

Giant in the Market: Brazil and Its Potential Leadership in Social Media Debates

Brazilian people's high engagement with social media is nothing new. As one of the countries with the highest number of active users and average time spent on platforms, Brazil plays a strategic role in the operations of major tech companies, often being chosen as a testing market for new features.

According to the [Digital 2024: Brazil](#) report by DataReportal, 187.9 million Brazilians were connected to the internet in 2024, representing 86.6% of the population. This increase of 6.1 million users (or 3.3%) compared to the previous year reflects the country's continued digital expansion.

However, the [TIC Domicílios 2024](#) survey reveals inequalities in access. For 60% of Brazilians, the mobile phone is the only connection device, a percentage that reaches 86% among lower-income classes (D and E). Additionally, 29 million Brazilians still do not use the internet, of whom 17 million belong to classes D and E, and 17 million self-identify as Black or mixed race. These figures highlight significant disparities in the quality and availability of mobile connectivity.

Despite these inequalities, mobile internet plays a central role in the media consumption habits of the Brazilian population. According to the [TIC Domicílios 2023](#) survey, 80% of internet users in Brazil consume online videos, programs, movies, or series. This widespread engagement, combined with the consumption of music and digital news, demonstrates how online platforms have become primary sources of information and entertainment, shaping the digital daily lives of most Brazilians.



Social Media Usage

With such a highly connected population, Brazil is one of the world's leading social media markets in terms of user numbers and engagement levels. Given the relevance of its user base and its direct impact on the regional operations of these platforms, this prominence gives the country strategic influence over the decisions of multinational tech companies.

In this context, Brazil has a unique potential for dialogue and bargaining power with big tech companies, as it hosts regional offices of these corporations. Civil society also plays an active role in this landscape, frequently called upon to discuss content moderation policies and market practices. At the same time, [the Brazilian Judiciary has emerged as a major player in these discussions, as evidenced by the Supreme Federal Court \(STF\) ruling in 2024 that ordered the suspension of the X platform \(formerly Twitter\) for failing to comply with judicial orders](#)—a rare move in Latin America.

Brazil consistently ranks [among the top countries in global social media consumption, placing third in usage, behind only India and Indonesia](#), and ahead of major markets like the United States, the European Union, Mexico, and Argentina. Approximately 144 million Brazilians use social media, representing 66.3% of the population. As highlighted by the [Digital 2024: Brazil report](#), this continued growth is fueled by widespread access to mobile devices and the availability of affordable internet plans.

Brazilians' average daily time on social media is also significant: 3 hours and 37 minutes, placing the country third globally. The most popular platforms include WhatsApp, with 94% penetration among internet users (147 million people); Instagram, used by 87.6% (134.6 million); and Facebook, with 79.6% (111.3 million), demonstrating Meta's dominance in Brazil's digital landscape. TikTok has rapidly risen in popularity and now reaches 55.8% of the population, particularly among younger audiences.

Despite its importance for real-time discussions and news consumption, 38.4% of Brazilian internet users use the X platform (formerly Twitter). LinkedIn maintains a strong presence in professional environments, with 28.2% adoption. Video consumption is also prominent, with YouTube leading in audience reach, with 95.5% of connected users.

Brazil's digital evolution is heavily driven by its young population, with an average age of 33.8 years, which projects continued growth in online engagement and the adoption of new platforms. This trend is also reflected in the increasing integration between social media and e-commerce, with more than 60% of users using platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp for shopping—a clear indicator of Brazil's digital economy transformation.

The [Influencers, Jovens, e Política na América Latina](#) report, conducted by InternetLab, reveals key nuances in this scenario. Among young people aged 16 to 24, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are the most used social media platforms. TikTok is emerging as the primary platform for accessing information, including news and political content.

Market Impact

Social media's impact in Brazil goes beyond user engagement and significantly influences the digital economy.

The social media market was valued at USD 81.42 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 179.22 billion by 2029, growing at a compound annual rate of 17.09%. While Meta remains dominant in Brazil, TikTok has been the most downloaded app worldwide in recent years and leads in time spent, followed by YouTube.

Although no specific study exists on the market value of Brazil's social media sector, some estimates help estimate it. In 2023, total digital media investment in Brazil reached BRL 35 billion, with 52% allocated to social media, totalling approximately BRL 18.2 billion.

However, the Brazilian digital environment has fluctuated due to recent political and regulatory events. The STF's temporary suspension of the X platform in 2024 exemplifies how judicial decisions directly impact the sector. Estimates suggest X's annual revenue in Brazil ranges between USD 80 million and USD 100 million, representing about 2% of the company's total sales.

Political Influence

Given the size of Brazil's market and its intense digital participation, any global debate on platform regulation, content moderation policies, and algorithmic transparency must consider Brazil's impact and reality.

Companies like Meta, Google, and TikTok consider Brazil a priority market, directly influencing their privacy and platform governance decisions. Moreover, Brazil has positioned itself as an essential testing ground for new social media strategies, shaping big tech companies' local and global operations.

The massive presence of Brazilian users and their high receptiveness to new features make the country a strategic space for experimenting with moderation policies, digital advertising, and integrating social media with financial services.

The Brazilian market [generates millions of reais in digital advertising](#) and [e-commerce](#) and has become a strategic asset for technology companies. [Nicola Mendelsohn](#), Meta's Global Business Vice President, said, "Brazil is truly innovative." This highlights Brazilians' willingness to test new features, directly influencing the company's strategies.

Beyond immediate revenue, Brazil is a crucial testing ground for new technologies and strategies. Its demographic diversity and vibrant online culture provide a valuable laboratory for understanding user behavior and refining platform features. Success in the Brazilian market often drives expansion into other emerging markets.

Brazil must not be a mere spectator in transforming digital platform policies. With one of the largest social media markets in the world, high engagement rates, and a dynamic digital ecosystem, the country has the potential to play a leading role in defining global platform governance guidelines. Decisions made in Brazil impact millions of users and set precedents that resonate internationally. By striving to be at the forefront of regulation, balancing innovation, digital rights, and the responsibilities of big tech companies, Brazil has the opportunity to shape the future of the internet for its population while inspiring global regulatory models to ensure a more transparent, secure, and democratic digital environment.

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