

The growth of Instagram among world leaders

Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo is Sub-Saharan Africa's most followed leader on Instagram with 431,000 followers, ahead of Rwanda's President Paul Kagame and Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, with more than 165,000 followers each.



Source: Public Instagram profiles

Burson Cohn & Wolfe (BCW) has released the Twiplomacy study about the most followed *World Leaders on Instagram*, which finds 92 heads of state, 48 heads of government and 36 foreign ministers have personal accounts on Instagram.

Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta and Zimbabwe's Emmerson Mnangagwa are also some of the African leaders that are also on Instagram.

In fact, Instagram is the fastest growing social network among world leaders, according to the newly released 2018 [World Leaders on Instagram study](#) by leading global communications agency Burson Cohn & Wolfe (BCW).

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the most followed world leader on Instagram with 14.8 million followers. He is closely followed by Indonesian President Joko Widodo, with 12.2 million followers, who more than doubled his followers over the past 12 months. With 10 million followers, US President Donald Trump is in third position.

Pope Francis is in fourth position with 5.7 million followers, just ahead of Queen Rania of Jordan, Turkey's President Recep

Tayyip Erdoğan and the White House account, each with more than 4 million followers.

The UK Royal Family has almost tripled its followers over the past 12 months in large part thanks to the pictures of the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle which increased the account's followers by 570,000 on May 19, 2018.

The study analyses the activity of the 426 Instagram accounts of heads of state and government and foreign ministers, 100 more than in the 2017 study, using aggregate data from Facebook's CrowdTangle tool.

As of October 1, 2018, the accounts have a combined total of 98.3 million followers and published 98,372 posts in the past 12 months which have garnered a total of 860.4 million interactions (comments and shares).

US President Donald Trump leads the rankings in terms of total interactions (comments and likes). Over the past 12 months, @realDonaldTrump has garnered more than 218 million interactions, more than three times as many as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has more followers, but only 69 million interactions on his 80 photos and videos over the past year.

Most effective

However, considering the number of interactions (comments and likes) per post, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the most effective world leader on Instagram, with each of his 80 posts receiving, on average, 873,302 interactions. Turkey's President Erdoğan is in second position with 413,934 interactions and Indonesia's President Joko Widodo's Instagram posts receive an average of 411,673 interactions per post.

"This third installment of the BCW study shows Instagram has become the social media network where world leaders garner the most interactions," said Chad Latz, chief innovation officer, BCW. "What is astounding is that the average size of world leaders' Instagram accounts is less than half the size of their Facebook pages - with five times fewer posts over the past 12 months. However, all Instagram accounts together total 860 million interactions, which is 162 million (23%) more than the total interactions on Facebook over the same period."

The World Leaders on Instagram study also found that 156 of the 193 United Nations member states maintain an official Instagram account, 16 more than in the 2017 study. Ninety-two heads of state, 48 heads of government and 36 foreign ministers maintain personal pages on the platform, which tend to get better engagement than institutional accounts.

Instagram is not the most obvious social network to make sweeping policy statements, however Instagram Stories have become a secondary channel for digital diplomacy, where word leaders meet, greet and tag each other.

Key findings

Other key findings include:

- Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo is Sub-Saharan Africa's most followed leader on Instagram with 431,000 followers, ahead of Rwanda's President Paul Kagame and Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari with more than 160,000 followers each.
- Jordan's Queen Rania is the most followed Arab leader with more than 4.8 million followers, surpassing Sheikh Mohammed, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, with more than 3.3 million followers.
- Argentina's President Mauricio Macri is the most followed Latin American leader on Instagram with 880,000 followers ahead of outgoing Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and Paraguay's Mario Abdo Benítez who each boast more than half a million followers.
- The British Royal Family tops the Instagram ranking in the European Union with 3.5 million followers, far ahead of French President Emmanuel Macron, with 1.1 million followers, and Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel with 684,000 followers.
- The Information Department of the Government of Brunei is the most active government account, with more than 17

posts per day on average. Imran Khan, Pakistan's Prime Minister, is in second position with more than 10 posts per day and the Foreign Ministry of Kuwait is the third most prolific with more than eight posts per day.

- Since June 2018, 15% of the 426 accounts have created Instagram TV (IGTV) channels which allow users to upload up to 60-minute-long videos in vertical format.

World Leaders on Instagram is BCW's latest research into how world leaders, governments and international organisations communicate via social media. The research builds on BCW's highly acclaimed annual [Twiplomacy](#) study, which is now in its sixth year. In 2016, the Twiplomacy study was expanded to cover all key social media platforms and has massively enhanced BCW's digital reputation worldwide.

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