

Social media in Canada

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ABSTRACT

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During the past few years, there have been tremendous changes on social media through different applications in Canada. Many people choose their products and services solely based on the tips they receive from various social media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. Social media are experiencing an increase popularity, both among the ordinary people who simply use the facilitated interaction, and businessman who observe it as a serious marketing facility. In this paper, we study the trend and usage of social media for different purposes in Canadian society. The survey indicates that Facebook has been the most popular followed by Twitter and LinkedIn. The study also indicates that social media are used for many purposes such as reaching update news, recommending products or services, recruiting employees, etc.

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1. Introduction

During the past few years, there have been tremendous changes on social media through different applications in Canada. Many people choose their products and services solely based on the tips they receive from various social media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. Social media are experiencing an increase popularity, both among the ordinary people who simply use the facilitated interaction, and businessman who observe it as a serious marketing facility. Social media appear in different types, from sharing photos to chat applications. Social media are used for different purposes such as advertising products, medical purposes (Matta et al., 2014), enabling community through social media (Gruzd & Haythornthwaite, 2013), providing emergency medicine for Canadian residents (Purdy et al., 2015) or even for recruiting Canadian youth for medical research (Chu & Snider, 2013). A survey accomplished in 2017 indicates that, nearly 37 percent of the world's population maintained an account on at least one of the existing social networks. In addition, several surveys indicate that Facebook has managed to become leadership position on the social networks market, with nearly 1.96 billion accounts around the globe, followed by WhatsApp, and YouTube. In Canada, about 20 million residents are anticipated to use a social network account by 2018. Here, as in the rest of the world, Facebook is believed to be the

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highest penetrating rate, with 75% of the population using an active account on this platform followed by LinkedIn, with the highest penetration rate among residents of British Columbia and Alberta. Moreover, Twitter has also been experiencing tremendous growth among its Canadian users from nearly 3.3 million in 2012 to some 7.6 million active users in 2020. In spite of the fact that people around the globe spend about 118 minutes per day surfing social networks, Canadian users spent only 107 minutes per day surfing social networks via different devices. Thus, social networks are believed to become a good marketing tool, prompted an increase in marketing. In 2015, over 90 percent of Canadian marketers stated their brand's presence on Facebook, with a further 78 percent claiming Twitter presence. In 2017, social media advertisement revenue in Canada was expected to be over 560 million U.S. dollars, with the largest share of these revenues being created by mobile ads¹. Fig. 1 demonstrates the number of users of Facebook in different years.

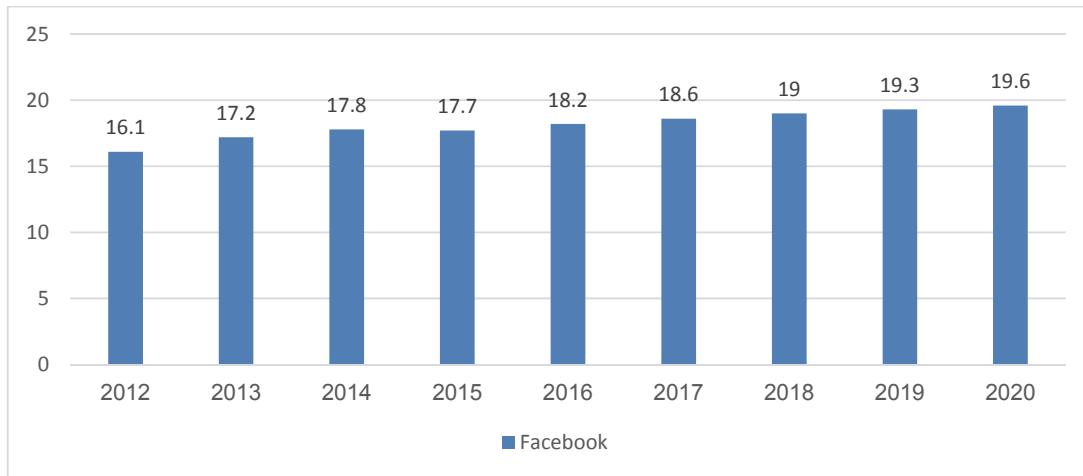


Fig. 1. The number of Facebook users (In million users)

Haight et al. (2014) performed a survey on the 2010 Canadian Internet Use Survey to study the differences in people's access to the internet and level of online activity. The survey not only revisits the digital divide in the Canadian context, but also extends present investigations by incorporating an analysis of how demographic factors could influence on social networking site (SNS) adoption. They reported that access to the internet represents existing inequalities in society with income, education, rural/urban, immigration status, and age all affecting adoption patterns. Moreover, the results indicate that inequality in access to the internet was now being mimicked in the level of online activity of internet users. More recent immigrants to Canada appeared to maintain lower rates of internet access; however, recent immigrants who were online had substantially higher levels of online activity than Canadian born residents did. Moreover, women acted fewer activities online than men did. People's use of SNSs varied in terms of education, gender, and age. Women were substantially more tendency to implement SNSs than men. In that survey, high school graduates also maintained the lowest percentage of adoption compared to all other education parties. Current students were by far the group who utilized SNSs the most. Canadian born, recent, and early immigrants all presented similar adoption rates of SNSs. Age was a strong predictor of SNS usage, with young people depending on SNSs in comparison with those aged 55+.

In this paper, we present a preview of different studies on Canadian social media. The study tries to highlight the facts on the effects of different tools such as like, recommend, share, etc. on Canadian residents' purchasing behavior.

¹ <https://www.statista.com/topics/2729/social-networking-in-canada/>

2. Social media

Hermida's et al. (2012) work is believed to be one of the most important studies on Canadian purchasing behavior. The study investigated the effect of social media on news use, based on an online survey of 1600 Canadians. Many enterprises seem to rush into social media, observing services such as Facebook and Twitter as potentials to market and distribute content. Hermida et al. (2012) reported that social networks are an important source of news for Canadians. Nearly 40% of social networking users stated they receive news from social media such as Facebook, while 20% receive news from organizations and individual journalists they follow. Participants in this survey stated they valued social media because it provides events and exposes them to a wider range of news and information. While social interaction has always influenced on the dissemination of news, the survey recommends that social media are becoming primary source for people to share news. Networked media technologies are extending the capability of users to build personalized news streams.

Duff et al. (2013) reported on two different studies on various characteristics of archives' use of social media: an environmental scan of Canadian archives and a focus group study of archival users. The environmental scan verified the use of social media by 648 archives and realized the degree of user involvement with a collection of social media services. They gathered the data in a two-month period in year 2012. The focus group study included of five sessions, each with 4-7 participants, for a total of 28 participants. They reported that, with some exceptions, archives were making minimal implementation of social media to absorb users, user involvement was also relatively low, and the participants in the study maintained a number of concerns about attributing to social media. Nevertheless, the participants in the focus groups also believed the potential for social media to democratize the archives, contribute to the public good, allow for a richer historical record representing other points of view, and, finally, increase their involvement with archives. Poell and Borra (2012) examined the suitability of social media as platforms, such as Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr, of alternative journalism by the protestors of the 2010 G20 summit in Toronto, Canada. This specific use of social media was investigated according to the history and theory of alternative journalism. They reported that social media could not facilitate the crowd-sourcing of alternative reporting, except to some extent for Twitter and reporting was dominated by a relatively small number of users.

Gruzd and Roy (2014) studied political polarization in social media by considering social network analysis of a sample of 5,918 tweets posted by 1,492 Twitter users during the 2011 Canadian Federal Election. They reported a clustering impact around shared political views among supporters of the same party in the Twitter communication network, recommending that there were pockets of political polarization on Twitter. On the other hand, there seemed to be some evidence of cross-ideological connections and exchanges, which could facilitate open, cross-party, and cross-ideological discourse, and ignite wider debate and learning as they were observed by nonaffiliated voters and the media at large. Nevertheless, what seemed to be far less likely was any increased interest for committed partisans to shift their allegiances due to Twitter involvement, and they postulated that Twitter usage at present was likely to further embed partisan loyalties during electoral periods.

Social networking sites (SNSs) have recently received significant popularity among youth. Sampasa-Kanyinga and Lewis (2015) investigated whether the frequent use of social networking sites could be associated with poor psychological functioning among children and adolescents. In their survey, students who had unmet need for mental health support were more likely to state using SNSs for more than 2 hours every day than those with no detected unmet need for mental health support.

3. Conclusion

In this paper, we have highlighted different facts about the effects of social media in Canadian society. The survey has concluded that social media are becoming the primary source of sharing news, medical advices, recruiting people, suggesting products or services. The survey has concluded that Canadian

residents have an increase trend of using such facilities and we may expect more people use popular social network such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. to share their ideas.

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