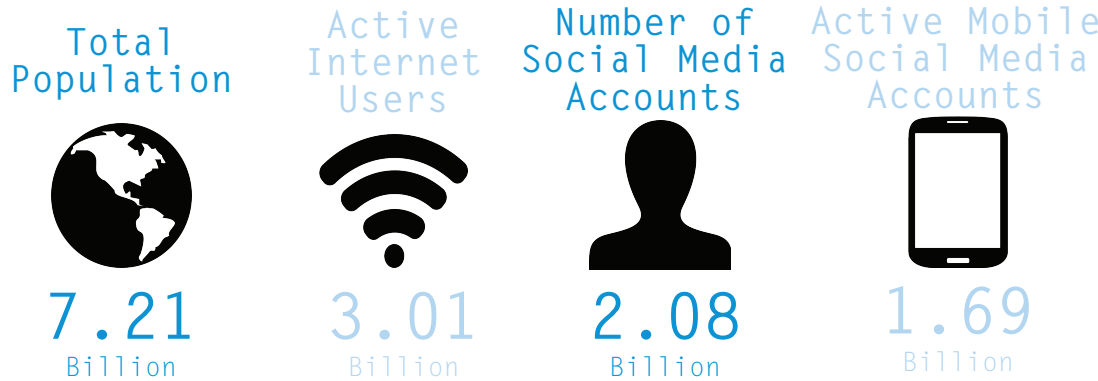


The New Digital Divide

The **digital divide** is a term that refers to the gap between demographics and regions that have access to modern information and communications technology, and those that have restricted or no access. Recently, social media has played a role in creating a new digital divide.



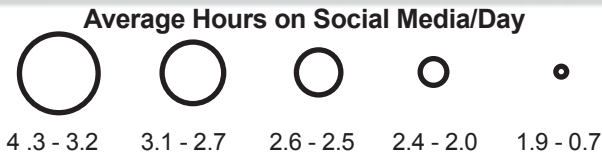
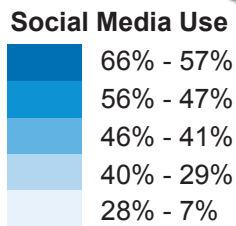
Social Media Use Worldwide

Internet Access

With 88% of North America having access to the Internet, the area also has high rates of social media use. Successful, industrialized nations, such as the United States, can benefit economically and socially from the Internet and social media use expanding across the globe to developing nations. The Internet acts as a gateway that links millions of people to communicate ideas and participate in a global economy.

Time Spent on Social Media

The average social media user spends 2 hours and 25 minutes per day using social networks and microblogs. Argentinian and Filipino users report using social media for the largest amount of time each day, averaging at more than 4 hours per day.



Self-Empowerment

Social media played a major role in the 2011 Egyptian uprising. Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter allowed thousands of Egyptians to organize protests against Egypt's President, Hosni Mubarak. Social media brought to the Egyptian people a sense of self-empowerment by granting them the capacity to speak and assemble, which was something that was previously not there. Egypt is one of the few countries in Africa that utilizes social media.

Closing the Digital Divide

The popularity and generative nature of social media on the Internet has the ability to empower individuals in developing nations to express themselves and make known the human rights abuses they may suffer from their nations. This leaves a challenge for policymakers and international development organizers in developing nations with low Internet and social media use, such as Africa. It is up to these policymakers to use the power of social media to further bridge the digital divide and liberate individuals.

