

COVER STORY

# SOCIALLY



Text: Chow Ee-Tan. Images: Courtesy of Respective Interviewees/Stockphoto

# SHIFTING

Social media has become such an integral part of our lives that we can't imagine life without it. No longer is social media used only for 'socialising'. Latest trends have shown that it has become a place for commerce, collaborations, reviews, and brand monitoring.

According to an article '10 Social Media Statistics You Need to Know' on Oberlo.com (5 April 2021), there are currently 3.78 billion social media users worldwide, that is about 48 per cent of the world population. Users spend an average of two hours and 25 minutes per day on social media.

Facebook is still the most popular social media platform, sitting at more than 2.6 billion monthly active users. The next biggest social media is YouTube, which has 2.3 billion active users while Instagram has close to 1.3 billion active users. In recent years, TikTok, which started in 2016, has gained much popularity to becoming the fastest growing social media platform.

Digital marketing is a buzz word as

more and more advertisers are using social media more than traditional media.

"Social media will be here to stay, and they will only get bigger," says Marcus Teoh, a social media expert and zero-budget Facebook marketing trainer. "Social media has led to the drop in the usage of traditional media, as it becomes the quickest way information is received. The viral effect is unrivalled. One tweet or one video can reach millions in just a matter of minutes."

Teoh, who is also a bestselling author and international speaker, says while social media will continue to be a primary socialising tool that shares news and information globally, the next wave

**"THE FIRST RULE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS THAT EVERYTHING CHANGES ALL THE TIME. WHAT WON'T CHANGE IS THE COMMUNITY'S DESIRE TO NETWORK."**

— KAMI HUYSE, social media strategist

Marcus Teoh, author, speaker and social media expert





## TOP SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS IN 2021

Over the past year, there has been a shift in the way brands promote their products or services on social media. What social media trends should you expect in this constantly changing landscape? Here are nine expert or research-backed trends social media marketers should watch and leverage on in 2021.



would be social commerce as that is where transactions occur leading to direct profitability to both users and platform providers.

“Social media is a powerful platform as they revolve around human psychology. They analyse our preferences and desires from the way we surf the web and feed us with advertisements that we want to see,” he says, adding that giants like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and WeChat are strong ecosystems and would continue to become stronger as they are being fed by multiple sources and have very large user base.

Facebook and Instagram are both under the company Facebook Inc. which also owns the world’s largest messaging apps WhatsApp and FB Messenger. YouTube is owned by Google while TikTok and WeChat are owned by Byte Dance and Tencent Holdings respectively.

“Standalone social media platforms like Twitter and Snapchat may find it challenging to compete if they do not evolve,” says Teoh. “We observed how quickly Facebook tried to keep Snapchat away by having “Stories” where content disappears after 24 hours. Instagram recently took on TikTok by introducing “Reels” which is also a short video sharing feature.”

### STORIES, VIDEOS AND LIVE STREAMING

As our attention spans get shorter, ephemeral content—primarily images and videos available for a short duration and disappear afterward—is making its presence felt. From Snapchat to now Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn Stories, content formats are short, engaging, and addictive; and they are no longer the prerogative of young people.

- 1 Brands will take a less-is-more posting approach, i.e., posting only content that is thoughtful, valuable, and in-touch with the world around them.
- 2 Content value will be very important.
- 3 Conversational marketing will change its tone to becoming more authentic and human.
- 4 Consumers will crave snackable content, i.e., short form content
- 5 Video will continue to take centre stage.
- 6 More brands will go live.
- 7 Social media platforms could double as shopping channels.
- 8 Users will embrace gaming and VR.

Source: Hubspot.com

Video content, meanwhile, is one of the most engaging forms of content that will soon dominate social media, says Teoh. From short-form videos seen on TikTok to long-form content on YouTube, videos are the future of social media content.

"According to a study by Cisco.com, by 2022, 82 per cent of all online content will be video content. This clearly shows how important it is to start utilising video content to stay relevant in the social media domain," he says. As Internet speed and bandwidth increase, more videos will be produced and consumed.

Live streaming has become more popular too and is here to stay. Even the older folks have had to adapt to live streaming and online chat because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Teoh says via live streams, we can 'interact' with celebrities, politicians or brands in real-time. More and more social media platforms will support both video sharing and streaming.

"Setting up live streaming

**"IT'S BECAUSE OF THIS FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT TOWARDS USER-GENERATED INFORMATION THAT PEOPLE WILL LISTEN MORE TO OTHER PEOPLE THAN TO TRADITIONAL RESOURCES."**

— ERIC SCHMIDT,  
Executive Chairman & former CEO, Google

and speaking well in front of the camera will be a required skill for many. We need to generate traffic, analyse and use data, and develop digital strategies for business to do well. Those unable to pick up these new tools and skills will find it challenging to adapt to the fast-changing environment," says Teoh.

#### **SOCIAL COMMERCE & CUSTOMER SERVICE**

It's no longer e-commerce but social commerce which is well on its way to becoming a

mainstream retail channel on par with other mediums like websites and offline stores. This retail trend is only growing and will get stronger.

A survey by Hootsuite reveals that 60 per cent of businesses interviewed said they intend to increase their Instagram budget in 2021, and 46 per cent plan to increase their Facebook budget. YouTube and LinkedIn are also popular.

"Companies and brands that still do not use social media will be missing out and left behind," says Teoh, adding that this trend will strengthen further with more social media introducing pro-selling features. From shoppable posts to Instagram Storefronts, social media is evolving to be retail platforms.

"For instance, Facebook has introduced Marketplace, a social commerce feature that allows users to buy and sell like what WeChat is capable of doing, but it is still not actively adopted in the local scene. They are always

## 3 New Social Media Platforms You Need to Know

### **DISCORD**

Discord is a group-chatting platform originally built for gamers that has since become a platform for many kinds of communities like investing, entertainment, education, etc. It is divided into servers, each of which has its own members, topics, rules, and channels. Discord also allows users to voice- and video-chat, as well as livestream games and other programs from their computers.

### **Clubhouse**

Clubhouse is an audio-based social networking platform. It's structured in rooms where users can talk about different topics. It opens up a new way for businesses to connect and engage with their audience. Clubhouse is available to both Apple and Android (only in the US for now) users. You need an invitation to use the app.

### **Signal**

Signal is one of the most popular alternatives to WhatsApp. It's built on an open-source architecture with security and privacy in mind. It includes all the features you would expect from a messaging platform.

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quick to emulate the closest rival TikTok. Eventually they will be able to allow users to transact directly from the Live Streams as this is a lucrative business opportunity that converts traffic into transaction,” says Teoh.

At the same time, brands have recognised social media as platforms for delivering customer service. It won't just be some one-off cases where customers post their questions or complaints on social media and brands respond. It would become a prominent customer service channel and thus it's important for brands to handle their online customers well.

### INFLUENCERS' MARKET VALUE

“Social media influencers will become more and more influential both economically and politically,” says Teoh. “With a large number of followers, their view and their messages will influence and impact a very large audience in a very short period. Many make better living than professionals who are not present online given the commercial value. A whole new industry is born.”

The growing trend of social media influencers can be seen from two perspectives. First is the sheer rise in the number of influencers on social media while the second can be seen by the increase in business marketing spent on influencer marketing.

As of now, investing in influencers is an alternative to running paid ad campaigns, and delivers good results depending on the types of business. Influencers can help marketers

achieve a variety of marketing goals in addition to generating leads. Thus, marketers are now collaborating with a whole network of small, relevant, niche influencers. Going forward, we will see more and more marketers using this strategy and work with multiple smaller influencers rather than just one celebrity influencer.

### PERSONALISATION AND LOCAL TARGETING

More businesses and marketers are leveraging on the personalisation trend in the delivery of advertisements on social media. For some time now, brands can customise their social media ads for as many target segments as they like because social media provides advanced targeting and customisation options for marketers—showing the right ads to the right potential consumers at the right time.

Personalisation has now reached a level that social media is able to 'understand' the type of products you like and would show you ads for similar products from different brands.

Many brands use location-based targeting to reach out to and attract people from a specific geographic location. One common way in which brands attract a local audience is by geo-tagging their posts and stories. If you add a location to your social media content, it will automatically draw-in a local audience.

### TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Social media will also see a rise in the adoption of technologies



**KAN WENG HONN**

*E-Commerce Entrepreneur & YouTuber*  
YouTube: [www.youtube.com/wenghonn](http://www.youtube.com/wenghonn)  
163K Subscribers

## Tapping into Bread-and-Butter Content

**KAN WENG HONN IS AN E-COMMERCE ENTREPRENEUR AND ACTIVE YOUTUBER. HE SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE WITH OTHERS ON HOW TO MAKE MONEY ONLINE ON HIS YOUTUBE CHANNEL.**

“During the first MCO last year, I lost my job as a fitness instructor when all the gyms had to close. So, I decided to work on various online businesses and one of them is on YouTube.

Although fitness is something that I love, sharing fitness won't really help our fellow Malaysians in this tough period. So, I decided to share my experience on how to make money online. Hopefully my little knowledge can go towards helping others and

myself by making money as a YouTuber.

I started doing dropshipping and content creation and I shared all the processes that I have gone through and things that I learned on YouTube channels. I chose to use YouTube because I could make money directly from ads there—you need just 1K subscribers and 4K views to qualify. I also have a couple of Facebook groups but it was YouTube which gained me many followers.

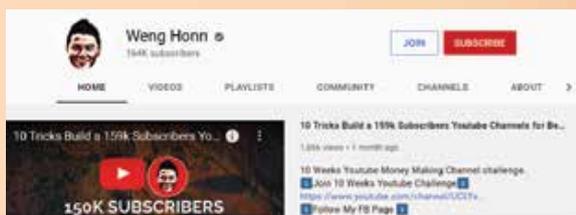
I worked up to 15 or 16 hours daily creating my videos. My biggest challenge was to make my channel grow from scratch into a profitable venture. When I started, I posted 6-7 videos every day, and within a year my channel has more than 1.7k videos uploaded. It took me about 12 months to reach 160k subscribers and during the first six months of MCO last year, I managed to gain about 100k subscribers, which is something that I never expected. I never thought I could create such an impactful channel within a

short period of time.

Sharing my videos in Bahasa Malaysia was inspired by Jack Ma's 'Think Global and Do It Locally' philosophy. There are too many English videos out there thus it is not easy for a rookie like me to penetrate into the market. I researched and found that Shopify dropshipping is very hot in Western countries. And I realised that Shopee and Lazada can do dropshipping too similar to Shopify. I decided to make

my videos more 'native' and use Bahasa Malaysia. And it worked!

While I have built up some authority in teaching and inspiring others to start their own online business, I think of myself as a coach more than an influencer. My advice to those who want to be an influencer is: don't set making money as your only goal, but start with what you're passionate about. Never stop learning, which is my core belief that I embrace daily."



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like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR). As the usage of social media platforms grow, users will demand better and more engaging experiences that are made possible by these technologies.

For instance, Facebook is taking steps in this direction with the introduction of Horizon, a social virtual reality world. This is a virtual world where people can connect, play games, and explore, which takes it to the level of social connection.

While the adoption of VR in social media may still be at an infancy stage, AR can enhance our reality by adding digital elements to it and changing the way things actually look. The applications include basic photo filters to other fun posts and stories. AR filters are now being used on several major platforms like Snapchat and Instagram. Brands can also use AR to offer better shopping experiences to online customers. ©



**JAJAZUBER (SITI KHADIJAH SUBIR)**  
Video Game Creator  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/jajazuber](https://www.facebook.com/jajazuber)  
Likes: 30,178. Followers: 117,530

## Making Gaming Social

SITI KHADIJAH SUBIR, OR KNOWN AS JAJAZUBER ON SOCIAL MEDIA, IS A VIDEO GAME CREATOR. SHE USES FACEBOOK LIVE AS HER PLATFORM TO DO LIVE STREAMING. SHE PLAYS VIDEO GAMES THAT BRING A VARIETY OF CHARACTERS TO ENTERTAIN HER FOLLOWERS ON HER LIVE STREAM.

"My social media handle, JajaZuber, is a combination of my nickname "Jaja" and "Zuber", which is my father's nickname from his hometown.

Someone I knew who was the founder of a very famous product helped me to prepare the tools needed to conduct a live stream—for example, gaming PC, gaming chair, and many more. I started streaming in October 2019 on Bigo then moved to Facebook for more viewers.

I am fortunate that my boss recommended me to learn how to live stream because he said that I have the talent of entertaining people. I'm glad that I have a lot of support to keep me going from my friends, my viewers, followers, and even my fellow online streamer friends.

What I love about this is being able to create something new and I also enjoy the fact that what I do can entertain my followers. The idea was initially to



use spontaneous content. But over time, I changed strategy to offering more easily shared opinions among fellow streamers for more thoughtful and fruitful ideas so that viewers could appreciate the characters and content that are still new.

It took me a lot of time to set up everything and prepare content for my live streaming. I believe that to be successful in live streaming, interest plays a big role for without that, what you do will be just temporary. Secondly, always be patient because anyone who ventures into this field will face challenges—whether you are a celebrity or an entrepreneur, you must be prepared to start from the bottom.

The hardest challenge is when my followers don't like a given content. Some would make nasty comments and use abusive words. As streamers or influencers, we need to act professionally to resolve problems and to apologise even. Being too engaged in my streaming, I sometimes lose sight that my contents could upset my viewers.

A social influencer can dramatically influence his or her followers and the audience whether it's through a video or a photo. So, we need to set an excellent example to be well received, and I remember always to use social media in a humble way."