A Scientific Guide to Posting Tweets, Facebook Posts, Emails, and Blog Posts at the Best Time

http://blog.bufferapp.com/best-time-to-tweet-post-to-facebook-send-emails-publish-blogposts

By Belle Beth Cooper August 29, 2013 104 Comments

We're pretty keen on optimal timing for social media here at Buffer, and I figured it was high time I collected all the information we have about online communication into one place. I've collected research and stats on Twitter, Facebook, email and blogging to help you find the best time to communicate with others in each format.

The tricky thing I've come across is that since the web is still so new, **a lot of the research available to us is conflicting**. We really need more time and more studies to get definitive answers about what works best, and the fact that our audience members are constantly changing their own activity patterns makes it even harder to work out for sure. Looking at the latest social media stats seems to only confirm that.

So my suggestion would be to use this guide as just that—a guide to help you work out what to test for your own audience, so that you can see what actually works best in your specific case.

Let's get into the stats then!

Facebook – find the best time to post your updates

When I posted about Facebook's News Feed algorithm, one of the factors I talked about was time decay. This is simply the age of your post: how long has it been since you posted it? With the recent introduction of Story Bumping, time decay matters a lot less than how relevant your story is to the user in terms of getting into their News Feed (i.e. does it from a user or Page they interact with often, or have interacted with recently). Still, it's good to keep time decay in mind, since it does make *some* difference: you won't see posts from 3 months ago in your News Feed today.

In terms of specific days and times to post on Facebook, here are some of the stats I found:

Engagement rates are 18% higher on Thursdays and Fridays.

I love the way this was explained in Buddy Media's study: as they put it, "the less people want to be at work, the more they are on Facebook!"

Best Day to Post:
Determine Yours

Our research revealed that 86% of Posts are published between Monday through Friday, with user engagement on these Posts peaking on Thursday and Friday. Generally speaking, that means the best time of the week to post is towards the end of the week. This finding coincides with data recently revealed by Facebook showing that the "Happiness Index" on Facebook spikes by 10% on Friday.[1]

Engagement rates fall approximately 3.5% below average for Posts published Monday through Wednesday, with engagement rates on Saturday being 18% below average. However, engagement rates ultimately vary by industry.

Specific industries varied slightly in which days of the week garnered the most engagement, but most of them sit around the end of the week, from Wednesday to Friday.

Another study found that **engagement was 32% higher on weekends**, so the end of the week is definitely a good rough guide to start experimenting with. The following infographic from KISSmetrics and Dan Zarrella describes it well:


The best time of day to post on Facebook is debatable, with stats ranging from 1pm to get the most shares, to 3pm to get more clicks, to the broader suggestion of anytime between 9am and 7pm. It seems that this generally points to early afternoon being a solid time to post, and anytime after dinner and before work being a long shot.

For more Facebook stats and Facebook statistics we've written a complete guide for you to check out.

Twitter – when is the best time to Tweet for engagement vs. clicks

Twitter is such a popular network for mobile users that it can be a bit tricky to lock down exactly when the best time to post is. Here are some suggestions from the research I've found:

Twitter engagement for brands is 17% higher on weekends according to Dan Zarrella's research.
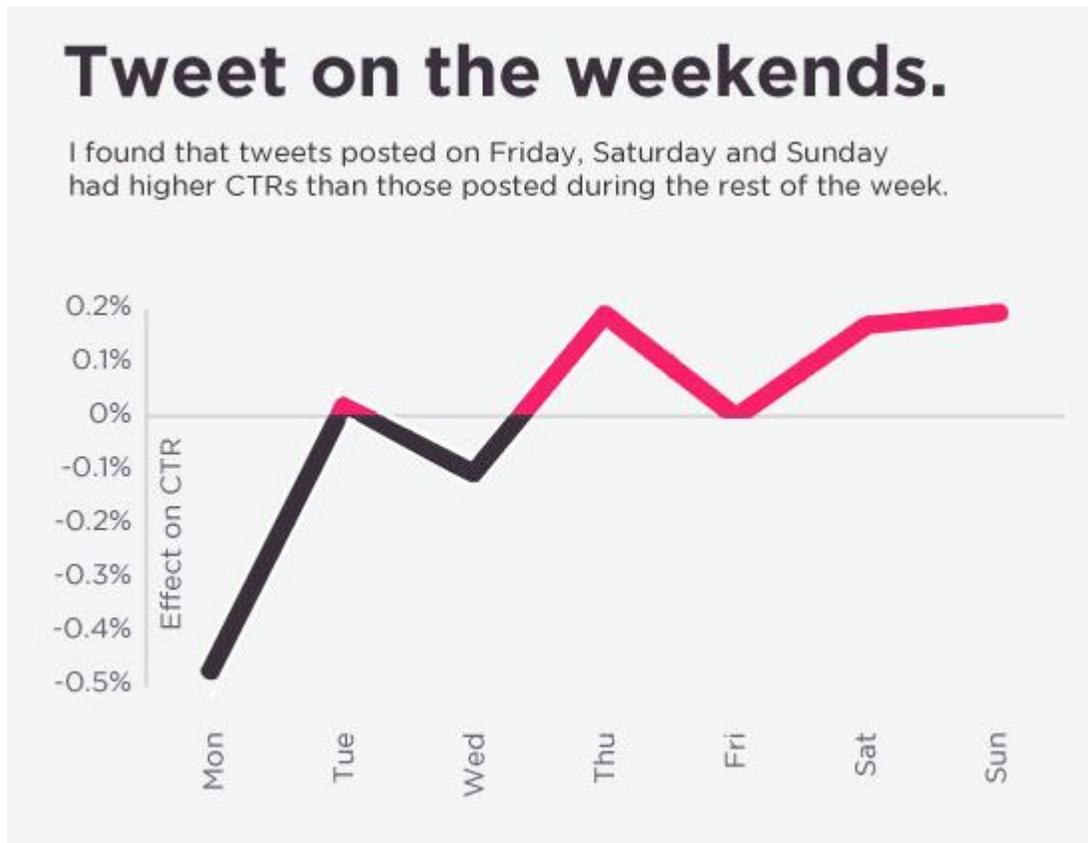
If you're tweeting from your company account, you might want to keep this in mind, especially if engagement is what you're looking for. Buffer can help you spread out your tweets to post at the optimal times, so you don't even have to work weekends to take advantage of this! Click-through rates are generally highest on weekends, as well as mid-week, on Wednesdays.

On the other hand, an Argyle Social study showed that weekdays **provide 14% more engagement than weekends**, so this is definitely one you'll want to test on your audience.
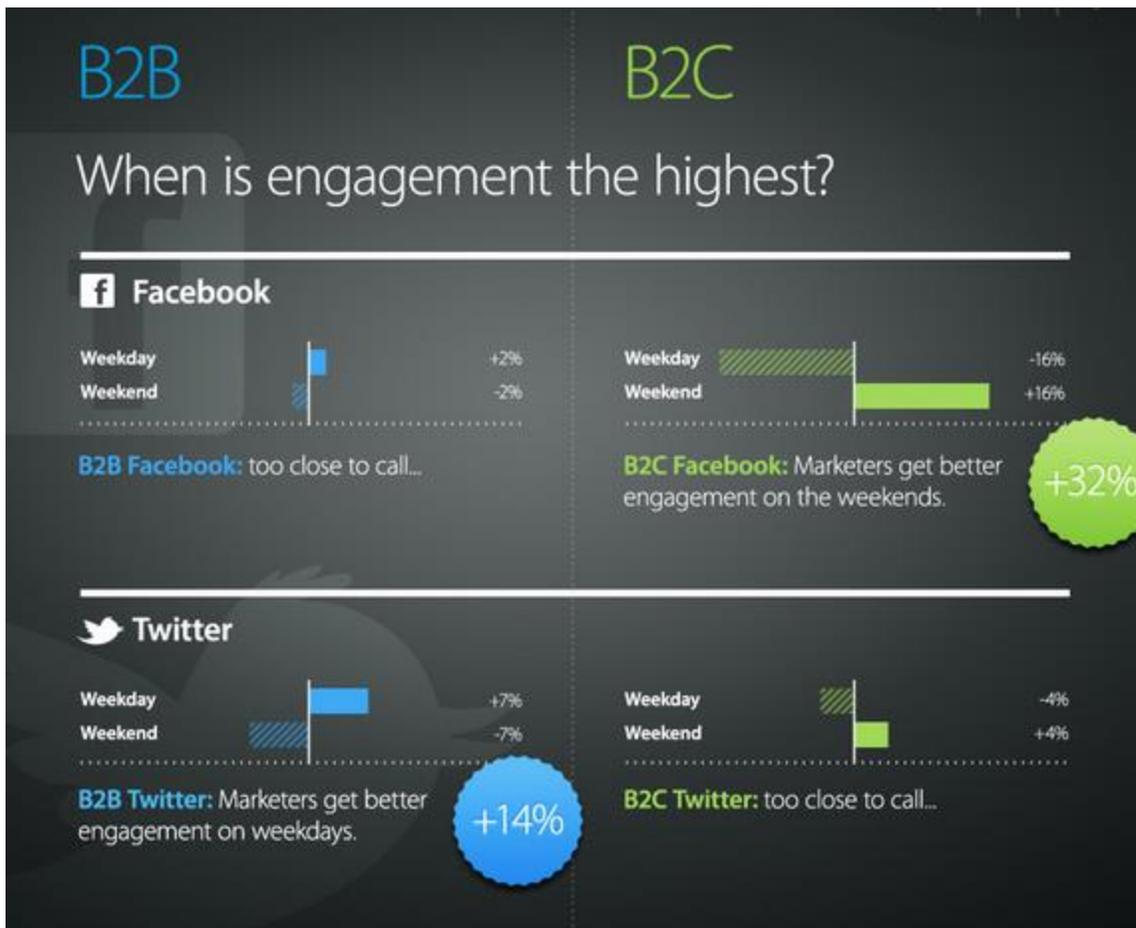
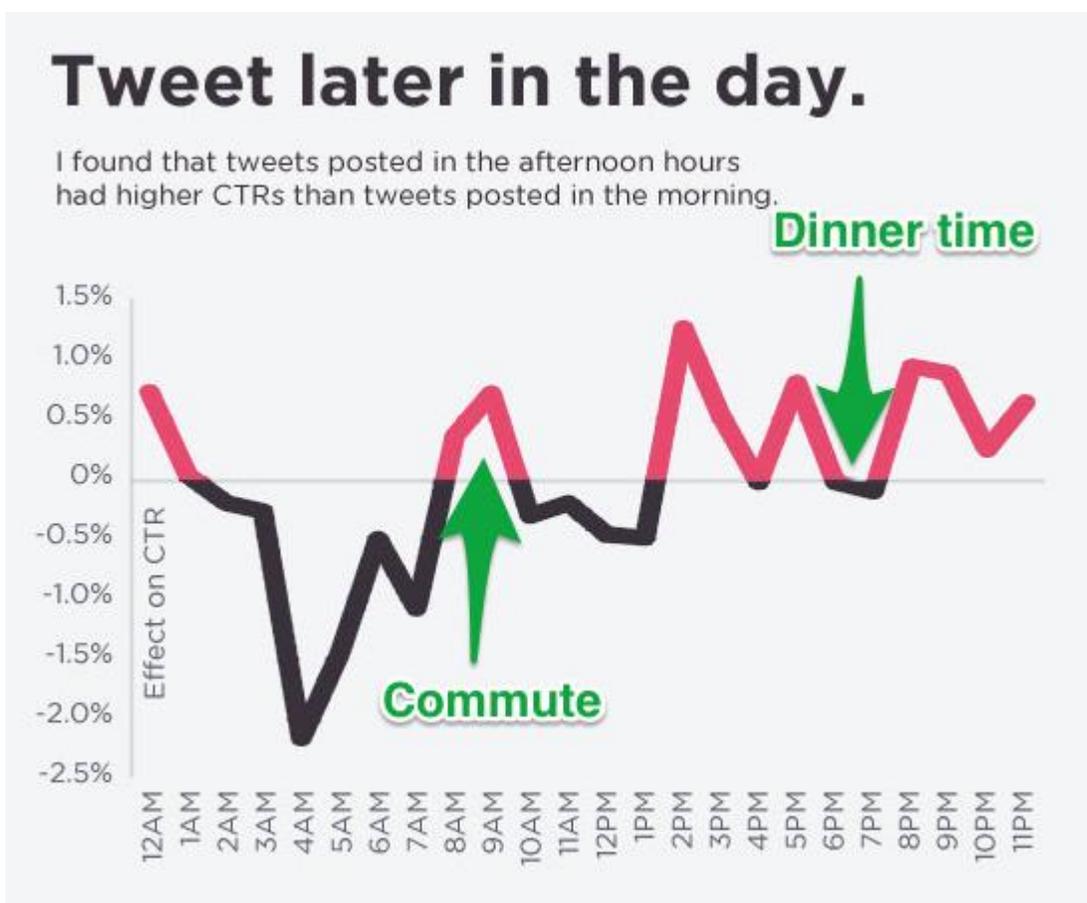When we look at the time of day, **retweets have been shown to be highest around 5pm**.

For click-throughs, the best times seem to be around noon and 6pm.

TWITTER CTR BY HOUR

~ 60%

80%

40%

0%

12AM   6AM   12PM   6PM   11PM

This could be due to lunch breaks and people looking for something to keep them occupied on the commute home after work.

Tweet later in the day.

I found that tweets posted in the afternoon hours
had higher CTRs than tweets posted in the morning.

Dinner time

Commute

Effect on CTR

1.5%
1.0%
0.5%
0%
-0.5%
-1.0%
-1.5%
-2.0%
-2.5%

12AM 1AM 2AM 3AM 4AM 5AM 6AM 7AM 8AM 9AM 10AM 11AM 12PM 1PM 2PM 3PM 4PM 5PM 6PM 7PM 8PM 9PM 10PM 11PM

There are lots of Twitter users who primarily use a mobile device—rarely loading up Twitter on their desktops. Twitter did an interesting study of these users and found that they are **181% more likely to be on Twitter during their commute.**

They're also **119% more likely to use Twitter during school or work hours.**

For more details on the latest Twitter stats and Twitter statistics, check out this guide.

Email – find the best time to send for the right content

There's been lots of research done on the best time to send emails, particularly in the case of email marketing. Some research done by Dan Zarrella from Hubspot broke down each time of day and worked out which type of emails work best for that period. Here's what he found:

- **10pm–6am**: This is the dead zone, when hardly any emails get opened.

- **6am–10am**: Consumer-based marketing emails are best sent early in the morning.

- **10am-noon**: Most people are working, and probably won't open your email.

- **Noon–2pm**: News and magazine updates are popular during lunch breaks.

- **2–3pm**: After lunch lots of people buckle down and ignore their inbox.

- **3–5pm**: Property and financial-related offers are best sent in the early afternoon.

- **5–7pm**: Holiday promotions & B2B promotions get opened mostly in the early evening.

- **7–10pm**: Consumer promotions are popular again after dinner.

What I thought was really interesting about this breakdown is why each type of email is more popular at certain times. From 3–5pm, for instance, the reason people open financial and property-related emails is that they're more likely to be thinking about their life situation and how to improve it. Understanding how these time blocks work can be a good start to sending your emails at just the right time.

And since **23.63% of emails are opened within an hour of being received**, this is something we definitely want to get right.

For more general emails, **open rates, click-through rates and abuse reports were all found to be highest during early mornings and on weekends.**

OPEN RATES BY HOUR

~ 53%

60%

30%

0%

12AM   6AM   12PM   6PM   11PM

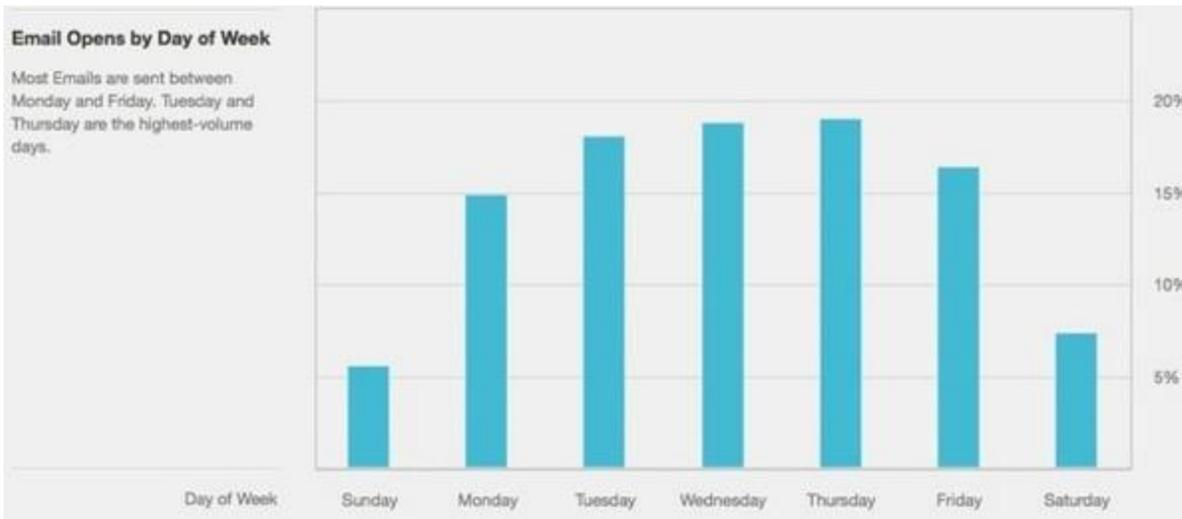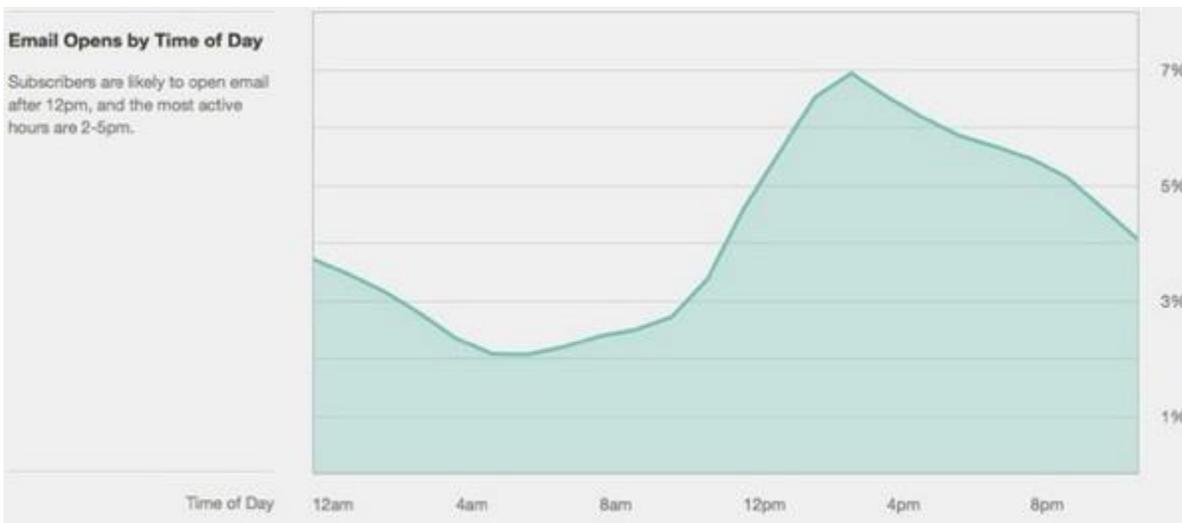KEY TAKEAWAY

OPEN RATES ARE HIGHEST IN THE

EARLY MORNING

This probably means that most of us have more time to dedicate to our inbox during these periods, rather than during the day when we're trying to get work done.

CLICK RATES BY DAY

~ 10%

10%

5%

0%

Sunday   Wednesday   Saturday

KEY TAKEAWAY

CLICK RATES ARE HIGHEST DURING THE

WEEKEND

OPEN RATES BY DAY

~ 44%

45%

23%

0%

Sunday   Wednesday   Saturday

KEY TAKEAWAY

OPEN RATES ARE HIGHEST DURING THE

WEEKEND

In a different study by MailChimp open rates were shown to be **noticeably lower on weekends**.

Email Opens by Day of Week

Most Emails are sent between Monday and Friday. Tuesday and Thursday are the highest-volume days.

They also found that **open rates increased after 12pm, and were highest between 2pm and 5pm**.

Email Opens by Time of Day

Subscribers are likely to open email after 12pm, and the most active hours are 2-5pm.

A GetResponse study backed this up by showing that open rates drop off slightly, and **click-through rates drop significantly on weekends**.

GetResponse found that **Thursday is the best day for both open rates and click-throughs**.
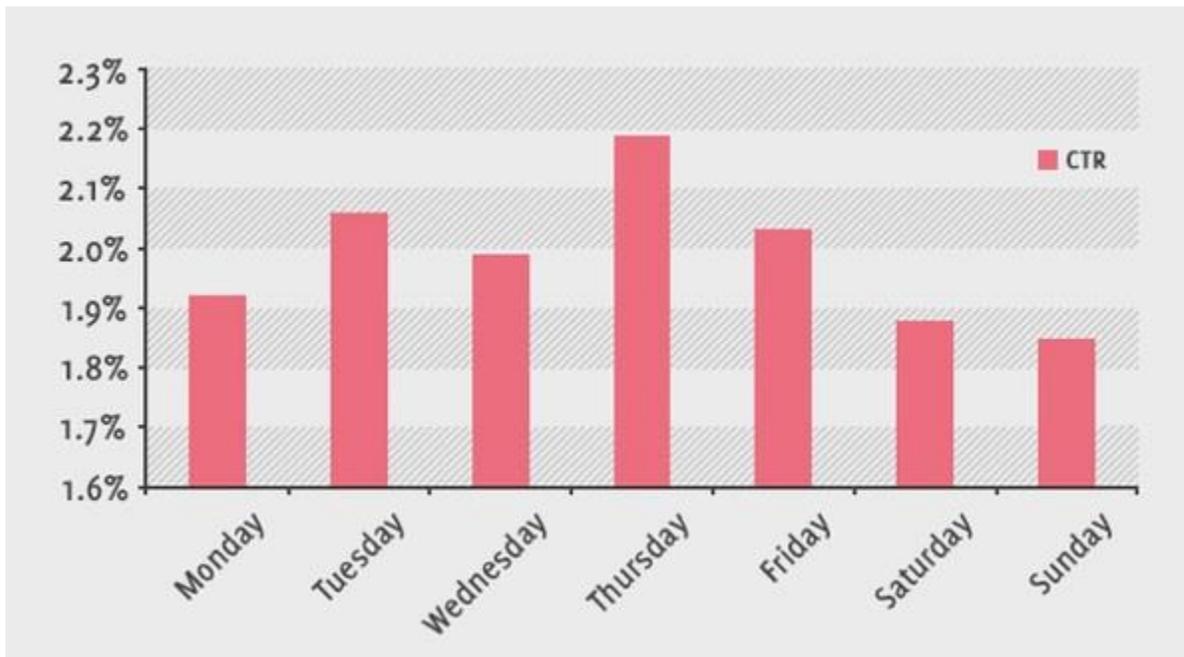
Mark Suster offers [some great advice](#) when it comes to sending emails:

Often I'll write emails on the weekend and then send first thing Monday morning. I want to be on top of the stack, not at the bottom of the pile. Most people process email first thing in the morning (although productivity experts say not to!).

BTW, when I wrote blog posts on Sunday's I always Tweet again Monday morning for exactly this reason.

Blog posts – what time should you hit publish on your posts?

So let's take a look at when to publish blog posts.

Dan Zarrella has some more [great stats](#) on this topic, but he makes a good point about the pros and cons of the timing you choose. One thing Dan suggests we consider is that **if we post during time of higher traffic, we're more likely to have higher bounce rates and get lost amongst the noise** of other content being published.

On the other hand, **posting at times when fewer people are online will garner less traffic and engagement, but give our posts more prominence and less competition against other content.**

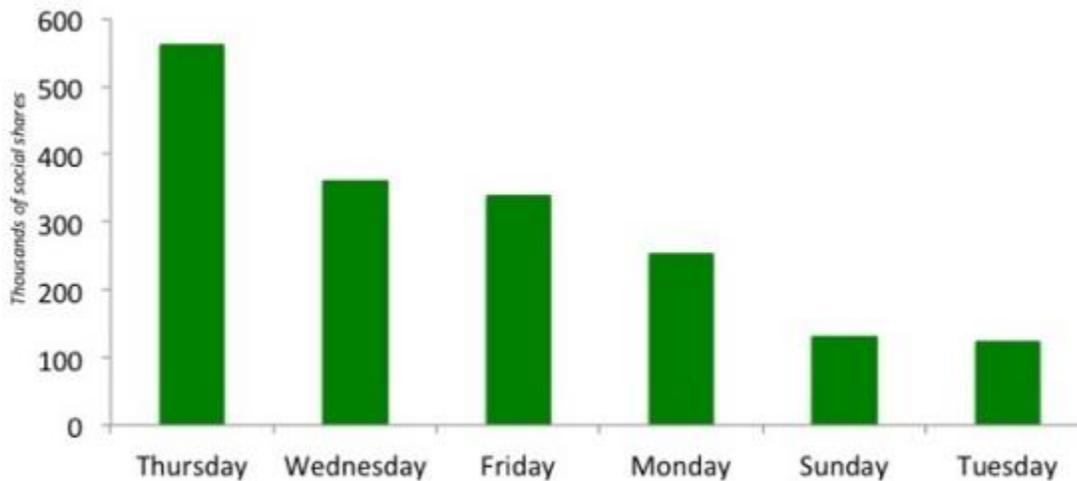Here are some useful stats from Dan's research into blog timing:
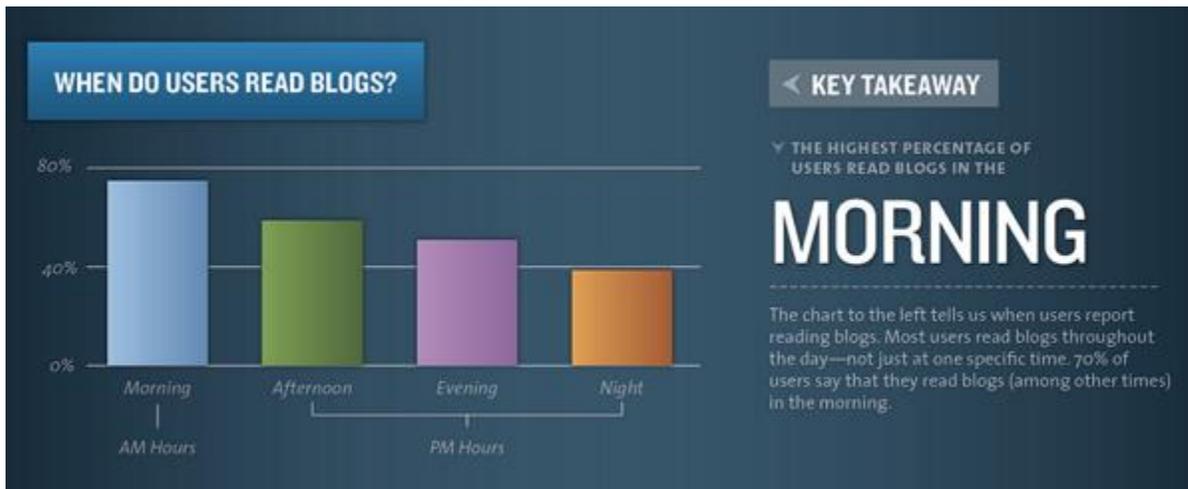
- **70% of users say they read blogs in the morning**
- **More men read blogs at night than women**
- **Mondays are the highest traffic days for an average blog**
- **11am is usually the highest traffic hour for an average blog**
- **Comments are usually highest on Saturdays and around 9am on most days**
- **Blogs that post more than once per day have a higher chance of inbound links and more unique views**

Knowing your audience is obviously important for working out the best time to publish on your blog. If your audience is women, for instance, mornings are probably a better bet than nights.

While Mondays are the best days to publish for traffic, Social Fresh suggests **posting on a Thursday for more social shares** across the web. Here are also more ideas to find the best time to publish blogposts.

Best Day to Blog by Social Shares

Thousands of social shares (y-axis: 0, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600)

Thursday — ~560
Wednesday — ~360
Friday — ~340
Monday — ~255
Sunday — ~130
Tuesday — ~125

Presented by: **shareah⊙lic**

This study also found that most content sharing happens in the morning, which backs up Dan's stats that mornings are the most popular time to read blogs.

With Buffer's new custom scheduling feature, you can now publish your post whenever suits you and schedule it to be promoted on social networks at a more optimal time. Plus, you can now send and schedule posts to Google+ from Buffer!

Timing depends on the individual

Timing is difficult to get exactly right, and a big part of this is because we all have different schedules and routines for checking email or using social media. An experiment by online retailer eBags showed this point perfectly. Looking at the latest social media statistics the range of different schedules seems to only increase too.

The company thought that when users were signing up to an email list, that was probably a good time of day for them to be online, so sending emails to them at that same time of day would work best. By analyzing the behavior of each individual user, eBags sent out emails to users at the same time of day they had signed up for the email list.

This actually worked incredibly well: **click-through rates rose by 20% and conversion rates rose by 65%.**

Unfortunately, this is such a complicated and time-consuming process that it wasn't sustainable. Hopefully these kind of features can be built into social media and email management tools in the future so we can all take advantage of these insights!

Since it's still so difficult to find the optimal time for each type of online communication that will work for everyone, I'd love to hear about your personal experiences. **What works best for you?** You can comment below, send me an email or catch me on Twitter at @bellebethcooper.

P.S. If you liked this post, you might enjoy our Buffer Blog newsletter. Receive each new post delivered right to your inbox, plus our can't-miss weekly email of the Internet's best reads. Sign up here.

Photo-Credit: Social timing infographics from Dan Zarrella, KISSmetrics, Bit.ly and Argyle Social.

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