

# 2020 TRENDS

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA





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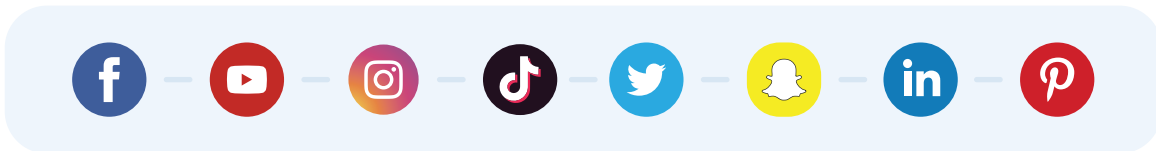
|                                 |           |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Introduction .....              | <b>1</b>  |
| Social Landscape Overview ..... | <b>2</b>  |
| What's New & What's Next .....  | <b>5</b>  |
| Facebook .....                  |           |
| YouTube .....                   |           |
| Instagram .....                 |           |
| TikTok .....                    |           |
| Twitter .....                   |           |
| Snapchat .....                  |           |
| LinkedIn .....                  |           |
| Pinterest .....                 |           |
| What Do I Do Now? .....         | <b>8</b>  |
| About Alabama Media Group ..... | <b>12</b> |

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## WELCOME TO THE NEW SOCIAL FRONTIER

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In previous years, our annual trends e-book has included digital channels like search, display, video and voice. But what's been made clear to us throughout 2019 is the 2020 marketing landscape will be dominated by social. Leaders like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube have grown far beyond connecting friends and followers. These platforms are becoming the go-to source for news, entertainment, "TV" viewing and delivery of branded and advertising content.



The first 20 years of the new millennium saw the cutting of cables to the house – from telephone cord cutting to saying goodbye to cable and dish providers. Now, consumers are turning away from direct digital relationships with websites and experiencing everything through social channels - from news and entertainment to shopping and travel.

Technological advancements in social are fundamentally shaping marketing budgets while search, display, linear TV and radio have shown little evolution. Not every social channel out there is appropriate for advertisers, and that's why our 2020 Trends e-book will focus on the social channels best suited to impact marketing strategy.

Today's social media landscape is a crowded, everchanging labyrinth of hashtags, followers, live streams, stories and beyond. Habits change, platforms evolve, and new platforms arise constantly, which is why it's more important now than ever for marketers to understand and stay ahead of the curve. We hope this eBook serves as a comprehensive guide to the most relevant social media platforms to help you discover which are best fit for your business goals. With the right skills and tools combined with an informed up-to-date strategy, your business is sure to flourish on social.



# THE PLAYERS

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

Some 88% of U.S. 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.

### Most Popular Social Platforms

(ranked by number of active users in millions)

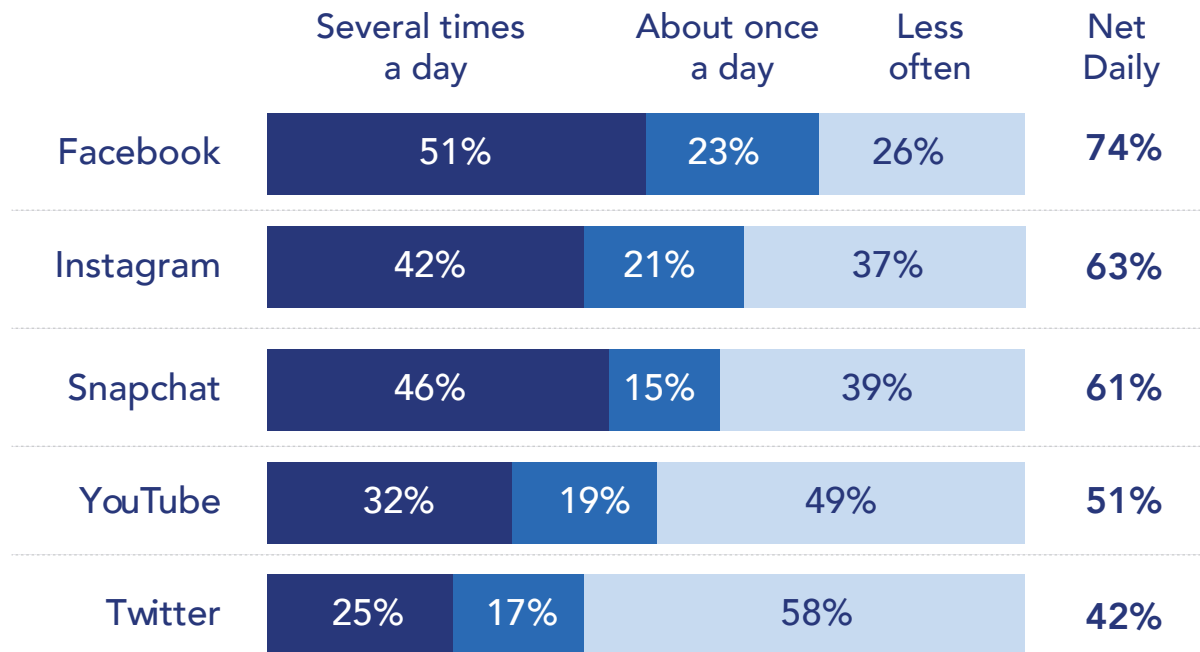


Source: Statista

- Used largely for business-to-consumer marketing
- Used largely for business-to-business marketing
- Not popular in US

# Social Media Usage

Among US adults who say they use \_\_\_\_, % who use each site . . .



Source: Statista Source: Pew Research Center

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## What's New & What's Next for Marketing Channel by Channel

Social platforms are constantly evolving, and it can be hard to keep up. Here is the status of the most notable social media for 2020 and what you can expect from them in the next year.

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# Facebook

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## *What happened in 2019*

You're probably aware of Facebook's recent negative media attention. From the Cambridge Analytica and political ad dilemma to the ongoing user privacy concerns and government fines, there's no doubt CEO Mark Zuckerberg and company are no strangers to playing defense.

Despite its troubles, Facebook reported having over 2.45 billion monthly active users in September 2019, an 8% increase year-over-year. And, those people are spending a minimum of 50 minutes per day on one of Facebook's products – more than any other platform.

Additionally, less than two years after its debut the Facebook Watch platform reached 140 million global daily active users who spend an average of 26 minutes per day watching video.

 **96% of marketers consider Facebook the most effective social media advertising platform based"**

In addition to its impressive active users and content consumption numbers, Facebook's advertising tool is a booming business that shows no signs of slowing down. 96% of marketers consider Facebook the most effective social media advertising platform based on proven ROI.

## *What's new for 2020*

At this year's annual developer conference, F8, Facebook announced a complete redesign of both its desktop and mobile experiences.

What's front and center in this redesign? Facebook Groups.

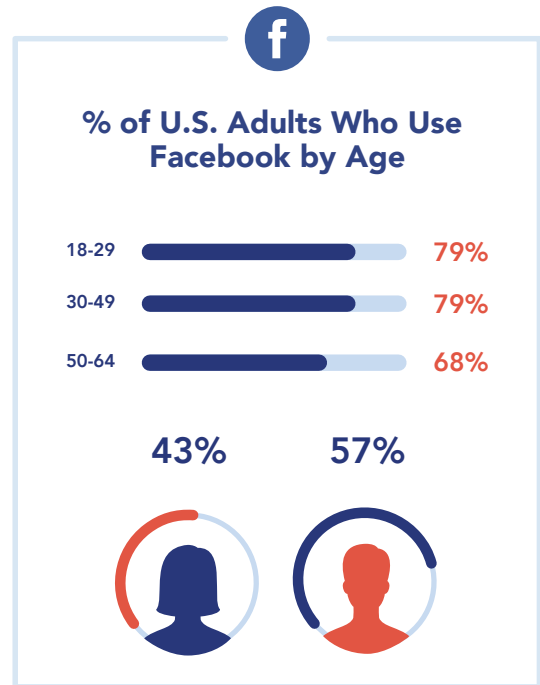
In a blog post Facebook announced that the new design “puts your communities at the center” by providing quick access to groups from an ever-present left-hand sidebar and adding a groups button to the top of the app. The News Feed section of Facebook’s new homepage will look significantly smaller, consequently making news feed ads smaller as well.





### *What does this mean for marketers?*

Facebook marketing plans should be constantly adapted to the platform's everchanging nature. Organic reach for business pages has been on the decline while interactions with groups in the newsfeed have been trending upward. With the new groups-centric design, Facebook ads should absolutely be embraced if they haven't already been.



Branded groups could be the solution under for your business, which offer special features that let brands create and manage groups their brand name while keeping employee personal profiles hidden, and linking them to an overarching Facebook page.

The mobile app redesign launched earlier this year. It's unclear exactly when Facebook will roll out the desktop redesign, but it should be expected sometime in 2020.

## **YouTube**

### *What happened in 2019*

YouTube is a digital world of tutorials, child influencers, music videos, product reviews and more. As the second most visited site after Google, it's not exactly like other social platforms, or search engines, or video providers – though it could be mistaken for any

one of them. More than 1.9 billion logged-in users visit YouTube each month, and those users watch over a billion hours of video daily.

### *What's next for 2020*

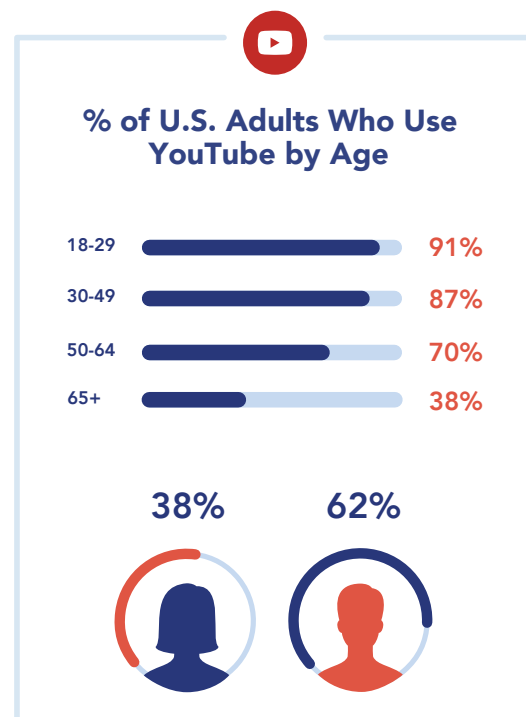
Starting Jan. 2020, YouTube will require all "creators" who upload videos to tell them if their content is made for kids, and if it is, it will block data collection as "made for kids" in an effort to protect the privacy of young users. This

is seen as a move to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) after YouTube owner Google was fined \$170 million for violating COPPA by allowing kids' personal data to be collected.

### *What does this mean for marketers?*

If your product or service is directed to children under 13, running personalized ads on YouTube will no longer be an option.

Placing a heavier emphasis on appealing to parents on YouTube could be a way to circumvent this new policy.



# Instagram

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## *What happened in 2019*

Instagram has been steadily gaining users since it was created in 2010. Owned by Facebook, it became the **second largest traditional social media platform** by global monthly active users at a whopping 1 billion. Instagram attributes their success to their unique visual storytelling approach.



**72% of its users make purchase decisions based on Instagram content**

## *Shopping Made Easy*

The Instagram shopping feature made it easy for consumers to browse and buy their favorite brands' products with just a few taps. Business pages were able to tag their own products in their posts and stories where consumers could checkout

in-app without ever leaving the platform. Instagram has become incredibly popular for product discovery as 72% of its users make purchase decisions based on Instagram content and on average, the platform yields higher value purchases than other social media channels.

## *What's new for 2020*

### Removing likes

Instagram has already tested removing public likes in 7 countries, but on Nov. 8 2019, CEO Adam Mosseri announced that the platform would immediately start removing likes in portions of the U.S. With this change, only the user will still be able to see their "like" count. This move comes after multiple studies have shown that Instagram is more taxing on our brains compared to other social platforms, especially when it comes to the ways we compare ourselves to everyone else while using it.

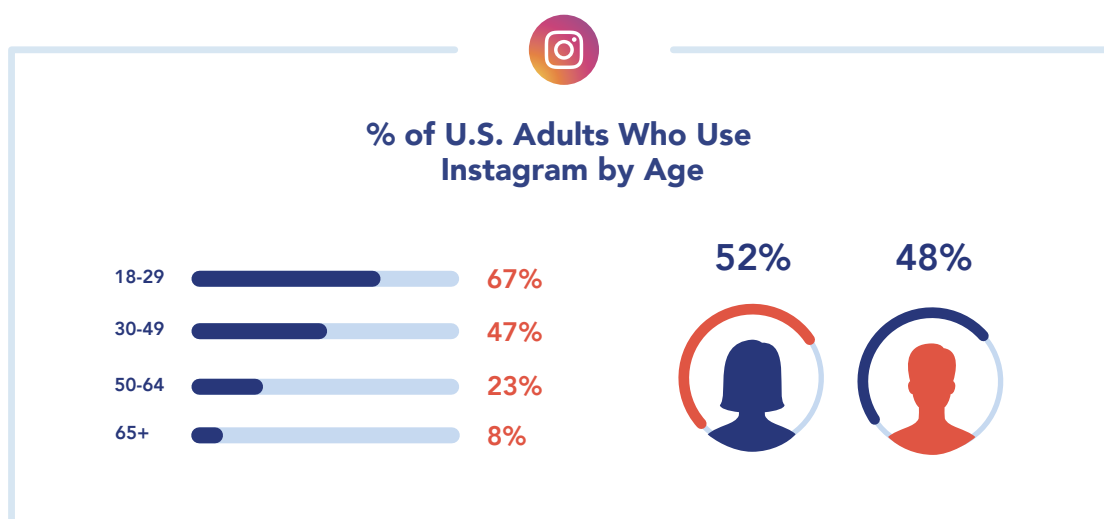


“We don’t want Instagram to be such a competition, we want it to be more of a place where people spend more of their energy connecting with the people that they love and things they care about” said Mosseri.

### *What does this mean for marketers?*

The removal of Instagram likes could have positive or negative effects on those who advertise and market on the platform. It is unclear whether hiding likes will result in less or more engagement, however one study has already reported that 41% of Canadian content creators said engagement dropped after like counts were hidden.

It could shift important evaluations of success from likes on a post to actual post reach, which would generally be a more inflated number than like count. The removal of likes could be disheartening for influencers who profit from how many likes they receive per post. But, there are other analytical tools that can be used such as engagement rate and follower count. Ultimately, it's more important than ever to create relevant Instagram content that inspires engagement. The removal of likes is just a test for now, but it is predicted to be a permanent change.



## TikTok

### *What happened in 2019*

TikTok has been able to attract a small yet growing group of publishers (like BuzzFeed, Hearst and Vice) who are eager to master the short-form video platform and its young growing audience. At 800 million global monthly active users, the Chinese-based app has already surpassed Snapchat's number of monthly users just two years after its international launch.

This emerging platform delivers up to 15-second looping audio-accompanied videos through its “Following” and “For You” tabs on the home screen as well as its “Discover” function which allows users to search for preferred topics with relevant hashtags.



**TikTok has hit 1.5 billion downloads, outperforming Instagram.**

After acquiring its better-known rival Musical.ly (used for karaoke-style videos) in August 2018 and userbases were conjoined, we have seen more variety in the videos people share on the app - mostly fun and humorous content. Up-and-coming comedians performing stand-up routines, skateboarders showcasing their skills, pranksters, dancers, budding beauticians and crafters among others are the types of creators that can be found on TikTok.

### *What's new for 2020*

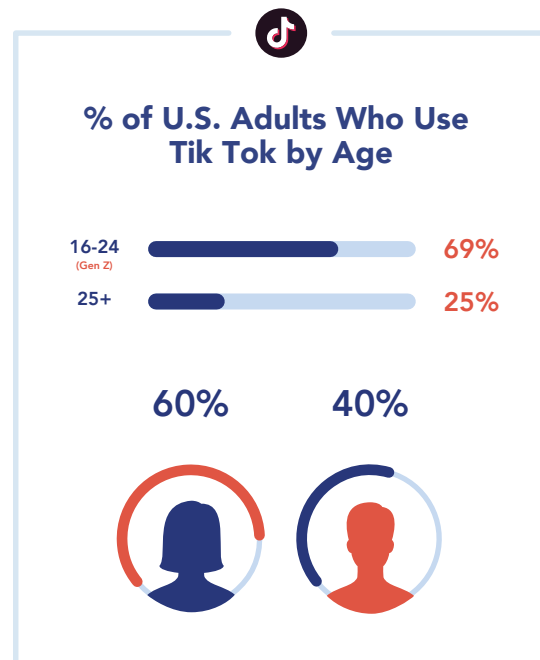
Although biddable ads on the platform were launched earlier this year, the ad tool requires its sales representatives to create and run the ads vs. brand representatives being able to run their own campaigns. This manual process in addition to its small sales team among other shortcomings poses an issue for advertisers who want to experiment with the platform themselves. In a pitch deck acquired by Digiday, TikTok outlined its plan to test letting advertisers across the U.K., France, Italy and the U.S. buy ads through its ads manager platform rather than a member of the app's sales team. This would streamline the overall process for buying ads on the app and possibly even appeal to many more advertisers. We predict this to come sometime next year.

## What does this mean for marketers?

With the app becoming the most buzzed-about social platform as of late, TikTok could emerge as huge opportunity for marketers.

“I think TikTok can be a secret weapon for marketers when they realize that 34% of the users are over the age of 30,” says social media specialist Rachel Pederson “However ages 16-24 is a really powerful future buying demographic.”

If marketers are to create ads that look and feel like native TikTok content, they could become hugely relevant to its users and therefore could arise as a highly effective social media marketing medium.



## Twitter

### What happened in 2019

Along with most established social media platforms, Twitter’s user growth has been evening out for a while. The company reported 330 million global monthly active users for Q1 2019, a slight decrease from its all time high of 336 million monthly active users in Q1 2018. Since launching in 2006, Twitter saw promising user growth until its first decline in Q1 2016.

## What's next for 2020?

As a reaction to growing concern about misinformation spread on social media, Twitter's CEO Jack Dorsey announced on Oct. 20, 2019 that it would no longer allow political advertising on its platform, effective Nov. 22.



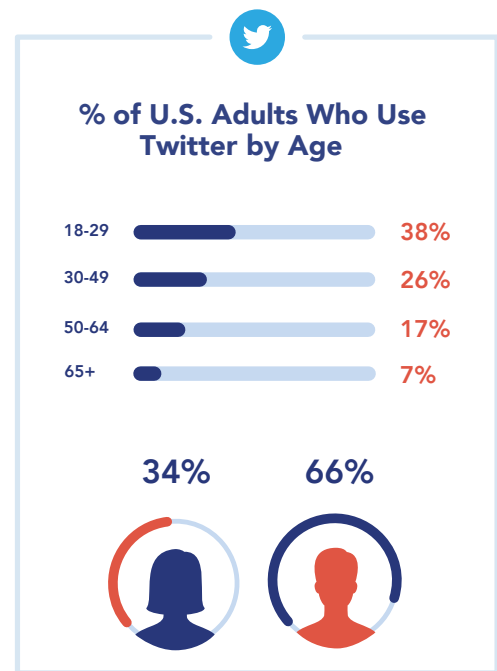
"A political message earns reach when people decide to follow an account or retweet," Dorsey continues. "Paying for reach removes that decision, forcing highly optimized and targeted political messages on people. We believe this decision should not be compromised by money."

Dorsey went on to say there will be a few exceptions to this new policy including ads in support of voter registration. Response to this has been strong and mixed, with critics questioning the company's ability to enforce the new policy given its poor history banning hate speech and abuse from its service.



## What does this mean for marketers?

The political ad ban has obvious implications for political/advocacy marketers. As Social Media Today explains, it's an ambitious attempt to address one of the core issues leveled at social media in recent times – and if it works, it may set a new precedent for dealing with the same on other platforms.

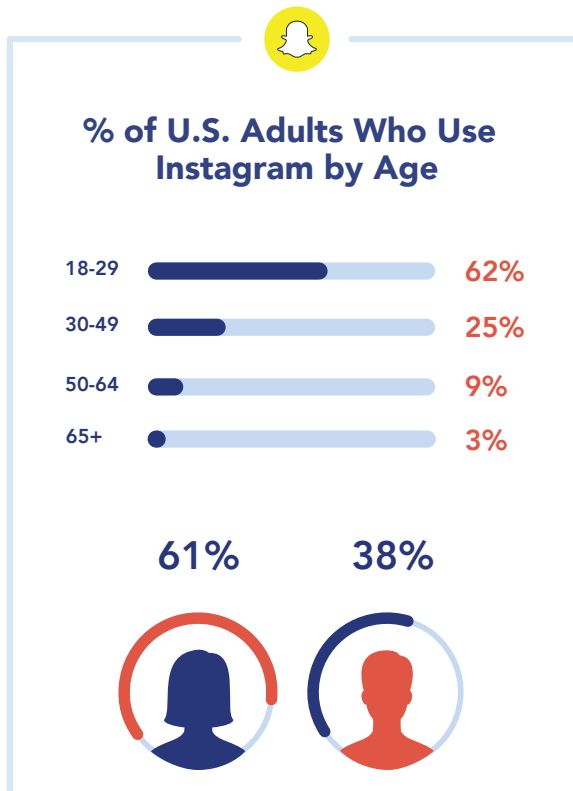


## Snapchat

### What happened in 2019

At 310 million monthly active users, Snapchat has proven itself as a relevant social media platform since it launched in 2011. Snapchat is the pioneer of the Stories format (also available on Facebook and Instagram) - pictures or videos that are viewable for 24 hours.

Along with its mostly younger demographic, businesses have also been buying into Snapchat with promising results. Hundreds of various publishers such as CNN, BuzzFeed and ESPN create content exclusively for Snapchat that lives on its Discover tab. Users can subscribe to these publishers so they will show up at the top of the page.



### *What's new for 2020*

#### **More News Content**

According to Axios, Snapchat is creating a dedicated news channel specifically for the 2020 presidential debates.

Sources tell Axios “part of Snap’s pitch for politicians to get more involved in the platform around debates is that the debate channel will increase their exposure to a key voting demographic, elevating their stories and content for

youngsters who don’t necessarily opt-in to receive political content.” Axios also reports that more efforts to increasing voter participation will also be a part of Snapchat’s 2020 strategy. It’s becoming apparent that Snapchat wants to be the place young people go to for all their political news.

### *What does this mean for marketers?*

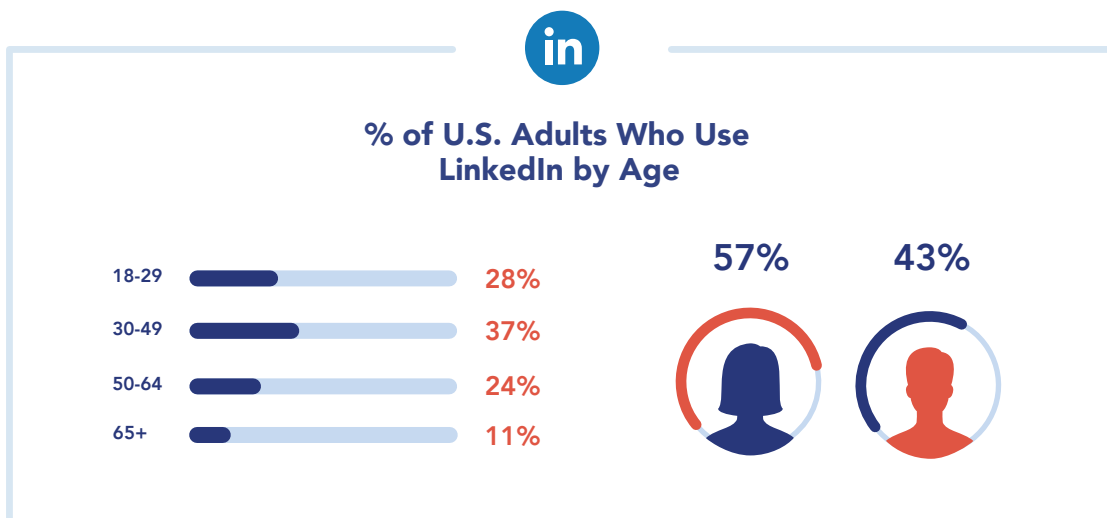
Snapchat’s booming advertising platform is promising for marketers who wish to reach a younger, engaged audience. The new dedicated news channel for the 2020 debates will attract a more engaged audience that will interact with content. Advertisers who need to reach younger audiences need to expand beyond Instagram into Snapchat for 2020.

## *What happened in 2019*

Known as mainly a business-to-business platform, LinkedIn remains the number one platform B2B marketers use to distribute content. Its 303 million global active monthly users often come to LinkedIn for industry news, expert advice, job postings, career training, peer insights and recommendations. Due to its professional nature this platform sets itself apart from other social media, although its ad capabilities are comparable to Facebook's.

## *What's next for 2020*

Although the company hasn't made any official announcements as far as big changes in the upcoming year, people have started to speculate. With LinkedIn recently jumping on the live streaming train, it's possible that we could see both individuals and businesses create "live content" such as webinars, article discussions and more to create engaging content for employers and/or customers that visit the profile or page. It would be cool to see a tool that allows users to even live stream prerecorded content to the platform.



## *What does this mean for marketers?*

Although LinkedIn advertising is more costly than other platforms, marketers shouldn't shy away. The high cost is said to be a result of the highly refined targeting (like job title, company size etc.) available, which allow for more precise targeting, especially for business-to-business marketers.

## **Pinterest**

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### *What happened in 2019*

Pinterest focuses on images, sharing and buying via "pins" which users can post to their profile "boards" on the platform. In 2019 it maintained a majority female user base. With 300 million global monthly active users, Pinterest can be a huge marketing opportunity, especially for ecommerce consumer goods stores. Research by ecommerce platform Shopify found that it was the #2 source of all referral traffic to the site and 93% of users were using it to plan their purchases.

### *What's next for 2020*

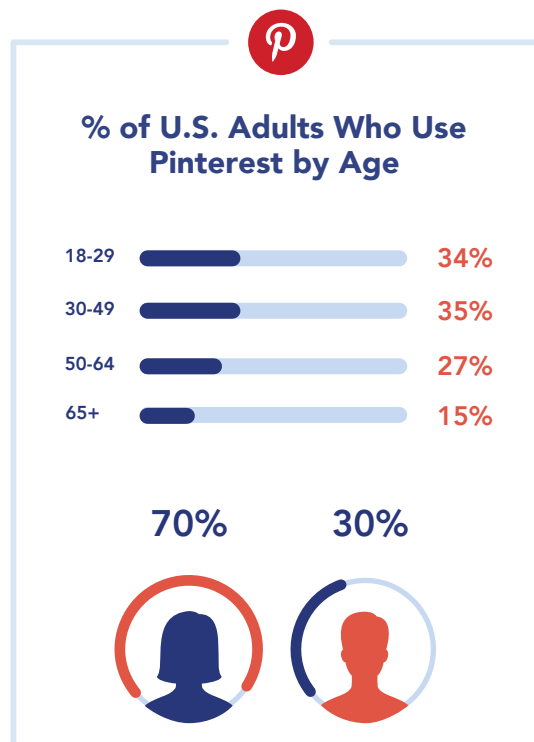
In November 2019, Pinterest announced the launch of a new feature ahead of the holiday season that will let users shop from a curated list of small businesses. Called 'The Pinterest Shop', it will feature hundreds of "product pins" where users can shop from 17 small businesses. Additionally, Pinterest has been actively courting



**"The Pinterest Shop",**  
it will feature hundreds  
of "product pins" where users can  
shop from 17 small businesses.

advertisers and beefing up its ad tools and support staff to provide 1:1 support for advertisers.

A new “Shop the Look” ad unit will soon go live in the US where advertisers can feature up to 25 items in an image. New business profiles will allow a dedicated shop tab and the ability to show video on the brand profile page. Shoppers will see a preview of 4 items and can click through to see more.



### *What does this mean for marketers?*

Pinterest’s shopping features and ad capabilities can be viable for marketers who aim to capture consumers and convert them from the dreaming to decision making stage. Bringing in-app tagging and purchases into the platform puts Pinterest closer to Instagram’s user experience.

**“Advertisers seeking to reach an over 30 audience should consider adding Pinterest to their portfolio”**

Advertisers seeking to reach an over 30 audience should consider adding Pinterest to their portfolio as the audience is more balanced in the older age ranges versus the youth-leaning Instagram.

# OK, GREAT INFORMATION WHAT DO I DO NOW?

We've covered a lot of social ground here, but you're probably wondering *which social media channels should be a part of your marketing mix?*

Here are a few questions from the Digital Marketing Institute to ask yourself to help select your social channels and make the best decision based on the most important factors:

## 1. What are your social media strategy objectives?

For instance, if you want to simply increase brand awareness, well-established platforms are best. To enhance lead generation, *LinkedIn* is a viable option.



## 2. What channels are your target audience using?

You obviously want to be present when and where your target audience is consuming content. *Figure out your audience's key demographics* and then match those with a social channel's demographics.



## 3. What channels are your competitors using?

This will provide a good baseline against which you can *gauge industry activity* and determine what you should be doing.





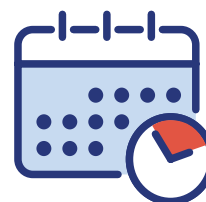
#### 4. What kind of content do you want to create?

There is a variety of different content formats – some that will complement your business goals and brand identity, and some that will not.

*Consider the nature of the content your business* should create, and that will lead you to the appropriate platforms.

#### 5. How many channels can you manage?

Finding the right balance can be tricky, but automated *scheduling platforms such as Hootsuite and Buffer can help* you maximize your efforts.



## THE CASE FOR SOCIAL IS UNDENIABLE.

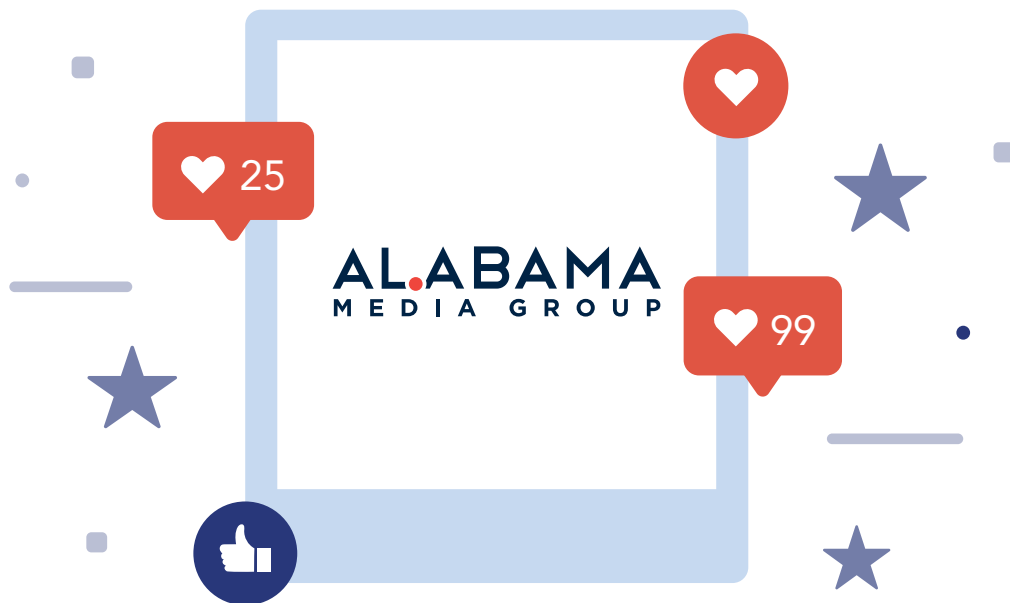
Our team is ready to help you think through your *2020 strategy*. Just give us a shout. We'll look at your current goals, strategies and tactics, and make recommendations on social and other complimentary marketing tactics that make sense for your business, your budget, and your future. [Contact us today to get started.](#)

### About Alabama Media Group

Alabama Media Group is a digitally minded news, information and entertainment company reaching millions of consumers through social, web and print channels daily.

Through our award-winning brands “Reckon,” “People of Alabama”, “It’s a Southern Thing” and “This is Alabama,” AMG brands craft compelling digital programming to connect to consumers across the Southeast – and beyond. As digital marketing experts and a leading publisher, Alabama Media Group drives daily conversations and engages millions through stories that inform, entertain, inspire, and connect our communities to the world around them. We also produce Alabama’s most popular local news site AL.com and the state’s oldest newspapers: The Birmingham News, The Huntsville Times and Mobile’s Press-Register and The Mississippi Press.

**Alabama Media Group** is part of Advance Local, one of the nations’ leading media and marketing companies, attracting more than 48 million consumers across a stable of award-winning digital and print brands in markets throughout the U.S.





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