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Brands need to be more human on Twitter

The typical Twitter user seems to be a male in his late twenties/early thirties, who is quite tech savvy and active in IT, media/advertising or the consulting business. These Twitter users address questions to brands, hoping they are listening and will answer. Google, Apple and Amazon are the most discussed brands on Twitter. These are some of the results of the Ultimate Twitter Study, conducted by InSites Consulting.

In May 2009 InSites Consulting launched the Ultimate Twitter Study. Members of the online TalkToChange research community, who use Twitter, were invited to take part in this Twitter study and promote it to their followers and friends. In total 620 'real' (=average of 17 tweets/day for 14 months) tweeters from all over the world took part in the study. Over 50.000 tweets were analyzed in qualitative, quantitative and observational research methods.

Twitter user is a professional male

The typical Twitter user seems to be a male in his late twenties/early thirties, who is quite tech savvy and professionally active in IT, media/advertising or the consulting business. This profile is strikingly comparable to the one of the early internet users. People on Twitter seem to be quite influential in the offline world in one way or another. They tend to be industry experts, journalists, bloggers etcetera.

Users define Twitter as a social network of friends and/or business contacts enabling them to share and discover interesting, exciting, inspiring or funny news or hyperlinks in a very fast way.

Brands need to be more human on Twitter

Brands on Twitter should observe tweets very carefully and talk back to brand followers in a very personal way instead of merely spamming followers with advertisements. Twitter users really address questions to brands, hoping they are listening and will answer.

Google, Apple and Amazon are the most discussed brands on Twitter, followed by a mix of tech companies and other strong global brands like Starbucks, Disney and HP.

Tom De Ruyck, Senior Research Consultant at InSites Consulting: "Twitter is a conversation hive, and it is very valuable for brands to tap into it and learn from what consumers are saying about them. People often send tweets in the heat of the moment: when they experience something positive or negative with a product. This immediacy is never seen before. Although this might sound like a threat for marketers because negative comments about their brands are 'in the open', it is at the same time an opportunity for client services teams to take immediate actions and make customers happy again. This company responsiveness will certainly spread the word on Twitter too."

Why do people use Twitter?

Most people started using Twitter out of curiosity and the urge to stay connected with people and trends within their industry. They follow people who are able to make them curious, smile or wonder. Twitter is also the new sharing platform: 20% of tweets contain a link to a blog, website or movie.

"A couple of years ago everyone suddenly had a blog to share their personal thoughts with friends, family and the rest of the world", says Tom De Ruyck, Senior Research Consultant at InSites Consulting. "Today we see that these kinds of blogs are disappearing one by one. It takes several hours a day to update them for only a handful of readers. The big blogs with thousands of readers will continue to exist and are updated by a professional team of online journalists. Twitter is a new phenomenon: sharing highly personal thoughts in 140 characters from anywhere you want and

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without too much effort. In other words, micro-blogging is the new, more efficient version of the amateur blog.”



Contact: **Tom De Ruyck**
Senior Research Consultant
Tom.deruyck@insites.eu
T +32 9 269 14 07 | M +32 497 885 882

InSites Consulting

InSites Consulting is a leading marketing research company in the field of online market research with a strong international position. It was established as a spin-off of the Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School. Via an online panel comprising more than 2,000,000 panel members spread over 25 European countries, both quantitative and qualitative online marketing research is carried out. The head office in Ghent has 75 highly-skilled and experienced employees. InSites Consulting stands for: expertise and consulting, driven by innovation, excellent customer service and quality-oriented. More information on www.insites.eu and our blog <http://blog.insites.be>