

# Asians muscling into social media world

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With more than 220 million bloggers in China alone and nearly three out of five people in Singapore having a Facebook account, Asia is presenting a huge commercial opportunity for online advertising.

[Social media](#) guru Thomas Crampton, Asia-Pacific director of Ogilvy Public Relations' global social media team, said regional users were jumping on the social media bandwagon at a faster rate than the rest of the world.

"Asia is... the most exciting part of the world for what's going on in social media," he told AFP on the sidelines of a social media forum in Singapore.

Facebook launched an Asian sales office in Singapore this month in order to to be better placed to sell ads to companies aiming for the region's consumers.

"The Asian market's a very, very big market for us," said Blake Chandlee, Facebook's commercial director for regions outside North America and western Europe. "It's an enormous opportunity for us."

Chandlee said Asia was the fastest-growing among Facebook's geographical markets, or "theatres", despite restrictions on access in China.

Crampton said the growing number of Asians connected to the Internet was a key driver behind the region's social media craze.

A report in July by research firm Nielsen said that "while the US pioneered much of the early Web 2.0 and social media innovation, Asia is playing no small role in shaping -- and in some cases leading -- the new social media landscape."

The report added that "Asian social media adoption rates have surpassed Western adoption rates".

As of December 2009, China had 221 million bloggers or more than twice the number in the United States, it added.

Crampton noted that Facebook's ranking of leading markets showed Indonesia was already a close third behind the United States and Britain in monthly active subscribers -- and poised to take second spot within

months.

Facebook refuses to give regional or country breakdowns, saying only that it has more than 500 million users worldwide.

Data from market research firm Inside Network estimated that monthly active Asia-Pacific users of Facebook numbered 117 million, or more than 20 percent of the global figure.

In June this year Asians also "tweeted" the most on micro-blogging platform [Twitter](#), outpacing the United States, according to data from Internet research company SemioCast.

"Twitter users in Asia, mainly located in Japan, Indonesia and South Korea, account for 37 percent of tweets," said SemioCast, which studied 2.9 million tweets over a period of 24 hours on June 22.

It said US-generated tweets now account for only 25 percent of messages on Twitter, down from 30 percent in March.

Asia-Pacific users are also creating social media content "to an extent that is unheard of almost anywhere in the world," Crampton added.

Data from research firm Forrester showed Chinese, South Korean, Japanese and Australians creating video, music and text content for social media at a much higher rate than Americans did last year.

And despite China's ban on Facebook and Twitter, the nation still boasts the largest number of social media users in any country thanks to locally-developed substitutes, the Hong Kong-based Crampton said.

"What has happened as a result is that domestic players have arrived, and these domestic players are the rough equivalents of what is happening

internationally," he added.

He cited Chinese video-sharing website YouKu and social networking site Qzone as "being one hundred percent replacements" for foreign sites such as YouTube and [Facebook](#).

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