

Facebook tops social pack in US, Twitter lags: study

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Facebook remains the dominant social network for US Internet users, while Twitter has failed to keep pace with rivals like Instagram and Pinterest, a study showed Wednesday.

The Pew Research Center report found 72 percent of Americans who are online currently use Facebook, a modest uptick of one percentage point from a year ago and five points higher than in 2012.

Because the vast majority of Americans use the Internet, the figures suggest 62 percent of all US adults are on Facebook, according to Pew.

The study showed Pinterest, the bulletin-board style network, was used by 31 percent of those surveyed while Facebook-owned photo-sharing network Instagram grabbed 28 percent, with both showing significant growth.

Twitter's share remained stuck at 23 percent, the same level as last year, although it rose from 16 percent in 2012.

Facebook has an added advantage over its rivals because its users are "highly engaged," according to the survey, which found 70 percent of Facebook users saying they log on daily, including 43 percent who do so several times a day.

That compared with daily engagement of 59 percent for Instagram users, 38 percent of those on Twitter and 27 percent of Pinterest users.

LinkedIn, a social network oriented toward career enhancement, saw its user base decline to 25 percent of online adults, from 28 percent in 2014. But those who use the platform daily rose to 22 percent from 13 percent a year earlier.



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Some 10 percent of online adults said they used Tumblr, the blogging platform acquired two years ago by Yahoo. That compared with six percent the last time Pew asked in December 2012.

Tumblr is popular among younger adults with 20 percent of those between the ages of 18 and 29 reporting they use it, Pew found.

The survey mirrored the global picture for the major social networks. Facebook last month said its monthly active user based grew to 1.49 billion. Twitter's user base increased only marginally to 316 million.

Pew found that Facebook was notably popular among women, garnering 77 percent of those who are online, and the 18-29 age group, where 82 percent use the social network.

Messaging gains

The Pew survey also showed considerable interest in messaging applications which allow smartphone users to bypass carrier networks.

Some 36 percent of smartphone owners said they used messaging apps such as WhatsApp, Kik or iMessage.

These apps are especially popular among young adults, and were used by 49 percent of smartphone owners between the ages of 18 and 29, Pew found.

"The emergence of messaging apps is noteworthy as these communication tools serve different social needs than traditional online social networks," said lead author Maeve Duggan, a researcher at Pew.

"The data also show how swiftly an already complex terrain of interaction is becoming more varied."

The survey found 17 percent of adult smartphone owners used apps which automatically delete messages to protect privacy such as Snapchat or Wickr. Among young adults, the percentage was even higher at 41 percent.

The Pew report is based on telephone interviews conducted from March 17 to April 12 among a national sample of 1,907 adults, including 1,612 Internet users, with a margin of error between 2.6 and 4.6 percentage points, depending on the subgroup.

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