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# Mobile Messaging and Social Media 2015

*36% of smartphone owners use messaging apps, while 17% use apps that automatically delete sent messages*

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## About This Report

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at [pewresearch.org/internet](http://pewresearch.org/internet).

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## Summary of Findings

In today's world, people — particularly young people — are continually finding and adapting new ways of communicating electronically to fit their needs. Case in point: 2015 marks the first time Pew Research Center has asked specifically about mobile messaging apps as a separate kind of mobile activity apart from cell phone texting. And already, according to a new survey, 36% of smartphone owners report using messaging apps such as WhatsApp, Kik or iMessage, and 17% use apps that automatically delete sent messages such as Snapchat or Wickr.

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### Messaging Apps Appeal to Smartphone Owners

*% of smartphone owners who use ...*



Pew Research Center Survey, March 17-April 12, 2015.

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Both of these kinds of apps are particularly popular among young adults. Half (49%) of smartphone owners ages 18 to 29 use messaging apps, while 41% use apps that automatically delete sent messages. These apps are free, and when connected to Wi-Fi, they do not use up SMS (Short Messaging Service) or other data. Furthermore, they offer a more private kind of social interaction than traditional social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter.

The results in this report reflect the noteworthy and rapid emergence of different kinds of communications tools serving different social needs. These new tools add to an already complex and varied terrain of online and mobile interaction.

Overall, this survey found that 85% of adults are internet users and 67% are smartphone users. Throughout this report, analysis is largely based on these groups.

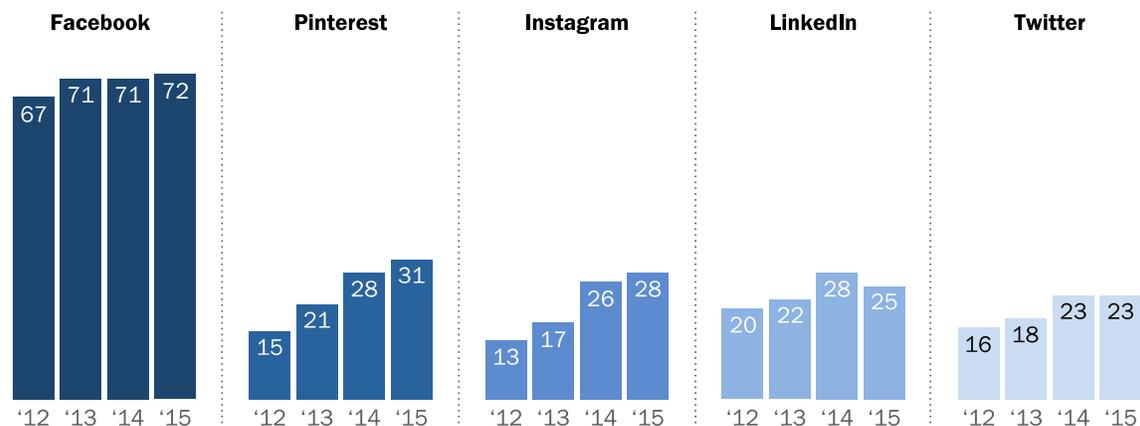
Along with asking about usage of mobile messaging apps, the survey also tracked usage of a variety of social media platforms and online forums. Among the key findings:

- The proportion of online adults who use Pinterest and Instagram has doubled since Pew Research Center first started tracking social media platform adoption in 2012. Some 31% of online adults use Pinterest (up from 15% in 2012), while 28% use Instagram (up from 13% in 2012). However, none of the social media platforms measured in this survey experienced a statistically significant increase in usage between September 2014 and April 2015.

- In terms of user engagement, the proportion of Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn users who use each respective site daily has increased significantly since September 2014. Fully 59% of Instagram users, 27% of Pinterest users and 22% of LinkedIn users visit these platforms daily.
- Facebook remains the most popular social media site – 72% of online adults are Facebook users, amounting to 62% of all American adults. Growth on the site has largely plateaued. There has not been a significant change in the overall share of users since 2012. Those on Facebook remain highly engaged with 70% saying they log on daily, including 43% who do so several times a day.
- Some 15% of internet users read or comment in discussion forums such as reddit, Digg or Slashdot, while 10% use the blogging website Tumblr. Young adults are particularly likely to use both Tumblr and discussion forums more generally, and men are more likely than women to participate in discussion forums online.

## Pinterest and Instagram Usage Doubles Since 2012, Growth on Other Platforms is Slower

*% of online adults who say they use the following social media platform, by year*



Pew Research Center Survey, March 17-April 12, 2015.

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The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted March 17, 2015 through April 12, 2015 among a national sample of 1,907 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. 672 respondents were interviewed on a landline

telephone, and 1,235 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 730 who had no landline telephone. Of the full sample, 1,612 are internet users. The margin of sampling error for results based on the full sample is plus or minus 2.6 percentage points. Because many items were based on half samples, results based on internet users in this report have a margin of sampling error of either plus or minus 3.9 percentage points or plus or minus 4.0 percentage points. Results based on smartphone owners have a margin of error of plus or minus 4.6 percentage points. See the Methods section at the end of this report for more details.

## Main Findings

### Mobile Messaging

Roughly three-in-ten online adults (29%) — and 36% of smartphone owners — use messaging apps such as WhatsApp, Kik or iMessage. These apps allow mobile users to message one another without using up SMS data, which is required when exchanging traditional text messages. Some of these messaging apps, such as iMessage, maintain conversations even if a user switches between devices, such as a tablet, laptop or desktop computer, or cell phone.

Messaging apps are especially popular among young adults. Among smartphone owners ages 18 to 29, 49% use messaging apps. However, these apps are relatively popular with older smartphone owners as well: 37% of smartphone owners age 30 to 49 and 24% of those ages 50 and older use mobile messaging apps.

In addition, 14% of online adults — and 17% of smartphone owners — use apps that automatically delete the messages they send, such as Snapchat or Wickr. These ephemeral messaging apps hold particular appeal to younger smartphone owners: Fully 41% of smartphone owners ages 18 to 29 use these services, compared with just 11% of smartphone owners ages 30 to 49 and 4% of those 50 and older.

### Mobile Messaging Apps Particularly Popular Among Young Adults

*Among smartphone owners, the % who use messaging apps and apps that automatically delete sent messages*

	Messaging apps	Auto-delete apps
Total	36%	17%
Men	37	17
Women	36	18
White, Non-Hispanic	34	18
Black, Non-Hispanic	N/A*	N/A*
Hispanic	N/A*	N/A*
18-29	49	41
30-49	37	11
50+	24	4
High school grad or less	30	19
Some college	34	20
College+	45	13
Less than \$50,000/yr	37	18
\$50,000+	36	17
Urban	42	22
Suburban	37	15
Rural (n=99 smartphone owners)	22	13

Source: Pew Research Center, March 17-April 12, 2015.

\* Because some questions were given to half the respondents, there are not enough cases to allow sufficient statistical analysis for these groups.

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## Discussion Forums and Tumblr

Various discussion forums have been in existence since the dawn of the web. Indeed, a 2002 Pew Research survey found that [25% of online adults](#) had participated in online chat rooms or discussions. These platforms have changed over time and have garnered followers despite the explosion of social media platforms and other sources of online content in the intervening years. Today, 15% of online adults read or comment on modern-day discussion forums such as reddit, Digg or Slashdot.<sup>1</sup>

These types of discussion sites are relatively popular among young adults – 23% of those 18 to 29 say they use online discussion forums. In addition, online men are more likely than online women to use discussion forums (20% vs. 11%).

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### Demographics of Online Discussion Forums

*Among internet users, the % who read or comment in discussion forums such as reddit, Digg or Slashdot*

	Internet users
Total	15%
Men	20
Women	11
White, Non-Hispanic	16
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=94)	13
Hispanic (n=99)	17
18-29	23
30-49	14
50-64	13
65+	8
High school grad or less	11
Some college	20
College+	15
Less than \$30,000/yr	20
\$30,000-\$49,999	12
\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=98)	14
\$75,000+	18
Urban	19
Suburban	14
Rural	10

Source: Pew Research Center, March 17-April 12, 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> In a 2013 survey, 6% of internet users indicated that they used reddit specifically, but this survey did not ask about reddit alone.

One-in-ten online adults (10%) use Tumblr, a slight increase from the 6% who did so the last time Pew Research asked in December 2012. As with many of the platforms and services discussed in this report, young adults are especially likely to use Tumblr: 20% of online adults age 18 to 29 do so. Tumblr usage is also particularly high among urban residents: 16% of urban internet users use Tumblr, compared with 8% of suburban residents and just 3% of rural residents.

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## Demographics of Tumblr

*Among internet users, the % who use Tumblr*

	<b>Internet users</b>
<i>Total</i>	<i>10%</i>
Men	10
Women	11
White, Non-Hispanic	9
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=94)	15
Hispanic (n=99)	15
18-29	20
30-49	11
50-64	5
65+	2
High school grad or less	10
Some college	13
College+	9
Less than \$30,000/yr	16
\$30,000-\$49,999	8
\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=98)	4
\$75,000+	11
Urban	16
Suburban	8
Rural	3

Source: Pew Research Center, March 17-April 12, 2015.

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## Social Media

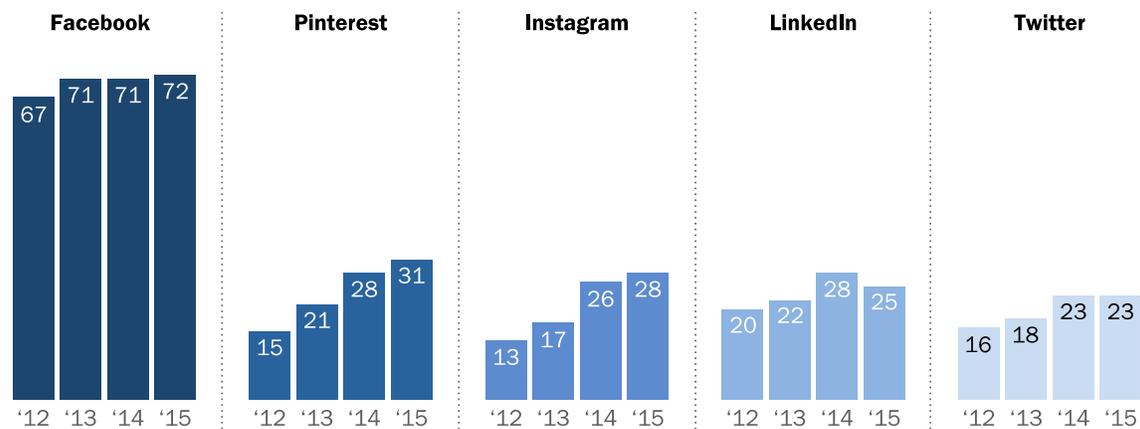
Over the past four years, almost all of the major social media platforms that are consistently tracked in Pew Research surveys<sup>2</sup> have seen a significant increase in the proportion of U.S. adults who use them. Some have witnessed more rapid growth than others.

While Facebook remains the most popular social media site among internet users, it was the only platform not to see significant growth among internet users since 2012. Today, 72% of online adults use Facebook, a change that is not statistically significant from the 67% who did so in 2012.

Other sites, such as Pinterest and Instagram (which is owned by Facebook), have experienced significant growth between 2012 and 2015. Today 31% of online adults use Pinterest, up from 15% in 2012. Likewise, 28% of online adults use Instagram, a 15-point increase from the 13% of internet users who did so in 2012.

### Pinterest and Instagram Usage Doubles Since 2012, Growth on Other Platforms Slower

*% of online adults who say they use the following social media platform, by year*



Pew Research Center Survey, March 17-April 12, 2015.

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<sup>2</sup> These include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and LinkedIn

LinkedIn and Twitter both saw significant rates of growth, but at a slower pace. A quarter of online adults use LinkedIn, up from 20% in 2012. And some 23% of online adults use Twitter, a 7-point increase from the 16% who did so in 2012.

However, none of these platforms experienced a significant increase in usage between September 2014 and April 2015.

## The Demographics of Social Media Users

The following analysis discusses the demographic characteristics of each of the five social media platforms in the survey.

### Facebook — 72% of adult internet users/62% of entire adult population

Fully 72% of online American adults use Facebook, a proportion unchanged from September 2014. Usage continues to be especially popular among online women, 77% of whom are users. In addition, 82% of online adults ages 18 to 29 use Facebook, along with 79% of those ages 30 to 49, 64% of those ages 50 to 64 and 48% of those 65 and older.

### Facebook Demographics

*Among internet users, the % who use Facebook*

	Internet users
<i>Total</i>	72%
Men	66
Women	77
White, Non-Hispanic	70
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=85)	67
Hispanic	75
18-29	82
30-49	79
50-64	64
65+	48
High school grad or less	71
Some college	72
College+	72
Less than \$30,000/yr	73
\$30,000-\$49,999	72
\$50,000-\$74,999	66
\$75,000+	78
Urban	74
Suburban	72
Rural	67

Source: Pew Research Center, March 17-April 12, 2015.

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## **Pinterest – 31% of adult internet users/26% of entire adult population**

Some 31% of online adults use Pinterest, a proportion that is unchanged from the 28% of online adults who did so in September 2014. Women continue to dominate Pinterest – 44% of online women use the site, compared with 16% of online men. Those under the age of 50 are also more likely to be Pinterest users – 37% do so, compared with 22% of those ages 50 and older.

## **Pinterest Demographics**

*Among internet users, the % who use Pinterest*

	<b>Internet users</b>
<i>Total</i>	31%
Men	16
Women	44
White, Non-Hispanic	32
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=85)	23
Hispanic	32
18-29	37
30-49	36
50-64	24
65+	16
High school grad or less	25
Some college	37
College+	31
Less than \$30,000/yr	24
\$30,000-\$49,999	37
\$50,000-\$74,999	41
\$75,000+	30
Urban	26
Suburban	34
Rural	31

Source: Pew Research Center, March 17-April 12, 2015.

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### Instagram – 28% of adult internet users/24% of entire adult population

Some 28% of online adults use Instagram, a proportion that is unchanged from the 26% of online adults who did so in September 2014. Instagram continues to be popular with non-whites and young adults: 55% of online adults ages 18 to 29 use Instagram, as do 47% of African Americans and 38% of Hispanics. Additionally, online women continue to be more likely than online men to be Instagram users (31% vs. 24%).

### Instagram Demographics

Among internet users, the % who use Instagram

	Internet users
Total	28%
Men	24
Women	31
White, Non-Hispanic	21
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=85)	47
Hispanic	38
18-29	55
30-49	28
50-64	11
65+	4
High school grad or less	25
Some college	32
College+	26
Less than \$30,000/yr	26
\$30,000-\$49,999	27
\$50,000-\$74,999	30
\$75,000+	26
Urban	32
Suburban	28
Rural	18

Source: Pew Research Center, March 17-April 12, 2015.

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## LinkedIn – 25% of adult internet users/22% of entire adult population

A quarter of online adults use LinkedIn, a proportion that is unchanged from the 28% of online adults who did so in September 2014. As was true in previous surveys of LinkedIn usage, the platform is especially popular among working-age adults as well as college graduates and those with relatively high household incomes. LinkedIn is the only major social media platform for which usage rates are higher among 30- to 49-year-olds than among 18- to 29-year-olds. Fully 46% of online adults who have graduated from college are LinkedIn users, compared with just 9% of online adults with a high school diploma or less. The site continues to be popular among the employed – 32% are LinkedIn users, compared with 14% of online adults who are not employed.

## LinkedIn Demographics

Among internet users, the % who use LinkedIn

	Internet users
<i>Total</i>	25%
Men	26
Women	25
White, Non-Hispanic	26
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=94)	22
Hispanic (n=99)	22
18-29	22
30-49	32
50-64	26
65+	12
High school grad or less	9
Some college	25
College+	46
Less than \$30,000/yr	17
\$30,000-\$49,999	21
\$50,000-\$74,999	32
\$75,000+	41
Employed	32
Not employed*	14
Urban	30
Suburban	26
Rural	12

Source: Pew Research Center, March 17-April 12, 2015.

\*Not employed includes those who are retired, not employed for pay, disabled, or students.

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## Twitter — 23% of all internet users/20% of entire adult population

Some 23% of all online adults use Twitter, a proportion that is identical to the 23% of online adults who did so in September 2014. Internet users living in urban areas are more likely than their suburban or rural counterparts to use Twitter. Three-in-ten online urban residents use the site, compared with 21% of suburbanites and 15% of those living in rural areas. Twitter is more popular among younger adults — 30% of online adults under 50 use Twitter, compared with 11% of online adults ages 50 and older.

## Twitter Demographics

*Among internet users, the % who use Twitter*

	<b>Internet users</b>
<i>Total</i>	23%
Men	25
Women	21
White, Non-Hispanic	20
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=85)	28
Hispanic	28
18-29	32
30-49	29
50-64	13
65+	6
High school grad or less	19
Some college	23
College+	27
Less than \$30,000/yr	21
\$30,000-\$49,999	19
\$50,000-\$74,999	25
\$75,000+	26
Urban	30
Suburban	21
Rural	15

Source: Pew Research Center, March 17-April 12, 2015.

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## Frequency of Use on Social Media Sites

While there were no changes in overall usership on any site when comparing data from the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2015, a few social media platforms did see an increase in user engagement. The proportion of daily users on Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn increased significantly from 2014.

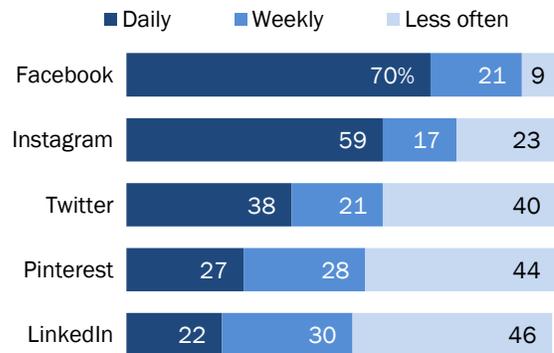
Today, 59% of Instagram users are on the platform daily, including 35% who visit several times a day. This 59% figure reflects a 10-point increase from September 2014 when 49% of Instagram users reported visiting the site on a daily basis. Similarly, the proportion of Pinterest users who visit the platform daily rose from 17% in September 2014 to 27% in April 2015, while the proportion of daily users on LinkedIn increased from 13% to 22% over the same time period.

Twitter saw no significant changes in its proportion of daily users. Some 38% of those on Twitter use the site daily, a figure that is statistically unchanged from the 36% who did in 2014.

Facebook continues to have the most engaged users – 70% log on daily, including 43% who do so several times a day. This overall proportion of daily users, however, is unchanged from the 70% who used Facebook daily in 2014.

### Facebook and Instagram Users Highly Engaged on Daily Basis

*Among the users of each respective site, the % who use that site with the following frequencies (e.g., 70% of Facebook users use the site on a daily basis)*



Source: Pew Research Center, March 17-April 12, 2015.

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## Methods

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted March 17, 2015 through April 12, 2015 among a national sample of 1,907 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. 672 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,235 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 730 who had no landline telephone. The full survey included interviews with respondents ages 16 and 17; the 1,907 respondents in this analysis include only those 18 and older. The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who was at home. Interviews in the cell phone sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was 16 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, visit:

<http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>

The combined landline and cell phone samples are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity, and region to parameters from the 2013 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2014 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,907	2.6 percentage points
Form A internet users	819	3.9 percentage points
Form B internet users	793	4.0 percentage points
Form B smartphone owners	587	4.6 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

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## Survey Questions

**WEB1-A** Please tell me if you ever use the internet or a mobile app to do any of the following things. Do you ever use the internet or a mobile app to...[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]?<sup>3</sup>

Based on Form A internet users [N=819]

	TOTAL HAVE EVER DONE THIS	----- DID YESTERDAY	HAVE NOT DONE THIS	(VOL.) DON'T KNOW	(VOL.) REFUSED
<b>Use Twitter</b>					
Current	23	n/a	77	0	0
September 2014 <sup>i</sup>	23	n/a	77	*	0
September 2013	20	n/a	80	*	*
August 2013	18	n/a	82	*	0
May 2013	18	n/a	82	*	*
December 2012	16	n/a	84	*	*
August 2012	16	n/a	84	*	0
Aug. 2-5, 2012 <sup>ii</sup>	16	n/a	84	0	0
February 2012	15	8	85	*	0
August 2011	12	5	88	*	0
May 2011	13	4	87	*	0
January 2011	10	n/a	90	*	*
December 2010	12	n/a	88	*	0
November 2010	8	2	92	0	*
<b>Use Instagram</b>					
Current	28	n/a	72	*	0
September 2014	26	n/a	74	0	0
August 2013	17	n/a	82	*	0
December 2012	13	n/a	87	*	0
Aug. 2-5, 2012	12	n/a	88	1	0
<b>Use Pinterest</b>					
Current	31	n/a	68	1	*
September 2014	28	n/a	72	*	0
August 2013	21	n/a	77	2	*
December 2012	15	n/a	83	2	0
Aug. 2-5, 2012	12	n/a	87	1	*

<sup>3</sup> From January 2005 through 2013, question wording was: "Please tell me if you ever use the internet to do any of the following things. Do you ever use the internet to...[ITEM]?" Prior to January 2005, question wording was "Please tell me if you ever do any of the following when you go online. Do you ever...[ITEM]?" Unless otherwise noted, trends are based on all internet users for that survey.

Use Facebook<sup>4</sup>

Current	72	n/a	28	0	0
September 2014	71	n/a	28	0	*
August 2013	71	n/a	29	0	0
Dec. 13-16, 2012 <sup>iii</sup>	67	n/a	33	0	*
Aug. 2-5, 2012	66	n/a	34	*	0

Based on Form B internet users [N=793]

	TOTAL HAVE EVER DONE THIS	----- DID YESTERDAY	HAVE NOT DONE THIS	(VOL.) DON'T KNOW	(VOL.) REFUSED
<b>Use LinkedIn</b>					
Current	25	n/a	74	1	0
September 2014	28	n/a	72	*	0
August 2013	22	n/a	77	1	*
Aug. 2-5, 2012	20	n/a	79	1	*
<b>Use Tumblr</b>					
Current	10	n/a	89	1	*
December 2012	6	n/a	93	1	*
Aug. 2-5, 2012	5	n/a	94	1	0
<b>Read or comment in a discussion forum like reddit or Digg or Slashdot</b>					
Current	15	n/a	84	1	0
<b>Use messaging apps like WhatsApp, Kik or iMessage</b>					
Current	29	n/a	70	*	*
<b>Use an app that automatically deletes the messages you send like Snapchat or Wickr</b>					
Current	14	n/a	85	1	0

**SNS2** Thinking about the social media sites or mobile apps you use... About how often do you visit or use [INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE]? [READ AS NECESSARY: Several times a day, about once a day, a few times a week, every few weeks or less often?]<sup>5</sup>

	SEVERAL TIMES A DAY	ABOUT ONCE A DAY	A FEW TIMES A WEEK	EVERY FEW WEEKS	LESS OFTEN	(VOL.) DON'T KNOW	(VOL.) REFUSED
<i>Item A: Based on Twitter users</i>							

<sup>4</sup> Dec. 13-16, 2012 trend was asked of all internet users as a standalone question: "Do you ever use Facebook?"

<sup>5</sup> September 2013 trend categories were several times a day, about once a day, 3 to 5 days a week, 1 to 2 days a week, every few weeks or less often. Results shown here for "a few times a week" combine "3 to 5 days a week" and "1 to 2 days a week."

a. Twitter							
Current Form A [N=174]	25	13	21	16	24	*	*
September 2014 [N=323]	22	14	24	15	25	*	0
September 2013 [N=223]	29	17	21	12	20	1	0
<i>Item B: Based on Instagram users</i>							
b. Instagram							
Current Form A [N=197]	35	24	17	10	13	*	*
September 2014 [N=317]	32	17	24	10	16	1	0
September 2013 [N=196]	35	22	21	6	15	1	0
<i>Item C: Based on Pinterest users</i>							
c. Pinterest							
Current Form A [N=207]	9	14	30	25	22	1	1
September 2014 [N=398]	9	8	29	25	26	1	1
September 2013 [N=272]	11	13	30	21	24	1	1
<i>Item D: Based on LinkedIn users</i>							
d. LinkedIn							
Current Form B [N=212]	9	13	30	25	22	1	1
September 2014 [N=463]	7	6	25	31	30	1	*
September 2013 [N=341]	5	8	34	27	25	*	*
<i>Item E: Based on Facebook users</i>							
e. Facebook							
Current Form A [N=572]	43	27	21	4	5	0	0
September 2014 [N=1,074]	45	25	17	6	6	*	*
September 2013 [N=960]	40	24	23	6	8	*	0
<i>Item F: Based on Tumblr users</i>							

<sup>i</sup> September 2014 trends based on two omnibus surveys, conducted Sept. 11-14, 2014 and Sept. 18-21, 2014 [N=2,003, including 1,001 cell phone interviews]. Omnibus surveys not conducted as tracking surveys.

<sup>ii</sup> Aug. 2-5, 2012 trends based on an omnibus survey conducted Aug. 2-5, 2012 [N=1,005, including 405 cell phone interviews]. Omnibus survey not conducted as a tracking survey.

<sup>iii</sup> Dec. 13-16, 2012 trends based on an omnibus survey conducted Dec. 13-16, 2012 [N=1,006, including 405 cell phone interviews]. Omnibus survey not conducted as a tracking survey.