

# How are South Africans interacting with social media?

 By [Andre Britz](#)

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In a recent poll, Effective Measure asked online consumers about their sentiments and usage of popular and trending social media sites. Considering the efficacy of the human race, it was interesting to see just how engaged our online consumers are.

The survey included questions on eight social media spaces: YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, Facebook, Tumblr, LinkedIn, MySpace, Google+, and Cowbird.

Says Alan Morrissey, Effective Measure country managing director for South Africa: "South Africans are prime advocates of social media, with emerging social sites such as Pinterest and Cowbird already gaining traction while the likes of Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and YouTube jostle for top spot for high user engagement. This openness to social media suggests that it is a medium that would work very well, if applied correctly with the right understanding of the target market, as part of an integrated ad campaign aimed at South Africans."

When asked how actively these consumers participate in the social sites of choice, the most popular portals were Facebook and Google+. But despite global trends South African consumers tend to refrain from active participation on MySpace, Twitter and YouTube. This trend may shift in line with better broadband pricing and access and as social media adoption rises on mobile.

## Entertainment is biggest driver

Entertainment seems to be the biggest driver of visitors to social media portals. Facebook and LinkedIn are used to connect with like-minded people and Google+ is surprisingly often used for research.

It seems that on average, the online consumer in South Africa is not that likely to share interesting content or anecdotes they come across. The regular sharers do so on YouTube, Facebook, Google+ and to a lesser degree Twitter and LinkedIn.

Given the interaction and popularity of social media platforms, the platforms are, not surprisingly, aggressively user focused with the aim of maintaining and gaining market share (and thereby a larger slice of the ad revenue). The SA online consumer rank "provide recommendations to expand my interests" as the highest value provider.

Facebook, Google+ and YouTube are the sites users enjoy most. "As broadband penetration and digital ad spend increase rapidly in the country, social media strategies need to be aware of and complement the reasons why South Africans visit

social sites. From our poll, we found being entertained was very important, so an agency may want to look at applying gamification tactics that appeal to their campaign's particular target market as a way to extend the reach of their campaign," says Morrissey.

I leave you with this interesting fact: Those who live in a household of four people *still* feel a need to socialise online...

Take a look at the [Effective Measures infographic](#).

## ABOUT ANDRE BRITZ

André Britz is the 2010 and 2011 best media planner winner at the Bookmarks and heads up Atmosphere Orange, a media planning and buying agency based in Cape Town. She has extensive agency experience and is well-known in the digital space. Follow @AtmosphOrange on Twitter.

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