

Global survey reveals social habits of consumers in 72 countries

Wave 7, described as the world's largest and longest-running survey representing more than 1 billion active internet users, has been released.

Universal McCann (UM), a division of IPG Mediabrands, has tracked the dynamic shifts that have taken place within the social media landscape for the last seven years.



As part of this year's survey, the importance of the human need to connect, combined with the proliferation of smartphones, reveals compelling insights into consumer behaviour. These insights offer brand marketers an opportunity to create customised media strategies that speak to consumers locally at the global level.

African knowledge improves

"We are now in our fourth year of Wave research in South Africa and have research covering Kenya, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire to add to our map. The insights gained out of this study allow us to frame our social media strategies in a far more relevant way for our clients and their audiences. It is no longer prudent for brands to be active in the social space without truly understanding the type of conversations that people are willing to entertain with them in social media. This is a valuable tool that helps us to unlock these insights together with our clients," says Bruce Williamson, MD, UM.

According to the survey, relationship, diversion, learning, progression and recognition are the five key needs underpinning all consumer interaction. These five motivations continue to fuel the world's prolific use of social media. The research shows no sign of internet user fatigue. The rapid growth of mobile is resulting in an 'always on' mentality, with consumers around the world being more connected, more often.

"The research has identified that consumers will connect with brands that meet five basic needs. By answering these needs, and by combining technology, social platforms and media in a more cohesive way, brands can put themselves in an extremely powerful position. We believe it can guide them through this journey," says Glen Parker, research director, UM G14/EMEA.

The expansion of the Wave study from South Africa into Kenya, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire represents the start of an aggressive plan by Mediabrands to provide a step change in the research support agencies and clients receive on the continent.

"Studies like this will enable us to better understand our consumer, how they interact with a dynamic media environment and what motivates them to engage with, or purchase, particular products and services," says Brad Smale, MD, World Markets, Mediabrands.



Key findings

- Content creation culture - Africans are active producers and uploaders of content. Nigeria's active internet users are the most active content creators globally and are 45% more likely than the average global internet user to do so.
- The keyboard to success - The professional social network has shown the fastest growth in the past year. The survey reveals that this platform has become the key place to boost your professional profile, as well as influence opinion and earn respect. Within Africa, consumers are finding professional social media particularly effective in giving them a voice and meeting their needs. Visiting a professional social networking site nearly doubled in SA from

Wave 6 to Wave 7, and at almost 60% is 16% ahead of the global norm. Other African markets are catching up fast.

- How much to share - Internet privacy continues to make front-page news. Almost 70% of global consumers registered concern about the amount of personal data online. However, over 43% are supportive of brands using online behavioural data for marketing if it improves their online experience. This value-exchange has resulted in a 10% spike in consumer membership in brand communities, proving that a greater understanding of consumer needs can lead to a strategic approach to engagement. 65% of South Africa's active internet users have joined branded communities online, up from 41% the previous year.

- Pleasure, Passion or Pursuit - While all countries still value social media for its ability to foster human relationships, Kenyan and Nigerian consumers are there to aid their progression in life, Cote d'Ivoire for learning purposes, whilst South Africans tend to be there to stay in touch with friends and to express their emotions.

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