

# Smartphones Are the Overwhelming Driver of Social Referrals

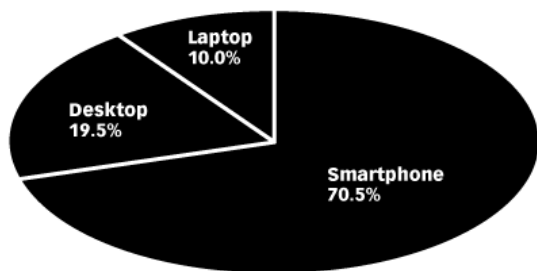
Article

**S**ocial networks represent only a small portion of ecommerce referrals, but their role in the path to purchase is growing fast. As a last-touch channel, **social networks have doubled in visit share to US retail sites in the past two years**. And the overwhelming majority of social referrals come from smartphones, according to Q1 2019 data from Adobe Digital Insights.

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**US Social Referral Share to Ecommerce Sites, by Device, Q1 2019**

% of total



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Source: Adobe Digital Insights, April 15, 2019

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www.eMarketer.com

Two trends explain why 70.5% of US social referrals come from smartphones: Consumers have increased their mobile shopping habits, and social network users have become predominately mobile-centric.

We estimate that more than 115 million people in the US will make at least one purchase with a smartphone in 2019, amounting to 58.9% of all US digital buyers. And even more—193.3 million people—will use a smartphone to browse, research or compare products without making a purchase.

Facebook drives the most ecommerce referrals (80.4%) by far, according to Adobe Digital Insights. Instagram (10.7%) was a distant second, followed by Pinterest (8.2%).

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**US Social Referral Share to Ecommerce Sites, by Platform, Q1 2019**

% of total



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Source: Adobe Digital Insights, April 15, 2019

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We forecast that 91.2% of Facebook users will access the platform on a smartphone in 2019, amounting to 156 million users. The number of users who will access exclusively on mobile devices (including tablets) will reach 113.7 million in 2019.

Time spent on social networks with mobile devices far outpaces computers. US Facebook users ages 18 and older will spend an average of 18.07 minutes per day on mobile devices (including tablets) in 2019, compared with 5.31 minutes on desktop/laptops.

The average time spent on Facebook for all devices (23.37 minutes) amounts to 44.8% of time spent on all social media. While this is a huge share, its referral rate is almost double that, indicating that there are other factors that make Facebook a powerful driver to ecommerce sites beyond having the highest usage rates.

As social commerce takes off, social networks could become the point of purchase, rather than a driver of referrals. Social networks at the forefront of social commerce, **particularly Instagram**, could play a larger role in driving ecommerce purchases. But those purchases have to be made on smartphones.