

Facebook in SA: facts, figures, marketing opportunities



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4 Feb 2010

With over 2.6 million unique monthly browsers, 1.18 billion monthly page views, 46% of active users returning to the site daily, 1.58 million users on mobile platform and 78% of users coming back every week, South Africa is the 29th largest Facebook (FB) country across the globe.



FNB, Media Shop, Zenith, Standard Bank and Group M, among others, are local companies that are on the FB direct sales platform, presenting these firms with huge opportunities for their brands to emerge victorious in a connected world full of endless possibilities.

“FB pages are a powerful hub for brands as it builds a direct dialogue,” Mark Cowan, FB head of emerging markets for Europe, Middle East and Africa, said yesterday, Wednesday, 3 February 2010, at The Venue, Melrose Arch, Johannesburg.

“Communication in media is shifting and while the standard ad approach interrupts user activity, FB ads align with user's activities,” Cowan said.

The standard ad approach (push model) is well-known for its shorter window of opportunities, but FB ads (pull model) provides at least 25 minutes average session per visit, he explained.

A first for local companies

For the first time in SA, local companies will, through Habari Media, be offered FB engagement ads which fall within the context of FB pages. Habari Media is a digital sales house offering internet and mobile advertising platforms.

Engagement ad units include polling ads, virtual gifting, event ads, becoming a fan, and video commenting.

Cowan indicated that the standard ad approach communicates a message and it is a passive form of intake, while FB ads make consumers to become part of the conversation and FB ads are shareable as a social currency.

“Your FB page allows you to develop a deep relationship with consumers and foster a two-way dialogue - brand and consumer,” he said, denying ‘rumours’ that FB is about to charge browsers a fee to use pages.

“Pages are completely free of charge and building connections create a marketing model. FB helps you reach exactly who you want - mass or niche, and is a powerful targeting that results in higher efficiency, whether the target is marriage status, location, demographics, workplace or real time.

“FB is part of the daily routine for users. The best thing about us is that you can target real people using real information.”

Ads will be tracked to help businesses assess impact

Statistics suggest that 55% of FB users are over 25 year-old, and 51% of users are female while male users account for 49%.



Blake Chandlee, VP EMEA and emerging markets at Facebook, and Mark Cowan, head of emerging markets - EMEA, at Facebook, and the Habari Facebook launch at The Venue, Melrose Arch, Johannesburg.

In SA, however, 52% of FB users are female, compared to 48% of male browsers. Globally, 28% of users are over 35, 31% are between 18 and 24 year-old, 14% of users are between the age of 13 and 17 and 27% are between the age of 25 and 34.

Adrian Hewlett, Habari Group CEO, said: "Facebook still offers self-service ads, but the benefits of working through Habari Media include a professionally managed campaign, advice on creative, and guaranteed delivery of impressions."

He also said Habari Media will ensure the ads are tracked and help businesses measure their success.

"The world is quickly changing for both consumers and advertisers, and we want to help you through that change," Cowan said.

However, while FB has proved to be an amazing tool for social collaboration and marketing opportunities, it has also become a tool for criminal syndicates, including paedophiles, human traffickers, kidnappers and pimps, who use it to advance their 'evil' business.

Cowan's colleague, Blake Chandlee, VP of EMEA and emerging markets, said: "We have a team of dedicated people around the world who take down anything illegal to protect our users, and we are also mindful of cultural sensitivities."

For more:

- Facebook: www.facebook.com
- Habari Group: www.habarigroup.co.za
- Twitter Search: [#fbhabari](https://twitter.com/fbhabari)

Presentations:

- Rob Stokes of Quirk eMarketing, Cape Town leg:

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Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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