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Social Media Use in 2018

A majority of Americans use Facebook and YouTube, but young adults are especially heavy users of Snapchat and Instagram

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Social Media Use in 2018

A majority of Americans use Facebook and YouTube, but young adults are especially heavy users of Snapchat and Instagram

A new Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults finds that the social media landscape in early 2018 is defined by a mix of long-standing trends and newly emerging narratives.

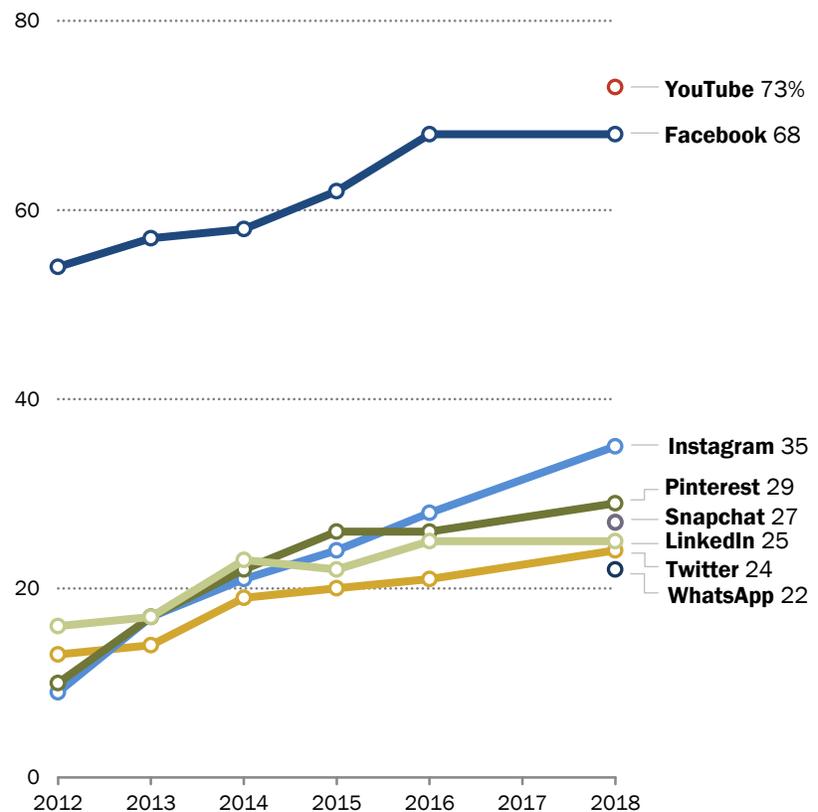
Facebook and YouTube dominate this landscape, as notable majorities of U.S. adults use each of these sites. At the same time, younger Americans (especially those ages 18 to 24) stand out for embracing a variety of platforms and using them frequently. Some 78% of 18- to 24-year-olds use Snapchat, and a sizeable majority of these users (71%) visit the platform multiple times per day. Similarly, 71% of Americans in this age group now use Instagram and close to half (45%) are Twitter users.

As [has been the case](#) since the Center began surveying about

the use of different social media in 2012, Facebook remains the primary platform for most Americans. Roughly two-thirds of U.S. adults (68%) now report that they are Facebook users, and roughly three-quarters of those users access Facebook on a daily basis. With the exception of those 65 and older, a majority of Americans across a wide range of demographic groups now use Facebook.

Majority of Americans now use Facebook, YouTube

% of U.S. adults who say they use the following social media sites online or on their cellphone



Note: Pre-2018 telephone poll data is not available for YouTube, Snapchat or WhatsApp. Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018. Trend data from previous Pew Research Center surveys.

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But the social media story extends well beyond Facebook. The video-sharing site YouTube – which contains many social elements, even if it is not a traditional social media platform – is now used by nearly three-quarters of U.S. adults and 94% of 18- to 24-year-olds. And the typical (median) American reports that they use three of the eight major platforms that the Center measured in this survey.

These findings also highlight the public's sometimes conflicting attitudes toward social media. For example, the share of social media users who say these platforms would be hard to give up has increased by 12 percentage points compared with a survey conducted in early 2014. But by the same token, a majority of users (59%) say it would *not* be hard to stop using these sites, including 29% who say it would not be hard at all to give up social media.

Different social media platforms show varied growth

Other than the video-sharing platform YouTube, none of the other sites or apps measured in this survey are used by more than 40% of Americans.

The Center has asked about the use of five of these platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Pinterest) in several previous surveys of technology use. And for the most part, the share of Americans who use each of these services is similar to what the Center found in its previous survey of social media use conducted in April 2016. The most notable exception is Instagram: 35% of U.S. adults now say they use this platform, an increase of seven percentage points from the 28% who said they did in 2016.

The youngest adults stand out in their social media consumption

As was true in previous Pew Research Center surveys of social media use, there are substantial differences in social media use by age. Some 88% of 18- to 29-year-olds indicate that they use any form of social media. That share falls to 78% among those ages 30 to 49, to 64% among those ages 50 to 64 and to 37% among Americans 65 and older.

At the same time, there are pronounced differences in the use of various social media platforms *within* the young adult population as well.

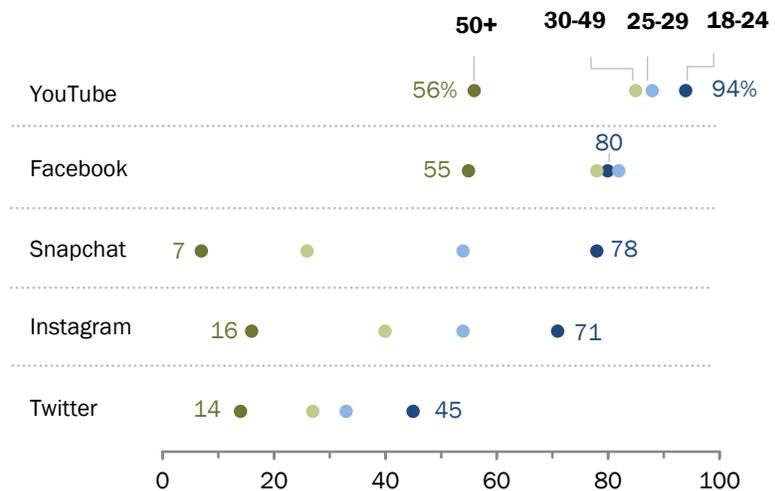
Americans ages 18 to 24 are substantially more likely to use platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter even when compared with those in their mid- to late-20s. These differences are especially notable when it comes to Snapchat: 78% of 18- to 24-year-olds are Snapchat users, but that share falls to 54% among those ages 25 to 29.

With the exception of those 65 and older, Facebook is used by a majority of Americans across a wide range of demographic groups. But other platforms appeal more strongly to certain subsets of the population. In addition to the age-related differences in the use of sites such as Instagram and Snapchat noted above, these are some of the more prominent examples:

- Pinterest remains substantially more popular with women (41% of whom say they use the site) than with men (16%).
- LinkedIn remains especially popular among college graduates and those in high-income households. Some 50% of Americans with a college degree use LinkedIn, compared with just 9% of those with a high school diploma or less.

Social platforms like Snapchat and Instagram are especially popular among those ages 18 to 24

% of U.S. adults in each age group who say they use ...



Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018.
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- The messaging service WhatsApp is popular in [Latin America](#), and this popularity also extends to Latinos in the United States – 49% of Hispanics report that they are WhatsApp users, compared with 14% of whites and 21% of blacks.

For more details on social media platform use by different demographic groups, see [Appendix A](#).

Roughly three-quarters of Facebook users – and around six-in-ten Snapchat and Instagram users – visit each site daily

Along with being the most popular social media site, Facebook users also visit the site with high levels of frequency. Fully 74% of Facebook users say they visit the site daily, with around half (51%) saying they do several times a day. The share of Facebook users who visit the site on a daily basis is statistically unchanged compared with 2016, when 76% of Facebook users reported they visited the site daily.

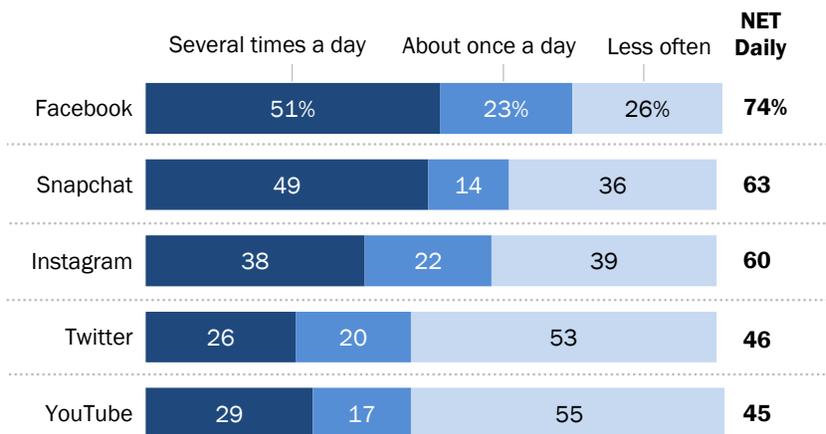
While the overall share of Americans who use Snapchat is smaller than that of Facebook, a similar share of

Snapchat users (49%) say they use the platform multiple times per day. All told, a majority of Snapchat (63%) and Instagram (60%) users indicate that they visit these platforms on a daily basis. The share of Instagram users who visit the platform daily has increased slightly since 2016 when 51% of Instagram users were daily visitors. (Note: this is the first year the Center has specifically asked about the frequency of Snapchat use in a telephone poll.)

In addition to adopting Snapchat and Instagram at high rates, the youngest adults also stand out in the frequency with which they use these two platforms. Some 82% of Snapchat users ages 18 to

A majority of Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram users visit these platforms on a daily basis

Among U.S. adults who say they use ____, the % who use each site ...



Note: Respondents who did not give answer are not shown. "Less often" category includes users who visit these sites a few times a week, every few weeks or less often.

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018.

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24 say they use the platform daily, with 71% indicating that they use it multiple times per day. Similarly, 81% of Instagram users in this age group visit the platform on daily basis, with 55% reporting that they do so several times per day.

The median American uses three of these eight social platforms

As was true in previous surveys of social media use, there is a substantial amount of overlap between users of the various sites measured in this survey. Most notably, a significant majority of users of each of these social platforms also indicate that they use Facebook and YouTube. But this “reciprocity” extends to other sites as well. For instance, roughly three-quarters of both Twitter (73%) and Snapchat (77%) users also indicate that they use Instagram.

Substantial ‘reciprocity’ across major social media platforms

% of ___ users who also ...

	Use Twitter	Use Instagram	Use Facebook	Use Snapchat	Use YouTube	Use WhatsApp	Use Pinterest	Use LinkedIn
Twitter	--	73%	90%	54%	95%	35%	49%	50%
Instagram	50	--	91	60	95	35	47	41
Facebook	32	47	--	35	87	27	37	33
Snapchat	48	77	89	--	95	33	44	37
YouTube	31	45	81	35	--	28	36	32
WhatsApp	38	55	85	40	92	--	33	40
Pinterest	41	56	89	41	92	25	--	42
LinkedIn	47	57	90	40	94	35	49	--

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018.
“Social Media Use in 2018”

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90% of LinkedIn users also use Facebook

This overlap is broadly indicative of the fact that many Americans use multiple social platforms. Roughly three-quarters of the public (73%) uses more than one of the eight platforms measured in this survey, and the typical (median) American uses three of these sites. As might be expected, younger adults tend to use a greater variety of social media platforms. The median 18- to 29-year-old uses four of these platforms, but that figure drops to three among 30- to 49-year-olds, to two among 50- to 64-year-olds and to one among those 65 and older.

A majority of social media users say it would *not* be difficult to give up these sites

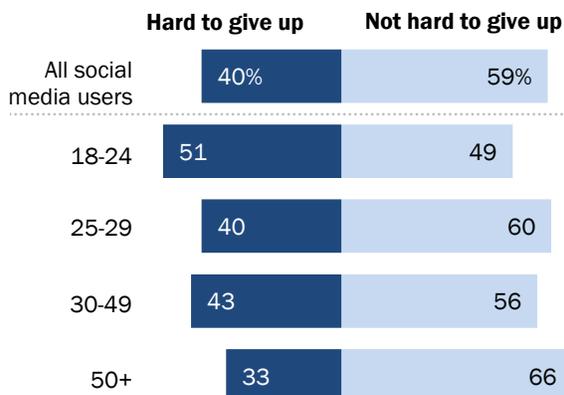
Even as a majority of Americans now use social platforms of various kinds, a relatively large share of these users feel that they could give up social media without much difficulty.

Some 59% of social media users think it would *not* be hard to give up social media, with 29% indicating it would not be hard at all. By contrast, 40% say they would indeed find it hard to give up social media – although just 14% think it would be “very hard” to do this. At the same time, the share of social media users who would find it hard to give up these services has grown somewhat in recent years. The Center asked an identical question in a survey conducted in January 2014, and at that time, 28% of social media users indicated they would have a hard time giving up social media, including 11% who said it would be “very hard.”

These findings vary by age. Roughly half of social media users ages 18 to 24 (51%) say it would be hard to give up social media, but just one-third of users ages 50 and older feel similarly. The data also fit broadly with other findings the Center has collected about Americans’ attitudes toward social media. Despite using them for a wide range of reasons, just 3% of social media users indicate that they have [a lot of trust](#) in the information they find on these sites. And relatively few have confidence in these platforms to keep their [personal information safe](#) from bad actors.

Majority of users say it would *not* be hard to give up social media

Among U.S. social media users, the % of who say it would be ___ to give up social media



Note: Respondents who did not give answer are not shown. “Hard to give up” include those saying it would be very or somewhat hard. “Not hard to give up” include those saying it would be not too hard or not hard at all.

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018. “Social Media Use in 2018”

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Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at [pewresearch.org/internet](https://www.pewresearch.org/internet).

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Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018, among a national sample of 2,002 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (500 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,502 were interviewed on a cellphone, including 1,071 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers under the direction of Abt Associates. A combination of landline and cellphone random-digit-dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>

The combined landline and cellphone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2016 Census Bureau's American Community Survey one-year estimates and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cellphone only, or both landline and cellphone), based on extrapolations from the 2016 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cellphones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	2,002	2.4 percentage points
Ages 18-29	352	5.8
18-24	201	7.7
25-29	151	8.8
30-49	528	4.7
50-64	544	4.7
65+	529	4.7

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Pew Research Center undertakes all polling activity, including calls to mobile telephone numbers, in compliance with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act and other applicable laws.

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Appendix A: Detailed table

Use of different online platforms by demographic groups

% of U.S. adults who say they use ...

	Facebook	YouTube	Pinterest	Instagram	Snapchat	LinkedIn	Twitter	WhatsApp
Total	68%	73%	29%	35%	27%	25%	24%	22%
Men	62	75	16	30	23	25	23	20
Women	74	72	41	39	31	25	24	24
White	67	71	32	32	24	26	24	14
Black	70	76	23	43	36	28	26	21
Hispanic	73	78	23	38	31	13	20	49
Ages 18-29	81	91	34	64	68	29	40	27
18-24	80	94	31	71	78	25	45	25
25-29	82	88	39	54	54	34	33	31
30-49	78	85	34	40	26	33	27	32
50-64	65	68	26	21	10	24	19	17
65+	41	40	16	10	3	9	8	6
<\$30,000	66	68	20	30	23	13	20	20
\$30,000-\$49,999	74	78	32	42	33	20	21	19
\$50,000-\$74,999	70	77	34	32	26	24	26	21
\$75,000+	75	84	39	42	30	45	32	25
High school or less	60	65	18	29	24	9	18	20
Some college	71	74	32	36	31	22	25	18
College+	77	85	40	42	26	50	32	29
Urban	75	80	29	42	32	30	29	28
Suburban	67	74	31	34	26	27	23	19
Rural	58	59	28	25	18	13	17	9

Note: Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018

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Topline questionnaire

January 2018 Core Trends Survey

Abt Associates for Pew Research Center

Sample: n=2,002 adults age 18 or older nationwide, including 1,502 cell phone interviews

Interviewing dates: Jan. 3-10, 2018

Margin of error: \pm 2.4 percentage points for results based on Total [n=2,002]

WEB1 Please tell me if you ever use any of the following social media sites online or on your cellphone. Do you ever use ... **[INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]**?¹

Based on internet users [N=1,785]

	YES, DO THIS	NO, DO NOT DO THIS	(VOL.) DON'T KNOW	(VOL.) REFUSED	YES, DO THIS (Based on All Adults)
Use Twitter					
Current	27	73	*	*	24
April 2016	26	74	0	*	21
April 2015	24	76	0	0	20
September 2014	23	77	*	0	19
September 2013	18	82	*	0	14
May 2013	18	82	*	*	15
December 2012	16	84	*	*	13
August 2012	16	84	*	0	13
Use Instagram					
Current	39	61	*	*	35
April 2016	34	66	*	*	28
April 2015	29	71	*	0	24
September 2014	26	74	0	0	21
September 2013	17	82	*	0	14
December 2012	13	87	*	0	11
August 2012	12	88	1	0	9

WEB1 continued ...

¹ May 2013 wording was "Do you ever use the internet to ... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]?" August and December 2012, as well as September 2013 through September 2014 wording was "Please tell me if you ever use the internet to do any of the following things. Do you ever ... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]?" April 2015 through April 2016 question wording was "Please tell me if you ever use the internet or a mobile app to do any of the following things. Do you ever use the internet or a mobile app to ... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]?"

WEB1 continued ...

	YES, DO THIS	NO, DO NOT DO THIS	(VOL.) DON'T KNOW	(VOL.) REFUSED	YES, DO THIS (Based on All Adults)
Use Pinterest					
Current	32	67	*	*	29
April 2016	30	69	*	0	26
April 2015	30	69	1	*	26
September 2014	28	72	*	0	22
September 2013	21	77	2	*	17
December 2012	15	83	2	0	13
August 2012	12	87	1	*	10
Use Facebook²					
Current	76	24	*	*	68
April 2016	79	21	*	*	68
April 2015	72	28	*	0	62
September 2014	71	28	0	0	58
September 2013	71	29	*	0	57
December 2012	67	33	*	0	57
August 2012	66	34	1	0	54
Use LinkedIn					
Current	28	71	1	*	25
April 2016	28	71	1	0	25
April 2015	24	75	1	0	22
September 2014	28	72	*	0	23
September 2013	22	77	1	*	17
August 2012	20	79	1	*	16
Use Snapchat					
Current	30	70	*	*	27
Use YouTube					
Current	81	18	*	*	73
Use WhatsApp					
Current	24	75	*	*	22

² December 2012 trend was asked of all internet users as a standalone question: "Do you ever use Facebook?"

SNS2 Thinking about the social media sites you use ... About how often do you visit or use [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]? [READ AS NECESSARY: Several times a day, about once a day, a few times a week, every few weeks or less often?]³

	SEVERAL TIMES A DAY	ABOUT ONCE A DAY	A FEW TIMES A WEEK	EVERY FEW WEEKS	LESS OFTEN	(VOL.) DON'T KNOW	(VOL.) REFUSED
<i>Item A: Based on Twitter users</i>							
a. Twitter							
Current [N=458]	26	20	25	13	15	*	*
April 2016 [N=183]	24	20	23	14	18	*	*
April 2015 [N=193]	25	14	23	16	22	1	*
September 2014 [N=323]	22	14	24	15	25	*	0
September 2013 [N=223]	29	17	21	12	20	1	0
<i>Item B: Based on Instagram users</i>							
b. Instagram							
Current [N=627]	38	22	21	8	9	*	*
April 2016 [N=207]	36	16	26	10	12	0	0
April 2015 [N=219]	35	24	18	10	12	*	*
September 2014 [N=317]	32	17	24	10	16	1	0
September 2013 [N=196]	35	22	21	6	15	1	0
<i>Item C: Based on Facebook users</i>							
c. Facebook							
Current [N=1,336]	51	23	17	4	6	*	*
April 2016 [N=556]	55	21	16	3	4	1	*
April 2015 [N=600]	42	27	22	4	5	0	0
September 2014 [N=1,074]	45	25	17	6	6	*	*
September 2013 [N=960]	40	24	23	6	8	*	0
<i>Item D: Based on Snapchat users</i>							
d. Snapchat							
Current [N=451]	49	14	21	5	10	1	*
<i>Item E: Based on YouTube users</i>							
e. YouTube							
Current [N=1,450]	29	17	34	12	9	*	*

³ April 2016 question wording was "Thinking about the social media sites or mobile apps you use ... About how often do you visit or use [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]?" April 2015 items were each asked of a half sample of respondents who use that specific type of social media. September 2013 trend categories were several times a day, about once a day, three to five days a week, one to two days a week, every few weeks or less often. Results shown here for "a few times a week" combine "three to five days a week" and "one to two days a week."

PIALS How difficult would it be, if at all, to give up the following things in your life? If you do not use or have the item, just tell me. How hard would it be for you to give up ... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]?

	VERY HARD	SOMEWHAT HARD	NOT TOO HARD	NOT HARD AT ALL	OTHER	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a. Your television						
Current [N=2,002]	31	25	17	23	4	*
January 2014 [N=1,006]	34	23	21	20	*	1
October-December 2007	43	24	15	16	1	1
February-April 2006	44	26	14	15	*	*
March-May 2002	38	31	13	17	1	*
<i>Item B: Based on those who have a cellphone or smartphone</i>						
b. Your cellphone or smartphone						
Current [N=1,933]	52	22	10	12	4	1
January 2014 ⁴ [N=928]	48	21	16	13		*
October-December 2007 [N=1,698]	51	23	11	14	*	*
February-April 2006	43	27	13	16	*	*
<i>Items C: Based on internet users</i>						
c. The internet						
Current [N=1,785]	50	23	11	13	3	*
January 2014 [N=857]	52	20	15	12	1	*
October-December 2007 [N=1,572]	45	28	12	15	1	*
February-April 2006 [N=2,822]	38	31	11	18	1	*
March-May 2002 [n= 2,259]	31	32	16	19	2	*
<i>Item D: Based on social media users</i>						
d. Social media⁵						
Current [N=1,343]	14	26	30	29	*	*
January 2014 [N=857]	11	17	21	40	10	*

⁴ In previous surveys, question only referred to "cellphone."

⁵ January 2014 item wording was "Social media such as Facebook or Twitter." January 2014 item was based on internet users.