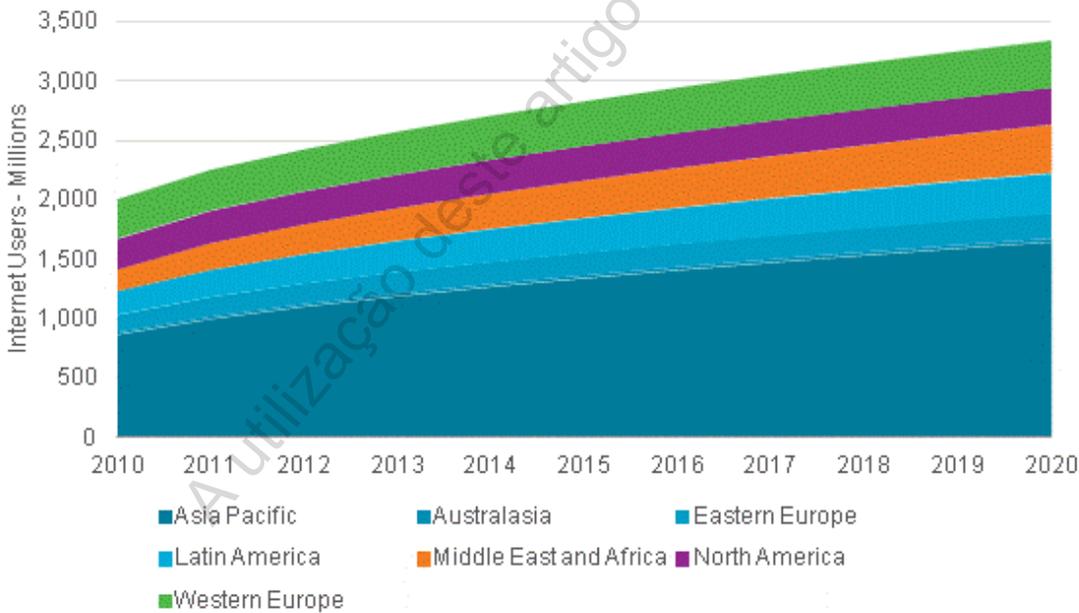


Digital Life and Consumers - September 2013

Article | 16 Sep 2013

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Global Internet Users: 2010-2020

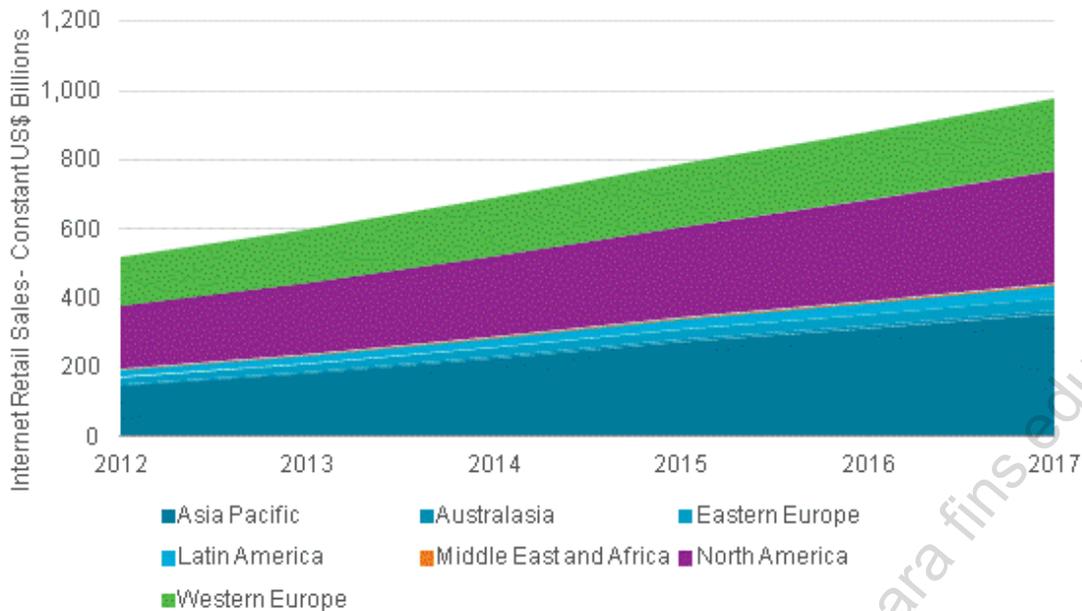


Source: Euromonitor International from International Telecommunications Union/World Bank/Trade Sources

Note: Data from 2013 onwards is forecasted

1. INTERNET SHOPPING AND "SELLSUMERS"

Internet Retail Sales: 2012-2017



Source: Euromonitor International from International Telecommunications Union/World Bank/Trade Sources

Note: Data from 2013 onwards is forecasted

Heard about new 'ethical app' Buycott?

An app designed to inform users about the ethical standards of companies by scanning the barcodes of their products launched worldwide earlier this summer. This 'ethical app' gives users the choice to 'Buycott' as it traces the "corporate family tree" of a product back to its parent company or conglomerate, allowing users to make decisions as to whether they agree with the trading standards or political stance of a particular firm before buying.

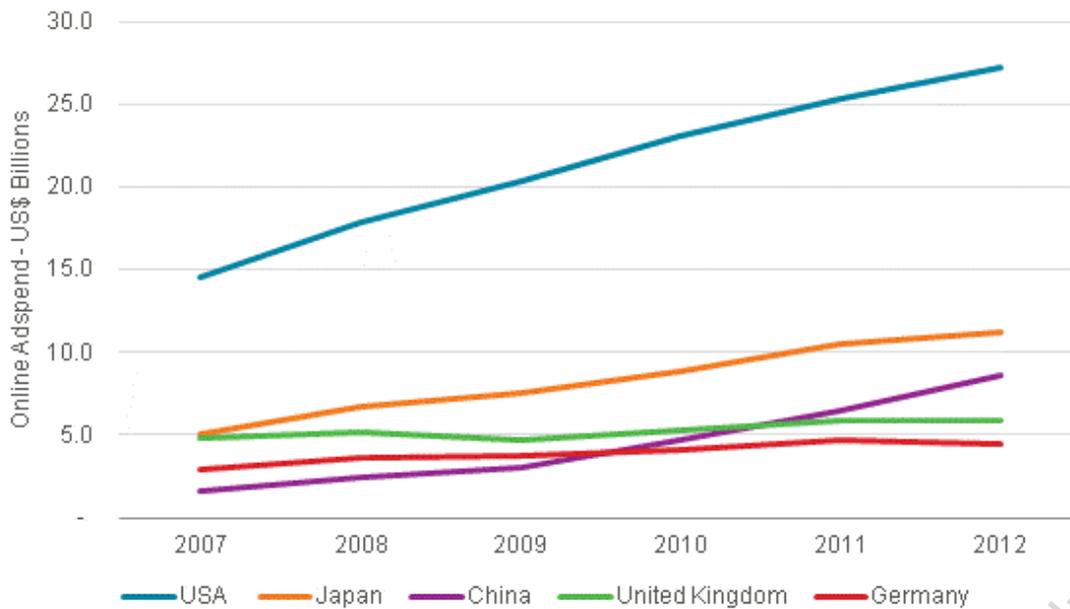
Ivan Pardo, the 26-year-old developer behind the app, says that is not a tool for following any particular ideology, as users can create their own "campaigns" in-app, with information on companies crowdsourced from users. "I don't want to push any single point of view with the app," Pardo said.

"For me, it was critical to allow users to create campaigns because I don't think it's Buycott's role to tell people what to buy." "We simply want to provide a platform that empowers consumers to make well-informed purchasing decisions."

2. CITIZEN ADVERTISING AND CROWDSOURCING

Brands working with consumers to promote themselves, co-create and relate.

Online Adspend in Top Five Markets: 2007-2012



Source: Euromonitor International from World Association of Newspapers/Jupiter Research

Note: Data ranked by 2012

Crowdsourcing and crowdfunding maturing in the world of fashion

Crowdsourcing is evolving as an advanced tool for the clothing industry. Once used to ask consumers more simple questions such as which patterns to feature on T-shirts, it is today becoming an R&D tool for designers and retailers. Meanwhile, significant numbers of consumers are offering online feedback on clothing they buy in-store or online while many heed online reviews from fellow shoppers.

Today, crowdsourcing is popular with retailers and designers who want to avoid designs that fail to sell and costly over-production. ModCloth is a retro-inspired US fashion brand which highlights its "democratizing fashion" stance, particularly its customer community that helps choose its ranges. Strategies like ModCloth's Be the Buyer prove its validity. "Our program allows our community to help choose the next ModCloth exclusive items," said Maggie Glover of ModCloth to Women's Wear Daily. "Members are given images of garment samples that they can vote to either 'pick' or 'skip.' They can also post comments about what they think would make an item better, like 'I wish this were shorter,' 'I wish this had sleeves,' etc. Many times we alter products before they are produced and sold based on the feedback. We have over 17 million votes and more than 850,000 comments to date." Glover says the programme is a "win-win" for everyone involved. "Our community gets to have significant input, we get to learn more about what our customer likes, and our designers get loads of constructive feedback direct from the consumer. We release new products every day, and on average our Be the Buyer items sell up to twice as much." This may be because engaging customers seems to add to their satisfaction. While crowdsourcing helps influence which products are sold, crowdfunding is backing new designers. Luevo, a new Toronto-based crowdfunding venture, will connect indie designers with consumers after its launch this October in Canada, the UK and the USA. Unlike with crowdsourcing, which allows people to "live" a product without buying it, each product on Luevo will have a minimum production requirement - designers will have to raise orders to prove demand before production.

3. FRUGALISTAS, CONSUMER VIGILANTEES & CYBERCRIME

Popular UK breakfast cereal's new recipe met with mixed reviews

Many fans of Kellogg's low-fat Special cereal have been critical of the product's altered recipe which now includes barley to make it crunchier and is only made with wholegrain wheat. The altered taste of the cereal has been the subject of many complaints from diet-conscious Brits, with over 100 complaints posted on Facebook and scores of complaints sent to the website of trade magazine The Grocer. One consumer asked: 'Is it true they are going to rename Special K to "Not So Special K"?'

In response, brand communications manager Louisa Thompson Davies told The Grocer: 'It is always difficult when you make changes to a product the size of Special K.. When we made our last recipe change in the 1980s we received complaints but the product went on to become our biggest-seller in the UK'. Some consumers have been less optimistic. In a talkback to a Daily Mail newspaper piece on the new recipe, Patrick of Belfast writes: I emailed them. Their reply was....."We adjusted our recipe only slightly. Our loyal customer base in the UK requested the change to bring our product in line with regional taste....." TRANSLATION: - We messed with the recipe and couldn't get it right"

A better community through an app

Under the headline "Snap, click, send", thenational.ae website praises the advantages of a new Abu Dhabi mobile app launched in June. The app, known as "CityGuard", promises to give residents a quick response to issues in the community: from road or traffic problems to environmental hazards and emergencies. The app identifies where reports come from to help authorities pinpoint the location and incident. Users will be notified of the progress of a complaint within 48 hours by the relevant authority, aiming to resolve the issue within a week, while emergencies will be dealt with immediately. "This is a unique service in the GCC region. It will help residents get their issues resolved at the earliest possible time" said Rashed Lahej Al Mansoori, director general of Abu Dhabi Government Contact Centre, to The National. During an 18-month trial, 1,500 complaints were made using the app, of which 80% were resolved.

4. MICROBLOGGING

Twitter changing to be 'more like Facebook'

Twitter has begun introducing a number of new features, which it says will make it easier to follow conversations and which analysts say makes it more like Facebook. Conversations will now be shown together rather than in a strictly reverse chronological order, in a feature which has already rolled out to some handsets and will now be updated in all iPhone and Android apps, as well as twitter.com.

The company said in a statement at the end of August: "From buzz about the VMAs to debates around upcoming football games, people come to Twitter to take part in these real-time, global, public conversations. To date, such exchanges haven't always been easy to follow. With this in mind, we've now made it easier for you to see conversations as they're taking place."

5. GENERATIONS Y and Z

Gen Y or Millennials - the kids of baby boomers and born in the mid-1980s-mid 1990s, and Gen Z, born 1995+ and nicknamed "digital natives" - weaned on things digital with their lifelong experience of communications and media technologies.

Can you communicate without leaving a trail?

A new photo-sharing app with a difference is intentionally fleeting. Emerging from a Sanford University design project created in response to a series of US scandals over politicians caught "sexting", Snapchat allows users to send images or video clips which "self-destruct" within ten seconds of being viewed.

Analysts have drawn comparisons between the app's hyper growth rate and those of Twitter and Instagram. Teenagers have embraced Snapchat as a fun way to communicate and there are a reported 200 million images "snapped" globally each day while the entrepreneurs behind the app are attracting significant backing. The app has headquarters not in Silicon Valley but in a beach house on Venice Beach, its premises marked by a yellow cartoon ghost on the door.

Snapchat's appeal perhaps lies in the fact that it offers a sense of excitement and an urgency of consumption that is rare, a little like groupbuying sites do. It is felt that it will soon outgrow its teen audience.

Privacy campaigners have warned that images sent through Snapchat may have more permanence than their senders intended.

Screen shots can be taken of any image sent through the app, and senders are notified when a recipient does so. The company has acknowledged that material deleted from its servers could be recovered "using the right forensic tools". MTV recently used Snapchat to send "cheeky" pictures from the new series of reality show *Geordie Shore* directly to fans' smartphones, in a marketing tie-in. Snapchat has claimed, however, that lewd images form a very small amount of the material shared through the app.

6. SOCIAL NETWORKING

A streamlined Facebook for the developing world

Facebook has been working on a project to expand its base of 1.1 billion users into the developing world: getting the social network onto the simple "feature phones" that are largely being replaced by smartphones in America and Europe but are still the norm in developing countries like India and Brazil. Facebook is planning to announce the first results of this initiative it has called Facebook for Every Phone.

A reported 100 million people now regularly access the social network from more simple feature phones. Many of these users pay little or nothing to download their Facebook news feeds and photos, with the data usage subsidised by phone carriers and manufacturers. India, Indonesia, Mexico, Brazil and Vietnam are the countries in which the phone software is doing the best. Analysts say Facebook has a powerful opportunity to win the long-term loyalty of millions of new global users by giving them their first taste of the Internet through Facebook on a simple mobile phone. Those users, Facebook hopes, will become more attractive to advertisers as their incomes grow and they gain broader access to the internet.

7. MOBILE ONLINERS

New IKEA app lets shoppers try out furniture for size

The 2014 IKEA catalogue app lets hesitating customers furnish their homes digitally with the help of a traditional paper catalogue. The free app uses augmented reality (AR) technology to show consumers what 90 pieces of furniture would look like in their home, enabling them to test colours and positioning. The app works by measuring the size of the catalogue itself (placed on the floor on the spot where the new item of furniture might go) in the camera. The app then creates an augmented reality image of the item so that it appears correctly in the room. Research by IKEA discovered that many of its customers experience "square peg, round hole syndrome" as 14% admit to buying the wrong-sized furniture for their rooms. Meanwhile, over 70% of shoppers did not know how big their homes are which inspired the global brand to develop the app.

IKEA's innovation is not the first of its kind: other high-end AR shopping apps include Decolabs (decolabs.com), which allows you to design and walk around your 'new room', and Sayduck (sayduck.com), with which you can place furniture from a range of brands in your space and share the images on social networks. But, the fact that it's now coming from a household name like IKEA means the technology is going mainstream.

Peter Wright, marketing manager of IKEA in the UK and Ireland, said: "When our designers and interiors experts started to think about how we could use augmented reality to help our customers, we felt that we could solve some of the very real problems they face." "Our customers want to be able to test out whether the products they've been inspired by in our catalogue will work in their own homes - particularly when it comes to larger pieces of furniture.. [it] really helps customers visualise the way their homes could look." Mattias Jöngard, a global communication manager with the brand puts it this way: "Augmented reality addresses the 'unknown' between seeing furniture you like and paying for it. It gives you a sense of whether that bed will actually look good next to your grandmother's old chest of drawers, and so it helps you make better decisions."

Snapcat: An app that lets cats take selfies!

A new range of apps including iOS app Cat Selfie and Android's Snapcat let cats take their own photos, or selfies rather than 'photobombing' pictures. When the phone is placed on the ground, the screen shows moving dots or 'bouncing lasers' for the cat to chase. When the cat paws at the image, the hit acts as a shutter press and its photo is taken. These versatile apps also claim to work with babies and toddlers too.

Snapcat was the first app to be released for taking cat selfies. It was created as part of the EyeEm Photo Hack Day in Berlin in June. A red dot displays on a black background on the phone's screen, and when the cat's paw touches it, the phone takes a picture. Cat owners can then add filters or stickers from picture-editing site Aviary before sharing the photos with social networks. Snapcat can also be used in a browser window and users can choose from four different moving icons including a mouse, ball of wool, bird and a cat's face.

8. THE BLOGOSPHERE

Women who take their footprints seriously

Twenty-something Lindsay, a native of US state Minnesota, welcomes the world to her "health-inspired, green livin' & green eatin' blog world on greenfoodgreenthumb.com... I love my life, my planet & the people I surround myself with". She is one of a tsunami of bloggers that pledge themselves to a more ethical lifestyle, who see it as their duty to "tread lightly on this beautiful planet". Many of these green blogs also extol the virtues of living a vegetarian or even vegan lifestyle, such as veganfeast.com, whose recipes claim that "no animals have died for your feast". Blog author Janet Hudson is a vegan chef with two cookbooks to her name, who went on to start Vegan Feast Catering, a service specialising in vegan cuisine in Southern California.

Thai consumers using own mobile devices for work

"Bring your own devices" (BYOD) is a growing trend among Thai businesses, with IT market research company IDC reporting that more and more organisations are allowing staff to use their own mobile devices for company purposes in the work environment. Michael Araneta of IDC Thailand told The Nation newspaper that the advantages of BYOD included improved productivity and increased worker satisfaction.

Chawapol Jariyawiroj of software company VMware said more than half of companies in Thailand now allowed employees to use their own devices to access corporate IT networks. New companies are increasingly using BYOD as the foundation of their network infrastructure, he added.

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