

News release

'Digital waste' pollutes the online world as brands fail to listen to what people want

Global report from world's largest research consultancy, TNS, shows half of consumers don't want to be bothered in social networks

Athens, Thursday 10 November 2011. Businesses are wasting time and money trying to reach people online without realising many resent big brands invading their social networks – according to findings from a global study launched by today by [TNS](#), a Kantar company and part of WPP [NASDAQ:WPPGY].

The findings were revealed by TNS's Digital Life study, the most comprehensive view of how more than 72,000 consumers in 60 countries behave online and why they do what they do – an interactive data visualisation of the key findings can be found at www.tnsdigitallife.com.

The race online has seen businesses across the world develop profiles on social networks, such as Facebook or YouTube, to speak to customers quickly and cheaply – but TNS's research reveals that if these efforts are not carefully targeted, they are wasted on half of them.

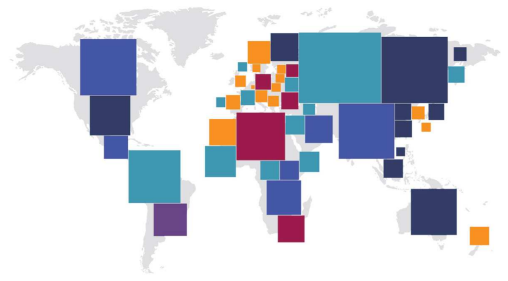
It found that 55 per cent of people*** in Greece do not want to engage with brands via social media – rising to 57 per cent in developed markets*. Instead, misguided digital strategies are generating mountains of digital waste, from friendless Facebook accounts to blogs no one reads. This is being combined with ever-increasing content produced by consumers – the study shows 62 per cent of digital consumers in Greece now comment about brands online, a figure which is higher than the global average of 47 per cent.

The result is huge volumes of noise, which is polluting the digital world and making it harder for brands to be heard – presenting a major challenge for businesses trying to enter into dialogue with consumers online.

"Winning and keeping customers is harder than ever," said Helena Chari, Managing Director of TNS ICAP. She continued, "The online world undoubtedly presents massive opportunities for brands, however it is only through deploying precisely tailored marketing strategies that they will be able to realise this potential. Choosing the wrong channel, or simply adding to the cacophony of online noise, risks alienating potential customers and impacting business growth."

TNS's Digital Life study asked consumers around the world whether they actually want to engage with brands on social networking websites – either to find out more or to make a purchase.

Although 58 per cent of people*** in Greece – higher comparing to the global average of 54 per cent – admit social networks are a good place to learn about products, the research shows brands must



harness digital more carefully if they are to use it to their advantage and deepen relationships with customers and prospects.

The study also reveals big geographic contrasts which highlight the risks of brands employing a catch-all approach that doesn't take the needs of different consumers into consideration.

Fast growth markets** were found to be far more open to brands on social networks. Just 33 per cent of Columbians*** and 37 per cent of Mexicans*** said they don't want to be bothered by them – opposing to 55 per cent in Greece***. However, even in those markets brands must still plan and manage online engagement carefully to avoid alienating consumers and doing more harm than good, according to TNS.

Helena Chari explains: *“Digital waste is the accumulation of thousands of brands rushing online without thinking who they want to talk to – and why. Many brands have recognised the vast potential audiences available to them on social networks; however they are failing to understand that these spaces belong to the consumer and their presence needs to be proportionate and justified.”*

“The key is to understand your target audience and what they want from your brand – social networks aren't always the right approach. If consumers in one market don't want to be talked to, can you use an alternative online method – creating owned digital media platforms, targeted sponsorship or search campaigns – to engage in an appropriate way that will achieve business results, without adding to the digital waste pile?”

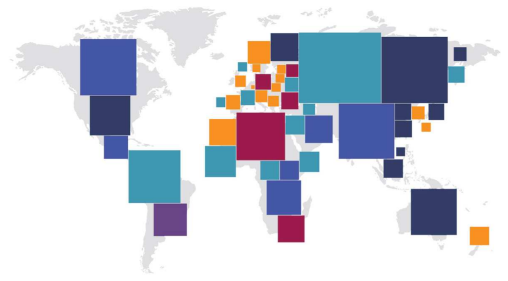
TNS's Digital Life study also sheds vital light on why people do engage with brands online. In Greece, 44 per cent of those motivated to post comments on companies do so for the simple desire to impart advice – similarly to the global average of 46 per cent.

Findings showed that more people like to praise than complain online (13 per cent vs 10 per cent). In Greece the results are similar to the global pattern – 13 per cent of people*** post comments to praise while 11 per cent complain about brands online.

However, motivations of online commentators can be self-serving. 79 per cent of Greek online consumers are driven to engage with brands online by a promotion or special offer, a figure much higher than the global average of 61 per cent.

When examining global contrasts, TNS found that consumers in fast growth markets are incredibly keen to spend more time and money online than they currently do – presenting major growth opportunities for brands.

There are, however, infrastructure challenges still to be overcome in these countries before businesses can really tap into the enthusiasm for the digital world. 48 per cent of people already online in fast growth markets would use the internet more if it was less expensive – rising sharply in Africa, to 81 per cent of people in Ghana, 71 per cent in Nigeria and 68 per cent in Kenya.



Likewise, while just a quarter of people*** in developed markets see social networks as a place to buy products, this rises to 48 per cent across fast growth markets. Similarly, in Greece 45 per cent of people*** see social networks as a good place to buy products from brands.

And when it comes to online shopping habits, Asian consumers are leading the adoption of group buying and purchase via mobile. Almost half (46 per cent) of digital consumers in China already use group buying tools in contrast to S/E Europe region where adoption rates are at the level of 19 per cent while in Greece the use of group buying rises to 23 per cent.

Adoption of shopping via mobile is also high in the Asia region – 34 per cent of mobile internet users in China and South Korea shop on their phone. In Greece 21 per cent of mobile internet users shop via mobile bringing the country in higher position comparing to S/E Europe average of 15 per cent.

Helena Chari adds: *“There is a huge appetite for increased internet access and mobile services among consumers in fast growth markets. Digital Life shows that as online communities mature, brands that can cut through the digital noise have fantastic potential to drive rapid growth from this nascent consumer base.”*

~ ENDS ~

Notes to editors

*Developed markets: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

** Fast growth markets: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Columbia, Egypt, Estonia, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Vietnam.

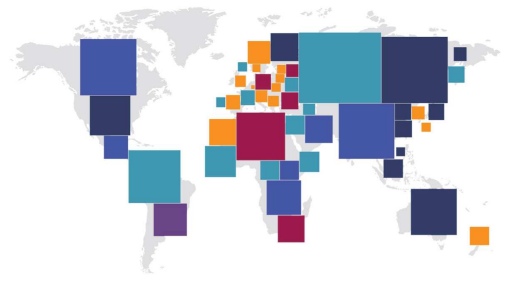
***This refers to Social Network Users only.

TNS has made some of the key findings from this study available to the public via an interactive data visualisation that can be found at www.tnsdigitallife.com. The visualisations were developed in partnership with Digit London.

Follow the conversation on Twitter - [@tns_global](https://twitter.com/tns_global), [@tns_icap](https://twitter.com/tns_icap) and #tnsdl.

About Digital Life

Digital Life provides recommendations on how to use digital channels to grow your business through a precise understanding of human behaviours and attitudes online. Based on in-depth interviews with



over 72,000 people in 60 countries, Digital Life's size, scale and detail make it the most comprehensive view of consumer attitudes and behaviour online, on a global and local level.

About TNS

TNS ICAP is a leading market research agency in Greece focused on clients' growth through precise analysis of their drivers, underpinned by a deep understanding of why people behave the way they do and the application of our long established expertise. Our work stretches across the entire range of marketing and business issues specializing in Innovation & Product development, Brand & Communication, Retail & Shopper and Stakeholder Management.

TNS is part of Kantar, one of the world's largest insight, information and consultancy groups.

Please visit www.tnsicap.gr for more information.

About Kantar

Kantar is one of the world's largest insight, information and consultancy groups. By uniting the diverse talents of its 13 specialist companies, the group aims to become the pre-eminent provider of compelling and inspirational insights for the global business community. Its 28,500 employees work across 100 countries and across the whole spectrum of research and consultancy disciplines, enabling the group to offer clients business insights at each and every point of the consumer cycle. The group's services are employed by over half of the Fortune Top 500 companies.

For further information, please visit us at www.kantar.com.

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