Photo- And Video-Sharing Popular On Twitter

Contributed by eMarketer
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Users turn to Instagram, Tumblr and Twitter itself to post pictures

As the number of Twitter users grows, consumers are using the site to share photos, videos and other links with their followers.

eMarketer forecasts that US adult Twitter users will reach 31.8 million in 2013, up 14.9% from the 27.7 million users in 2012. As the base grows, the way consumers use the site and what they share is also changing.

In July 2012, website analysis company Diffbot looked at 750,000 links posted to Twitter worldwide and found that 36% were images, 16% were articles and 9% were videos. Additionally, 8% linked to a product, and 7% each linked to a siteâ€™s front page, a status update or a page error. Games, location-sharing, recipes and reviews each made up less than 2% of links.

One area that has seen major growth over the past year has been social photo-sharing, especially with the rise in popularity of mobile photo application Instagram. Diffbot found that 15% of photos shared worldwide on Twitter came from Instagram, second only to direct Twitter image-sharing, at 40%. YouTube was the most popular video-sharing site, with 60% of all video links on Twitter going to YouTube.

In May 2011, Sysomos similarly analyzed Twitter messages worldwide and found that 1.3% of all tweets (not just those with links) were images, with Instagram only making up 5.2% of those photos. TwitPic hosted 45.7% of images at that time, but in the recent Diffbot data, TwitPic was down to only 7%.

These changes are due to the rise in Instagramâ€™s popularity, especially since it launched on the Android operating system in April 2012, and the August 2011 introduction of Twitterâ€™s proprietary photo-sharing tool, which quickly surpassed TwitPic and other Twitter-specific photo sites to become the most popular tool for photo-sharing on Twitter.

As Twitter usage grows in the US, and with the continued popularity of sharing photos via social networks, this landscape will continue to change. The number of photo-sharing apps will narrow down, as Instagram folds into Facebook, and Twitter will continue to enhance its own platform, including the way it allows users to share photos and videos.

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