



## Global Social Media Check Up

A global audit of law firm engagement in social media methods

Martindale-Hubbell®

2011 Research Study | Summary Report

 LexisNexis®

In association with:  
  
Burson•Marsteller

---

## Summary Report

---

LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell commissioned Burson-Marsteller to compile an international audit of social media usage by 110 law firms, operating in 22 cities during April and mid-May 2011.

To gain a representative sample of the legal market worldwide, leading law firms were identified in major cities across seven regions: North America, Latin America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa.

The audit consisted of quantitative and qualitative elements:

**Quantitative:** An audit of the levels of activity and community sizes (where they were present) for each of the selected law firms. LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube profiles were audited, as well as blogs, to gauge development and engagement levels.

**Qualitative:** A comparative study examined macro and micro trends occurring in the selected firms, and the nature of activity on popular social media channels. The comparisons looked at the following elements:

- How advanced is the region's law firms in using social media overall?
- Have they created and 'parked' a presence on social media channels to prevent use by other parties - or is there a clear purpose for their social media use?
- Are they focussed on 'one-way' broadcasting - or have they progressed towards interaction?
- How do firms and regions compare in their usage?
- Is there evidence of a strategic approach towards social media usage? Is it marketing/business development led? Talent or reputation management?
- Does the firm have an identifiable, and influential, online commentator speaking on its behalf?
- Does the firm have a social media policy?
- What local trends and factors might be barriers for local firms in terms of using social media? To what extent can social activity determine the online health and reputation of the firm?

Findings and case studies offer further insights into how effectively these firms are using social platforms - identifying gaps, consistency issues and opportunities for further social profile development and leveraging.

**The full report:** Global Social Media Check Up: A global audit of law firm engagement in social media methods.  
To obtain a free copy of the full report, please visit: [www.martindale-hubbell.co.uk/socialmedia](http://www.martindale-hubbell.co.uk/socialmedia)

---

©LexisNexis, the Knowledge Burst logo, Martindale-Hubbell and martindale.com are registered trademarks of Reed Elsevier Properties Inc., registered in the United States and/or other jurisdictions and used under license. Copyright 2011 Martindale-Hubbell, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication, LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell makes no warranty, express or implied concerning the content of this publication, products or services offered herein, all of which are provided "as is". LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell expressly disclaims all liability for reliance upon the information contained herein. In no event will LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell, its affiliates or other suppliers be liable for direct, special, incidental, or consequential damages (including, without limitation, damages for loss of business profits, business interruption, loss of business information or other pecuniary loss) arising directly or indirectly from the use of (or failure to use) or reliance on the information contained herein.

## Executive summary

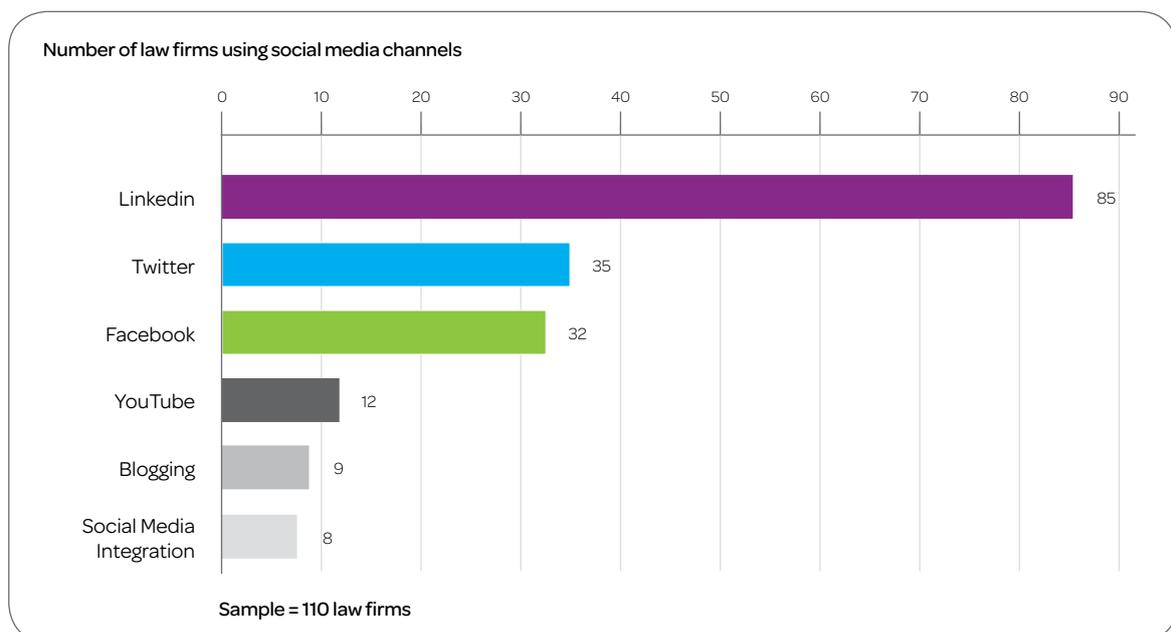
Currently there is a slow but steady uptake of social media tools used by, and created for, the legal sector. There are 6,377 legal professionals listed on LexTweet, a community of legal professionals using Twitter, and 9,226 lawyer blogs<sup>1</sup>. Also, around one-third of the 'AmLaw 100' law firms are on Twitter. LinkedIn is the most popular online platform for professionals, for all business sectors.

This 'check-up' audit examines how law firms in different world regions are using social media channels as part of their marketing and business development strategies; for example, as part of client development, recruitment or reputation management efforts. The intention of the study is not to provide a comprehensive analysis, but a representative 'snapshot' in time of how global law firms are currently using social media channels.

The full report considers global trends in social media usage that help to put the findings of this audit into context. Case study examples and a best practice section provide reference material and practical guidance to help law firms plan and implement their approach to social media.

### Usage by platform

- Global law firms are now at the stage of creating content on popular social networks. In general, social media efforts were concentrated in English-speaking countries that have high levels of per capita Internet penetration.
- LinkedIn emerged as the primary non-sector-specific platform used by the law firms audited: 85 firms were registered on this platform. Yet, while many law firms have created 'company' profiles, a much smaller percentage are taking advantage of some of the more advanced features of virtual networking, such as groups or LinkedIn Answers.
- Twitter is popular with 35 of those firms audited using this platform. At present, Twitter is mainly used as a broadcasting channel, rather than as a tool to hold conversations with the firm's followers. At present, only a small percentage of firms studied use Twitter interactively.
- YouTube remains largely unexplored as a platform by law firms. This lack of usage was seen across all world regions - even in cities where adoption of social media tools was comparatively high, such as in New York, Johannesburg and London. Amsterdam-based firms stood out as YouTube enthusiasts, with three audited law practices in this city actively using this platform for graduate recruitment, thought leadership and promotional marketing.
- Social media integration and blogging are very much in their infancy amongst the firms surveyed, with a mere 7% of firms using each technique. Pioneer firms in this niche were mainly based in Sydney, Johannesburg and Brussels.



<sup>1</sup>Blawgsearch.com, 2011

## Usage by region

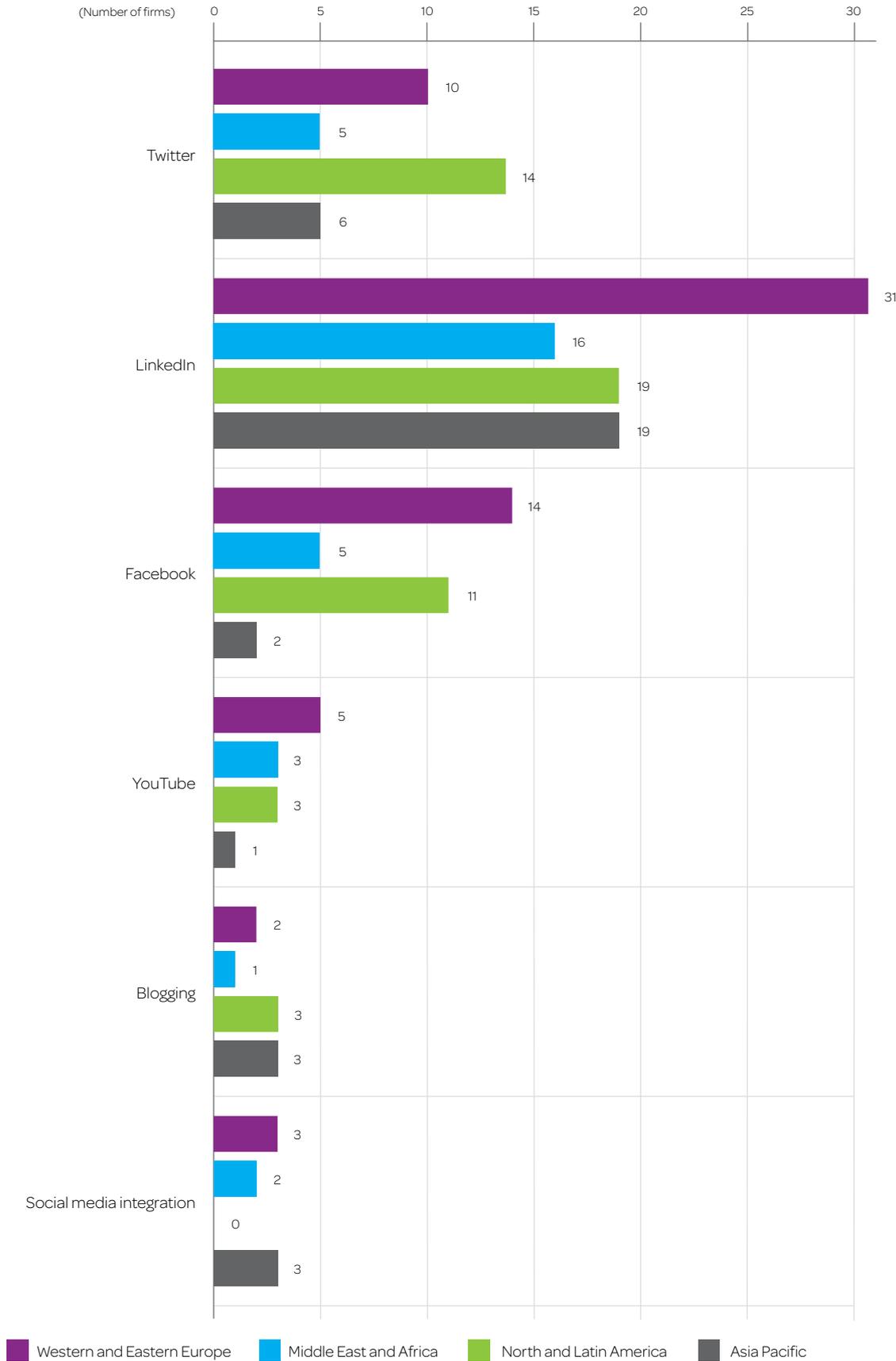
- **Western and Eastern Europe:** Western Europe leads the way for social media usage in the legal sector. However, usage and depth of engagement within this continent vary considerably: high activity was seen in the UK and Amsterdam, moderate activity in Brussels and notably lower levels in Zurich, Paris, Frankfurt and Moscow. Istanbul was the sole city in this region where no usage was recorded.
- **Middle East and Africa:** Johannesburg-based law firms are using social media more proactively when compared with other firms operating in these world regions. In Johannesburg, local firms have visible profiles on Twitter and LinkedIn, as well as some content on Facebook. There is a strong trend towards social media integration among this group of firms. The approach of Johannesburg firms contrasts considerably with those surveyed in Dubai and Lagos - where LinkedIn was the only network in which audited law firms had a notable presence.
- **North and Latin America:** Surveyed law firms operating in New York and Toronto are more active on social media networks than their equivalents in either São Paulo or Mexico City. In addition, Latin American firms tended to use the social media platforms differently - i.e. registering profiles, and focussing less on proactive engagement.
- **Asia Pacific:** Comparatively, this region saw the least amount of social media usage. Firms operating in Sydney emerged as a notable exception, with each of the surveyed practices appearing on both LinkedIn and Twitter. Firms in Sydney are also open to using Facebook, blogging, and integrating social media platform links into their websites.

## Behaviour on social networks

- The audit revealed that regular use was an issue for many of the firms that have made their first steps into the world of social media. In particular, some firms were infrequent users of channels registered in their own name - to the extent they used such channels at all. In addition, few firms had taken the step from 'one-way' broadcasting to interacting with their followers.
- There is a high incidence of 'social domain parking', especially on Twitter but also on Facebook. Social domain parking means a firm registers its name and various permutations, on a social media platform, which is then left unused. It is likely that firms who park their profiles do so with the intention of stopping non-authorized persons from operating under their brand name.
- Overall, the findings suggest there is arguably a 'blank canvas' for adaptive, fast-moving business development professionals and marketers to use social media to gain a competitive advantage. As Generation Y enters the workforce, these new professionals will be more at home with integrating social technologies into their professional lives. Returns on investment (ROI) will be conferred upon those practices that have the foresight to recognise this<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>Letting Gen Y Lead a Management Makeover, Harvard Business Review, 2011

Use of social media channels amongst audited law firms - All Channels



---

## The Parties

---

### About LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell

International buyers of legal services trust LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell to help them identify, validate and select a law firm or lawyer every day. Martindale.com is a leading international law directory connecting law firms and buyers of legal services worldwide. With a database of more than one million lawyers and law firms in 160 countries and over 8 million unique visitors per year, martindale.com provides global visibility for law firms, helping them to be found by prospective buyers of legal services who are searching the Internet. Martindale-Hubbell is part of the LexisNexis Group, a member of the Reed Elsevier Group plc.

For more information visit: [www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com) or email [connect@martindale.com](mailto:connect@martindale.com)

### About Burson-Marsteller

Burson-Marsteller UK was established in 1967 is the European HQ of the global public relations and public affairs firm. Reflecting London's role as a world class business centre, the UK's capital city has become the leading market for global public relations services providing an unrivalled opportunity to interact with and influence a diverse range of stakeholders. As such, Burson-Marsteller UK is well placed to serve and grow its international client base of FTSE 100 and Fortune 500 companies leveraging London as a gateway to the world.

Consultants at the multi-award winning office provide clients with strategic thinking and program execution across a full range of public affairs, brand marketing, corporate reputation, technology, investor relations and healthcare services. In addition, the company has a full-service advertising and design practice that specialises in digital consulting ensuring new media is fully integrated into client campaigns.

Burson-Marsteller is a part of Young & Rubicam Brands, a subsidiary of WPP (NASDAQ: WPPGY), one of the world's leading communications services networks.

For more information visit: [www.bursonmarsteller.co.uk](http://www.bursonmarsteller.co.uk)

---

# How Martindale-Hubbell can help your law firm win new business

---

Martindale.com is a leading international law directory, connecting law firms and high quality buyers of legal services worldwide. Martindale.com Connected is the free online network exclusively for legal professionals.

## Build your legal network online

Use martindale.com Connected to identify and connect with In-House Counsel and private practice lawyers around the world. Leverage your connections to help find new business, learn about opposing counsel, or collaborate on everyday challenges. Use blogs, forums and groups to network with clients and colleagues, increase your legal knowledge and share expertise.

## Global visibility for your law firm

Present your law firm in a comprehensive online profile to help buyers identify and validate law firms for their shortlist. With over 8 million unique visitors every year - more than competing legal directories - martindale.com provides a source of prospects for your law firm. Benefit from Martindale-Hubbell's strong reputation amongst buyers of legal services as a trusted reference since 1868, with an online database of over 1 million law firms and lawyers in 160 countries.

## Attract a new audience

Help your law firm to be found by prospective buyers of legal services who are searching the Internet. Each month there are over 2 million views of law firms and lawyers on martindale.com.

## Showcase your law firm's expertise

Engage buyers by showing that you have relevant experience to meet their legal needs. Providing examples of your client work and additional information about your law firm through articles, case studies and independent client ratings, enables prospective buyers to validate your experience and credibility more effectively, and make a more informed choice about doing business with your firm.

## Track your results

Martindale.com's powerful tracking features allow you to see who is interested in your firm, measure the effectiveness of your profile and support decisions to grow your business. Discover which of your competitors prospective buyers looked at, names of international corporations looking at your law firm how many times your profile has been viewed and geographic location of prospective buyers.

### Learn more about winning new business with martindale.com

Visit: [www.martindale-hubbell.co.uk](http://www.martindale-hubbell.co.uk)

Email: [connect@martindale.com](mailto:connect@martindale.com)

Join martindale.com Connected for free at: [www.martindale.com/connected](http://www.martindale.com/connected)

**For more information contact:**

Email: [connect@martindale.com](mailto:connect@martindale.com)  
[www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com)

Martindale-Hubbell® International  
Halsbury House  
35 Chancery Lane  
London, WC2A 1EL  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 (0)20 7347 3700 | Fax: +44 (0)20 7347 3701