Evolving the Utility and Potential of Social Media in Social Impact Assessment

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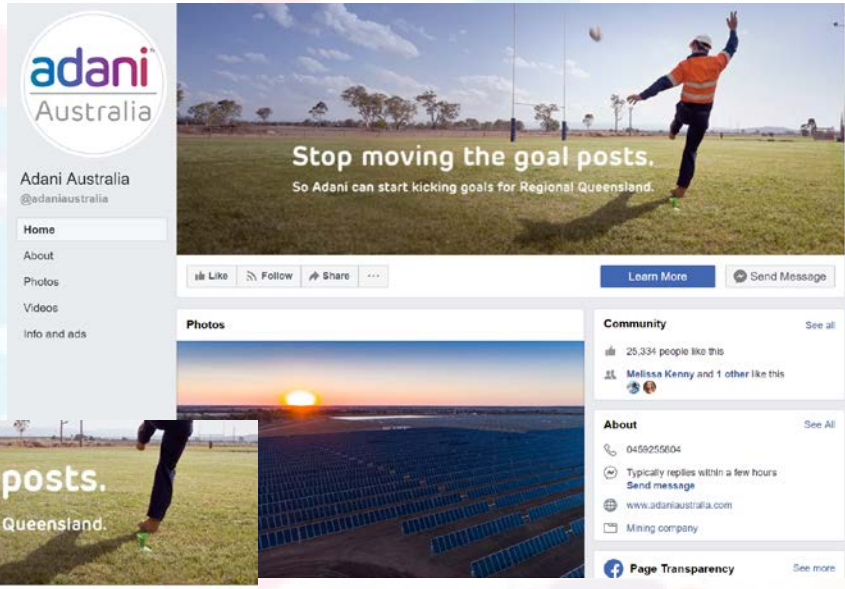
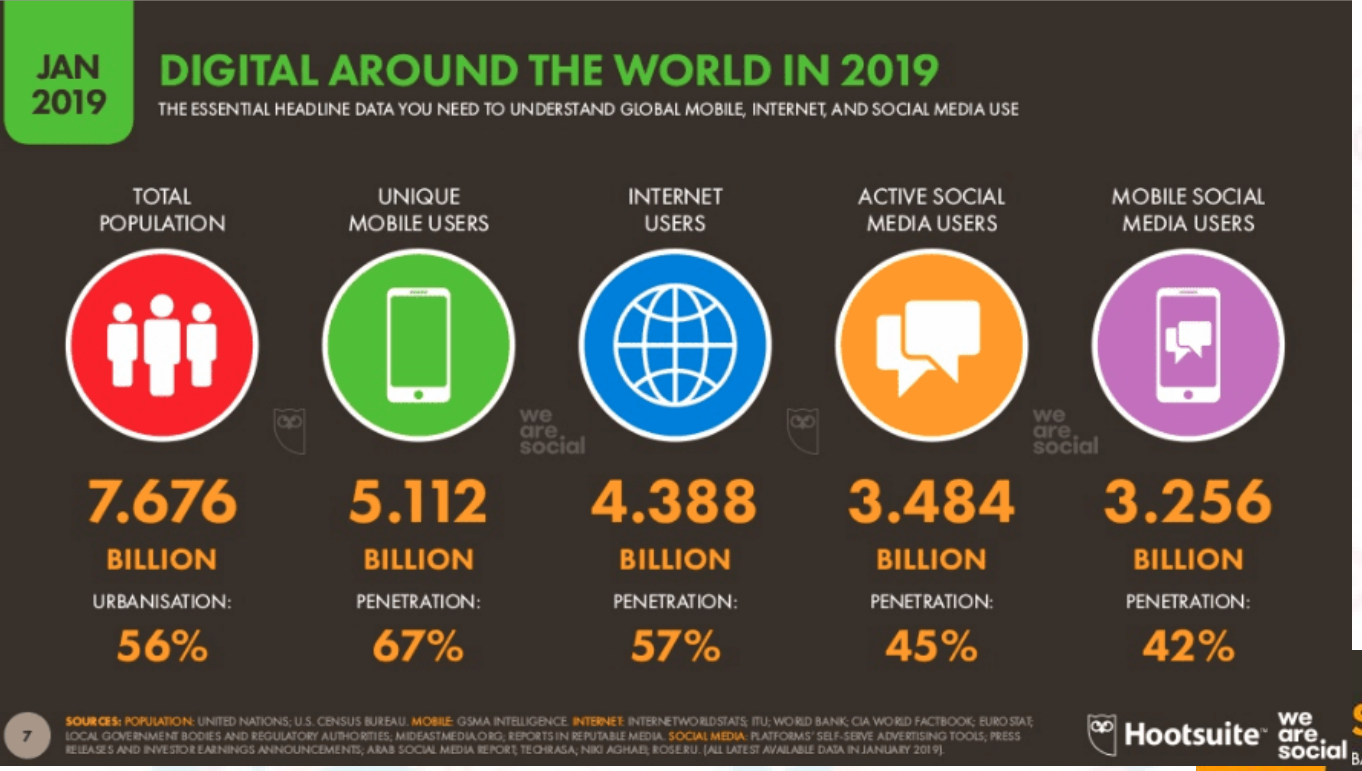
Non Government/community

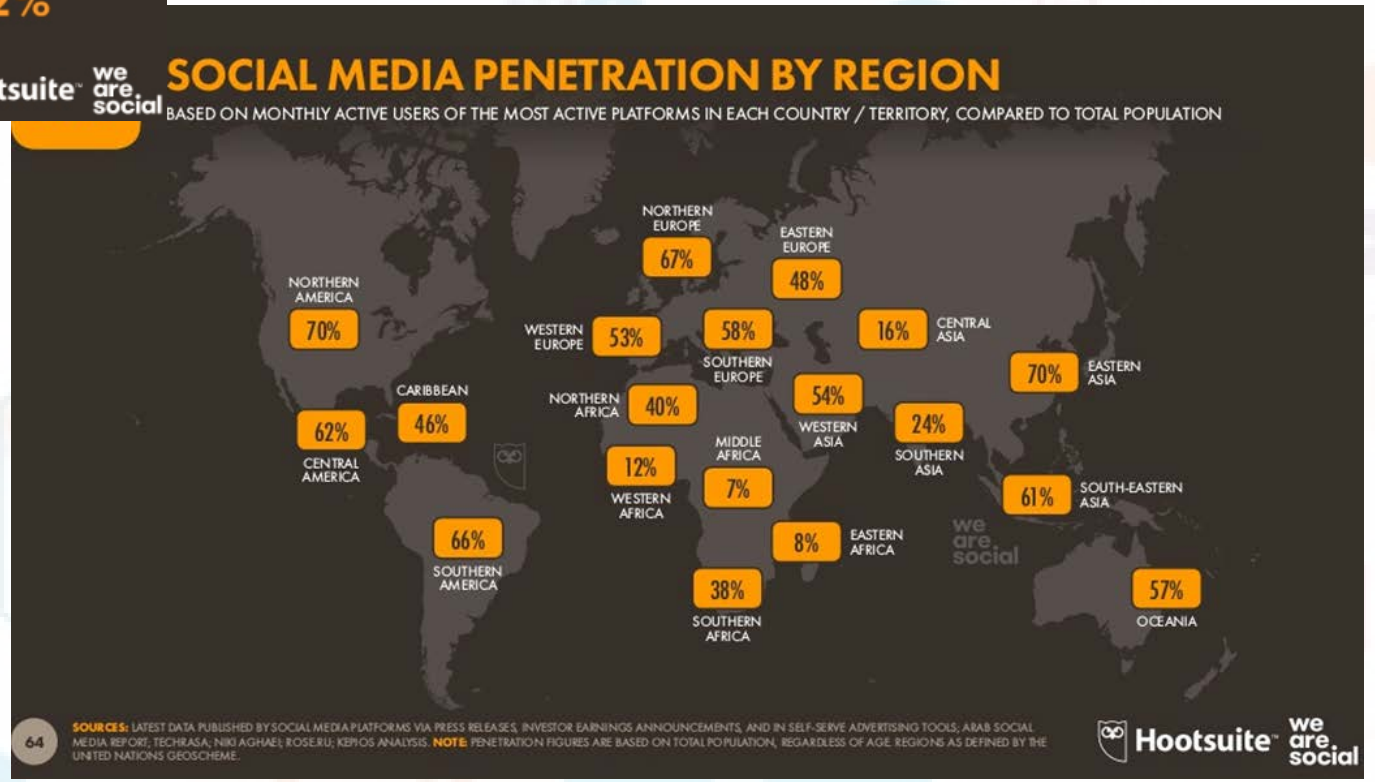


Developer/proponent



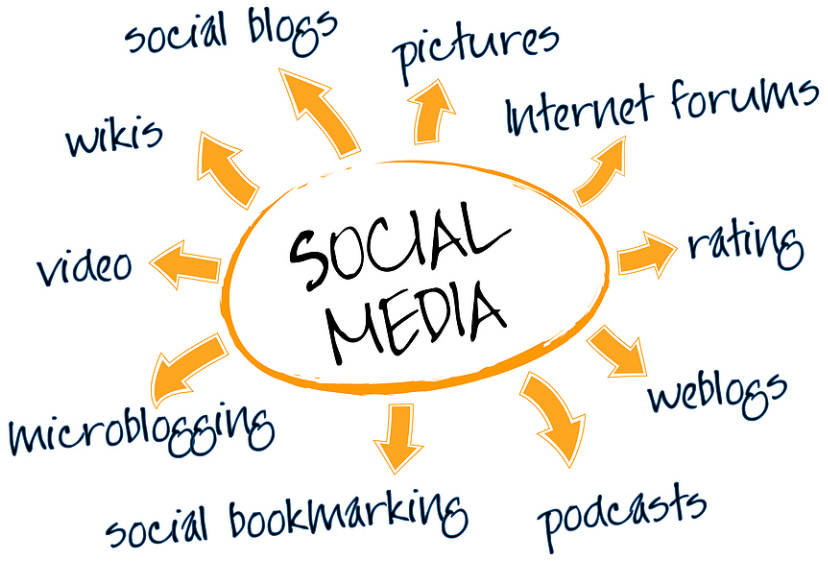
Internet usage up 9.1% year-on-year worldwide

Social media users up 9% year-on-year worldwide



The Use of Social Media in SIA

- E-participation
- Microblogs
- Online social networks
- Predominantly information sharing
- Public relations/branding



Benefits of Social Media Usage

- Rapid dissemination of information
- Cheap/low cost
- 24/7 access
- User friendly
- Develop relationships
- Easy to target and maintain connections and networks
- Up-to-date/real time
- Inform, educate, engage, assess and monitor
- Mobilise community– develop social capital

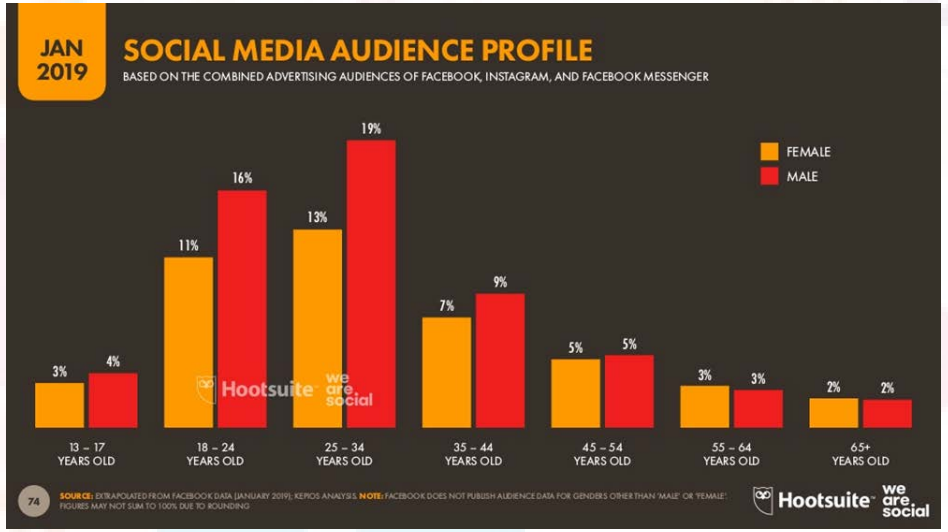
Potential Utility in SIA

- Data collection
- Public awareness
- Communication of updates
- Gathering of ideas/problem solving
- Stakeholder interaction/engagement
- Facilitation of dialogue
- Consultation/engaged decision making
- Community support (SLO)
- Assessing and monitoring public opinion
- Feedback

Arnstein's Ladder (1969)
Degrees of Citizen Participation

Challenges of Social Media Usage

- Technology reliant
- User demographic/geographic bias and barriers
- Accessibility – language and literacy
- Objectivity
- Information fabrication/legalities
- Insight dissention/mobilise conflict
- Human resource/time intensive
- Control/management
- Organisational culture



Strategies and tactics for social media use in SIA

	Information dissemination	Data monitoring & analysis	Dialogue & coordinated action
Description	Agency/assessor/consultant dissemination information using a number of message types	Agency/assessor/consultant collect, monitor and analyse data to accrue situational awareness	Agency/assessor/consultant engage others in conversations and coordinate collective actions
Activities/information products	Branding/public relations	Scoping – scale, stakeholders, history, experience, values, potential impacts	One-to-one conversations
	Inform/awareness/ education	Baseline data collection – community profile – sense of place	Facilitation of dialogue/participation
	Communicate updates	Data validation	Group targeting/inclusion
	Administrative news	Gauging and monitoring accounts – issues and public opinions	Message adjustment
	Opinion related messages	Software analysis of big data	Rumour management
			Crowdsourcing – citizen co-production
			Community engagement in decision making/intervention
			Mobilise support
			Promote consensus/social cohesion
Direction of information	One way: from agent (ie developer/proponent, planner, government, NGO) to public/community	One way: from public/community to agent/assessor/consultant	Two-way of multiway: from agency to another agency/ individuals/stakeholder groups/ community or between multiple stakeholder groups

Revolution

- Valuing SIA as an iterative process
- Understanding effective social media communication
- Assess existing capacity
- Develop and provide sufficient resources
- Maintain relevant training, support and skills
- Commitment

Questions?.....

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