

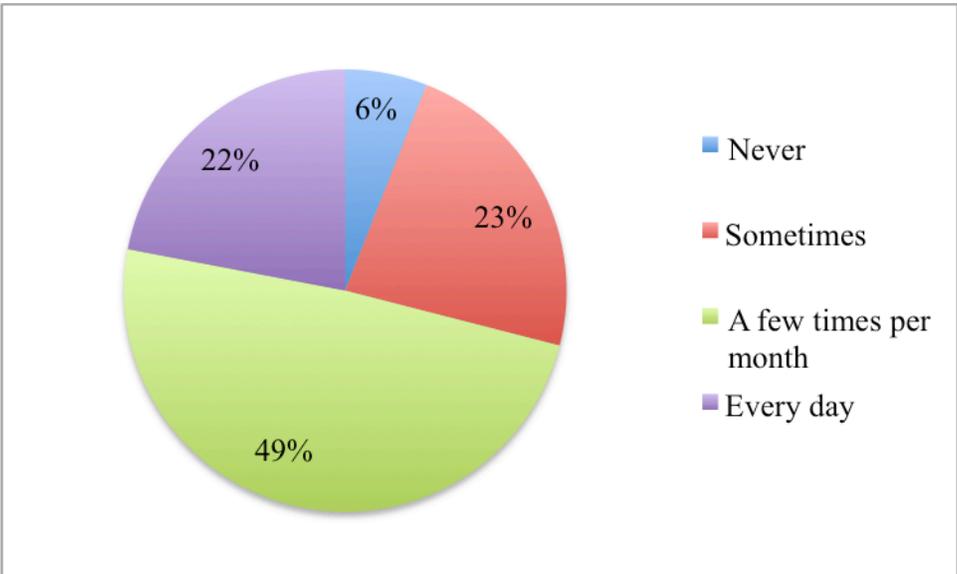
Introduction

The number of Internet users in the United States has immensely grown in the past few years, and without a doubt, “The rise of Web 2.0 technologies has led to a wealth of social media websites, popular examples of which are YouTube, Twitter and Facebook” (Moorman & Muninga, 2011, p. 13). Because of this booming growth in Internet users, many factors have changed within the social media world, and more specifically, social media’s impact on consumers’ purchasing behaviors. Customer purchasing decisions are affected by many aspects, but little research has been conducted to investigate the impact that social media has on consumer purchasing behavior. With this study’s results, marketers will be able to better understand consumers and make appropriate changes to marketing plans as well as view social media’s overall impact on consumer purchasing behavior.

To relate the topic of social media’s impact on consumer purchasing behavior to a communication studies theory, one can look to the social judgment theory. Frymier and Nadler (2007) state that the social judgment theory focuses on an individual’s internal processes in relation to a communicated message. For example, many companies use social media as a means of communicating promotions and cause-related benefits to its consumers (Wright & Hinson, 2008, p. 11). Consumers each have their own position on certain subjects, and according to the social judgment theory, “an attitude toward an issue or object can be thought of as a range of attitudes rather than as a single point along a continuum” (Frymier & Nadler, 2009, p. 90). This study analyzes a sample’s responses to questions regarding likelihood of attitudinal changes in regard to specific social media circumstances...

Chart 4: Responses to question # 6:

“How often do you keep in touch with your favorite stores and brands via social media?”:



About half of the participants engage in social media interactions with their favorite stores and brands. Only a small fraction of participants never keep in touch with their favorite stores and brands via social media. Ultimately, most participants sometimes, frequently, or always stay in touch with their favorite stores and brands through social media.