

Vision Statement

Mapping the Social Internet

Analysis by Mikolaj Jan Piskorski; visualization by Tommy McCall

Blogs. Status updates. Family photo albums, political tweets, viral videos. In the age of the social web, many people broadcast themselves to the world, but not everyone does it in the same way. Using fresh data from the Trendstream Global Web Index—a recurring survey of more than 50,000 users of social platforms in 18 markets—we mapped by country how people are sharing information about themselves online. We looked at five broadcast behaviors: blogging, managing a social-network profile, sharing photos, sharing videos, and microblogging.

The map that emerges shows an East-West divide in users' broadcast behavior. Asian users are more engaged with the social web than users in the West, where social networks are popular but other behaviors lag. Chinese and Indian users, for example, are three times as likely to microblog, or tweet, as American users. They're also twice as likely to share videos.

Perhaps the most interesting developments are in emerging markets, where users are going online in ever growing numbers.

Unlike Western users, many of whom established their patterns when the technology was fairly limited, users in the BRIC nations are joining a much more diverse social web. On four of the five broadcast behaviors, these countries demonstrate the most balanced use of various types of social platforms. And emerging markets have much more room to grow their internet populations, so the experimentation is likely to continue.

Mikolaj Jan Piskorski is an associate professor and the Marvin Bower Fellow at Harvard Business School. **Tommy McCall** is a data visualization designer based in New York City and was an information graphics designer for *Money* magazine.

HOW TO READ THIS CHART

