



PANDEMIC SOCIAL BOOST WAS BIGGER AMONG LOWER-INCOME CANADIANS

Source: Media in Canada

Date: 09/11/2020

The MTM also found that desktop is not dead thanks to lockdowns, but lack of dining out and travel may have affected Instagram.

Social media has been an important method of staying connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than feel isolated from friends and family, online Canadians looked for ways to connect despite being stuck at home.

The Media Technology Monitor (MTM) found that five out of six online Anglophone Canadians report using social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram with usage growing an average of 8% over pre-pandemic numbers.

That said, those who hadn't been using social media before, didn't feel the need to sign on.

There has been no growth since Fall 2019 among those aged 18 to 34. The biggest increase, 27%, has been among Canadians 65-plus, some of whom may not have been engaged before they were asked to stay home to stay safe. Younger online Anglophones were already using social networks, so there was less room for increase.

Three-fifths of social networkers between the ages of 18 and 34 felt like they had increased their use of social media. This perceived increase declines with age.

Household income also seems to be a factor with an increase of 13% among those in households with income less than \$35,000. As income increased, the level of growth declined.

And, while social use in general increased, the overall penetration of many individual social networking sites appeared to decline during the pandemic. Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat penetration declined by around 15%.

The reason might be tied more to the function of those platforms. For example, Instagram users often use the service to share pictures from travel or dining out, and casual users may not have been doing any of these types of activities while in quarantine.

Business-oriented site LinkedIn also saw a decline of 22% during the pandemic. While people may have experienced layoffs or other job instability during the pandemic, they may not have been using the time to look for other opportunities due to the economic uncertainty.

On the other hand, TikTok penetration tripled during the initial springtime lockdowns. This increase in usage of TikTok did not spur the overall growth in social media use, as TikTokers tend to use more than just one network.

MTM also found some shift in device usage. As social networkers spent more time stuck at home and less on the go, use of smartphones declined by 14%. The use of the computer for social networking increased by 8%. However, because many networks such as WhatsApp, Snapchat and TikTok are optimized for the phone, we still find that the smartphone is the most popular device for social networking.