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Destination Thailand: Current and future trends towards AEC 2015

Photo by Marianna Novicova

Social Thailand

The role of the Land of Smiles in the social networking world

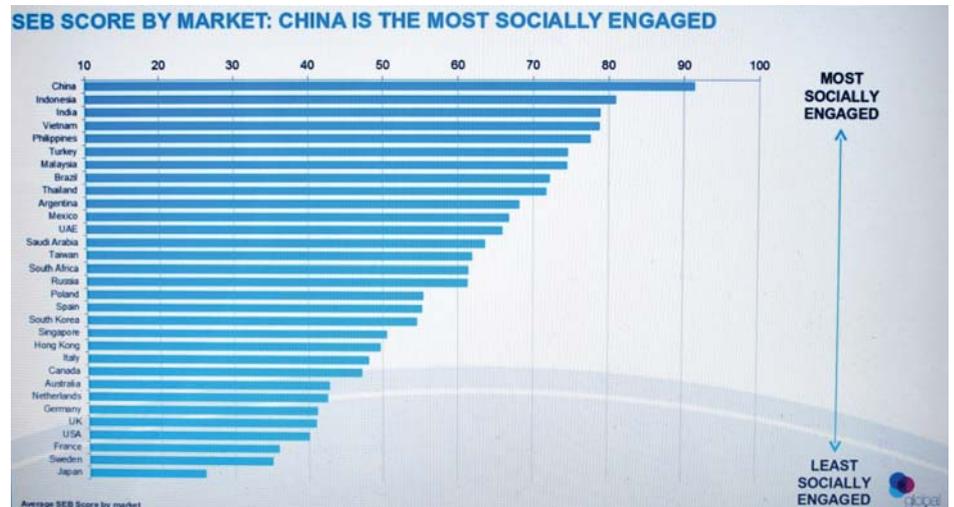
In Thailand, unlike in most other countries in the World, the gap between active users and passive users is not wide, offering great opportunities to increase the reach of a targeted social campaign...

By Ilaria Nardone

The fact that social media and Internet based networking platforms have become a major activity in our daily life is no longer big news. With billions of worldwide active users on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Google Plus, we can declare that our behavior on social media is more than a just a mirror of our reality. It is an extension of the real world itself. Consequently, understanding the behavior and the potential of online social networks is crucial for all types of business and non business activities. Especially here in Asia, "going social" has become an unavoidable necessity.

One of the latest reports, from We Are Social, highlights the fact that there are now well over 1 billion Internet users around Asia. At least 811 million of these use social media, meaning that 50% of the world's social media users are in Asia. With this impressive data in our hands, we want to know particularly more about the role of Thailand in this Asian social media world.

For Marcello Mari, Social Engagement Lead at GlobalWebIndex, the land of smiles has become in the last few years a very intriguing nation to monitor: "Thailand is definitely one of the most interesting markets for what concerns the Social Media landscape. At GlobalWebIndex we track 31 countries in the World and we recently rolled out a simple and comparable measure which enables the



exploration of how engaged different markets are. Asia (with the exception of Japan) dominates, with China leading the way regardless of the demographics compared. Thailand ranks 9th in this particular list behind Brazil, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia, the most engaged country in the world according to the SEB score."

The Social Engagement Benchmark (SEB) is a simple measure, conceived by Global Web Index staff, to assess how socially engaged a particular consumer segment has become. It uses 12 key social behaviors and aggregates social consumer engagement in participation, content creation and brand engagement.

The Far East has become a significant zone for investments and usage of Social Media, but what about the relation between Thailand and Italy?

"Thailand almost doubled Italy in terms of Facebook active user penetration. While in Italy 47% of the total online population is active on Facebook (one of the highest in Europe), Thailand scores an impressive 74%. This is a crucial phenomenon for strategists and marketers approaching the APAC markets. Contrary to most of the countries in the World, in Thailand the gap between active users and passive users is not very wide, offering great opportunities to increase the potential reach of a targeted social campaign. Our latest results show more than 12 million active users against a total Facebook population of 15 million accounts (GlobalWebIndex estimate), which is essentially the same active base compared to Italy. While Italy has a much higher Internet penetration, growth markets like Thailand have basically the same reach. Legacy thinking might dismiss many markets for significant online and social investment, due to perceived low Internet penetration. However if we look at the level of socially engaged consumers versus total population, this view has to be reconsidered."

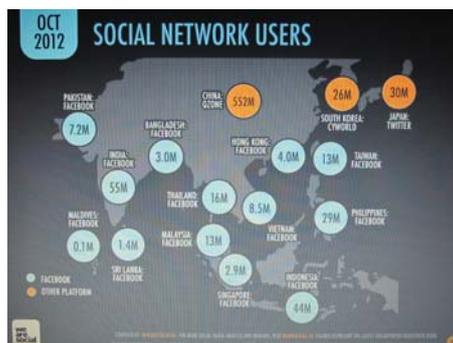
So, even though Thailand does not have a very high Internet penetration (about 36%), can it be considered as a country that is very engaged in Social Media?

"Many fast growth and lower Internet penetration markets have consumer segments engaged in social media that exceed or are on par with far more mature Internet markets. This means markets like Russia, Turkey, Brazil, China and Thailand are in broad parity with Italy, France, Germany, Spain and Australia in terms of the total percentage of population that are active in social media. It also means reassessing some mature markets. For example the Netherlands is not known as a social hub, however thanks to an extremely high Internet population with a mid ranking SEB score, social media reaches the largest proportion of the total population compared to any other market in the survey". With an impressive 117% mobile penetration in addition to a fast growing Internet connectivity, Thailand is positioning itself way above the Asian average, and can claim with reason to be one of the most socially engaged and net connected countries in South East Asia.

Source:

Global Web Index: globalwebindex.net

We Are Social: wearesocial.net



Ilaria Nardone

Born and raised in Venice, Ilaria is a post graduate in Mass Media and Politics at the University of Bologna. Falling in love with Asia, she moved to Bangkok and currently works as a Social Media Networker for a PR company. Besides keeping herself always informed about social network platforms, Ilaria spends her free time going to art galleries, exploring the city and searching for the latest Bangkok tendencies.