

Digital view: Life on the Danish Internet, September 7-13,
2009

Danish facts: Twitter is a small elitist nichesite

Number of users and demographic profile revealed



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

“Digital view: Life on the Danish Internet, August 31-September 6, 2009: General news-sites: cracking open variations and drivers of growth in an all-on-average category” is written by Jon Lund.

You can download your own free copy at www.jon-lund.com. or order it at

Jon Lund
Byholmvej 10 // 2720 Vanløse // Copenhagen // Denmark
jon@jon-lund.com // +45 2819 9052
CVR: 32 17 61 19 // Bank: 2128-7563384616

INTRODUCTION

Digital view: Life on the Danish Internet provides a weekly overview of the evolution of traffic on Danish websites, as measured for the Interactive Bureau of Denmark (Foreningen af Danske Interaktive Medier, FDIM).

Data stems from an ongoing research carried out by Gemius for FDIM.

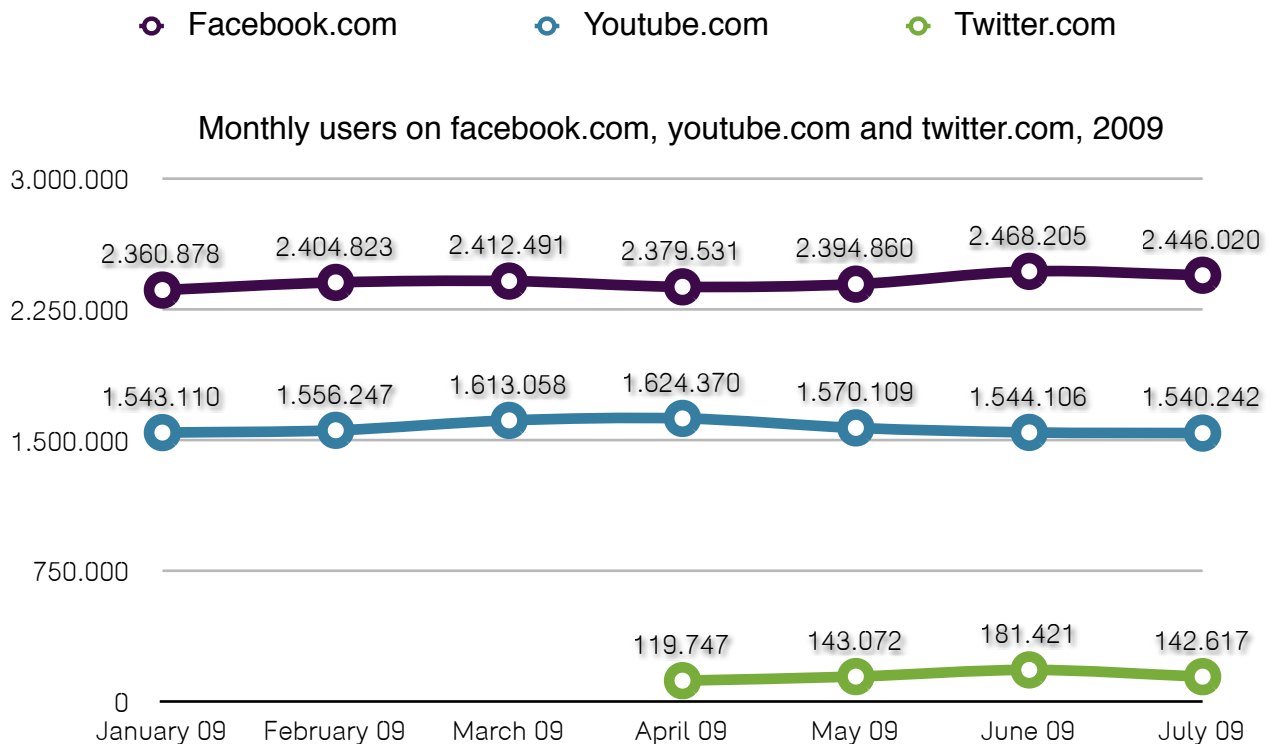
Data is collected through a peer-reviewed, automatic, structured and rule-based methodology and is generally of very high quality.

DANISH TWITTER-FACTS

Less than 200.000 Danes uses Twitter.com

Judging from the mentioning in newspapers, twitter is by far the hottest service on the internet these days. Google news indicates (Sept. 14, 2009) that the term "twitter" has been mentioned in 101.424 articles during the past month. As opposed to 87.327 articles containing the term "facebook".

Looking at the realities of usage unveils a somewhat different picture. More precisely: In July 2009 143.000 Danish adults accessed twitter.com at least once - equalling 3,8 percent of all adult Danish Internet users. Whereas facebook.com drew some 2.446.000 users (65 percent of adult online population) and youtube.com attracted 1.540.000 adult Danes (41 %). Just to take two other social networking based sites for comparison.



Number of +15 year old Danes having visited the site at least once during the month of July 2009. Source: FDM/gemiusAudience.

The figures show that twitter is not a mass medium, like facebook.com or youtube.com. And they show twitter has a very long way to go to become one.

In the US isn't twitter a mass medium neither, although twitter-usage is believed to amount to some 18 million a month, or 11 % of the US adults online, according to a September 14 eMarketer-report (<http://www.emarketer.com/Article.aspx?R=1007271>), quoting Nielsen, [comScore](#) and [Compete](#) for having pegged US unique visitors at 18.2 million, 17.6 million and 19.7 million, respectively, in May 2009.

Limit to growth: potentially 350.000 Danish twitter-users

Interpreting the figures shows you how Facebook.com and youtube.com both seems relatively stable. Facebook scores at a 2,4 million +/- 50.000-level; youtube.com at 1,6 million +/- 50.000.

Twitter.com does not show the same stable pattern, but grows significantly in the period. From not measurable in January, February and March over 120.000 adult users in April, 143.000 in May and 181.000 in June. In July - the Danish summer holiday-period - the number of twitter.com users falls again, and falls by a larger percentage than does facebook.com and youtube.com. Probably because Twitter as a younger and smaller site is more fragile and sensitive to the holiday seasons.

In a year twitter is believed to have a potential to double it's size, Jon Lund forecasts reaching some 300-350.000 Danish users. The forecast is based partly on the growth rates experienced this

Can you compare users this way?

Comparing twitter to facebook and youtube based on the activity on twitter.com alone, is not entirely fair, since a lot of twitter-activity takes places outside twitter.com. You can read and write tweets from your phone, and you can use other web- or desktopbased applications for your computer to access your twitter-stream. This you can also do with both facebook and youtube-content, but given the nature of twitter (posting and reading only 140 character posts in a no-nonsense interface) makes twitter more prone to off-site usage than does facebook or youtube.

This is why the chosen metrics of this analysis is monthly users: a figure that doesn't tell you how much time the users spend on the sites in question and doesn't tell you how many visits they made in total. No. What the figure tells you is the number of persons having visited twitter.com at least once during the entire month of July 2009. That is: a user that reads tweets using an iPhone in the metro every morning on his way to work only doesn't get counted if he during that month doesn't pay a single visit to twitter.com. The same goes for a user, who has downloaded and installed a special app on his computer. If he during the month in question visits twitter.com just once, he's in.

While it most certainly is the case that twitter-users with non-visiting twitter.com-behaviour exists, and that the stated numbers therefore to a certain degree underestimates the real numbers, it seems reasonable to assume that the effect on the produced results is of a relatively small magnitude.

far, partly on an assessment of the evolution on competitors websites and services and partly on the built-in limitations of the twitter-concept.

Twitter - an elitist niche-site

With up to 200.000 users, Twitter isn't mass, but puts itself nicely at the magnitude of niche-websites in Denmark - the space occupied by e.g. Danish regional newspapers (e.g. nordjyske.dk and fyens.dk - 179.000 and 220.000 users) or pizza- and ticket ordering websites (just-eat.dk and billetnet.dk - 160.000 and 218.000 users).

While twitter is believed to have the potential to grow additionally, it is also believed to remain a niche-site. The reason for this are two elements rooted near the heart of the twitter-concept, both making twitter elitist in nature.

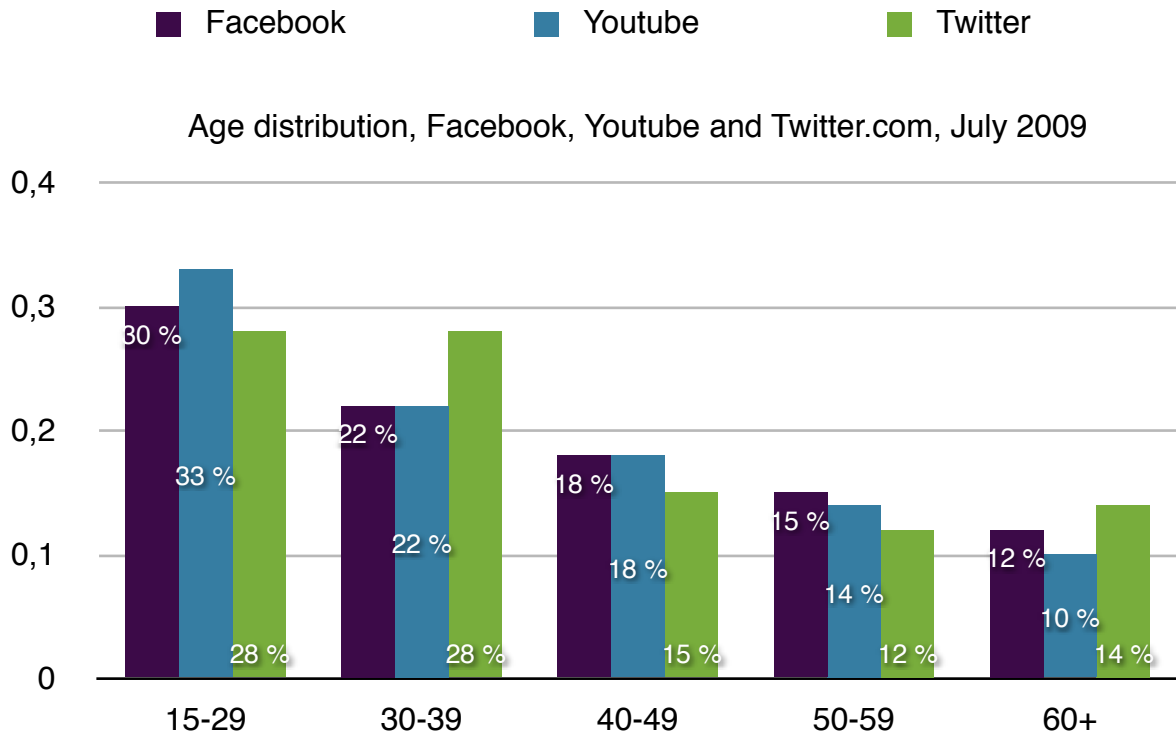
First, twitter consists at its core - as opposed to facebook - of nothing but short textual status-updates. The ability to attach pictures as tweet-pics no way resembles the photo-album capabilities of facebook. And twitter simply does not give the user the ability to e.g. integrate longer comments or implement and share applications. This gives twitter the first part of its elitist character. It's naked, stripped down to the basics of communication, all about having something to say to others. Not about building up a repository of rich social goods, meant for co-consumption.

Secondly the twitter-concept of followers reinforces the "pure thought"-element of twitter. You are not friends with anyone at twitter. You are not connected to others on the basis of being a part of a social group (and even less on the basis of who you like!). This "group-feeling" is a vital part of what brought facebook to success.

On twitter you merely follow others, whose tweets you find interesting. And others follow you - if they find you have something to say of interest. You're not expected to know the persons you follow in real-life, and there's no anticipation that you'll have get to meet them in-real-life. The reciprocity of the facebook relations are substituted with a uni-lateral approach.

These two characteristics: the naked, pure-thought substance and the uni-lateral character of relationships makes twitter a niche and elitist social network. Granma loves facebook - but won't ever let twitter into her heart.

The empirical findings supports this analysis. Looking first at age-distribution (graph below), twitter stands out compared to eg. facebook and youtube. Twitter is dominated by users in the late 20'es/early thirties.



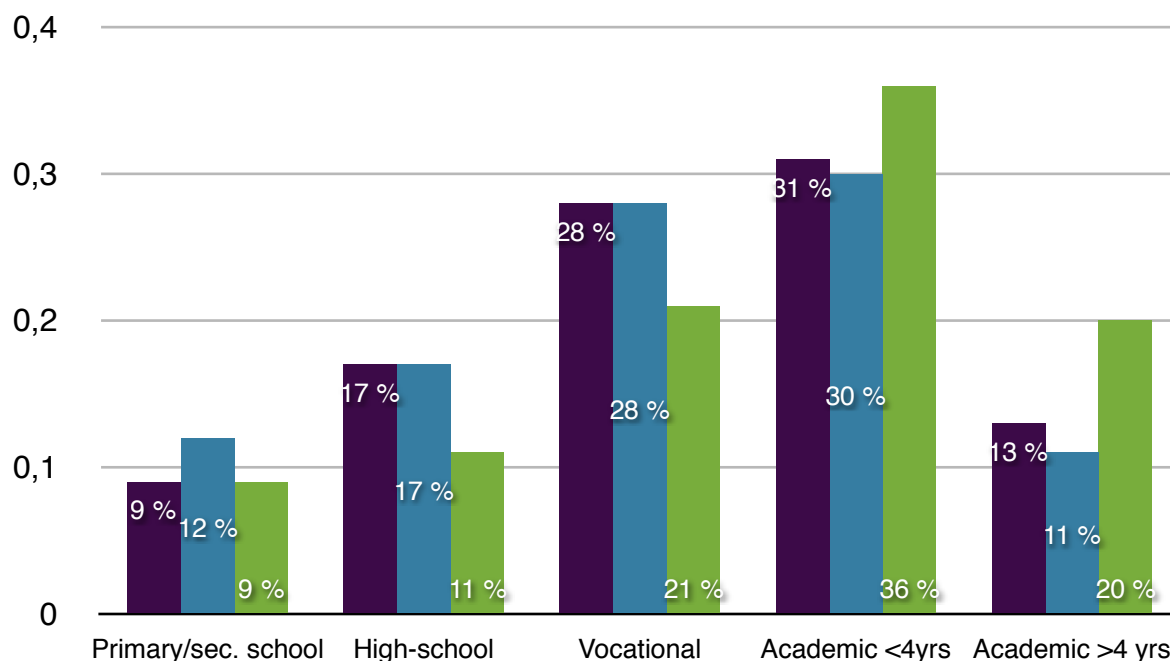
The distribution of +15 years old Danish users in different age-groups on Facebook, Youtube and Twitter. July 2009. Source: FDIM/gemiusAudience.

Men and women were exactly equally represented on twitter.com. The female users however, are more than twice as active as their male counterparts, measured by time spend.

Looking to the twitter-users educational background, you find an over-representation of users with an academic education comparing to facebook and youtube. 56 percent of twitter-users have a higher education, contrasted to 44 percent of facebook-users and only 41 percent of Youtube-users.

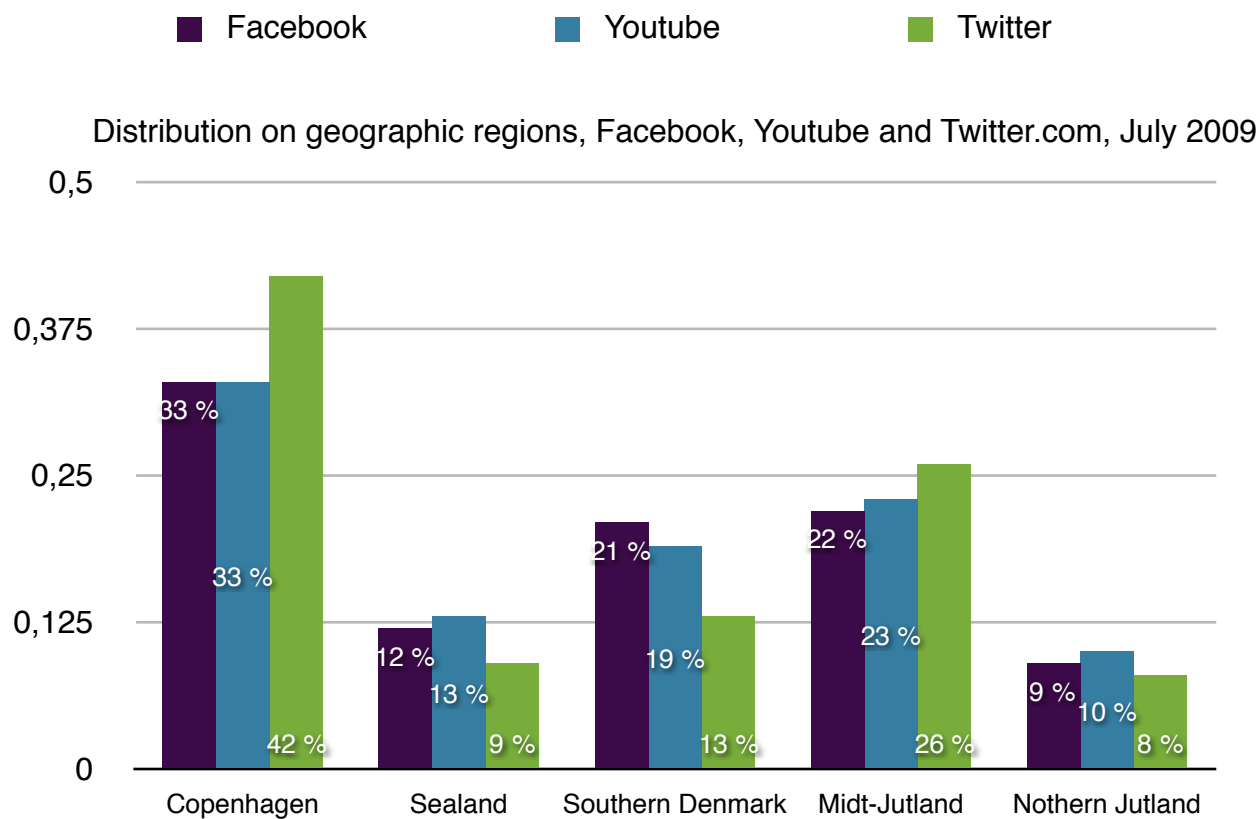
Facebook Youtube Twitter

Distribution by highest completed education, Facebook, Youtube and Twitter.com, July 2009



The distribution of +15 years old Danish users by highest completed education on Facebook, Youtube and Twitter. July 2009. Source: FDIM/gemiusAudience.

And finally you'll find twitter-users to live in the metropolitan greater Copenhagen and the area - whereas users of facebook and youtube are much more evenly spread through out the country. The one other region from which twitter has a larger share of users than facebook and youtube is the Århus-dominated Midtjylland,



The distribution of +15 years old Danish users in different geographic regions on Facebook, Youtube and Twitter. July 2009. Source: FDIM/gemiusAudience.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

“Digital view: Life on the Danish Internet” provides a weekly overview of the evolution of Danish activity on the internet, as measured for the Interactive Bureau of Denmark (Foreningen af Danske Interaktive Medier, FDIM).

The Data stems from an ongoing research carried out by Gemius for FDIM. The research falls in two parts: one part measures all pageviews of the sites taking part of the survey. Key results are published on <http://fdim.dk/?pageid=123>.

The other part of the research investigates Danes’ use of websites not actively participating in the study, such as Google, Facebook, Youtube and Twitter. This research is based on a panel with 7000+ actively participating panelists, which is adjusted to align with actual demographic composition and behavioural characteristics of the overall Danish internetpopulation.

The querying and processing of data, identification of key parameters for selected sites showing significant trends is done by Jon Lund based on a profound experience in traffic-analysis and an in-depth knowledge of the Danish internet-landscape.

Data is collected through a peer-reviewed, automatic, structured and rule-based methodology and is generally of very high quality.

The official statistics are available on www.fdim.dk and through a special analytics application.



ABOUT JON LUND

Jon Lund is advising, speaking and analyzing the impact of new media and new technology on business and society. Jon Lund views openness and transparency as factors contributing to the growth of business, the welfare of societies and the well-being of individuals. Open up, give away data, figures, facts and opinions, invite customers, business-partners and society in general to engage with you, in the long term will leave you better off.

From 2004 to 2009 Jon Lund was general manager of IAB Denmark (Foreningen af Danske Interaktive Medier, FDIM) and headed as such the official measurement of activity and ad spend on the internet.

Jon Lund is member of the board of IAB Europe and has held honorary positions as member of the Danish Ministry of Cultures advertising forum, member of the board of directors of the forum of the Danish Media, member of ICC Denmark's marketing committee. He holds a masters degree in Political Science and has worked with internet since starting his own agency in 1995.