

Migrants' Use of Social Media in Malta



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Since the early 2000s, the island nation of Malta experienced a reversal in its migration profile – from a country of emigration to one of immigration.¹ In 2004, Malta joined the European Union (EU) and since then has been a part of EU free movement, whereby Maltese citizens may reside in other EU countries, and whereby EU citizens may reside in Malta. Whilst one could argue that Malta has always hosted a number of migrants (with Indian and Arab community on the island for decades), the country has more recently experienced an increase in the number of third country nationals as well as asylum seekers.

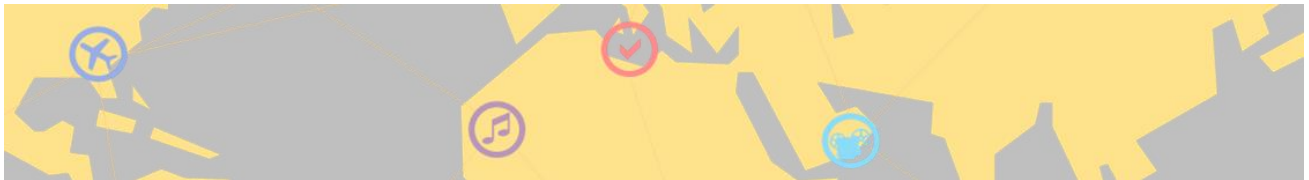
Migrants inevitably navigate an unfamiliar culture in their host country, may (particularly initially) have less friends and social networks in their new home, may not be aware of mainstream services health care, education, and employment, and may face migration-related legal and other challenges. A challenge for local authorities and civil society organisations in supporting migrants' integration in the country is how to reach newcomers. Social media may be a useful tool for outreach activities and communication with migrants.

Since the early 2000s, social media has become increasingly ingrained in everyday life all over the world. People accessing social media undertake at the same time various activities – they communicate with family and friends, share opinions and discuss current events with them as well as with a wider (known and unknown) audience, manage social lives, seek information about products and services, and promote their business. Whether directly or indirectly, social media may also provide relevant information to assist in migrants' integration, by providing formal and informal contacts and information.

¹ Cassar C., *Researching Migration and Asylum in Malta: A Guide*, People for Change Foundation, April 2013: <http://www.pfcmalta.org/publications-and-research.html>

This report analyses the findings of a survey conducted among migrants in Malta on their use of social media. It is intended to contribute to knowledge on migrants' use of social media as well as to inform local authorities and civil society organisations in the effectiveness of information and activities held or promoted over social media.

The report is structured in five parts. Following the introduction and summary of findings, the first section offers an overview of the literature on the link between social media and migration and briefly on migrant communities in Malta. The second section describes the survey's methodology and the respondents' features. The third section presents the findings of original research on migrants' use of social media, in particular of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. The fourth section analyses migrants' main activities on social media. The last part draws some conclusions.





2. Social Media and Migration

Social media are online technologies that strengthen communication and generate social ties among people.² They are based on the Web 2.0 technology that allows the exchange of user-generated content since the early 2000s.³ As of the beginning of 2016 more than 3 billion people in the world have access to the Internet, which corresponds to around 40% of the world population.⁴ At the end of 2015 social media users were 1.96 billion. Statistical projections envisage this number will increase to around 2.44 billion people by 2018.⁵

Social media can be conceptualized as internet applications in which *user-participation, content-sharing* and *social networking* in (semi-open) network infrastructures is central.

Dekker R., et al (2015) *Interethnic Contact Online: Contextualising the Implications of Social Media Use by Second- Generation Migrant Youth*

Social media enable users to share words, images, and videos with one other. They are used for three main purposes: interpersonal communication (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Skype), collaboration (e.g. Wikia, Digg, Google Docs), and multimedia sharing (e.g. in Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo, Filckr, SildeShare).⁶ In addition, they are critical information distribution and receiving channels.⁷

With the incorporation of data stream as a core mechanism, social media have changed everyday communication and information sharing patterns. Whereas previously people accessed information from static webpages, through social media platforms they can receive information structured as a stream (although not necessarily a continuous one). This is created, modified and shared by multiple users from

² Donath J., *Sociable Media*, Prepared for The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction, 15 April 2014.

³ O'Reilly T., *What Is Web 2.0, Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software*, 30 September 2005: <http://www.oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html>

⁴ Internet Live Stats, Internet Users, last accessed on the 9th February 2016: <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/#trend>

⁵ Statista 2016, Number of social network users worldwide from 2010 to 2018 (in billions), 2016:

<http://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/>

⁶ Cann A., Dimitriou K., and Hoolay T., *Social media: a guide for researchers*, Research Information Network, Research Information Network, 2011.

⁷ Dekker R. and Engbersen G., *How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration*, IMI Working Papers Series 2012, No. 64, November 2012.

multiple locations in an ongoing process of co-creation of information.⁸ The information received through social media platforms is influenced by users' feeds preferences, their social media platform's restrictions, and the time of the day the information is posted.⁹ Since most services are free of charge the primary entry barriers are limited to users' interest, internet access, and computer/internet literacy.

Social media are particularly useful for people that live geographically dispersed but require transnational networks to remain connected, such as migrants.¹⁰ For this reason, communication is intrinsically linked with migration: migrants build social, economic and communication bonds between home and host countries as well as other places.¹¹ This link is underlined by the transport and communication technologies that facilitate migrants' connections with their country of origin.¹² Therefore, migrants use social media to communicate both locally and globally.¹³ Meanwhile, information and communication technology has been recognised as critical for the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities.¹⁴ In recent decades, social media have become a facilitator of mobility.

Migrants and refugees use social media throughout their migrant trajectory to find a place of acceptance and a safe refuge through which conventional stories are challenged.¹⁵ Within destination countries social media can play a key role in addressing the needs of multi-ethnic communities, as individuals temporarily suspend differences and a multitude of shared narratives are brought together through this dynamic process.¹⁶ Additionally, social media can be used for educational purposes¹⁷ and to empower minorities.¹⁸ Some scholars point out that social media contribute to bond social capital within ethnic enclaves and strengthen their

⁸Hochman N. *The Social Media Image*, Big Data & Society, August 2014:

<http://bds.sagepub.com/content/1/2/2053951714546645#sec-6>

⁹ Chartbeat.com, *An Introduction to Traffic Sources, 2 Social Traffic* <http://lp.chartbeat.com/rs/chartbeatinc/images/chartbeat-social-traffic.pdf>, last accessed on 20th November 2015.

¹⁰ Dekker R. and Engbersen G., *How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration*, IMI Working Papers Series, No. 64, 2012.

¹¹ Borkert M. et al., *The State of the Art Research in the EU on the Take up and Use of ICT by Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities*, FIERI, 2009.

¹² Diminescu D., *The Connected Migrant: An Epistemological Manifesto*, Social Science Information, 47,4, 2008

¹³ Levitt P. and Jaworsky B.N., *Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends*, Annual Rev of Sociology, 33, 2007.

¹⁴ Vassallo J. and Pace Gouder L., *Strengthening Equality Beyond Legislation, Pilot Study on Preferred Media of Minorities*, Equality research Consortium, 2009

¹⁵ Chamarkeh H., *Social Media Usage, Tahriib (Migration), and Settlement among Somali Refugees in France*, Refuge, Vol.29, No.1, 2013.

¹⁶ WachaNga D. N., *Ethnic differences vs nationhood in times of national crises: The role of social media and communication strategies*, Journal of African Media Studies 7.3, 2015.

¹⁷ O'Mara, Ben, 2012, *Social media, digital video and health promotion in a culturally and linguistically diverse Australia*, Health Promotion International, Vol. 28 No. 3, 2012

¹⁸ Chiu L., *Culturally competent health promotion: the potential of participatory video for empowering migrant and minority ethnic communities*, International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care, 5(1), 2009.

cultural heritage, intra-group solidarity, and broader network with and within the diaspora.¹⁹ Others have gone beyond and insisted that social media support both intra- and inter-ethnic connections.²⁰

Throughout the migration cycle, migrants have different information and communication needs.²¹ Before leaving the country of origin, prospective migrants are still located in the country of origin but will look ahead to their new destination and their need for support and linkages to facilitate their move. Migrants then move to the country of destination. During this period of time they are adapting to the new environment and use the internet to both integrate into the new society and to stay in touch with family and connections they have left in the country of origin. Although arguably weak, the ties that social media facilitate support people in building relationships and acquiring information as they move from one place to another.²² Settled migrants have lived in the receiving country for a long period of time, yet social media can provide a link to, or possibility a reconnection with, the country of origin.

Migrants' use of social media can be influenced by various factors such as their proficiency of the language of the country of destination, their socio-economic background, their previous familiarity with technology and computer literacy.²³ Moreover, the security situation or challenges in accessing a computer and the internet in countries of origin can jeopardize digital communication amongst those who have moved and those who have stayed behind. Research has indicated that there is a strong correlation between age, level of education and English language proficiency, and the use of various kinds of technology.

The differences between migrant groups' access to and use of the internet and social media, brought on largely by cultural and linguistic backgrounds and the challenges of vulnerable groups such as newly arrived refugees, means that organisations aiming to connect with migrants via social media should tailor their communication strategy to the needs and cultural and social characteristics of the target group instead of using a generic approach.²⁴ This study, then addresses these differences and particularities, together with opportunities for communication, engagement and inclusion via social media.

¹⁹ Komito, L., and Bates, J., *Virtually local: Social media and community among polish nationals in Dublin*. Aslib proceedings: New information perspectives, 61 (3), 2009

²⁰ Dekker R., Belabas W., Scholten P., *Interethnic Contact Online: Contextualising the Implications of Social Media Use by Second-Generation Migrant Youth*, Journal of Intercultural Studies, Vol. 36, No. 4, 2015.

²¹ Hiller H. and Franz T. M., *New Ties, Old Ties and Lost Ties: The Use of Internet in Diaspora*, New Media & Society, 6,6, 2004.

²² Komito L., *Social Media and Migration: virtual community 2.0*, Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, vol. 62 (6), 2011.

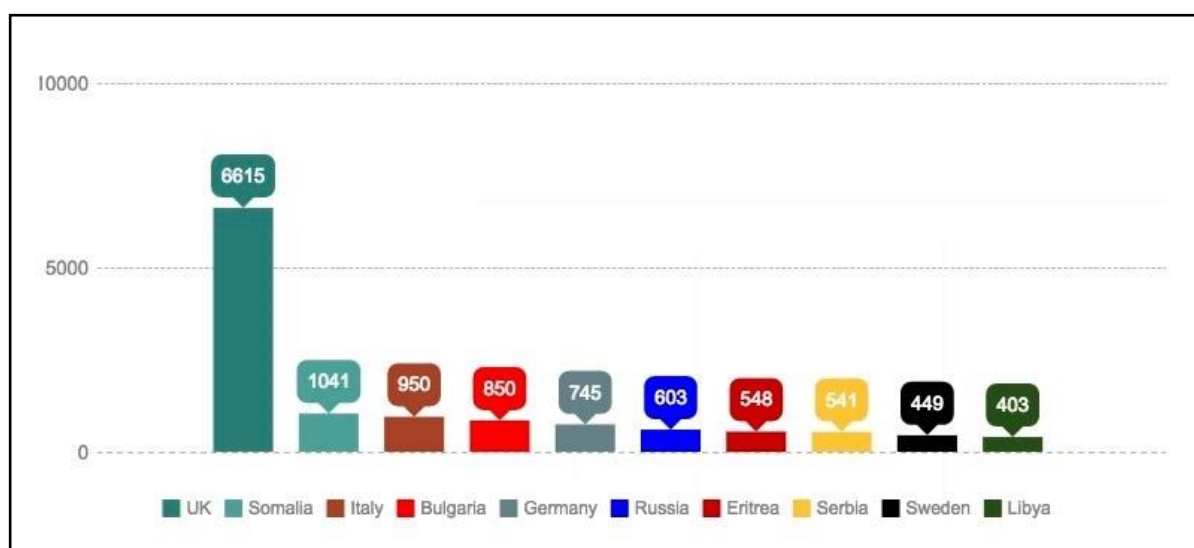
²³ O'Mara B, 2012, *Social media, digital video and health promotion in a culturally and linguistically diverse Australia*, Health Promotion International, Vol. 28 No. 3, 2012.

²⁴ Ibid.

2.1 Migrants in Malta

According to the most recent Census of Population and Housing (2011), 7.3% of the population of the Maltese islands is non-Maltese citizens. Approximately 60% of these citizens come from other EU countries.²⁵ The largest percentage of EU citizens come from the United Kingdom (32.6%) while Italians form the second-largest EU national group (4.6%). The largest groups of TCNs (including asylum seekers) are from Somalia (5.1%) and Russia (2.9%).²⁶

Figure 1: Non-Maltese Citizens Living in Malta (Census 2011)



In Malta, members of migrant communities connect both through (formal) migrant organisations and informal groups. Some migrant organisations in Malta (both formal and informal) include the African Media Association Malta, the British Residents' Association, the Confederation of Filipinos in Malta, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Malta, the Maltese-Serbian Community, the Moroccan Community in Malta, the Russian Maltese Cultural Association, the Somali Community in Malta, and the Syrian Community in Malta. These organisations use Facebook to connect with their members and share information relevant for their community.

Beside these formal migrant associations, migrant groups in Malta gather informally through Facebook groups and pages. A number of communities in Malta have set up online groups, including Brazilian, Italian, French, Libyan, Romanian, and Russian groups.

²⁵National Statistics Office Malta, *Census of Population and Housing 2011: Preliminary Report*, 2012: https://nso.gov.mt/en/publications/Publications_by_Unit/Documents/01_Methodology_and_Research/Census2011_PreliminaryReport.pdf

²⁶UNHCR Malta Statistics, accessed on the 2nd November 2015: www.unhcr.org.mt/charts



The aim of this research was to understand the use of social media by migrants as a tool for communication and social networking as well as a means of information distribution and reception. The objectives of the research were to identify migrants' use of social networks and media, to explore the purposes of use of social media, and to identify social media channels that can be used to communicate with migrants. Ultimately, the research sought a better understanding of the most effective ways of reaching out to and engaging with migrant communities via social media, particularly for the dissemination of information relating to migrants' rights, living conditions and integration.

3.1 Methods

The respondents in this study were 169 individuals coming from 44 countries. Respondents were found through social networks and migrant community organisations, as well as face to face interviews. This mixed method of collecting data was aimed at ensuring that we could reach out to both those who use and those who do not use social media, as well as to understand different ways and reasons of use. The survey was conducted in English. For 8 months an online structured questionnaire was sent to expatriate's Facebook groups in Malta.²⁷ PfC research assistants contacted migrant communities in Malta and asked them to promote the survey amongst their members both online and offline.²⁸ The survey was anonymous and no respondent was in a position of dependency or vulnerability that might have compelled his/her participation.

²⁷ Examples of migrant communities in Malta contacted through Facebook are Brazilians, Libyans, Russians, Serbians, and Filipinos.

²⁸ The organisations contacted are the following: the British Residents Association, the Maltese-Serbian Community, the Russian Centre for Science and Culture, the Moroccan Community, and the Filipino Community.

The research applied a quantitative approach and responses were analyzed using statistical techniques. All percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number. The survey focused on the following social media networks: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube. For each social media platform, the data was broken down by respondents' age, gender, educational background, and migrant category. Respondents were categorized in three groups: EU citizens, asylum seekers, and other TCNs in order to explore whether information and communication needs as well as internet access differ between these migrant groups. Of course, with a larger sample, one would have been able to analyse the data down to national groups, yet this was not possible within the size of this particular project. The selection of social networks was based on their popularity in Europe, including Malta, and their functions that allow online communication, information-seeking, and content sharing and creation.

In order to analyze if migrants' relationship with social media changes on the basis of age, respondents were divided into two major groups: under 30s (starting at 18 since all our respondents were adults) and over 30s. This allows highlighting differences between respondents that are included in the digital native generation and those who are not.²⁹ It is important to note here that whilst those who are digital natives may also hail from countries and context where access or availability of internet is different, and therefore this may account for particular ways of use of social media.

Respondents' use of social media was analysed according to three main types of activities:

- **Communication:** sending and receiving personal messages primarily to friends, family members, and acquaintances. Examples include chatting and sharing photos.
- **Information-seeking:** collecting information on specific topics. Examples include looking for migration-related information or looking up product/ service reviews.
- **Content sharing and creation:** creating and sharing – or helping others to create and share – information or creative work targeting large audiences beyond personal acquaintances. Examples include recording videos for YouTube or owning/administrating a Facebook page.

The above activities are not necessarily performed on an individual level. Social media users may stumble upon information on services/products while looking at a friend's photos; a post intended for close family members

²⁹ Prensky M. *Digital natives, digital immigrants part 1*. On the horizon. 2001, Sep 1;9 .

may be shared again over time and inadvertently find a wider audience. However, respondents' answers provide an overview of their main activities on social media.

This study presents some limitations. First, the study focuses on four social networks and does not examine the use of other services that have millions of users worldwide although are mostly used in geographic areas others than Europe such as QQ.³⁰ Second, questionnaires were not collected randomly but through social media, migrant organisations, and snowball techniques. The sample is therefore not scientifically representative. However, this small sample helps us understand at least some of migrants' use of social media, and sets the stage for future work and research in the area.

3.2 The Respondents – Key Demographic Features

Whilst the respondents' demographics varied in background and characteristics, some generalizations can be made. All asylum seekers who participated in the survey come from African countries. The majority of respondents are under the age of 30, and whilst Third Country Nationals and EU citizens have a similar age distribution, asylum seekers tend to be younger. Third Country Nationals in this survey have a higher level of education than EU nationals and asylum seekers. Across all migrant categories, women who have responded to this survey have a higher level of education than men. EU nationals and asylum seekers had been in Malta for a shorter period of time than Third Country Nationals.

3.2.1 Migrant Categories and Purpose of Stay

The respondents of this study were grouped into three categories: EU citizens, asylum seekers, and other TCNs. These categories are associated with different entry, work and residency rights in Malta.

EU citizens: respondents who are nationals of EU Member States. Survey participants came from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The number of EU citizens is 89, which corresponds to 53% of the total sample. Since the focus of this study was on the social media use of migrants, Maltese citizens and dual citizens (Maltese and another country) did not participate in this survey.

³⁰ Statista, *Leading social networks worldwide as of January 2016, ranked by number of active users (in millions)*: <http://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

Asylum seekers: respondents who applied for international protection in Malta. In this study we did not ask whether the person had applied for asylum elsewhere prior to arriving in Malta. The term therefore refers broadly to persons who have been through the asylum system including beneficiaries of international protection and rejected asylum seekers. Survey participants came from Gambia, Guinea, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Ghana, Libya, Senegal, and Russia. The number of asylum seekers was 31, which corresponds to 18% of the total sample.

Other TCNs: respondents who are nationals of a country that is not a EU Member State but who have not applied for international protection. Survey participants came from Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Gambia, India, Iraq, Libya, Macedonia, Philippines, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Sudan, Ukraine and the United States. Five respondents have a dual nationality (i.e. four Filipino/Maltese and one Australian/Maltese) but they have been grouped under this category. The number of TCN respondents under this category is 49, which corresponds to 29% of the total sample.

Figure 2: EU and Non-EU Citizens (TCNs, asylum seekers)

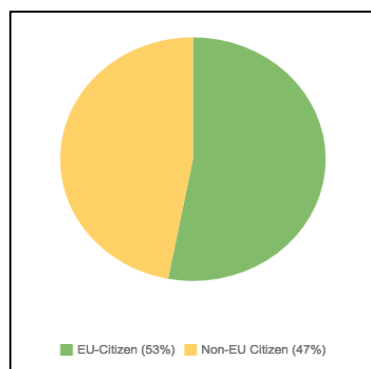
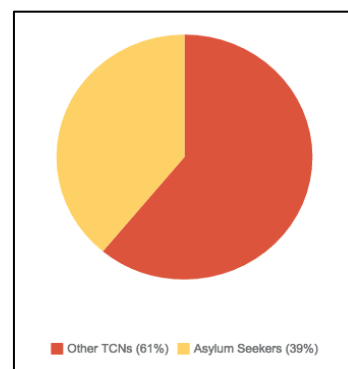
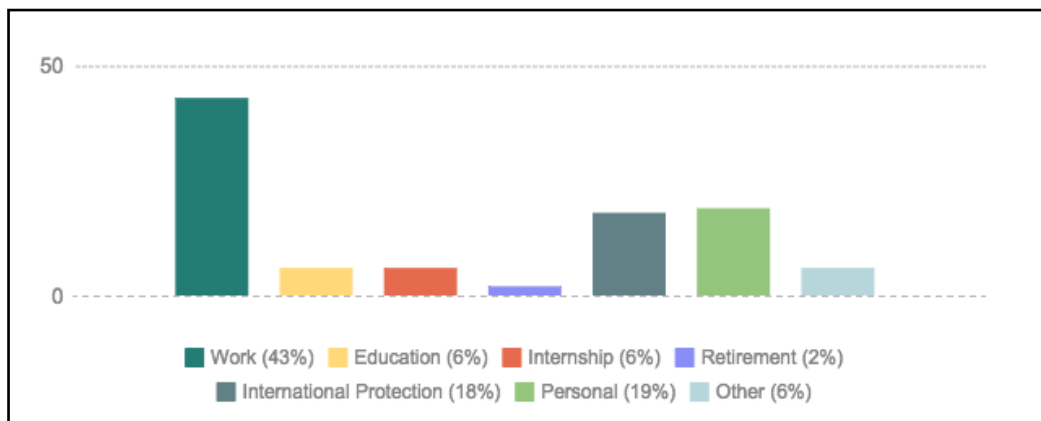


Figure 3: Asylum Seekers and Other TCNs



The largest categories of respondents arrived in Malta for work (43%), to seek international protection (18%) or for personal reasons (19%). Smaller numbers arrived for education (6%) or to do or seek an internship (6%), for retirement (2%) or for other reasons (6%). These numbers do not necessarily represent the current reasons for individuals' stay in Malta, since people will inevitably build lives that are more complex and connected later on, but they simply represent the initial reason for arrival in the country.

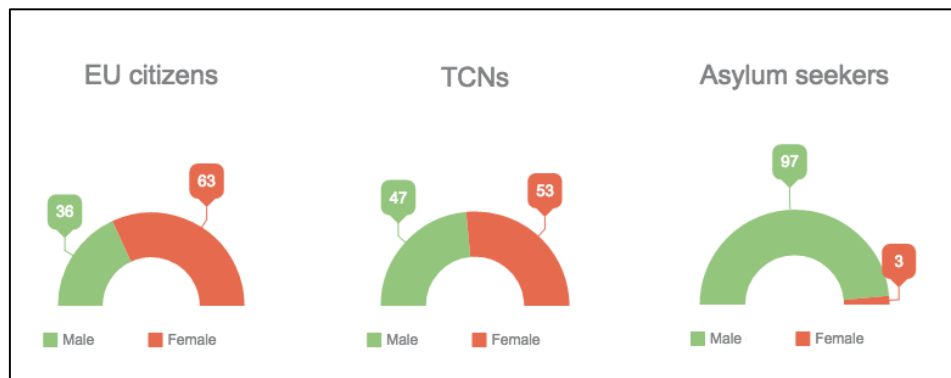
Figure 4: Purpose of Stay



3.2.2 Gender and Age

The sample is gender balanced, with women representing 49% of the total sample, in line with 2015 Migration data for Malta which stated that 44% in Malta are women.³¹ The percentage of female respondents is higher among EU citizens than TCNs (63% and 53% respectively), which is not accurately representative of the overall population as 2015 Eurostat data shows a smaller gender difference between the EU and non-EU population in Malta (46% and 41% respectively are women).³² Moreover, save one, all asylum seekers are male.

Figure 5: Gender by Migrant Category (Female respondents: 49% of the total)



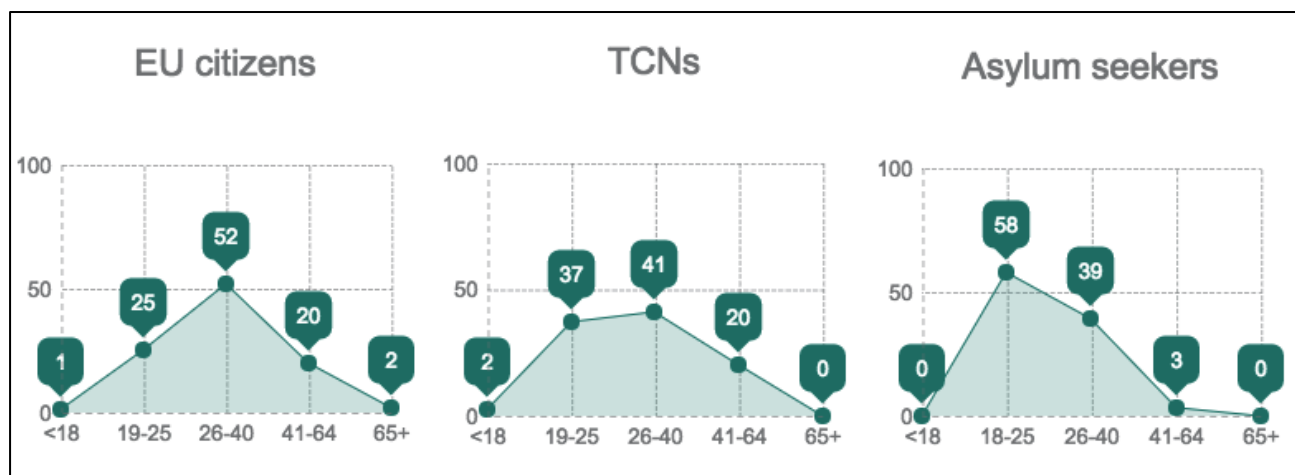
The sample's age ranges from 16 to 67 years old. The respondents' mean age is 31, with the largest groups falling in the 19 and 25 years old and 26 and 40 years old (34% and 46% respectively). In order to highlight differences in the use of social media between age groups that are included in the digital native generation and the others, this report divides the sample in two broad age groups. One group includes under 30s and the

³¹ Eurostat database, *Population on 1 January by five year age group, sex and citizenship*, Last update: 17-03-2016. Please see at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

³² Ibid.

other over 30s. The sample is therefore split into two groups – 60% of respondents are aged under 30, whilst 40% are aged over 30. 81% of asylum-seeker respondents are 30 or younger, while this percentage decreases considerably in the case of EU citizens and TCNs (56% and 55% respectively).

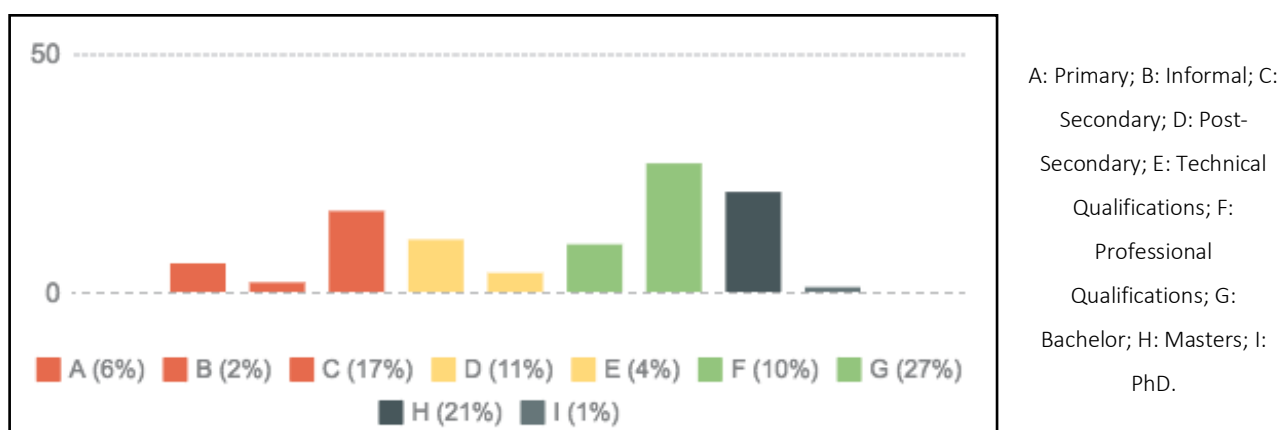
Figure 6: Migrant Category by Age



3.2.3 Education

The majority of respondents (60%) in this study have a tertiary education. Respondents with primary/informal/secondary education represent 26% of the total number, while 15% of respondents hold a post-secondary education.³³

Figure 7: Educational Attainment



³³ The respondents' educational attainment was grouped into three categories: Primary/Secondary Education (includes informal, primary, and secondary-level education); Post-Secondary Education (includes Post-secondary education and technical qualifications); and Tertiary Education (includes professional certifications, undergraduate, post-graduate degrees, and PhD degrees)

Female respondents are more educated than men: 78% of women hold a tertiary education compared to 41% of men. The percentage of women with tertiary education is higher among EU citizens and TCNs (70% and 96% respectively), whilst it would be unsuitable to generalize on tertiary education amongst asylum seeking women as only one respondent was female. The percentage of respondents holding a tertiary education is higher among TCNs than EU citizens (80% and 65% respectively).

Figure 8: Educational Attainment by Gender and Migrant Category (TCNs)

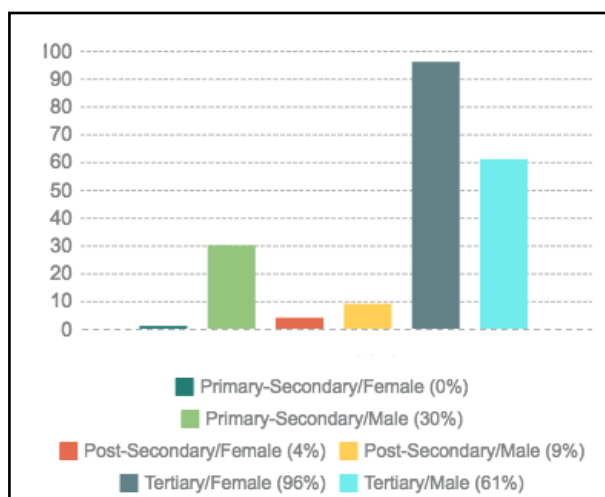


Figure 9: Educational Attainment by Gender and Migrant Category (Asylum Seekers)

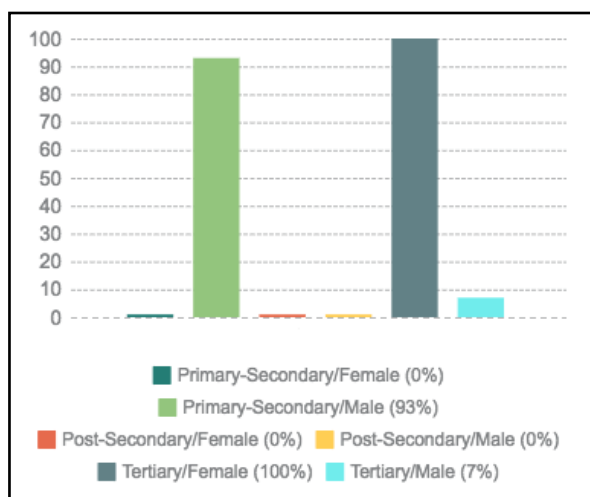
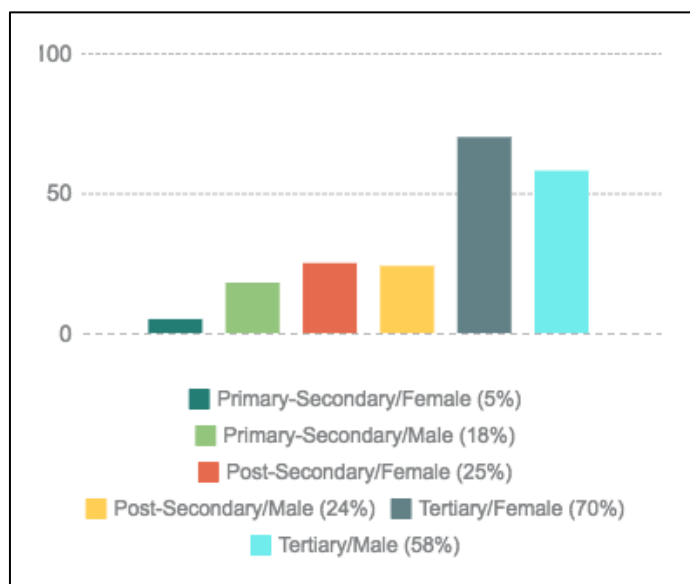


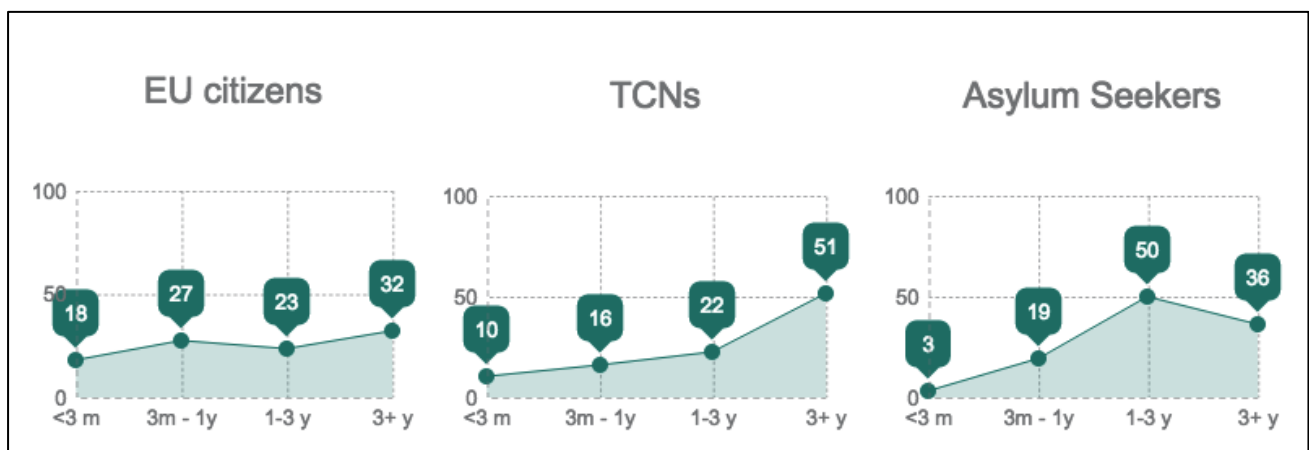
Figure 10: Educational Attainment by Gender and Migrant Category (EU citizens)



3.2.4 Length of Stay in Malta

In order to understand patterns of social media use, respondents were asked how long they had been in Malta and whether they intend to stay. More than one-third of respondents (38%) have been in Malta for more than 3 years. Among TCNs, this percentage increases considerably to 51% in contrast with EU citizens and asylum seekers (32% and 36% respectively). 63% of respondents intend to stay in Malta “indefinitely” while 38% plan to leave within 3 years. Results across the three migrant categories are similar. 54% of EU citizens are unsure of when or whether they will leave Malta, while this percentage increases for TCNs (64%) and even more for asylum seekers (68%).

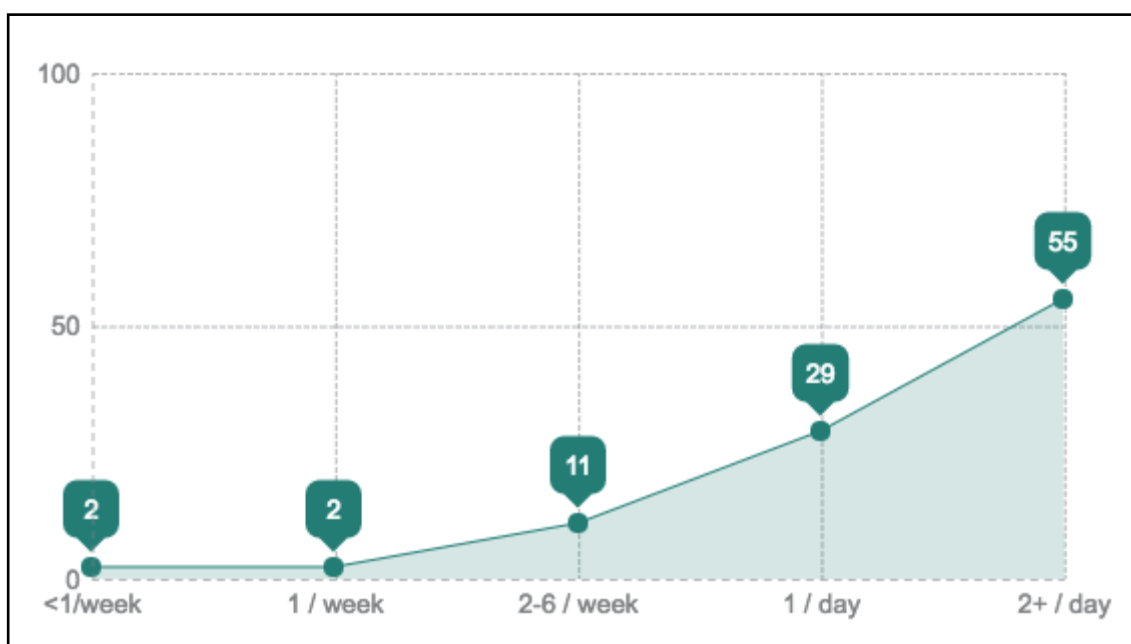
Figure 11: Length of Stay by Migrant Category- months (m) and years (y)



4. Migrants' Use of Social Media

Almost all respondents have access to a computer (96%). Internet access at home varies greatly amongst categories of migrants, at 98% amongst EU nationals, 86% amongst TCNs and at 42% amongst asylum seekers. At the same time, 87% of asylum seekers have access to the internet at cafes and on shared computers. The majority of respondents use social media for two hours or more per day (55%) while almost one-third use social media for one hour per day (29%). Age does not appear to be a determining factor, with 86% of respondents younger than 30 years and 82% of those over 30 using social media for one hour or more daily. Whilst 80% and 81% of asylum seekers and EU nationals respectively use social media for one hour a day, this number increases to 90% in the case of Third Country Nationals. Women are more likely to spend more than two hours on social media daily (56%).

Figure 12: Time Spent on Social Media (Hours per week or day)



Facebook is the most popular social network (98% of respondents use it) followed by YouTube (74%). These are accessed daily by 92% and 49% of respondents respectively. These percentages decrease sharply in the case of other social networks.

Figure 13: Social Networks Used

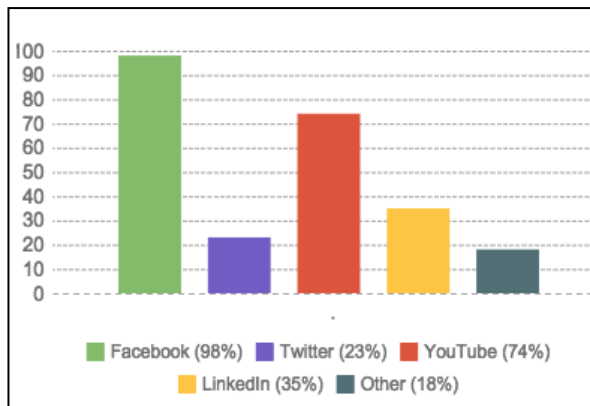
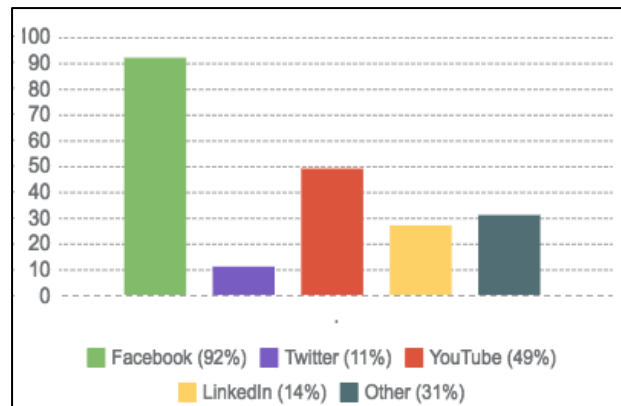
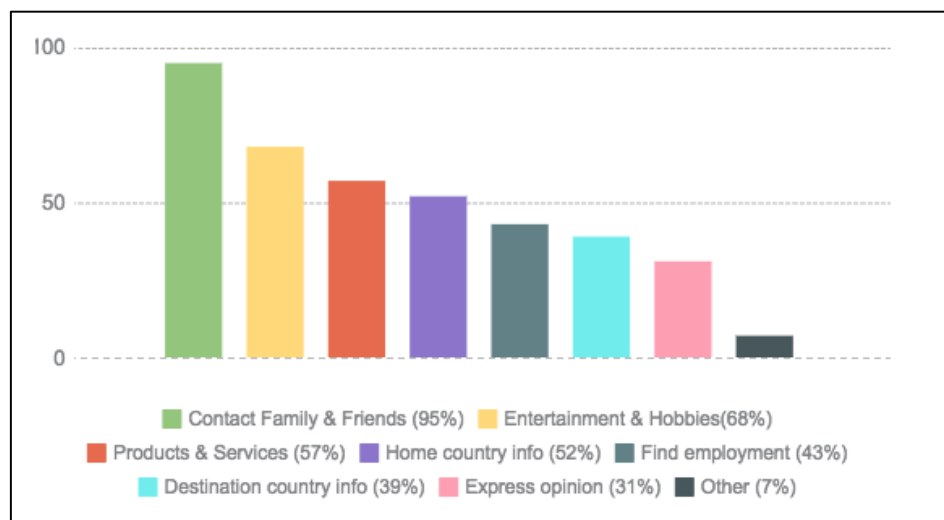


Figure 14: Percentage of Daily Users



Respondents' main reason for using social media was that of maintaining connections with family and friends (95%), whilst 68% use social media for entertainment and hobbies, and 57% for finding information on products and services. In contrast, only 31% of respondents use social media to express their opinion.

Figure 15: Use of Social Media: Purposes



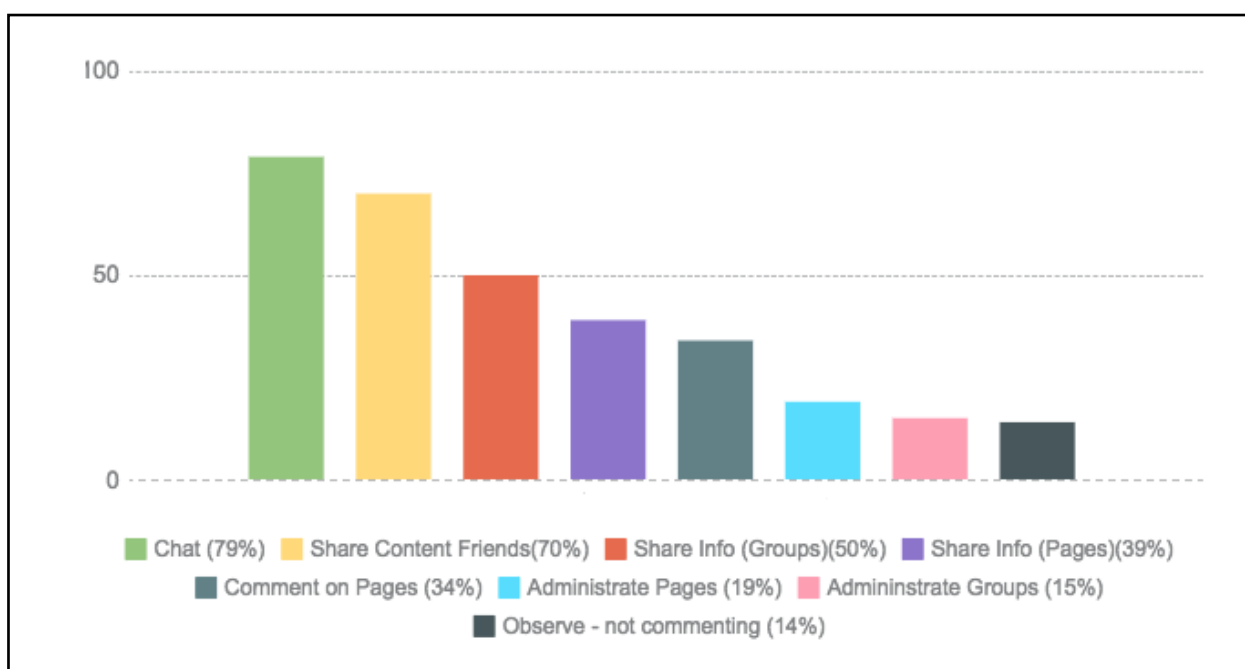
4.1 Use of Social Media Platforms

This study focused on four particular social media platforms – Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and LinkedIn. Whilst different countries and continents certainly have other social media that are popular and growing, these social media giants were selected particularly as one of the aims of the research was to understand how better to reach out to migrants via social media, so that means that are already in use by both organizations and service providers in Malta, and those that (as this section will detail) are also highly utilized by migrants, were selected.

4.1.1 Facebook

Almost all respondents (98%) across the three categories of migrants use Facebook. The three most popular uses of Facebook are chatting (79%), sharing content with friends (70%), and sharing information in groups (50%). In contrast, respondents do not comment on Facebook pages actively (34%) and 14% even stated explicitly that they are Facebook observers rather than commentators.

Figure 16: Activity on Facebook



The percentage of respondents younger and older than 30 years using Facebook is similar (97% and 100% respectively). Additionally, there is a very slight gender difference (97% of women and 100% of men use it) and there is wide although somewhat variable use across all migrant categories (100% of EU citizens and TCNs and 90% of asylum seekers).

Figure 17: Facebook Users by Gender

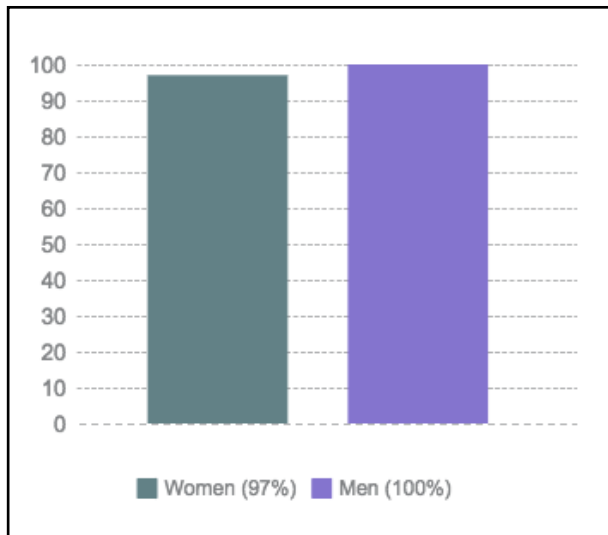
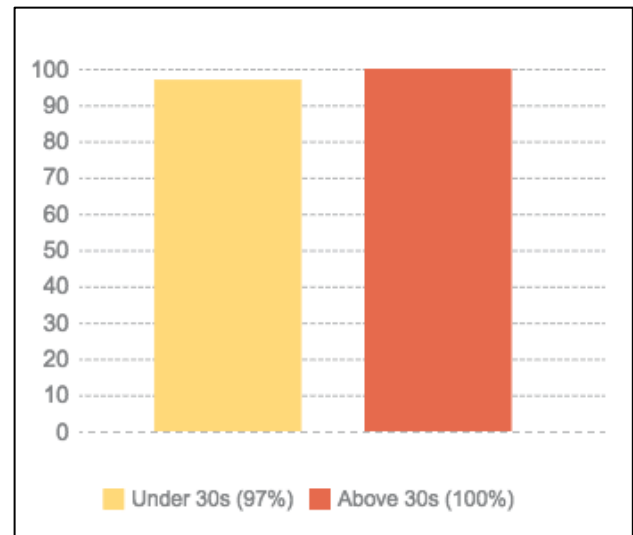


Figure 18: Facebook Users by Age



Migrants' educational background does not seem to influence Facebook use: 95% of respondents with primary/secondary education use it while data are only slightly higher among respondents with post-secondary education (100%) and with tertiary education (99%).

Figure 19: Facebook Users by Education

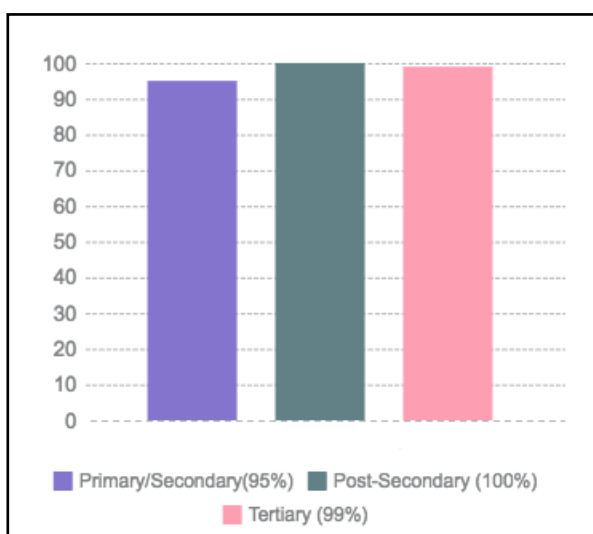
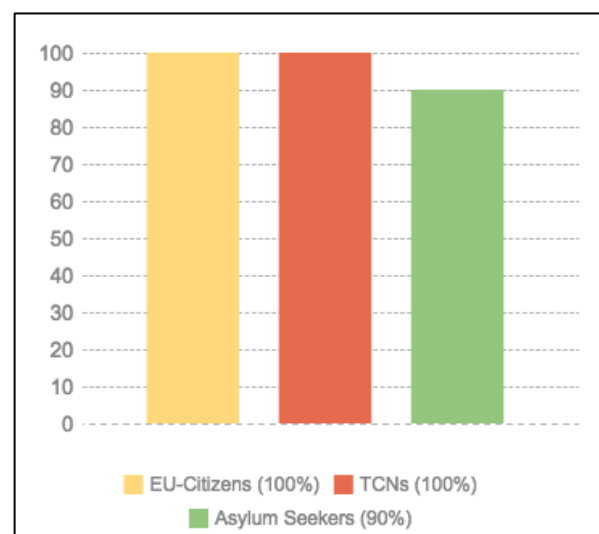


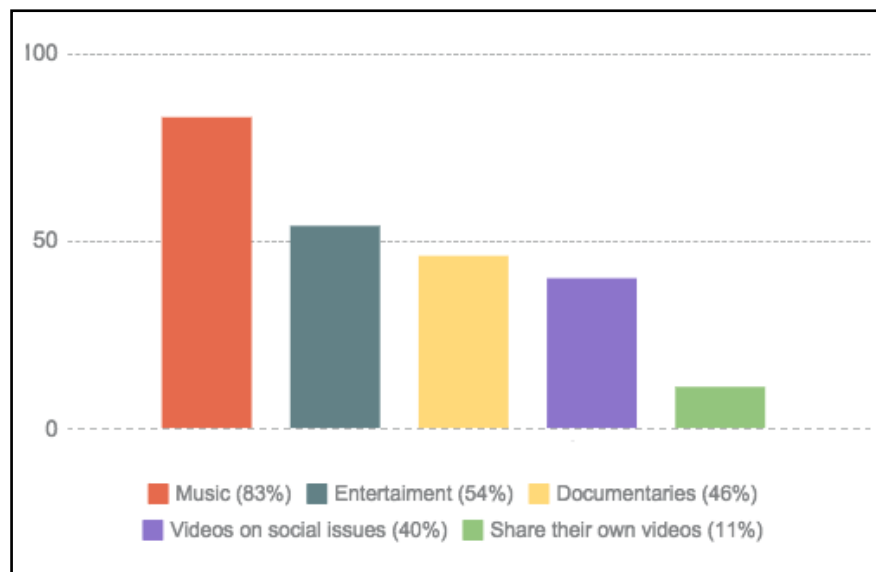
Figure 20: Facebook Users by Migrant Category



4.1.2 YouTube

YouTube is the social media service that is used most (74%) after Facebook. Whilst the vast majority use it for a variety of reasons (music, entertainment, documentaries, etc) only 11% of respondents share their own videos on Youtube. This means that whilst Youtube is at the moment a potential tool for sharing information via video with migrants, more work would need to be done for this tool to be more interactive.

Figure 21: Activities on YouTube



There is no gender distinction in the use of Youtube (74% of men and women use it). Among respondents aged under and over 30, the rate of usage is also similar (73% and 76% respectively).

Figure 22: YouTube Users by Gender

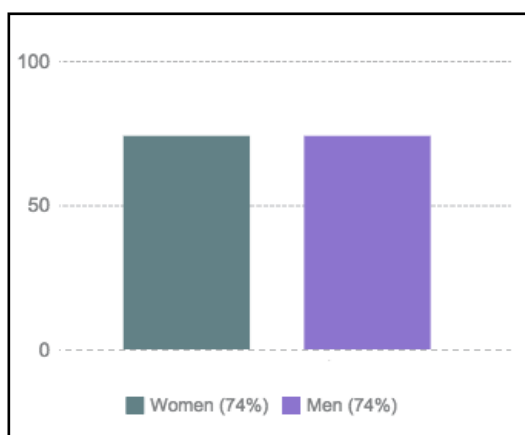
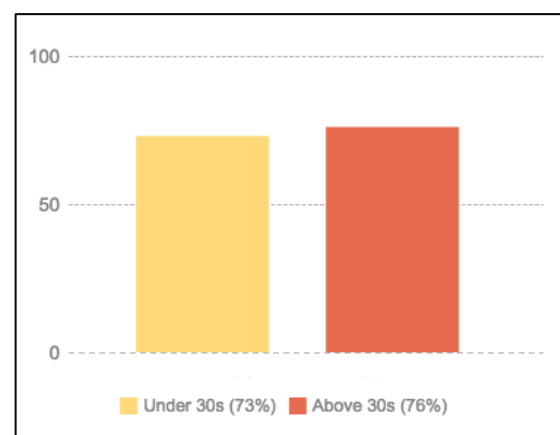


Figure 23: YouTube Users by Age



Use of Youtube is more common among EU citizens and TCNs (79% and 73% respectively) than amongst asylum seekers (61%). Respondents with a post-secondary and tertiary education show a higher use (80% and 76% respectively) than respondents with primary/secondary education (65%).

Figure 24: YouTube Users by Education

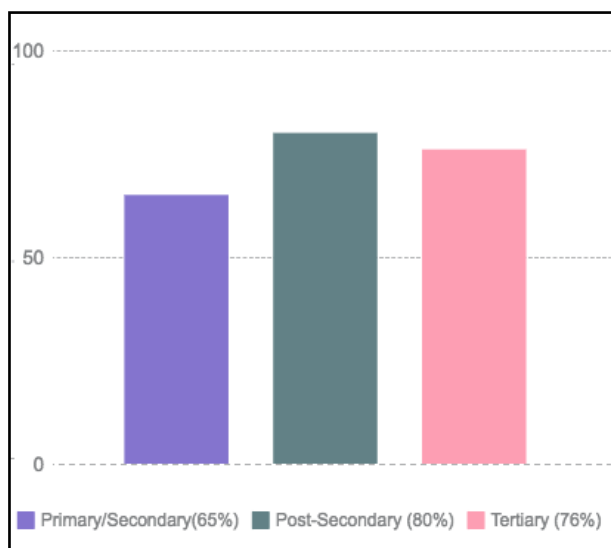
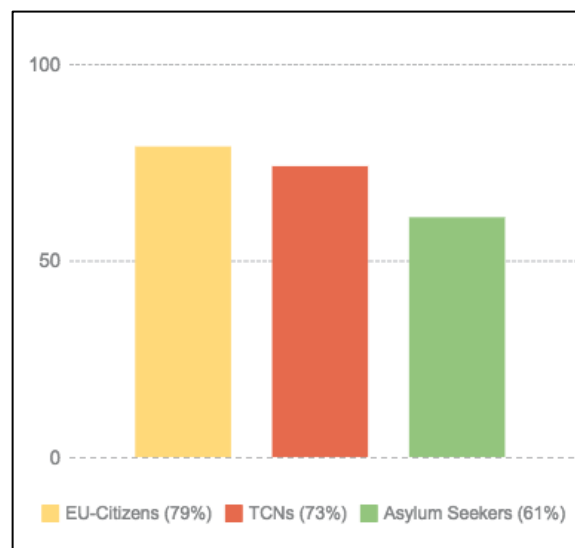


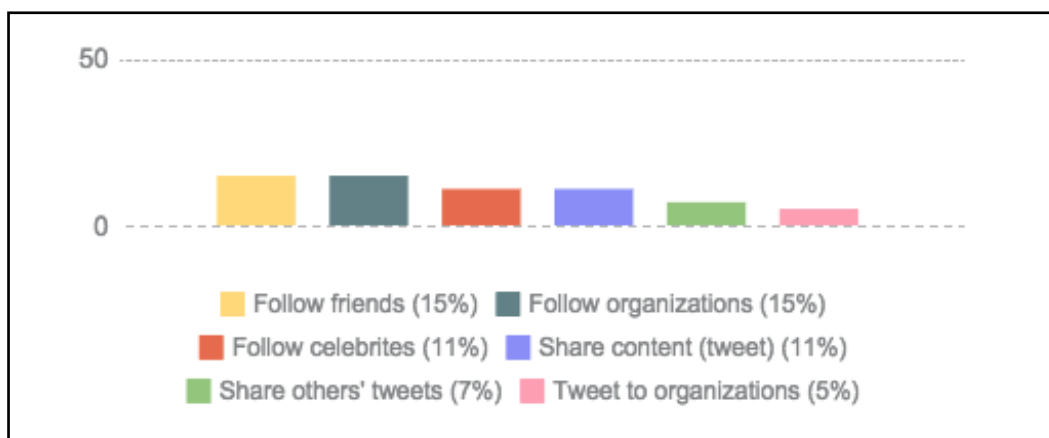
Figure 25: YouTube Users by Migrant Category



4.1.3 Twitter

Less than one-fourth of respondents use Twitter (22%). Interacting with family and friends and following organizations' profiles are the most common purpose of use of Twitter (15% each), closely followed by following celebrities and sharing content/tweeting (11% each).

Figure 26: Activities on Twitter



Twitter is more popular amongst men (28%) than women (17%) while respondents' age is only marginally relevant to usage (24% of under 30 use it compared to 21% of over 30). Twitter is more popular among EU citizens and TCNs (25% for both) than asylum seekers (13%). Finally, respondents holding a post-secondary education use Twitter more than those with a primary/secondary and tertiary education (36%, 21%, and 20% respectively).

Figure 27: Twitter Users by Gender

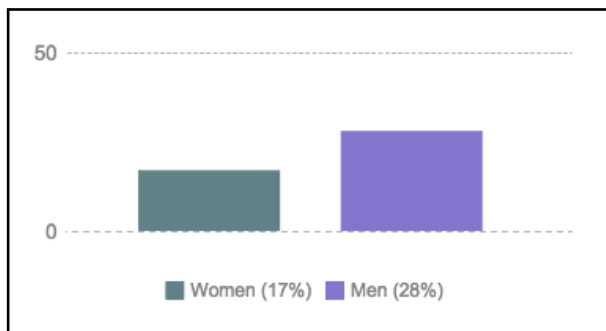


Figure 28: Twitter Users by Age

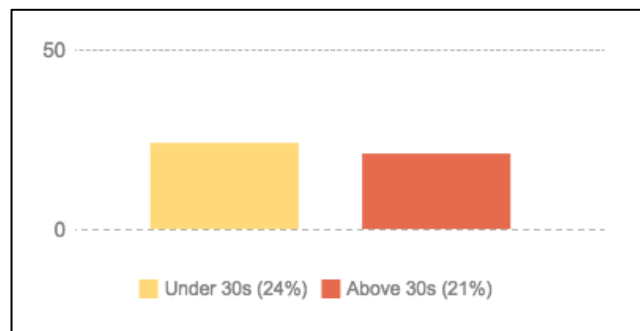


Figure 29: Twitter Users by Education

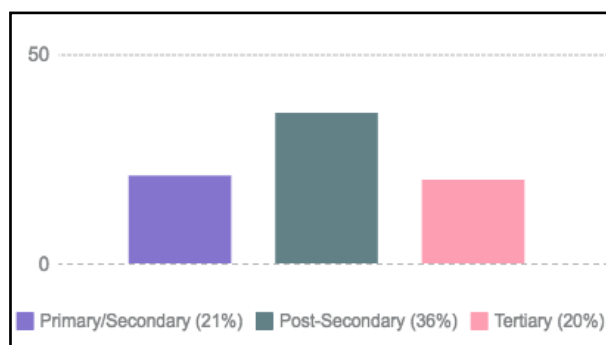
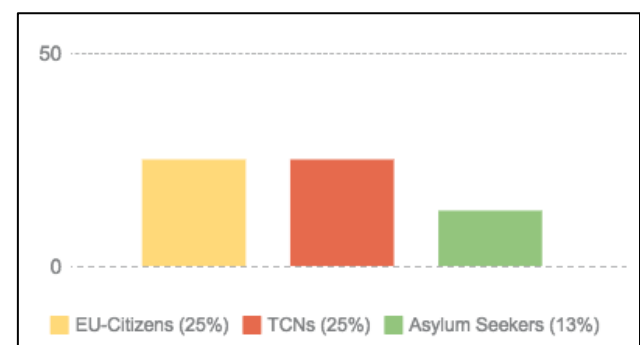


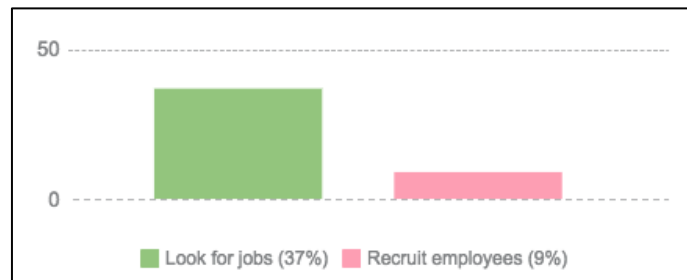
Figure 30: Twitter Users by Migrant Category



4.1.4 LinkedIn

In comparison with other popular social media services that mainly offer a channel to connect with personal acquaintances, LinkedIn focuses on career-focused networking. Therefore, it supports seeking and sharing business-oriented information as well as employment related promotion.

Figure 31: Activities on LinkedIn



37% of respondents use LinkedIn to look for a job while only 9% use it to recruit personnel. LinkedIn is more popular among women (40%) than men (30%), while over 30s use it more than under 30s (42% and 30% respectively). Migrant's level of educational and migrant category greatly influence the use of LinkedIn. EU citizens use it the most (46%), followed by TCNs (35%), but only 3% of asylum seekers use LinkedIn. It is more popular among respondents holding a tertiary education (43%) or a post-secondary education (36%) while only 16% of respondents with a primary/secondary education use it.

Figure 32: LinkedIn Users by Gender

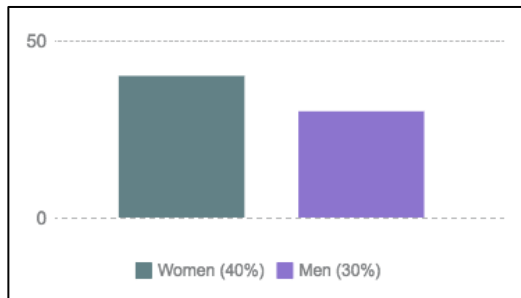


Figure 33: LinkedIn Users by Age

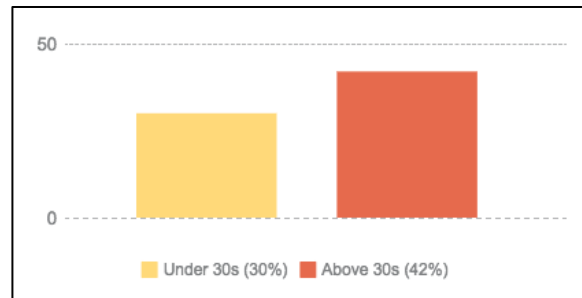


Figure 34: LinkedIn Users by Education

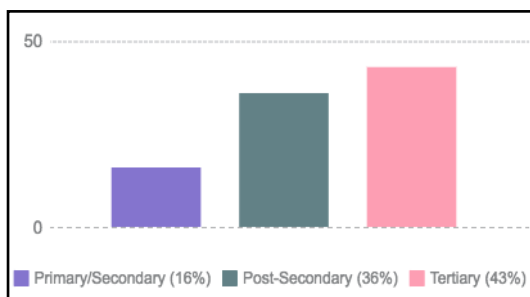
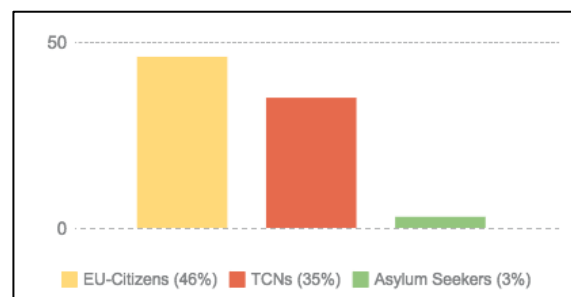
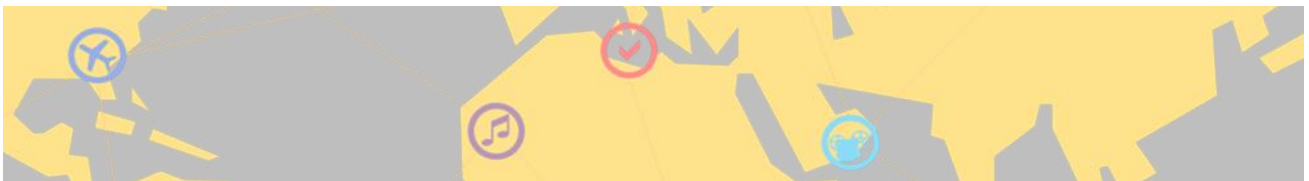


Figure 35: LinkedIn Users by Migrant Category



4.1.5 Other Social Media Platforms

Only 18% of respondents use social media services other than Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn. Other platforms that respondents use include *Instagram, Whatsapp, Gmail, Skype, Yahoo, Tango, MeetMe, Gtalk, LJ, Viber, Vice, Snapchat, VK.com, Tumblr, Internations.org, Ello, forums, online newspapers, and Pinterest*. Of these, 31% of them use one or more of these services daily. Other platforms are linked to a particular culture or language (e.g. the Russian-language VK.com), or indeed a different definition of social media. In fact, some do not meet the definition of social media as outlined in this report (for instance Gmail, online newspapers, and forums).



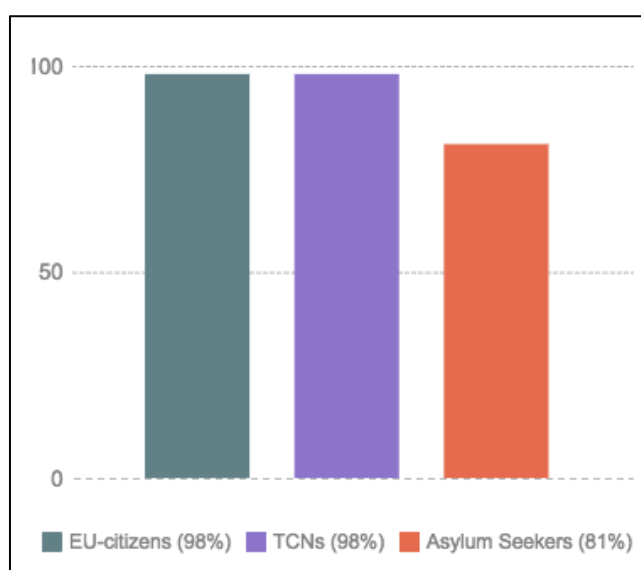
5. Social Media Activities

Migrants were asked about their activities on social media as well as what they follow and contribute to. The main activities covered by this research were communication (particularly communication with family and friends), information seeking and content creation. Through this we were keen to understand migrants' activity and empowerment over the internet, as well as how parameters around belonging and needs for information play out online.

5.1 Communication

Migrants in Malta use social media mainly to communicate with family and friends (95% of respondents). This is the case across all migrant categories (98% of EU citizens and TCNs, and 81% of asylum seekers use social media for this purpose).

Figure 36: Respondents Communicating with Family and Friends via Social Media by Migrant Category



Among the four social networks analysed in this research, Facebook and Twitter are focused on individual and group communication, via pages, walls, chats, groups and tags and short messages. The most popular activities reported on Facebook were chatting (79%) and sharing personal information (70%). EU citizens and TCNs use Facebook to share personal information with friends (81% and 74% respectively) significantly more than asylum seekers (32%). Meanwhile, the chat function is used almost consistently across the board (by 81% of asylum seekers, 79% of EU national and 78% of TCNs).

Figure 37: Sharing Personal Information with Friends on Facebook by Migrant Category

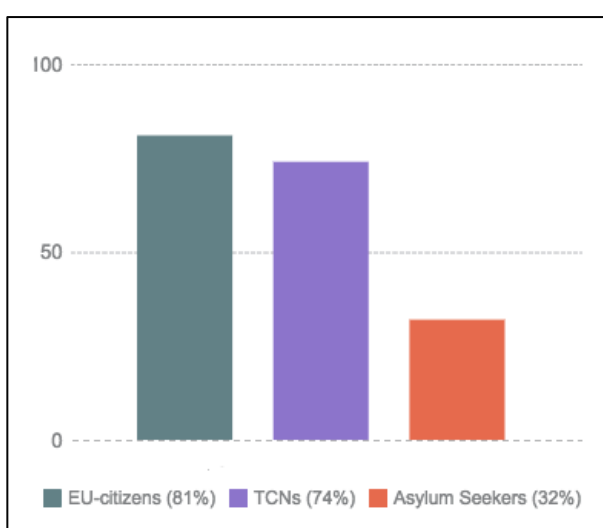
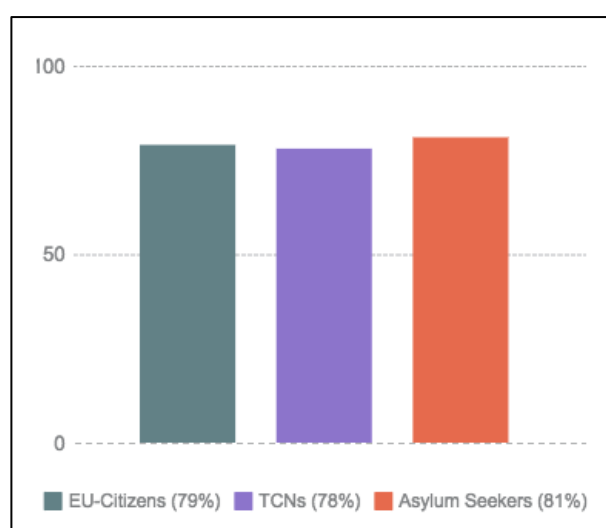


Figure 38: Chatting on Facebook by Migrant Category



Women are more likely to share personal information with friends (78% compared to 62% of men), over 30s are somewhat more likely to do so (73% compared to 68%) and people with a post-secondary education are the group most likely to share such information with friends (84% compared to 51% of respondents with primary/secondary education and 75% of respondents with tertiary education).

Few respondents use Twitter to follow specific friends' profiles and posts (15%). Amongst these, EU citizens and TCNs (17% and 18% respectively) show a higher rate of use than asylum seekers (6%). The numbers are closer when it comes to following organizations' profiles (17% of EU citizens, 14% of TCNs and 13% of asylum seekers). Following organizations' profiles is somewhat more popular among respondents under 30 (17% compared to 14% of respondents aged over 30) and respondents with a tertiary education (18% compared to 12% of respondents with either primary/secondary or post-secondary education). There is almost gender parity in following organizations' profiles on Twitter (16% of men and 15% of women).

Figure 39: Respondents Following Organizations' Profile on Twitter by Migrant Category

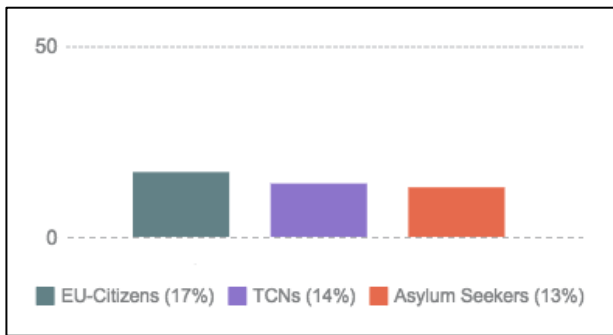
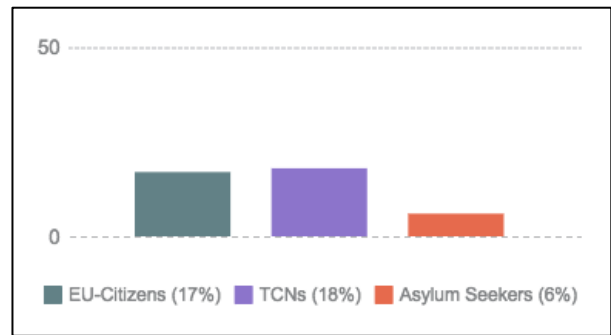


Figure 40: Respondents Following Friends' Profile on Twitter by Migrant Category



5.2 Information-Seeking

Across social media platforms, TCNs and EU citizens show similar levels of activity in seeking information about their country of origin and seeking information on their country of destination. 63% of TCNs and 61% of EU citizens use social media to seek information on the country of origin, whilst only 47% of EU citizens and 43% of TCNs look for information about Malta. In contrast, asylum seekers show a far lower low rate of seeking either (10%).

When asked to indicate the type of information they look for through their community's social media channels, respondents said they seek information related to daily life (56%) and services (53%). This is especially true among EU citizens (73% and 70% respectively). Many migrants also look for information on products/services, with rates of doing so significantly higher for EU nationals and TCNs than asylum seekers (70%, 51% and 10% respectively). TCNs seek out information on law/rights (49%), employment (49%) and accommodation, whilst asylum seekers use their community's social media channels mainly to seek information on education (73%) and employment (23%).

Figure 41: Information Sought via Migrant Community Social Media Channels by Migrant Category: Employment

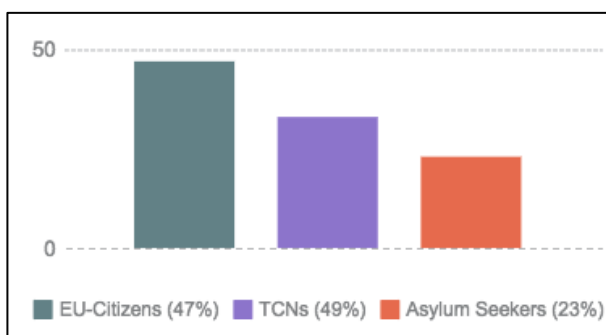


Figure 42: Information Sought via Migrant community Social Media Channels by Migrant Category: Accommodation

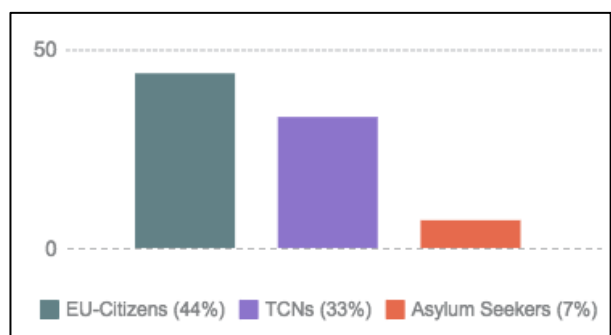


Figure 43: Information Sought via Migrant community Social Media Channels by Migrant Category: Services

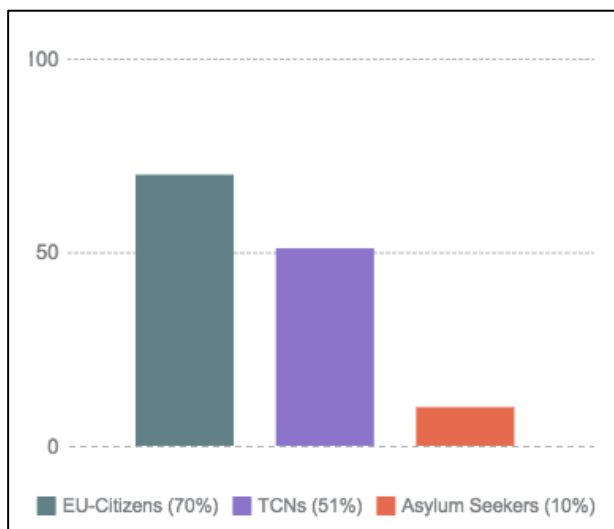


Figure 44: Information Sought via Migrant community Social Media Channels by Migrant Category: Daily Life

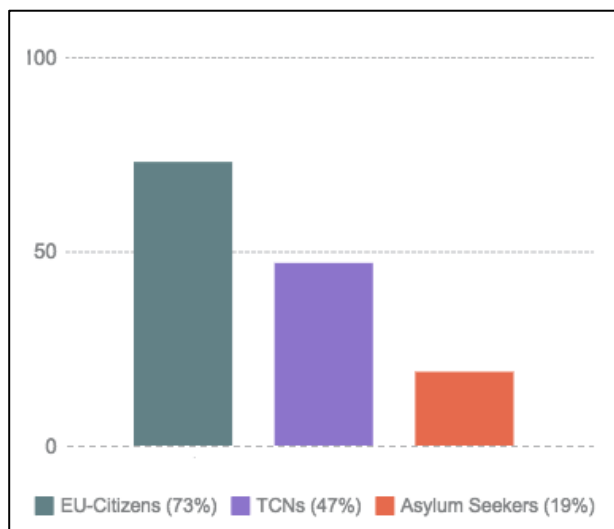


Figure 45: Information Sought via Migrant community Social Media Channels by Migrant Category: Education

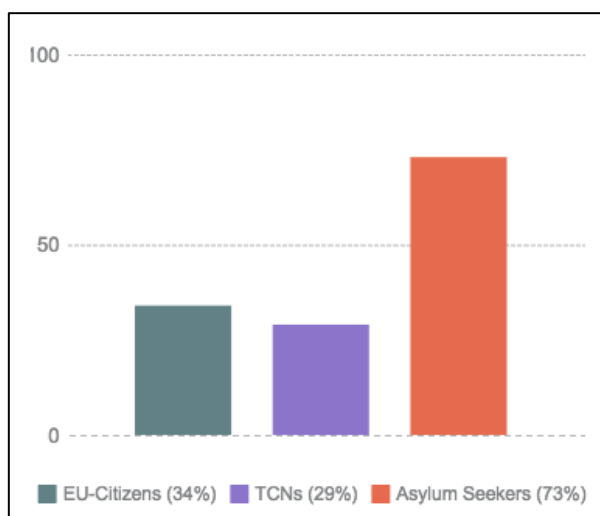
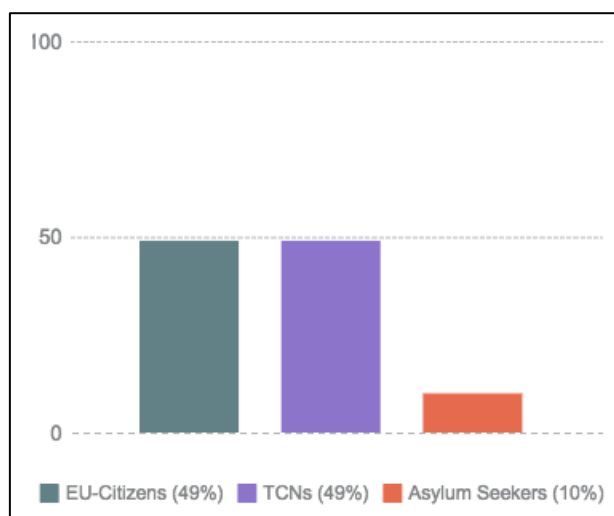
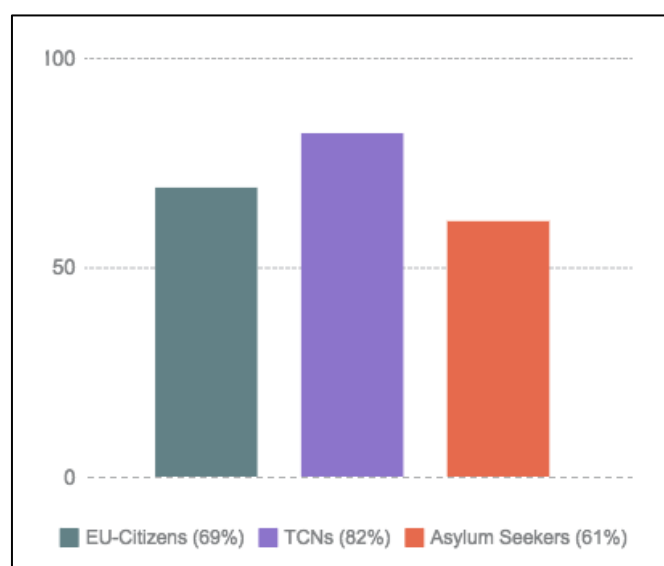


Figure 46: Information Sought via Migrant community Social Media Channels by Migrant Category: Law/rights



71% of respondents expressed a wish to receive more information on migrants' rights and regulations through their community's social media channels than they currently do. TCNs are more interested in receiving such information (82%) than EU citizens and asylum seekers (69% and 61% respectively). Women are more interested than men (77% and 65% respectively) while those aged over 30 more than those aged under 30 (75% and 69% respectively). Respondents' level of education also influences the interest, as respondents holding a tertiary education show a stronger interest (75%) than those with a primary/secondary education and post-secondary education level (65% and 64% respectively).

Figure 47: Respondents Wishing to Receive More Information on Migrants' Rights and Regulations via their Community's Social Media



5.3 Content Sharing and Creation

31% of respondents stated that they express their opinion on social media. EU citizens (38%) do so more than TCNs and asylum seekers (25% and 19% respectively). Amongst the content creation and sharing activities taken into consideration in this study, the most common is sharing information through Facebook pages and groups (49% and 36% respectively).³⁴ Sharing information through Facebook groups is more common among women (64% compared to 35% of men), over 30s (57% compared to 44% of under 30s) and those holding either a post-secondary or a tertiary education (60% and 58% respectively) compared to 23% of people holding a primary/secondary education.

The same results appear in the case of Facebook pages. Respondents sharing information on Facebook are mostly women (51% of women compared to 27% of men), aged over 30 (48% compared to 32% of respondents aged under 30), and hold either a post-secondary or tertiary education (40% and 49% respectively) compared to 14% of respondents holding a primary/secondary education.

³⁴ Facebook pages usually target a wide audience to share information about services/products. Instead, Facebook groups target a more specific audience than Facebook pages. They usually aim at facilitating discussion among members and their access can be only restricted to them.

However, only 19% of respondents are administrators of a Facebook page and even less of a Facebook group (15%). EU citizens are more engaged in administering Facebook pages and groups (30% and 24% respectively), while the percentage of TCNs managing pages and groups are much lower (10% and 8% respectively). No asylum seekers said that they administer Facebook pages or groups.

Figure 48: Facebook Pages Administrators

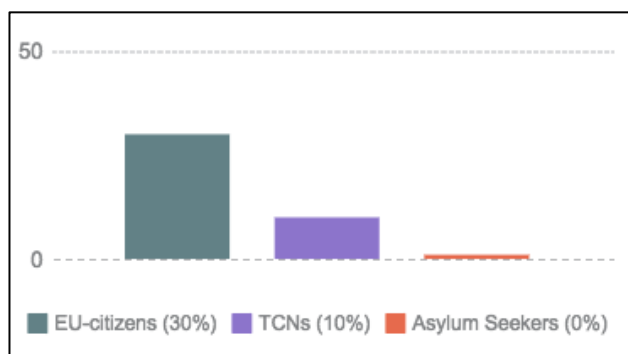
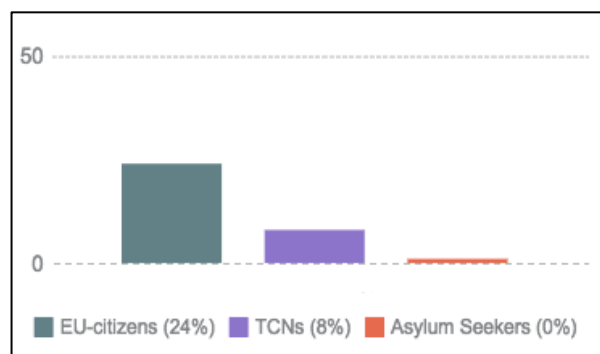


Figure 49: Facebook Groups Administrators



More women are Facebook group administrators (17% compared to 13% of men), and respondents who administer Facebook groups are more likely to hold a tertiary education (21% compared to 8% with a post-secondary education and 5% with a primary/secondary education). Similarly, more women are Facebook page administrators (22% compared to 16% of male respondents), those aged over 30 are somewhat more likely to be page administrators (22% compared to 18% of respondents aged under 30), and in this case it is individuals with a post-secondary education (28%) or tertiary education (24%) who are more likely to be Facebook page administrators compared to respondents with a primary/secondary education (2%).

Figure 50: Sharing ones' Own Material via Twitter

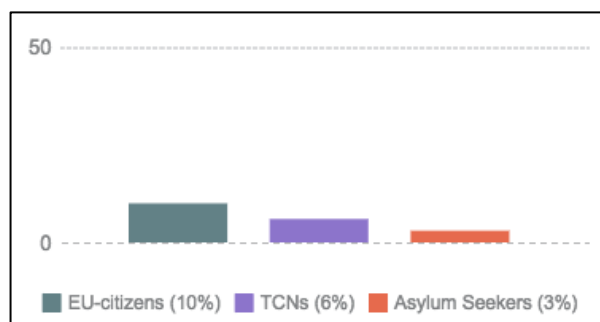
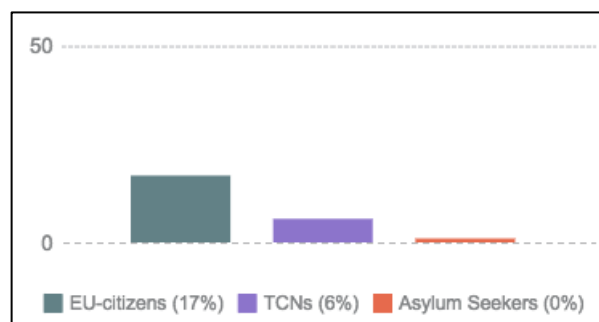
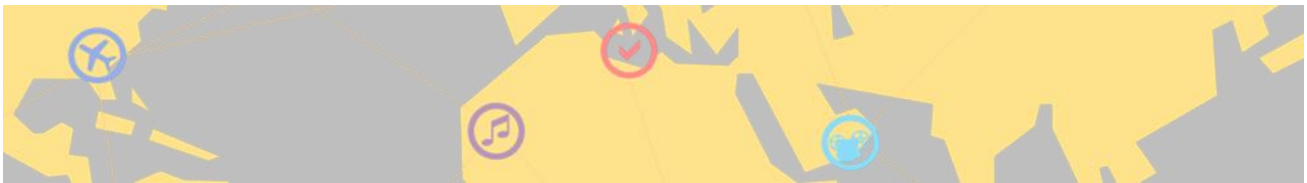


Figure 51: Sharing ones' Own Material via YouTube



Few respondents share their own material via Twitter and YouTube (11% on both platforms). This activity is more popular among EU citizens (10% on Twitter and 17% on YouTube) than TCNs (6% on both platforms) while no asylum seekers stated that they share their own material on either platform. On Twitter, most respondents who share their own content are male (12% compared to 10% of women), over 30s (14% compared to 9% of under 30s), and hold a post-secondary and a tertiary education (12% and 13% respectively compared to 5% with a primary/secondary education).

Similarly, on YouTube most respondents who share their own content are male (13% compared to 8% of women), are aged over 30 (14% compared to 9% of under 30s), yet hold mainly a post-secondary education (20% compared to 13% of respondents with a tertiary education and no respondents with primary/secondary education).





This study aimed to explore the use of social media by migrants as a tool for communication, a means of networking as well as a means of information distribution. Ultimately, the research intended to inform stakeholders on the most effective ways of engaging with migrants and migrant communities via social media.

The study findings suggest that outreach activities via social media can be an effective way to connect with migrants in Malta. The use of social media is quite widespread. Almost all respondents have access to a computer and all confirmed that they use social media platforms, the majority for two hours or more per day. Whilst there are differences between different ages, genders and levels of education, there is still widespread use (particularly in receiving information rather than creating it), which means that using social media to access migrants would not result in significantly excluding any particular groups.

Facebook is by far the most popular social media platform. The use of other social networks is quite limited, in particular of Twitter and LinkedIn. Additionally, social networks other than Facebook have a greater distinction in audience; for instance, they are mainly popular among TCNs and EU citizens but not with while asylum seekers, who are most active on Facebook. Other networks also tend to attract people with a higher level of education, and women are more likely to use Twitter and LinkedIn than men. This indicates that communication with migrants would be most effective through Facebook, but that when particular demographic groups are being targeted, other platforms will also reach high numbers of readers and members.

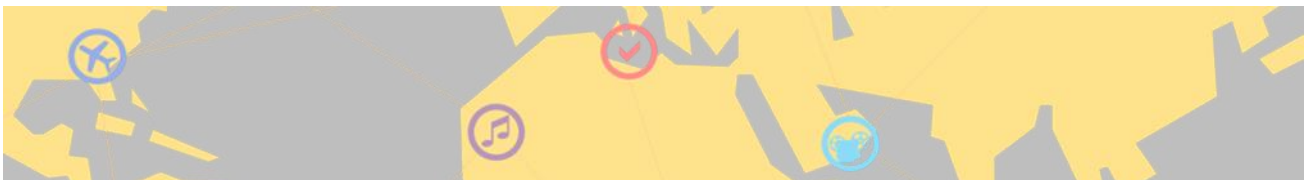
Migrants access social media mostly to connect with family and friends and to seek entertainment. Almost half of respondents do not seek information on products and services via social media while only slightly more

than one-third of respondents declare to seek information on the country of destination. It is unclear whether this is because information on social media is viewed as unreliable or impersonal, whether it is because there is not enough of it for social media platforms to be considered to be sources of such information, or because this is simply not a priority in social media use for migrants.





At the same time, the type of information migrants pursue via their community's social media channels varies across migrant categories but a large majority asked to receive more information on migrant rights and law regulations than they currently do. This suggests that organisations based in Malta trying to connect with migrants via social media should both establish a personal connection and amplify the range of social media posts (e.g. mixing targeted information with entertaining posts).

Finally, the findings indicate that migrants mostly use social media in a passive way. Few respondents are involved in content sharing and creation activities and these are more likely to hold at least a post-secondary education. It is possible to note a major engagement of EU citizens while asylum seekers are the least involved. This possibly means that one of the ways in which useful information can be shared is by empowering migrants online in order to assist them in developing and creating content that would be useful to them and to their friends and networks.

As the first of its kind, this research has allowed us to seek answers to some questions, and to open a wider conversation on the topic of social media use by migrants. We hope that sharing this research will enable organizations and groups to be able to better access migrants and particular demographics of migrants and to network more effectively.



Appendix: Social Networks

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|---|---|
| <p>Facebook</p>  | <p>Founded: 2004</p> <p>Stated Mission: “to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected.”</p> <p>Users: 968 million daily (June 2015)³⁵</p> <p>Facebook is the most popular social media network worldwide³⁶. Users may chat directly to each other as well as post links, photos, and messages to groups, pages and their own personalized “walls”.</p> |
| <p>Twitter</p>  | <p>Founded: 2007</p> <p>Stated Mission: “To give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers.”</p> <p>Users: 316 million monthly (as of June 2015)³⁷</p> <p>Twitter users post messages of up to 140 characters, which are aggregated to users’ feeds and can be searched by descriptive “hashtags” (e.g. #pfcmalta).</p> |
| <p>You Tube</p>  | <p>Founded: 2005</p> <p>Description: “YouTube allows billions of people to discover, watch and share originally-created videos.”³⁸</p> <p>Users: “over a billion”, with “hundreds of millions” of hours watched daily”.³⁹</p> <p>It allows to discover, watch and share originally-created videos. Moreover, it provides a forum for people to connect, inform and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small.⁴⁰</p> |
| <p>Linked in</p>  | <p>Founded: 2003</p> <p>Stated Mission: “To connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.”</p> <p>Users: 400 million registered.⁴¹ LinkedIn allows users to look for jobs, advertise their skill sets, and seek employees.</p> |

³⁵ Facebook Newsroom, Company Info. <http://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/> Last accessed on the 7th October 2015.

³⁶ Statista, “Leading social networks worldwide as of August 2015, ranked by number of active users (in millions.”, 2015, last accessed on the 20th November 2015: <http://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

³⁷ Twitter, Company / About, last accessed on the 7th October 2015: <https://about.twitter.com/company>

³⁸ YouTube, About YouTube, accessed on the 7th October 2015: <https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/>

³⁹ YouTube: Statistic, last accessed on the 7th October 2015: <https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>

⁴⁰ YouTube, About YouTube, accessed on the 1st March 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/en-GB/>

⁴¹ LinkedIn, About Us, last accessed on the 7th October 2015: <https://press.linkedin.com/about-linkedin>.

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