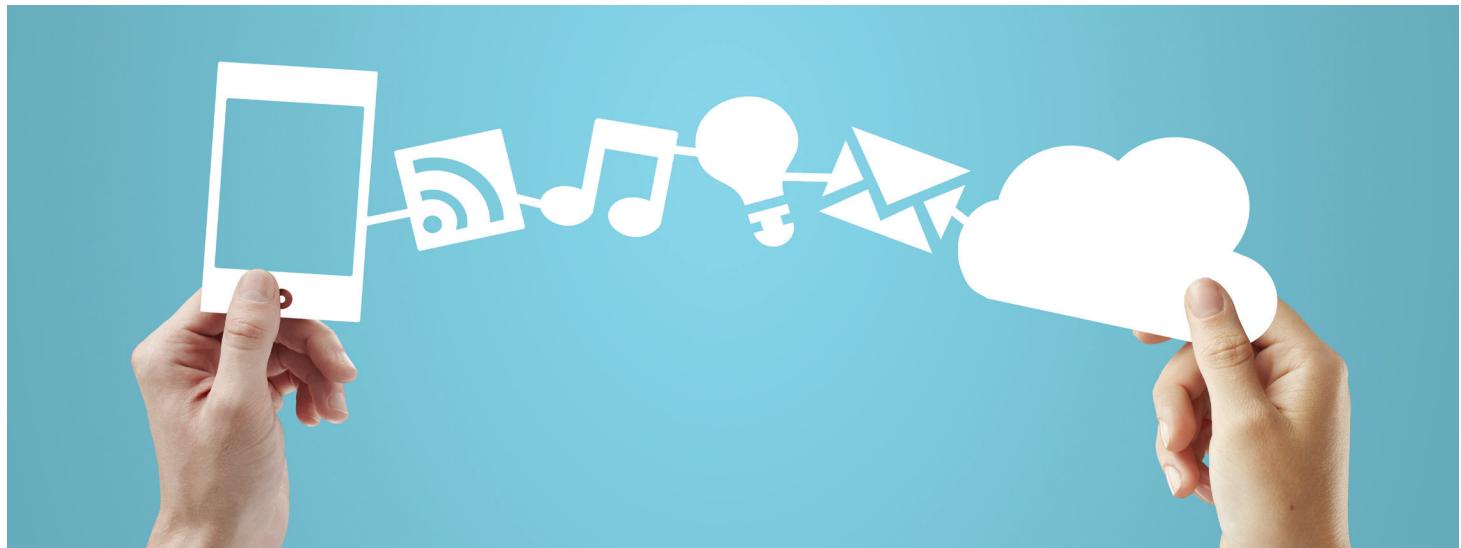


# Global Agenda Council on Social Media 2012-2014



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## Understanding/Context

Social media is changing rapidly. New companies, tools and apps appear incessantly, with varying degrees of success. Many are now offshoots of or merge with established platforms. The launch of Twitter's new #music service and Facebook's takeover of Instagram are examples. Increasingly fewer players are controlling the space. Generally, Facebook still dominates the sphere in the United States. The website accounts for 83% of the time people spend on social media websites in the US, according to comScore. That said, other players are starting to carve out space. Tumblr and Pinterest – two platforms that encourage image sharing – make up almost 8% of online social networking. This reflects the growing interest in visual media, a trend underlined by the global boom in online video. Despite the rise in popularity, many industries are still not aware of how to use social media effectively, while the massive amounts of data created by these communication technologies generate confusion on whether and how to use and regulate them for public benefit.

## Shaping the Agenda

The Global Agenda Council on Social Media believes social media can have a significant positive impact. By giving a platform to anyone who wants to use it, it has the potential to open and democratize societies. But social media can also create an illusion of community, diversity, power and freedom. In addition, it is unclear where – if anywhere – the limits of communication lie. Social media may give disproportionate exposure to radicalized voices. The Council has examined the tension between identity and anonymity, as well as evaluated social media literacy. Through these discussions, the emerging focus areas are threefold. First, time as an organizing principle on how people “consume” social media and use data should be explored. Second, the increase in visual content will produce a need for new measurement

tools, which are currently lacking. Finally, the prevalence of data-generating media requires a credible system for safeguarding privacy and regulation. Other themes the Council will look at include the concentration of social media companies, geographic differences in the use of social media, and misconceptions about the behavioural impact of social media.

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Over the next year, the Council plans to explore these challenges and their impact on individuals, groups and societies. The Council hopes to ensure that understanding is not limited to a small cross-section of society, and thus will create two publications. One will explore the developing themes in social media, while the other will outline best practices in social media that can be used by other Global Agenda Councils.

## Contact Information

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