
As Brazil's New President Jair Bolsonaro Takes the Top Spot as the Most Engaged World Leader on Facebook, Others Pay to Play to Make an Impact on the Platform

BCW Study Finds 50 Leaders Have Paid to Promote Their Posts, Including U.S. President Donald Trump Who Has Promoted More Than 50,000 Posts on Facebook Since Creating His Page

SINGAPORE, April 12, 2019 – Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is by far the most popular world leader on Facebook, with more than 43.5 million likes on his personal page and 13.7 million likes on his institutional Prime Minister of India page, according to the newly released 2019 **World Leaders on Facebook** study, part of the **Twiplomacy** series by leading global communications agency BCW (Burson Cohn & Wolfe). The study also found increased use of paid posts by world leaders.

U.S. President Donald Trump is in second place, with more than 23 million likes on his personal Facebook page and Jordan's Queen Rania is in third position with 16.9 million likes, reaching an Arabic and English audience well beyond the 5.8 million Facebook users in Jordan.

However, Brazil's new President Jair Bolsonaro, who took office on January 1, 2019, has dominated the rankings of World Leaders on Facebook over the past 12 months, taking the top spot in terms of interactions. His Facebook page has registered more than 145 million interactions, almost twice as many as U.S. President Donald Trump, who has 84 million total interactions and 2.5 times as many followers.

The study, using aggregate data from Facebook's CrowdTangle tool, analyzes the activity of 962 Facebook pages of heads of state and government and foreign ministers, 50 more than in the 2017 study. As of March 1, 2019, the pages have a combined total of 345 million page likes and published 449,739 posts in the past 12 months which have garnered a total of 767 million interactions (comments, likes and shares).

With Facebook's change of algorithm, favoring posts from friends, family and groups, it has become more difficult for pages of governments and world leaders to reach their audiences. Followers of world leaders' Facebook pages grew by 10 percent year on year but the interactions on their pages have dropped significantly. While world leaders registered 1.1 billion interactions in 2016, that number has decreased by 32.3 percent compared to their interactions in 2018.

To counter the changes to the algorithm, many leaders are promoting their posts and pages with Facebook ads. In early March 2019, 50 pages had been running ads according to Facebook's Ads Library, a new transparency feature which is now available on each page. President Trump's Facebook page has posted more than 50,000 ads since its inception, while UK Prime Minister Theresa May's page posted 74 paid ads in December 2018 to promote her Brexit plan.

"Our latest Twiplomacy study confirms that even among political figures who easily attract the attention of the public in social media, a paid strategy is still essential to secure reach and make a serious impact," said Chad Latz, Chief Innovation Officer, BCW. "Additionally, we see how some leaders are very successful by being personal and approachable on the platform using all the tools at their disposal, from Facebook Live to Facebook Stories, to engage their audiences."

Other Key Findings Include:

- Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta is the most popular leader in Sub-Saharan Africa with 3.6 million likes, ahead of Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo with 1.6 million likes.
- Jordan's Queen Rania has been topping the list of the most popular leaders in the Arab world for several years. With 16.9 million likes she has twice as many followers as Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (7.3 million likes) and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, with 3.8 million likes.
- Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has become the most popular leader on Facebook in Latin America ahead of Mexico's new President Andrés Manuel López Obrador with 5.6 million likes and Argentinian President Mauricio Macri with 4.4 million likes.
- The page of the British Royal Family is the most followed of world leaders in the European Union with 4.1 million likes ahead of French President Emmanuel Macron with 2.3 million likes and Romanian President Klaus Iohannis with 1.8 million likes.
- The Facebook page of the government of Botswana is the most prolific, with an average of 37 posts per day. The presidential administrations of the Dominican Republic and of Ghana both average more than 20 posts per day.
- In early February 2019 German Chancellor Angela Merkel [deleted her personal Facebook page @AngelaMerkel](#), which had 2.5 million fans, after stepping down as leader of the Christian Democratic Union, and in mid-March 2019, Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta temporarily deactivated all his social media profiles including his Facebook page which has 3.6 million followers.

About the Study

World Leaders on Facebook is BCW's latest research into how world leaders, governments and international organizations communicate via social media. The research builds on BCW's highly acclaimed annual *Twiplomacy* study, which is now in its seventh year. In 2016, the Twiplomacy study was expanded to cover all key social media platforms and has massively enhanced BCW's digital reputation worldwide. For more information, visit www.twiplomacy.com.

About Burson Cohn & Wolfe

BCW (Burson Cohn & Wolfe), one of the world's largest full-service global communications agencies, is in the business of moving people on behalf of clients. Founded by the merger of Burson-Marsteller and Cohn & Wolfe, BCW delivers digitally and data-driven creative content and integrated communications programs grounded in earned media and scaled across all channels for clients in the B2B, consumer, corporate, crisis management, CSR, healthcare, public affairs and technology sectors. BCW is a part of WPP (NYSE: WPP), a creative transformation company. For more information, visit www.bcw-global.com.

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