

Canadians more digitally creative than ever before: social media expert

BY ALY THOMSON, THE CANADIAN PRESS
OCTOBER 5, 2015

HALIFAX - Canadians are using a multitude of social media platforms to explore and expand expression, according to an expert, who says we're more digitally creative than ever before.

Social media has always been about communication, but it hasn't always been about content creation, said Sidneyeve Matrix, a media professor at Ontario's Queen's University.

"That's new. We're using our phones to actually create original content for self-expression, for brand affiliations, to connect and communicate with people we care about," said Matrix in a recent phone interview from her office in Kingston.

"Maybe it's very obvious, but it's actually very new and exciting."

Matrix was responding to a set of CBC research reports that looked at social media sites other than Facebook: Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat and Reddit.

The results showed high numbers of people sharing content across all five platforms. Content creation refers to activities such as posting a photo, uploading a video and commenting on a news story.

The study on Twitter said 85 per cent of its users are creating content online for others to consume, while another report said 88 per cent of Instagram users are content creators.

The reports also found that Pinterest, Instagram and Snapchat users were more likely to be women.

"You hear the old truism that males are more visual than females, but when you look at some of the more visual platforms here, you see that more women are using them than men," said Matrix.

"It would seem men are more consumers and women are more creators when it comes to visual media."

Sixty per cent of Instagram users were female, while for Pinterest, that number soared to a staggering 80 per cent. Fifty-six per cent of Snapchatters were female.

Chelsea Lefort, a realtor based in Halifax, uses social media platforms like Instagram to document her daily life as a realtor.

Lefort said roughly 80 per cent of her business comes to her through social media platforms. She posts things like photo slideshows and guided video tours of homes for sale.

"It's something creative that's value-added," said Lefort. "I show people how I live through real estate, rather than just posting photos of new listings all the time or sales I've made, and the personal connection really resonates with people."

The reports were based on the 2014-15 Media Technology Monitor survey, conducted with more than 12,000 people across the country.

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