

RESEARCH

## Younger, digitally engaged consumers exhibit upscale shopping behavior: study

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Consumers who are single tend to have a higher disposable income and this audience represents significant buying power for luxury brands.

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A study by International Demographics titled "The Media Audit" reveals that social media Web sites such as Facebook and Twitter have reached critical mass with consumers who are in important life stages.

"Younger people are more digitally engaged," said Milton Pedraza, CEO of [The Luxury Institute](#), New York. "They have more time than older people with families and over time, as people get older, they have less time to use Facebook and Twitter."

[International Demographics](#) develops syndicated research studies for the marketing, communications and media industries.

The study was conducted among 65,000 consumers, skewing more towards those who are younger and single, or who have young children living at home who frequently visit Facebook and Twitter.

## Findings

According to [The Media Audit report](#), 51 percent of U.S. adults surveyed have visited Facebook or Twitter in the last month.

However, among adults who are under 35 and single with no child, 80 percent have visited these sites.

The report also reveals that these same adults have extremely active lifestyles and exhibit upscale shopping behavior.

In addition, these single consumers are less likely to own a home, which in turn, frees up more income.

According to the study, this group is 25 percent more likely than the general population to shop at Neiman Marcus and 20 percent more likely to shop at Nordstrom.

Adults who are under 25, with no children and single are 12 percent less likely to be heavily exposed to outdoor billboards, 52 percent less likely to be heavily exposed to a newspaper and 13 percent less likely to be heavily exposed to television.

### Critical factor

Age plays a major role in how likely a person is to engage in social media, but important demographic characteristics also matter.

Life stages of a consumer and their ability to use social media, as well as their concerns as shoppers, make them of interest to marketers.

Even though young, single consumers without children are more likely to shop at upscale retailers than the general population, Mr. Pedraza believes they are not the most important customers.

“One thing I would guarantee is that they are not likely to spend more than people in their 40s and 50s,” Mr. Pedraza said. “They are probably likely to have a lower transaction spend than the older population. They are not the heavy buyers.

“They may be more likely to shop at these department stores,” he said. “But by no means are they the most important shoppers at these stores.”

### Final take

*Key finding in the study*

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