

Facebook hails US presidential race as 2015's top topic

December 9 2015, by Michael Liedtke



In this Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2015, file photo, Republican presidential candidates John Kasich, Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, Donald Trump, Ben Carson, Ted Cruz, Carly Fiorina and Rand Paul take the stage before the Republican presidential debate at the Milwaukee Theatre, in Milwaukee. The U.S. presidential election was one of the hottest topics on Facebook in 2015. (AP Photo/Jeffrey Phelps, File)

The U.S. won't elect a president until next year but the debate over the

crowded field of candidates jostling for the Oval Office emerged as the hottest topic on Facebook this year.

The race for the Democratic and Republican party nominations eclipsed an outpouring of emotions over deadly attacks, strife, social issues and disasters.

The rankings released Wednesday open a window into the cultural mindset by analyzing how frequently specific high-profile events, politicians, entertainers, athletes, movies and TV shows were mentioned in the posts of Facebook's 1.5 billion users.

"This year, the most talked about global topics reflected the serious challenges people are facing all over the world—and how our global community is connecting and coming together in ways we have never seen before," said Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook Inc.'s chief operating officer.

Google, the owner of the Internet's dominant search engine, will provide another snapshot of what people were thinking and talking about when it releases its annual breakdown of the year's most frequent requests for more information.

Here's a glimpse at how the world looked on Facebook this year:

TOP TOPICS

The polarizing candidacy of billionaire former reality-TV star Donald Trump helped drive early interest in who will win next year's race to succeed President Barack Obama. Facebook says last week's shootings in San Bernardino didn't trigger enough discussion to break into the top

five.

1. U.S. presidential election
2. Nov. 13 attacks in Paris
3. Syrian civil war and refugee crisis
4. Nepal earthquakes
5. Greek debt crisis

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TOP ENTERTAINERS

British singer Ed Sheeran doesn't have as many followers as Taylor Swift and other singers on Twitter but the voice behind the Grammy-nominated song "Thinking Out Loud" topped Facebook's charts this year. All five of the top spots were held by singers.

1. Ed Sheeran
2. Taylor Swift
3. Kanye West
4. Nicky Jam
5. Wiz Khalifa



This file image released by HBO shows Kit Harington as Jon Snow, left, in a scene from "Game of Thrones." "Game of Thrones" was one of the hottest topics on Facebook in 2015. (Helen Sloan/HBO via AP, File)

TOP TV SHOWS

No surprise here after the HBO series "Game of Thrones" enthralled audiences during its fifth season and won a record 12 times, including the prize for best drama, at the Emmy awards in September.

1. "Game of Thrones"
2. "The Walking Dead"

3. "The Daily Show"

4. "Saturday Night Live"

5. "WWE Raw"

TOP MOVIES

The anticipation for the Walt Disney Co.'s revival of the "Star Wars" franchise loomed over theaters like the Death Star for most of the year, even though the film won't be released until next week.

1. "Star Wars: The Force Awakens"

2. "Furious 7"

3. "Jurassic World"

4. "Avengers: Age of Ultron"

5. "American Sniper"



This file photo provided by Disney shows R2-D2, left, and Anthony Daniels as C-3PO, in a scene from the new film, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," directed by J.J. Abrams. The movie releases in the U.S. on Dec. 18, 2015, and is already one of the hottest topics on Facebook. (David James/Disney/Copyright Lucasfilm 2015 via AP, File)

TOP ATHLETES

The long-awaited May duel between two of the past decade's best boxers captivated sports fans.

Reflecting Facebook's worldwide reach, none of the most popular pastimes in the U.S. placed an athlete in the top five. New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady came in sixth place on Facebook's list, while Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry occupied the seventh spot to beat the Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James in the basketball arena.

1. Boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Boxer Manny Pacquiao
3. Mixed martial arts fighter Ronda Rousey
4. Soccer star Lionel Messi
5. Soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo



In this Saturday, May 2, 2015, file photo, Floyd Mayweather Jr., left, connects with a right to the head of Manny Pacquiao, from the Philippines, during their welterweight title fight in Las Vegas. Mayweather was one of the hottest topics on Facebook in 2015. (AP Photo/John Locher, File)

TOP POLITICIANS

Fascination over who might replace him next year wasn't enough to overshadow the current U.S. president as he wrapped up in his penultimate year in office.

1. U.S. President Barack Obama



In this Friday, Sept 25, 2015, file photo, Ed Sheeran performs at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Mass. Sheeran was one of the hottest topics on Facebook in 2015. (Photo by Winslow Townson/Invision/AP, File)

2. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump

3. Brazil President Dilma Rousseff

4. Democratic presidential candidate Hilary Clinton

5. Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders

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