4 Social Media Trends for 2016

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Looking back at 2015, it was a busy year for Social Media. Though we had lots of competitors vying to be the new 'it' network, the top 7 are still the most popular: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube and Google+. Some apps, like Snapchat and Vine, have gained popularity with the younger generations, but do not have the mass appeal of the others. At this point, it will be very difficult for a new network to break in to the top, so rather than that, the existing players are expanding their offerings to meet more needs. Facebook introduced a Siri-like personal assistant, Twitter launched Persicope for live streaming and Pinterest is now allowing you to purchase some of your pins. What will 2016 hold? Here are my educated guesses for the 4 big trends of 2016:

Biometric Data

The lose definition of *Biometric Data* is the digitalization of you as a person: examples include fingerprints, photographs, handwriting and your voice. The issue surrounding biometrics is the ability for others to attain the data without your permission. With better facial recognition software in play, many companies are collecting your biometric data from social networks, and mostly without your knowledge. Recently the European Commission has been pushing to create some laws and regulatons around that data collection in the hopes of protecting people's rights and privacy.

Expect to see more news stories on that early in the year.

IoT

The Internet of Things is a huge trend. I had it on my list of trends last year and I kept it here because the growth of things connected wirelessly is exponential. The possibilities of what can be tracked and assessed are limitless. Areas to watch are more toys, home appliances and wearables. With all this transfer of data in the cloud and online, there are also inherent risks of what can be taken. For more information, you can read my recent article on [IoT and Keeping Safe with Connected Devices](#).

Protection of Personal Data

As marketers take more data from users, the users are also becoming more aware. This year both Facebook and Google launched services that will walk you through your privacy settings to ensure you are sharing with your intended audience. Caveat: Be wary of these walk-throughs because they do help with basic settings, they also give you a false sense of security since they don't share what the networks themselves are taking from you.

More companies are releasing products and services to help protect your online identity. From software to hardware, look for more ways to mask your personal information and track your own identity.

Video and Live Streaming

Video has become king in the digital world. Two services were launched this year that allowed people to live stream their video content; the aforementioned [Periscope](#) (owned by Twitter) and [Meerkat](#). In both cases, you can live stream concerts, interviews and events. From a public perspective, this is great. From a privacy perspective, you could also technically live stream from someone's bedroom or a change room. Once broadcast, it has been seen by anyone on the service and cannot be 'unseen'. I expect some major privacy issue this year which will result in live streaming limited to approved accounts only.

We will also continue to see far more adverting campaigns laughed via video services like YouTube and Vine to target the 'Netflix generation' that no longer watches traditional commercials.

The advances we see in tech each year always amaze me. I look forward to another 12 months of surprises and excitement. In all new things though, keep a wary eye out for our own privacy and security. Keep safe and have fun.