

University of Maryland
Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
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How Social Media Has Influenced Consumer Perception



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International Food Information Council and the International Food Information Council Foundation



IFIC Mission: To effectively communicate science-based information on food safety and nutrition issues to health professionals, journalists, educators and government officials.

IFIC Foundation Mission: To effectively communicate science-based information on health, nutrition, and food safety for the public good.



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HAS Social Media Influenced Consumer Perception?

Indeed it has, the emergence of social media has changed the way we communicate.



Today's Presentation

- Social Media Landscape
- Specific Case Studies That Show Social Media's Influence
- The Role of Regulators, Academicians, Industry Stakeholders
- What Lies Ahead

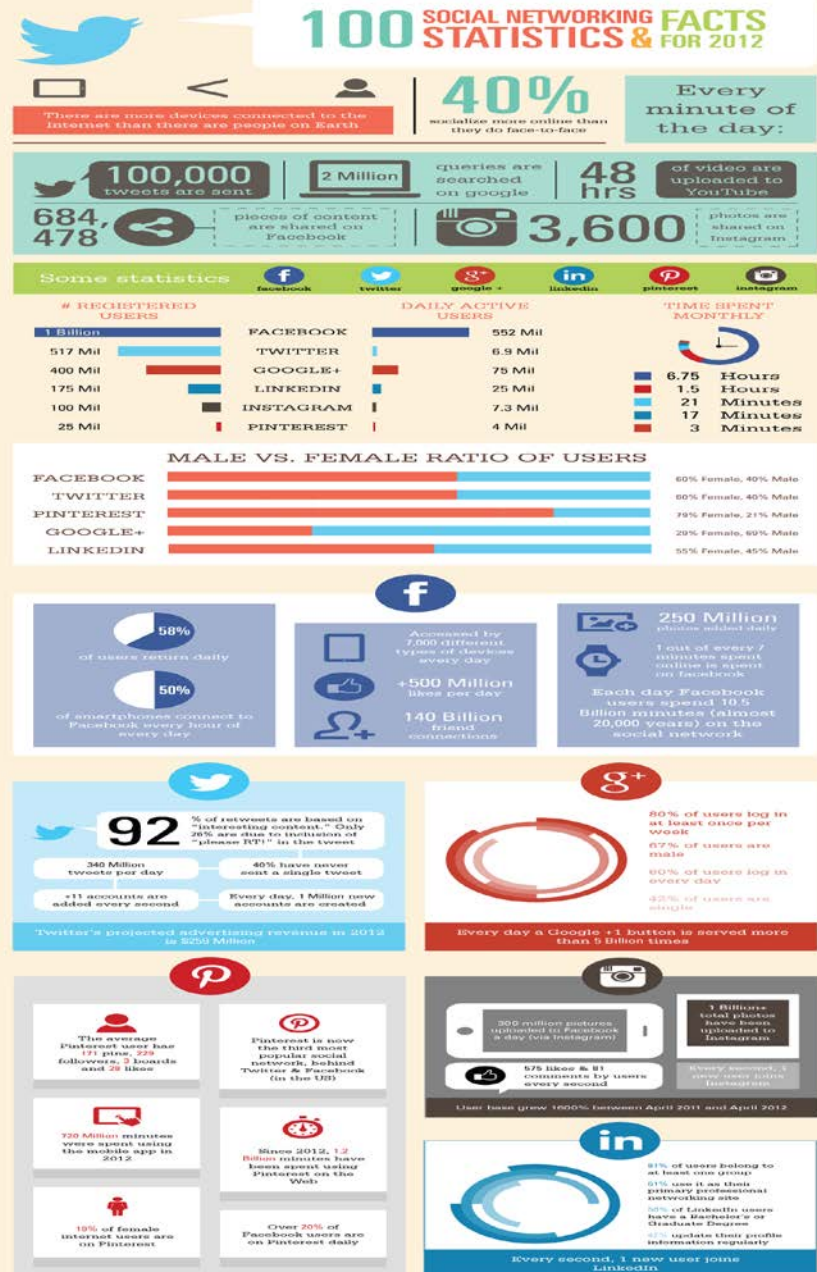
Question

How many people own a smart phone? A tablet?



Did You Know.....

- 73% of smartphone owners access social networks through apps at least once per day
- Facebook has over 1 billion users
- One out of every seven minutes spent online is on Facebook
- 340 million tweets are sent each and every day



SOURCES

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How Social Media Has Influenced Consumer Perception

CASE STUDIES



Case Study: Bisphenol A

In 2012, FDA stated that baby bottles and children's drinking cups could no longer contain bisphenol A, or BPA, a chemical used in the manufacture of polycarbonate plastic or epoxy resins, which are used in plastic bottles and food packaging materials. Bloggers and commenters were pleased with the decision, but expressed confusion about why FDA would abandon the chemical's use in some products, but still declare its safety for use in products that hold food.



Case Study: Finely Textured Lean Beef *Commonly Referred to as “Pink Slime”*

In March 2012, finely textured lean beef trimmings came under attack by two former FSIS personnel who questioned the appropriateness and safety of the product. One man referred to it as “pink slime.” Attention given to the topic intensified when it was reported that lean beef trimmings was a part of ground beef destined for the National School Lunch Program. One mom launched a petition drive to ban ground beef containing "pink slime" from the National School Lunch Program. By March 9 the petition had attracted more than 170,000 signatures. Bloggers and commenters have been highly critical of the government for its decision to provide finely textured lean beef trimmings as part of ground beef for schools. Most felt the government places the interests and priorities of the beef industry over those of the American people.



Case Study: Food Colors

- Two mommy bloggers initiate a petition on Change.org to have food colors removed from a specific product. Their petition generated over 270,000 signatures.

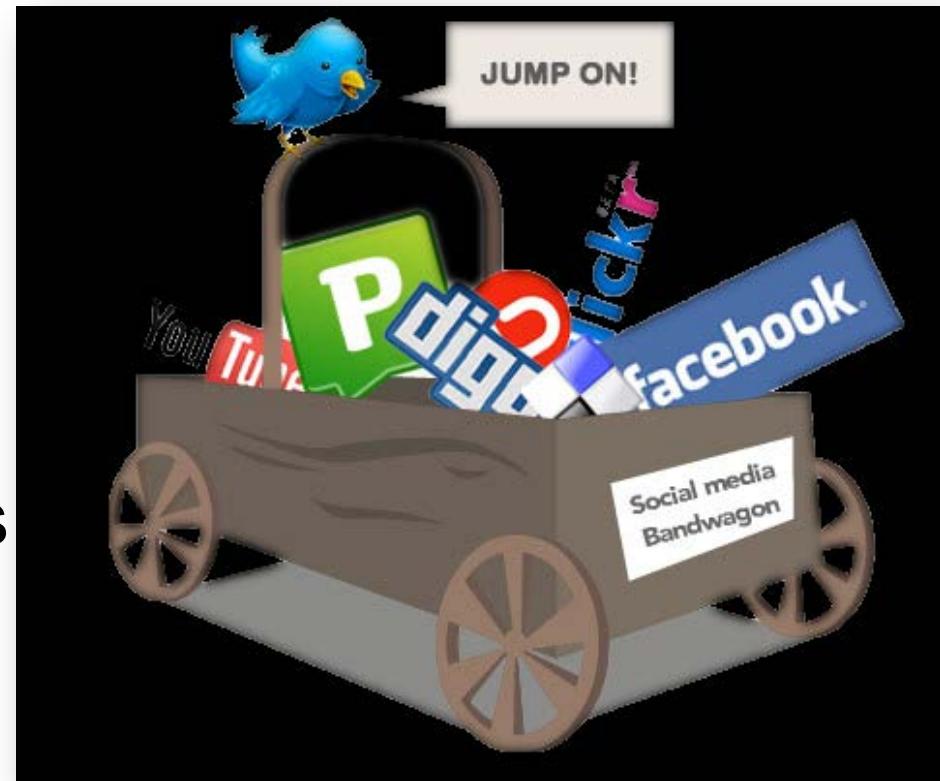


Who Are the Influencers?



What You Can Do

- Connect With Your Communications Department
- Participate Yourself
 - Start Slow
 - Build Relationships
 - Join the Discussions
- Come to IFIC



We All Have A Role to Play!

Learn the Social Media Tools That Are Best for Your Target Audience

- Blogs
- Social Networking Sites
- Microblogs
- Wikipedia
- Video Sharing
- Podcasts



Who Influences Consumer Perceptions? Here's What Consumers Say...

Video



What Lies Ahead? How Will Social Media Evolve?



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