

Emerging Markets Lead World In Social Networking Growth

Contributed by eMarketer
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Middle East and Africa, Asia-Pacific will exceed average growth rates

eMarketer estimates the number of social network users around the world will rise this year to 1.4 billion from 1.18 billion in 2011. This near-20% increase is a slight drop from the rise in 2011, and growth rates will continue to moderate as the market matures.

The fastest growth will come from the emerging markets of the world, especially the Middle East and Africa (where the base of social network users remains small) and Asia-Pacific. Latin America will also grow its user base by 18.5%, slightly below the worldwide average.

Growth in Facebook users will follow a similar pattern. eMarketer forecasts that Facebook will have nearly 826 million users around the world this year, up from 650.7 million in 2011. The 2012 figure will represent 58.8% of social network users, 36.4% of internet users and just under 12% of the total worldwide population.

Penetration among internet users will remain highest in North America, followed closely by the Middle East and Africa and Latin America—which have smaller bases of internet users than countries like the US and Canada, where web access is more widespread.

Facebook user growth will come fastest from Asia-Pacific, where adoption rates in India, Indonesia and Japan far exceed the worldwide average growth of 26.9% this year. The Middle East and Africa and Latin America will also post higher-than-average growth rates.

eMarketer forms its estimates of worldwide social network and Facebook users based on the analysis of survey and traffic data from research firms and regulatory agencies; Facebook company releases; historical trends; internet and mobile adoption trends; and country-specific demographic and socioeconomic factors.

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