 2.5 million people worldwide, including over 350,000 people in the UK representing all ages, socio-economic groups and other demographic types.

As the most quoted market research agency in the UK, YouGov has a well-documented and published track record illustrating the accuracy of its survey methods.

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