

Warc: Social media reaches new peaks, wields huge influence over how brands reach their audiences

Social media is the largest channel worldwide by advertising investment, forecast to total \$247.3bn in 2024, up 14.3% year-on-year.



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) Social media is the largest channel worldwide for advertising investment according to Warc Media's latest forecast, *Global Ad Trends*

Social platforms dominate the global media landscape, and wield huge influence over how brands reach their audiences according to Warc Media's latest forecast, *Global Ad Trends* a quarterly report which draws on Warc's dataset of advertising and media intelligence to take a holistic view on current industry developments.

Data from GWI shows that time spent with social platforms has increased by 50% since 2014, from an average daily consumption of 95 minutes to 152 minutes in 2024, and according to data.ai, worldwide user numbers across social platforms have risen 169% since 2014.

"Much of social media's success has been driven by Meta's remarkable renaissance," says Alex Brownsell, head of content, Warc Media. But, he adds that social's stronghold on budgets can also be seen in TikTok's rise and a return to double-digit ad revenue growth at Snapchat and Pinterest.

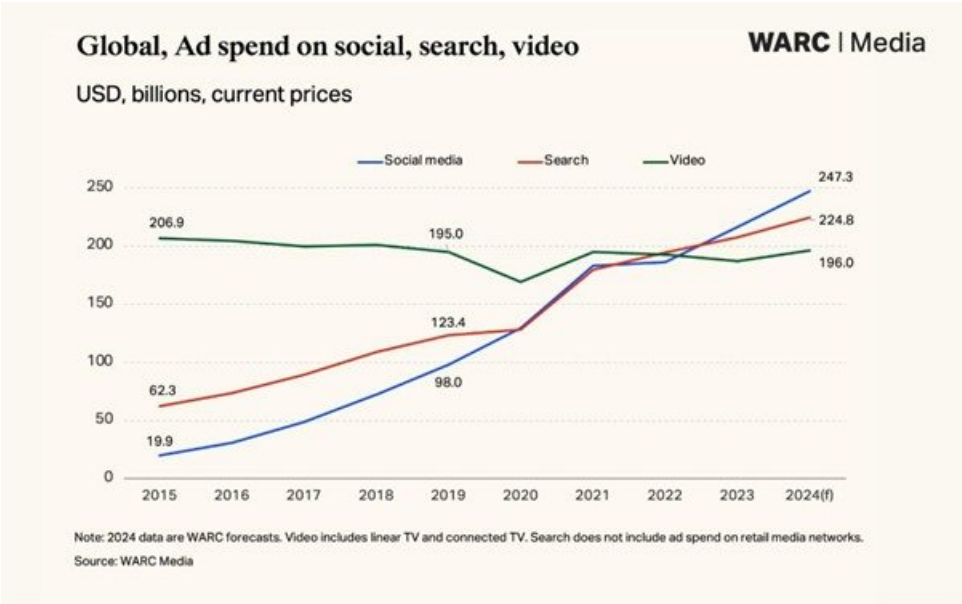
"However, with this dominance comes challenges, such as rising advertising loads in social environments, and the impact of AI on media planning. In this report, we take a holistic view of the global social media landscape, which shows no sign of losing momentum."

Key insights

Key insights highlighted in Warc's *Global Advertising Trends: Social Media Reaches New Peaks* are:

- Social is the leading media channel by ad spend globally

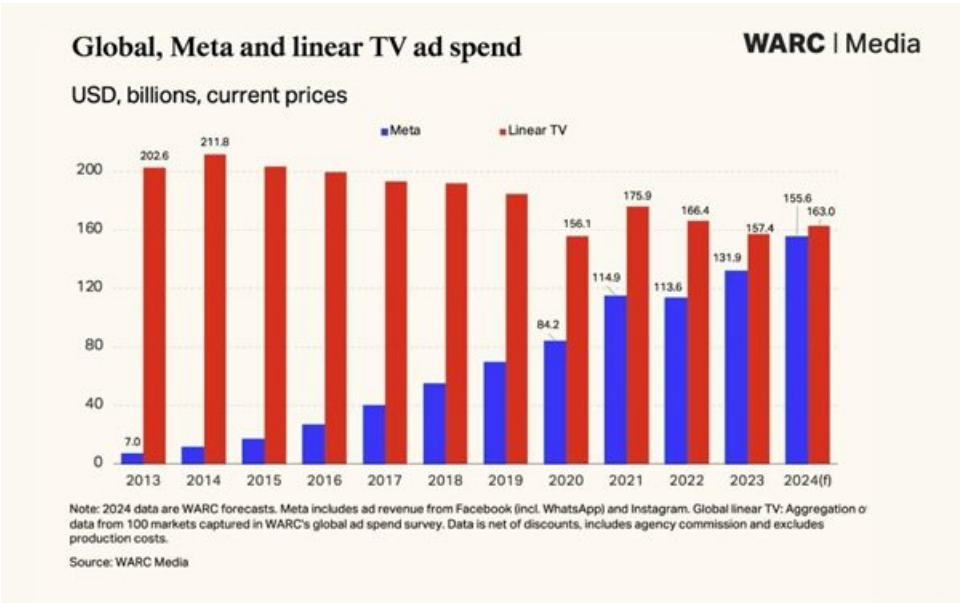
Global social spend is set to total \$247.3bn in 2024, up 14.3% year-on-year, a slight deceleration from +16.0% in 2023. Western platforms are growing fastest, fuelled by Chinese brands targeting US and European audiences.



- Meta is on track to overtake linear TV in ad revenue in 2025

Both Facebook and Instagram grew by more than 20% year-on-year in Q1 2024, and Meta is forecast to earn \$155.6bn in ad revenue this year, representing a 63.0% share of global social spend, fuelled by a wave of investment from Chinese exporters, and the popularity of its AI tools.

According to Warc Media, Meta is set to overtake global linear TV in advertising spend terms in 2025.



- Investment in AI has helped to drive incremental social spend

Tools like Meta's Advantage+, which automate aspects of creative and media planning, are becoming increasingly popular with advertisers. However, some brands have complained of erosion in campaign efficiencies.

- TikTok's growth will slow in 2024, amidst US ban concerns

Warc Media forecasts TikTok will earn \$23.1bn this year. The +18.3% year-on-year increase marks a significant slow-down from the 87.8% growth rate it clocked up last year, despite the introduction of new search and shopping ad formats. Given TikTok's unique popularity with Gen Z audiences, many advertisers in the US will be hoping a ban does not come into effect.



US Senate approves bill to pressure TikTok sale

24 Apr 2024



- Snapchat and Pinterest return to double-digit ad growth.

Pinterest is set to enjoy a 17.3% year-on-year increase in ad revenue in 2024, while Snapchat is forecast to grow 13.7%. This strong growth of both platforms is attributed to a refocus and leaning into their respective strengths.

- Twitter/X's ad revenue woes are set to continue in 2024

X's ad revenue in 2024 is predicted to decline by 6.4% globally and 5.1% in the US. However, compared to its startling 46.4% decrease in 2023, it marks something of a stabilisation for the Elon Musk-owned platform, largely due to political ad spend. However, marketers remain concerned with brand safety and X's much-publicised issues with bots.



From mention to movement: The influencer marketing evolution

30 Apr 2024



- Ad loads are rising across social platforms

Meta reportedly increased its ad load in Q4 2023 to 19.1%, with most Reels sessions now having seven or more ads. Platforms are aiming to improve monetisation "efficiency" with new search and shopping ad formats.

- Social platforms are becoming increasingly homogeneous

As TikTok prepares to launch a photo-sharing app, Notes, and Meta invests in AI search tools, social platforms are converging in the advertising formats and commerce functionality they offer to brands.

Commenting on this, Rachel Morman, global head of social, PHD says, "AI offers incredible new opportunities for [social advertisers], delivering multi-advertiser contextual ads, but that may not be suitable for all brands – such as those that need to heavily consider exclusivity and adjacency."

Gillian Collison, global head of social, GroupM, adds, "The challenge remains to enable brands to leverage their own data and analytics to understand target audiences at a deeper level, enabling personalised experiences across all mediums."



Superbalist launches Influencer Shops

29 Apr 2024



Social Media Outlook in the US, UK, China and APAC

- US: Social media advertising spend is set to reach \$75.6bn this year. Facebook remains the biggest player, forecast to reach \$36.3bn, followed by Instagram (\$21.3bn), and TikTok (\$10.1bn).
- UK: Social media advertising spend in the UK grew 15.6% year-on-year in 2023, and is forecast to reach £8.8bn in 2025, per the latest AA/Warc Expenditure Report. Much of this growth is attributed to rising spend on social video formats, up 20.0% year-on-year, according to IAB UK .
- China: Major Chinese social platforms have suffered an ad revenue slowdown since 2021, however, signs of positivity are emerging: video and photo sharing app, Xiaohongshu, with 312m MAUs in China, has reported its first profit; and Douyin, owned by ByteDance, is forecast to earn \$30.2bn in ad revenue, \$7bn more than TikTok, its Western sibling.
- APAC: more than 70% of consumers in Asian markets, including Indonesia and the Philippines, use social media across multiple stages of their buying journeys. GWI data shows that social media users in APAC are 11.2% more likely than the global average to purchase a product or service every week because of social media influencer endorsement.

Read a complimentary sample report of Warc's Global Ad Trends: Social media reaches new peaks [here](#). Warc Media subscribers can read the report in full.

A [podcast](#) Warc podcast discussing the findings outlined in the report will be available from 7 May.

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