"Social networks (56%) were the most used form of social media in 2021; compared to 2015 their use increased by 23 percentage points."

"In 2021, 59% of EU enterprises used at least one type of social media."

**Businesses raise their internet profile by using social media** This article presents recent statistics on the use of social media by enterprises in the European Union (EU). Social media are part of the digital technologies that enterprises exploit to increase their presence on the internet, improve marketing opportunities, communicate and interact with partners, customers and other organisations, and facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the enterprise. Social media refer to internet based applications such as social networks, blogs, multimedia content-sharing sites and wikis. In principle, enterprises use social media for image building or for marketing purposes, for gaining insights from customers or communicating within or outside the enterprise or for recruiting.

**Social media, a business paradigm shift**

For more than a decade, there has been a shift from the static webpages of the earlier websites towards web applications which draw on user data and relevant applications stored in the ‘cloud’. In that time, a multitude of internet-based services, collaborative web applications and interactive websites have appeared. Users have been encouraged to subscribe to these services, to author, post and share user-generated content and to add links to other websites. In addition, individuals and enterprises have been able to exchange information, experiences and opinions in the form of ‘many-to-many dialogues’ over internet communication platforms. These virtual interaction platforms have, in fact, been part of a paradigm shift in the way enterprises communicate with their customers.

Enterprises have not only progressively embraced this new generation of highly dynamic web applications, but have also adopted new behaviours. They have integrated social media into the way they run their business, organised forms of internal communication apart from the management chain and, most importantly, communicated and interacted with customers using the new applications. From that point of view it has been possible for customers to influence business decisions and assist companies in designing and marketing their products.

**Use of social media by enterprises**

Enterprises seek to enhance their internet presence by exploiting the possibilities that social media offer. The four most widely known categories of social media are: (a) social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Xing, and others; (b) corporate blogs or microblogs such as Twitter and others; (c) multimedia content-sharing websites such as YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, SlideShare, and others; and (d) wiki-based knowledge-sharing tools.

In 2021, 59% of EU enterprises used at least one of these types of social media, an increase by 22 percentage...
points compared to 2015. Percentages do vary widely from country to country, ranging from 80 % and more in Malta (84 %), Sweden (80 %) and in the Netherlands (80 %) to less than 40 % in Bulgaria (39 %) and Romania (36 %) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Enterprises using social media, 2015 and 2021 (% of enterprises) Source: Eurostat (isoc_cismt)

As shown in Figure 2, 59 % of EU enterprises used social media in 2021. More than 8 in 10 large enterprises reported using social media, a share significantly higher than the one recorded for small enterprises (56 %).

It is noticeable that 29 % of enterprises in the EU used only one of the four types of social media and another 29 % used two or more types of social media. Almost one third of small enterprises (30 %) preferred to concentrate on the use of only one type of social media compared to slightly more than one-fourth (26 %) using two or more social media. On the contrary, the share of EU large enterprises using more than two social media was nearly three times higher than the percentage using only one type (61 % and 23 %) (Figure 2).
Social networks were more popular than other types of social media. Some 56 % of enterprises in the EU used social networks empowering customers to connect by creating personal information profiles, to share experiences, to express opinions, to exchange information and, most importantly, to create communities of people with common interests around the enterprises' product brands. The percentage of EU enterprises using social networks ranged from 84 % in Malta to 36 % in Romania (Table 1).
The use of blogs or microblogs and content-sharing websites was less popular among EU enterprises, at 11 % and 28 % respectively. Corporate blogs are websites that are updated frequently, up to several times a day, with posts that contain text, images, audio or videos. Blogs can be used either inside an enterprise or for communicating with outside parties such as customers, business partners or other organisations. Microblogging is posting very short text messages, usually of a few hundred characters or less, and sharing hyperlinks to other websites, which usually contain longer text, videos or images. Multimedia content communities give enterprises the opportunity to share media content with potential or current customers, thus enhancing their marketing capacity. They may release photos and videos or share presentations and documents over the internet that may be linked to blogs and other social networking services or websites. The percentages of EU businesses using blogs or microblogs were highest in Spain (26 %) and Cyprus (23 %); multimedia content-sharing websites were highest in Finland (50 %) and in the Netherlands (45 %).

The least popular social media in 2021 were wiki-based knowledge-sharing tools used by 6 % of EU enterprises. A wiki is a website that in principle allows multiple users to create and collaboratively edit interlinked webpages using an internet browser. Wiki-based communication platforms may be open to a global audience or may be restricted to a selected network or community of partners. The highest percentage of EU businesses using wiki-based knowledge-sharing tools was registered in Sweden (15 %) (Table 1).

**Table 1: Enterprises using social media, 2021 (% of enterprises) Source: Eurostat (isoc_cismt)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social networks</th>
<th>Multimedia content-sharing websites</th>
<th>Enterprise blog or microblogs</th>
<th>Wiki-based knowledge-sharing tools</th>
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(*) Differences between the last column and the sum of the previous two columns are due to rounding.
- not available
- low reliability
- confidential

Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_cismt)

**Types of social media used over time (2015 - 2021)**

Between 2015 and 2021, the share of EU enterprises using social networks increased from 34 % to 56 % (Figure 3). During the same period the use of multimedia content-sharing websites increased by 16 percentage points (from 12 % to 28 %) and of blogs or microblogs by 2 percentage points (from 9 % to 11 %). The percentage of EU businesses using wiki-based knowledge-sharing tools increased slightly by 1 percentage point (and has remained stable since 2015).
In the EU, between 2015 and 2021 the use of social networks increased most (by 22 percentage points). Among the Member States the highest increases were reported in Belgium and France (by 32 percentage points), followed by Latvia (by 31 percentage points) and Luxembourg (by 30 percentage points). The lowest increases were recorded in Bulgaria (by 8 percentage points) and Ireland (by 1 percentage point), although it needs to be noted that in 2015 the uptake of social networks in Ireland was already at relatively high level compared to other countries (second highest in the EU) (Figure 4).
Types of social media used by enterprise size class

In 2021, 81 % of EU large enterprises employing 250 or more people used some kind of social networks. By contrast, slightly more than half of small enterprises employing 10 to 49 people (53 %) used social networks. Multimedia content-sharing websites were used by more than half of the large enterprises (55 %) compared to one quarter of the small EU businesses (25 %). In 2021, the share of large enterprises using enterprise blog or microblogs (33 %) was more than three time higher than the percentage recorded for small enterprises (10 %). Wiki-based knowledge-sharing tools were the least used social media regardless of the enterprise size class (Figure 5).
Types of social media used by economic activity

Considering the economic activity, during 2021 the percentage of EU enterprises using social networks ranged from 86% of enterprises in the accommodation sector and 81% in the information and communication sector to 41% of enterprises in transport and storage and in construction. Multimedia content-sharing websites were used by more than 5 out of 10 businesses in the information and communication sector and in the accommodation sector, but by less than 1 out of 5 enterprises in transport and storage sector, construction and in the electricity, gas, steam, air conditioning and water supply sector. Enterprise blog or microblogs were popular types of social media among enterprises in the information and communication sector (39% of the enterprises). On the contrary, less than 10% of the EU businesses in manufacturing, transport and storage and construction used enterprise blog or microblogs (Figure 6).
Enterprises using social media, by type of social media used and economic activity, EU, 2021 (% of enterprises)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_cismt)

Source data for tables and graphs
- Social media - statistics on the use by enterprises 2021 tables and graphs

Data sources

Data presented in this article are based on the results of the 2021 survey on ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises. Statistics were obtained from surveys conducted by the national statistical authorities in early 2021.

In 2021, 148 000 of the 1.5 million enterprises in the EU were surveyed. Of these enterprises, approximately 83 % were small enterprises (10-49 employees and self-employed persons), 14 % medium enterprises (50-249 employees and self-employed persons) and 3 % large enterprises (250 or more employees and self-employed persons).

Source data shown as ‘:’ refer to data that are unavailable, unreliable, confidential or not applicable. Unreliable data are included in the calculation of European aggregates. Data presented in this article may differ from the data in the database because of updates made after the data were extracted for this article. Data in the database are organised according to the survey year. The observation statistical unit is the enterprise, as defined under Regulation (EC) No 696/1993 of 15 March 1993. The survey covered enterprises with at least 10 employees and self-employed persons. Economic activities correspond to the NACE Revision 2 classification. The sectors covered are:
- manufacturing
- electricity, gas and steam, air conditioning and water supply
- construction
- wholesale and retail trades, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
- transportation and storage
- accommodation and food service activities
• information and communication; real estate
• professional, scientific and technical activities
• administrative and support activities
• repair of computers and communication equipment.

Context
In 2019, the Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, described how she wanted the EU to grasp the opportunities presented by the digital age. A Europe fit for the digital age is one of 6 Commission priorities for 2019-2024. This digital transformation is based on the idea that digital technologies and solutions should
• open up new opportunities for businesses
• boost the development of trustworthy technology
• foster an open and democratic society
• enable a vibrant and sustainable economy
• and help fight climate change.

In 2021, the Digital Compass for the EU’s Digital Decade (COM(2021)118 final), set the EU’s digital targets for 2030 around 4 cardinal points: skills, digital transformation of businesses, secure and sustainable digital infrastructures, and digitalisation of public services.

See also
• Use of Internet of Things in enterprises
• Use of artificial intelligence in enterprises
• Cloud computing - statistics on the use by enterprises
• E-business integration
• E-commerce statistics
• ICT security in enterprises
• ICT specialists - statistics on hard-to-fill vacancies in enterprises
• Digital economy and society statistics - enterprises
• Impact of COVID-19 on the use of ICT in enterprises
• Impact of COVID-19 on e-sales of enterprises

Main tables
• Digital economy and society
Database

- Digital economy and society <noprint>, see:

 ICT usage in enterprises (isoc_e)

  Websites and use of social media (isoc_cism)
  Social media use by type (isoc_cismt)
  Social media use by purpose (isoc_cismp)

Dedicated section

- Digital economy and society

Methodology

- ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises (ESMS metadata file — isoc_e_esms)

Legislation


• Regulation (EC) No 696/1993 of 15 March 1993 on the statistical units for the observation and analysis of the production system in the Community

External links

• Europe’s Digital Decade

• Media and digital culture