

## New Canadians' Journey Through the Social Media Landscape

This issue explores how new Canadians navigate the social media landscape and provides best practice guidelines for settlement service providers, while keeping immigrants' preferences in mind. For additional information, listen to AMSSA's webinar on [Building Collaboration Through Social Media](#) or see the list of resources on page 2.

### Technology Vs. Human Service

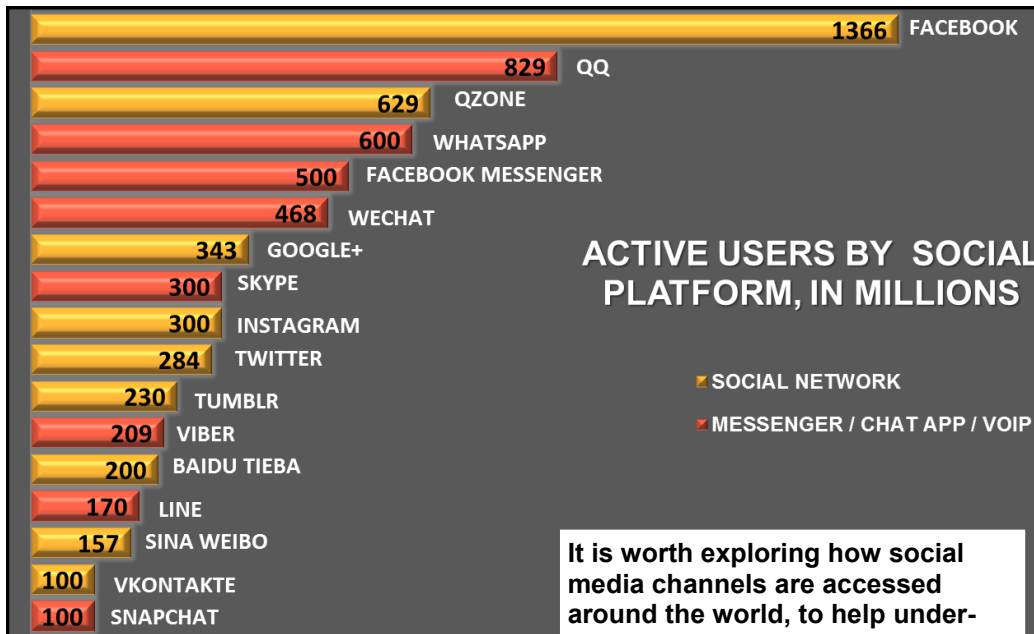
Most settlement service providers in Canada have come to view emerging technologies, such as social media, as potential outreach and service channels. In most cases, technology is used to augment existing face-to-face services.

However, not everyone in human services is enamored with technology; organizations don't assume that technology is right for every service, client, worker or project. In many cases, agencies already have 'hybrid clients' - clients who interact with service providers face-to-face at times, and using technology in others. Over time, given newcomers' preferences, the 'virtual only client' will evolve. This means that organizations should work to enhance online service provision to reach more newcomers, in order to ensure their success.

### Immigration and Settlement Social Networks

Beyond mainstream social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, newcomers participate in their own social networks. These networks allow them to get information and orientation from other newcomers directly, and without accessing services from an organization in their province. Here are some of the largest online social networks :

- [CanadaVisa.com](#) immigration forum — 419,000 members
- [Immigration.ca](#) — 23,000 members
- [LoonLounge.com](#) immigration forum — 116,000 members
- [RoadToCanada.com](#) — 25,000 members
- [Settlement.org](#) discussion area — 29,000 members



### ACTIVE USERS BY SOCIAL PLATFORM, IN MILLIONS

It is worth exploring how social media channels are accessed around the world, to help understand the potential profile of newcomers to Canada.

Internet use has increased in immigration source countries, according to [We Are Social](#). WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook Messenger and Viber all reported over 100 million new monthly active users in the past 12 months. Instant messenger services and chat apps account for 3 of the top 5 global social platforms, and 8 instant messenger brands now claim more than 100 million monthly active users.

### Social Media and

#### Client Service Goals

When trying to decide whether or not technology serves their strategic interests, settlement agencies should be able to answer for themselves:

- ⇒ How can we complement existing service delivery to offer clients another way to get help?
- ⇒ Our clients are often amongst the most sophisticated users of technology, and have expectations about being able to communicate with us quickly and easily. How do we reach out to them with information in ways they can use?
- ⇒ How can technology and social media help us achieve our client service goals?
- ⇒ Can technology really help us connect with people we may never see or talk to?
- ⇒ How has technology used in pre-arrival settlement services improved the settlement success of our clients?
- ⇒ How do we share information inside our offices and within the settlement sector to improve services or advocate for clients?

### Best Practice Guidelines

Organizations must develop key principles for technology use with regards to ethical considerations and best practice guidelines. Examples of ethical dilemmas include how to handle friend requests from clients, whether to post information related to work with clients on a blog, or whether to use client testimonials on the website. In addition, organizations must provide a secure environment. This can be created through encrypted email, secure video/text chat, or password protected online discussion groups.

## Media Consumption Among Newcomers: Digital First

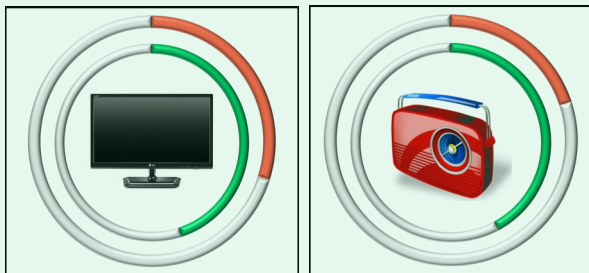
Settlement services are a vital part of the integration process, providing support and information that aid newcomers.

Recent immigrants—those who have moved to the country in the past five years—prefer to access settlement information online, through social media, rather than in person, according to a study entitled *Digital Acculturation* and released by Yahoo Canada in 2014. The research included qualitative online discussions with new Canadians across multiple ethnicities: Chinese, South Asian, Middle Eastern, European, and Filipino. In-

person interviews were conducted in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver.

Traditional media channels, including TV and radio, are less effective at reaching new Canadians, according to the same study. Recent immigrants watch only 1.5 hours of TV daily, compared to 2.5 hours for Canadians, and listen to one hour of radio, compared to 2.1 hours for Canadians. On the other hand, recent immigrants spend 54% more time on their mobile devices than Canadian-born residents.

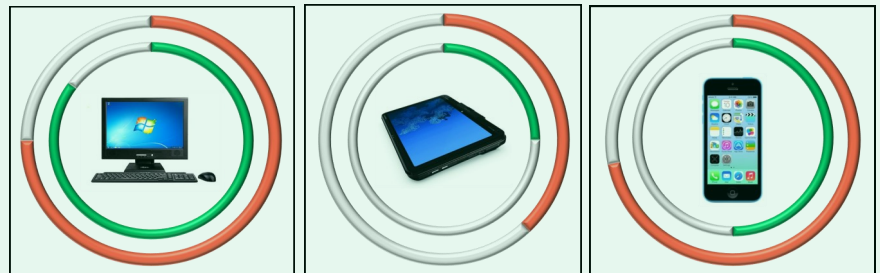
### Traditional devices



New Canadians 1.5 h/day  
Canadians 2.5 h/day

New Canadians 1 h/day  
Canadians 2.1 h/day

### Digital devices



New Canadians 3.8 h/day  
Canadians 4.4 h/day

New Canadians 1.9 h/day  
Canadians 1.5 h/day

New Canadians 4 h/day  
Canadians 2.6 h/day

**When it comes to media consumption, immigrants are heavy users of digital screens, starting with their smartphone. Clients will access information on social media channels, a key place for them to connect with service providers.**

## Dealing With a Crisis on Social Media

Social media platforms allow people to express dissatisfaction... loudly and, in many cases, with a great deal of vitriol.

While the principles for effective issues management don't really change, social media adds complexity to crisis communication. Multiple people can hijack your message and amplify that message further than you can by spreading the message on your own. Here are a few questions to help you assess the situation:

### Can the issue be taken offline for a resolution?

- Offline can put a halt to any social amplification.

### Is this the type of comment that might interest local or national media?

- When print or broadcast media pick up a negative thread, it becomes a "story" and gains a heightened level of intensity.

### Is the commenter an overactive tweeter or poster?

- Their comments can sometimes get lost in their own noise.

### Should you apologize on social media for the problem you have caused if that is the root of the adverse sentiment?

- An authentic apology is pivotal to protecting reputation.

### Are you in a position to continue to trade comments with the source of the negative sentiment?

- You'll need writing resources in order to learn to manage social web dialogue.

AMSSA Info Sheets can be found online:

[www.amssa.org/resources/Infosheet](http://www.amssa.org/resources/Infosheet).

## Additional Resources

- [Digital Acculturation](#), Yahoo Canada, 2014

Study that explores the digital habits of New Canadians.

- [GlobalWebIndex](#)

Provides statistics pertaining to the use of social media around the world.

- [Social Media Posting Guide](#), Craig Van Korlaar, 2012

For organizations that do not have full time social media staff. It is available in English, Arabic, Czech, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish.

- [Social Media Use and Social Work Practice](#), Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2014

Ethical challenges with regards to the use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Skype, YouTube, and blogs.

- [The Use of Social Media in Risk and Crisis Communication](#), C. Wendling, J. Radisch, S. Jacobzone, 2013

Different practices of risk and crisis communications

- [What are the Settlement Experiences of Newly Settled Newcomers to Western Canada: An Interim Report](#), University of Manitoba, 2014

Includes information with regards to settlement service use and accessing settlement information online.

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