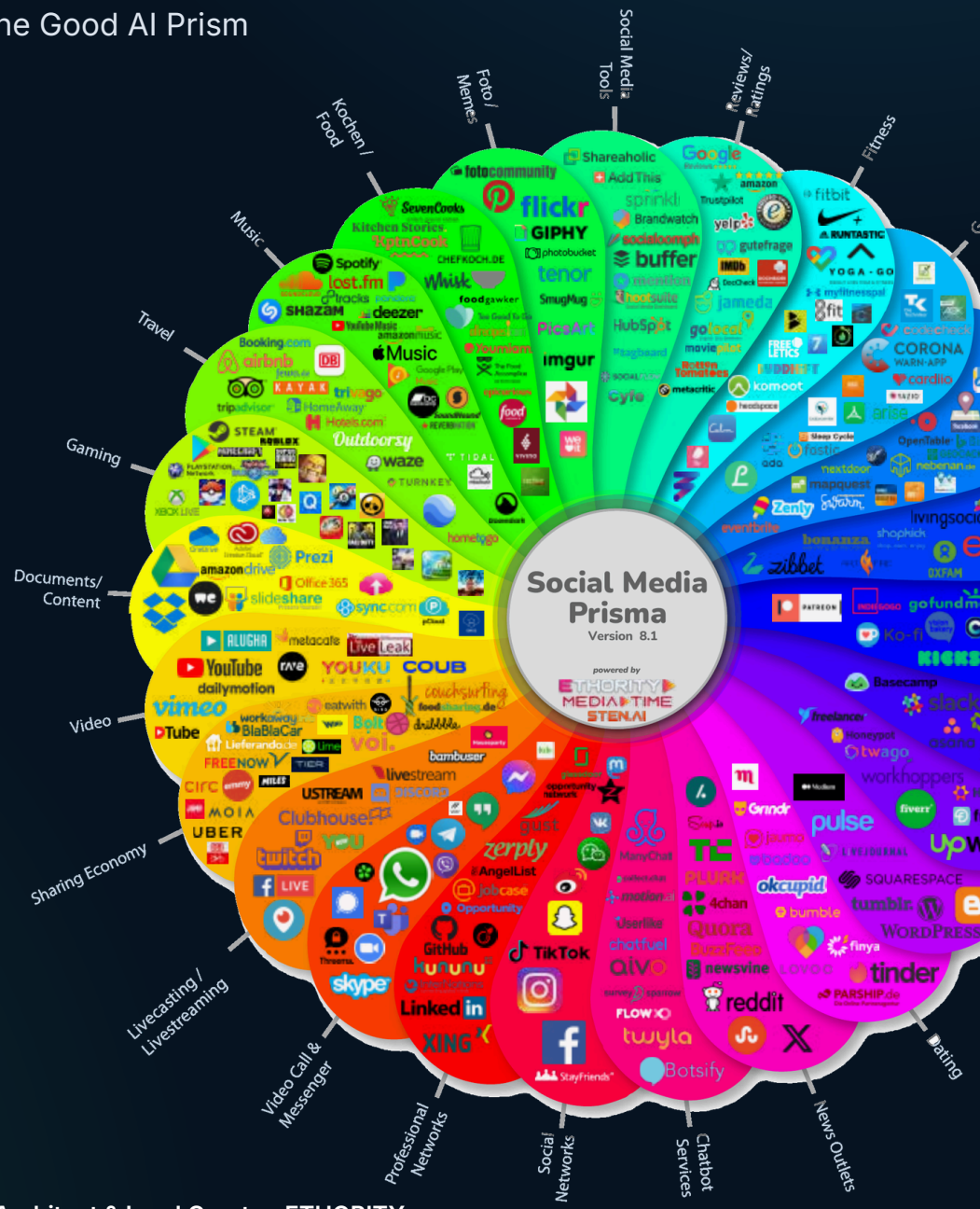
ETHORITY
AI BUSINESS OPERATING SYSTEM

HISTORIC PAPER · EDITION 1.4

The Social Media Prisma 2009–2025

How ETHORITY mapped the social web for sixteen years, and what the Good AI Prism takes from it



Sten Franke · Founder, Principal Architect & Lead Creator, ETHORITY

22 October 2026 · The Social Media Prisma was inspired by the Conversation Prism of Brian Solis and JESS3.

AT A GLANCE

One picture of the social web, redrawn for sixteen years

The Social Media Prisma sorted the platforms people used into about two dozen petals, from networks and video to reviews, messaging, shopping and work, so that a marketing team, a lecturer or a journalist could see the whole landscape on one page.

It began in September 2009 as a German adaptation of the Conversation Prism, which Brian Solis and JESS3 had drawn for the US social web in 2008. ETHORITY added the services that mattered in Germany, released it for free use with credit to the source and redrew it as the market moved: numbered German versions up to 8.1, a Chinese edition in 2012, two global editions and a 2017/2018 print edition.

2009
first German edition, September

8.1
latest version, master file June 2025

3
editions: German, Chinese, global

25
petals in version 4.0 (2012); later counts are given per edition

11
academic papers, books and theses citing or reproducing it, verified for this paper

30
articles and posts collected by ETHORITY after version 2.0, April 2010

What the Prisma is

A circular map. Each petal is one category of social channels; each logo is a service that mattered in that market. The centre names the edition and its publisher. Readers were invited to use and share it in publications and presentations with a link to the source. Licence terms differ by edition: the 2009 announcement required credit and did not allow modification; later artworks carry their own notice.

ORIGINS · 2008–2010

A German map of a US idea

In 2008 Brian Solis and the design agency JESS3 published the Conversation Prism, a circular map that sorted social services by the kind of conversation they host. It became a standard picture of the social web. Its US focus also left gaps: services that dominated Germany, such as Xing and StudiVZ, were barely known abroad.

In September 2009 ETHORITY redrew the map for the German market. BASIC thinking introduced it a month later as an overview of almost all relevant services in Germany, sorted by category, with the US original credited.

Version 2.0 followed in April 2010, rebuilt with suggestions that readers had sent through comments and emails. Cool Infographics in the United States covered the German version on 16 April 2010. A week later, ETHORITY collected 30 distinct articles and blog posts about the release, from t3n and turi2 to a FernUniversität Hagen blog and sites in Austria and Switzerland.

The pattern set in 2010 held for the next fifteen years: a shared map, improved with readers' suggestions and cited with a link to the source.

Linked in ETHORITY's collection of 23 April 2010 (selection)

t3n.de · meedia.de · turi2.de · atmedia.at · yigg.de · webosoph.de · karlkratz.de · fernuni-hagen.de · blog.xeit.ch · blog.loom-berlin.com · ecommerce-fachwissen.de · blog.meinestadt.de · kommunikation-zweinull.de · socialnetworkstrategien.de · webcific.com · ninare.de · f-i-ts.de · marko-kramer.de · blog.jan-haarhoff.de · marketingsocialmedia.de · stream.trendtag.de · blog.viminds.de · socialmedia-mainfranken.de · jappyblog.de · your-decision.de · doubleyuu.com · daniel-rapp.de

Sites ETHORITY listed as having covered or shared version 2.0.

TIMELINE

Every documented edition

2008 — **Conversation Prism**
Brian Solis and JESS3 map the US social web. The original that inspired the Prisma.

21 Sep 2009 — **Version 1.0 · German**
Adapted for Germany, with services such as Xing and StudiVZ.

15 Apr 2010 — **Version 2.0**
Released after a call for suggestions on 17 Mar 2010; linked across German-language media and blogs and covered in the US.

19 Sep 2011 — **Version 3.0**
The first edition with Google+.

14 Mar 2012 — **Chinese Edition 1.0**
A separate map for China's platforms, from BBS forums to microblogs.

28 Mar 2012 — **Version 4.0**
25 petals; adds Pinterest, Dailymotion, Orkut and Photobucket.

12 Sep 2012 — **Version 5.0**
New petals for social media tools and mobile apps; blog search removed; reviews merged with special-interest reviews, browser gaming with social gaming.

Undated — **Global Social Media Prism**
Two international editions without a publication date; the services shown allow them no earlier than mid-2011 and 2013.

22 Oct 2014 — **Version 6.0**
261 platforms in 25 petals; microblogging folded into social networks; monitoring and online dating added.

16 Oct 2017 — **Edition 2017/2018**
With DataChamp24; printed as poster and postcards.

By 2021 — **Version 8.0**
Reproduced in a 2021 book; permission papers of January 2021 name a planned first-quarter release. Separate petals for health and fitness.

2023 — **Version 8.0 re-issue**
Same map, powered by STEN.AI.

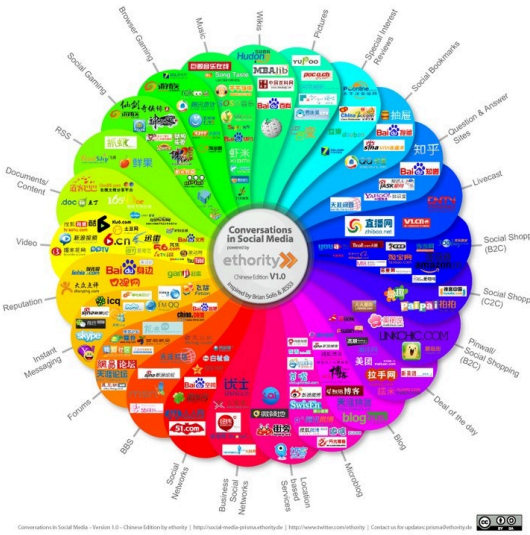
2025 — **Version 8.1**
The global landscape of social apps, platforms and tools; Twitter appears as X.

Exact dates follow ETHORITY's own release posts as retained in the 2022 website export, from the first German edition on 21 September 2009 onwards. The global editions carry no date: the services they show give only the earliest possible date. The Conversation Prism of 2008 is the original that inspired the Prisma.

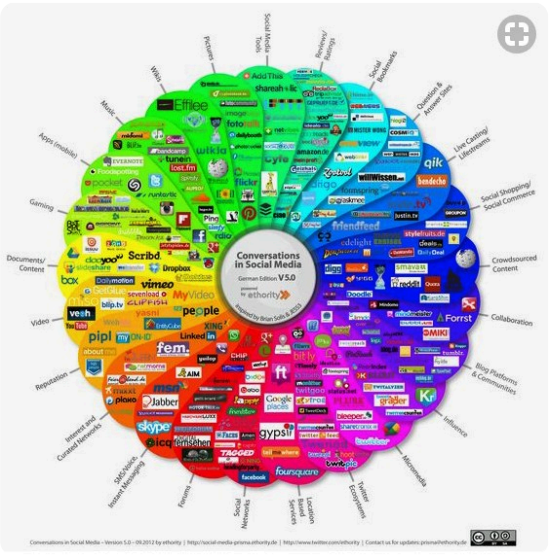
2012

Two maps in one year: China and version 5.0

In March 2012 ETHORITY published a separate edition for China, whose social web had almost no overlap with Germany's: Baidu, Sina, Youku, Taobao, QQ and Renren in place of Google, Facebook, YouTube and eBay. Six months later, version 5.0 added petals for social media tools and mobile apps, the first German edition to map apps as a category of their own.



Chinese Edition 1.0, March 2012. Petals include BBS forums, microblogs, deals of the day and location-based services.



German Edition 5.0, September 2012. The first edition with petals for social media tools and mobile apps.

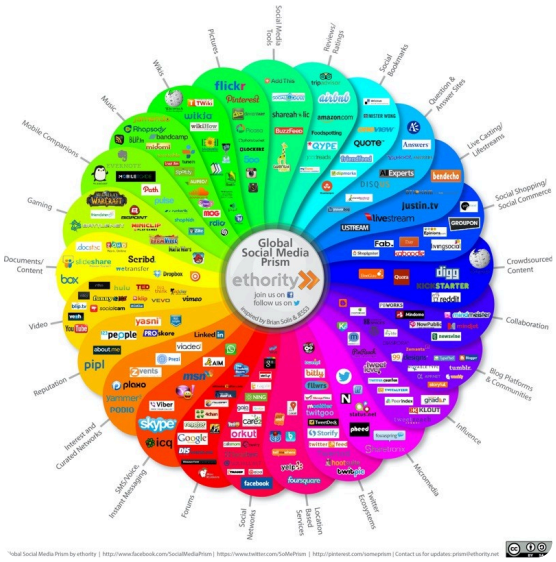
What only the Chinese map had

- Separate petals for BBS forums and for forums, reflecting how Chinese online discussion was organised.
- Three kinds of social shopping (B2C, C2C and pinwall), plus deals of the day.
- Separate petals for browser gaming and social gaming, and one for RSS readers.

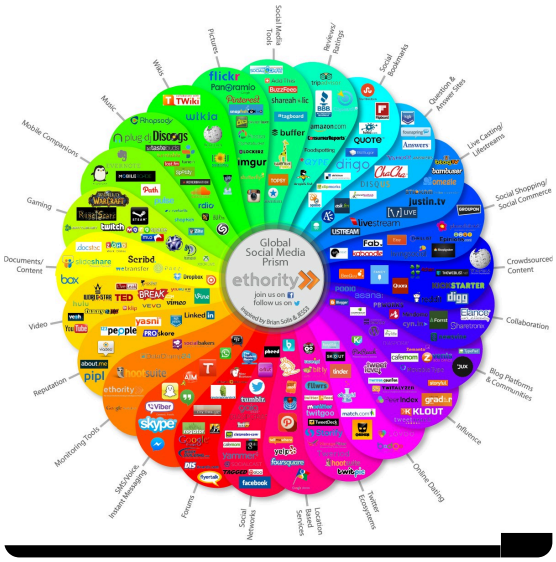
GLOBAL

The Global Social Media Prism

Alongside the German and Chinese maps, ETHORITY published a Global Social Media Prism for international audiences, with its own Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest channels. The two editions in the archive carry no date; the services they show place the first after mid-2011 and the second after early 2013.



Global Social Media Prism, first edition. It shows Google+, launched in June 2011.



Global Social Media Prism, later edition. It shows Vine, launched in January 2013, as well as Tinder and Snapchat.

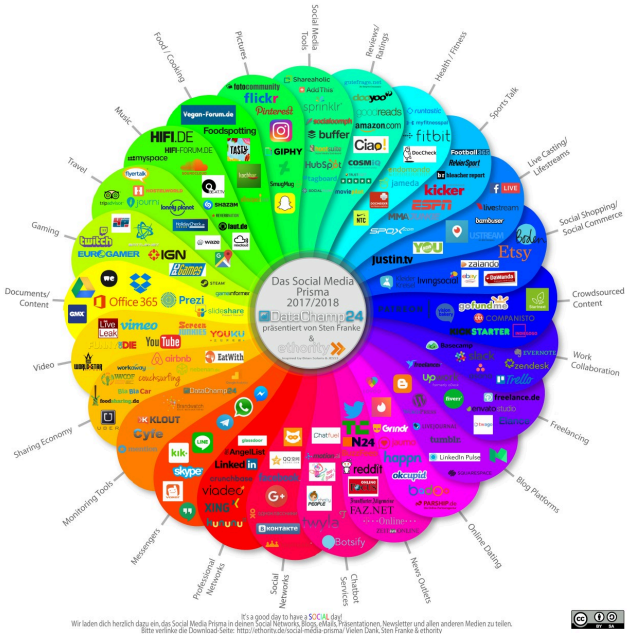
How the two global editions differ

- Both have 25 petals, including wikis, forums, influence, Twitter ecosystems and mobile companions.
- The later edition replaces micromedia with online dating, and interest and curated networks with monitoring tools.

2017/2018

From screen to wall

The 2017/2018 edition, presented with DataChamp24, left the screen. ETHORITY printed it as a poster and as postcards, and one recipient publicly thanked ETHORITY in November 2017 with photos of both. Its 25 petals ran from social media tools and sports talk to chatbot services and the sharing economy.



Das Social Media Prisma 2017/2018, presented by Sten Franke and ETHORITY with DataChamp24.

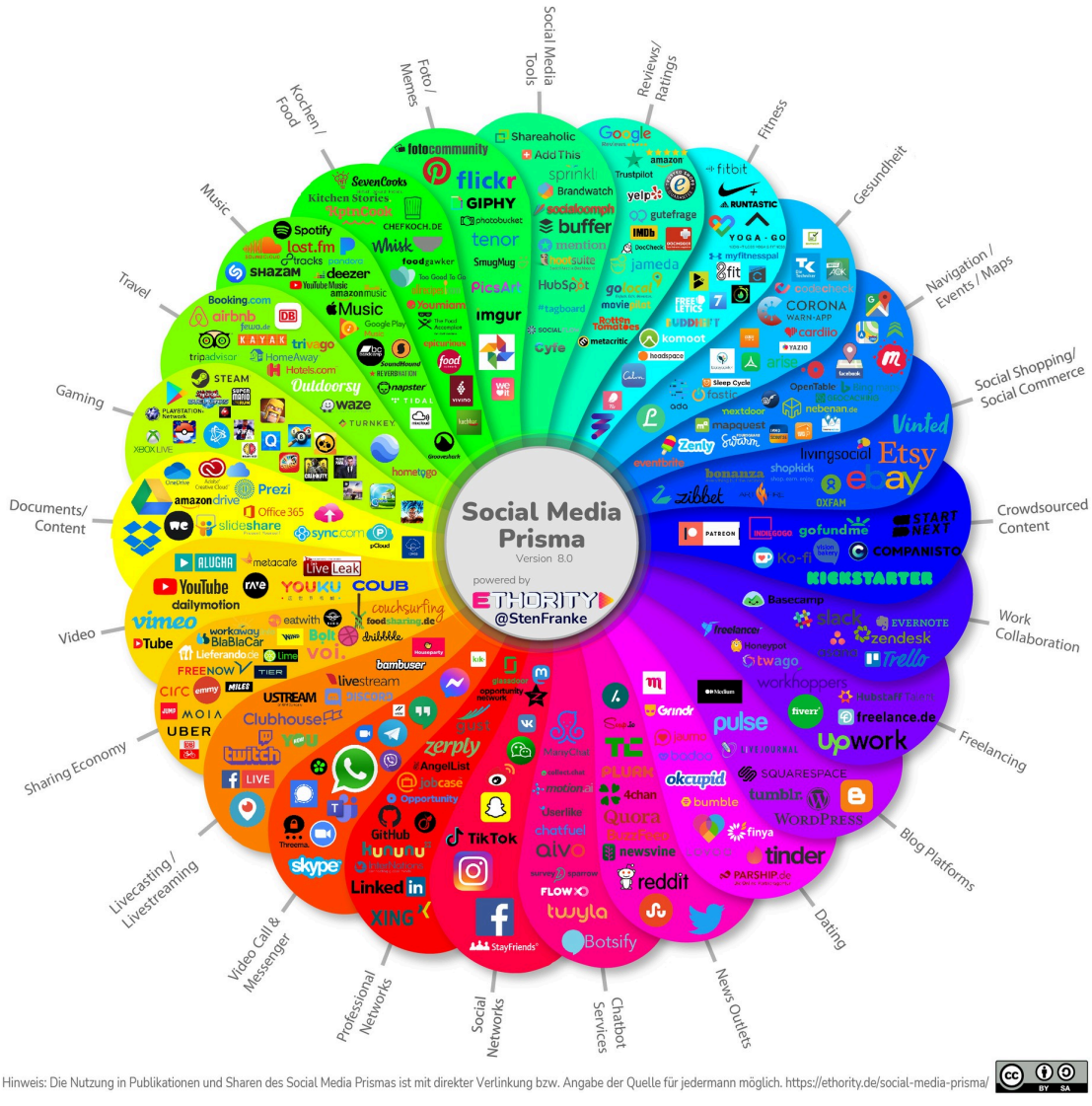


The printed poster.

VERSION 8.0 · 2021

The map of the pandemic years

Version 8.0 was in print by 2021; the permission papers of January 2021 name a planned release in the first quarter. Its petals show how everyday platform use had shifted: the Corona-Warn-App sits in a new health petal, Zoom and Teams under video call and messenger, Clubhouse under livecasting, and delivery and mobility services under the sharing economy. Compared with 2017/2018, health and fitness became separate petals and navigation, events and maps gained their own, while sports talk and monitoring tools left the map. Springer's Social Selling im B2B (2021) reproduces version 8.0 with ETHORITY's permission of January 2021, and its preface thanks Sten Franke for interviews.

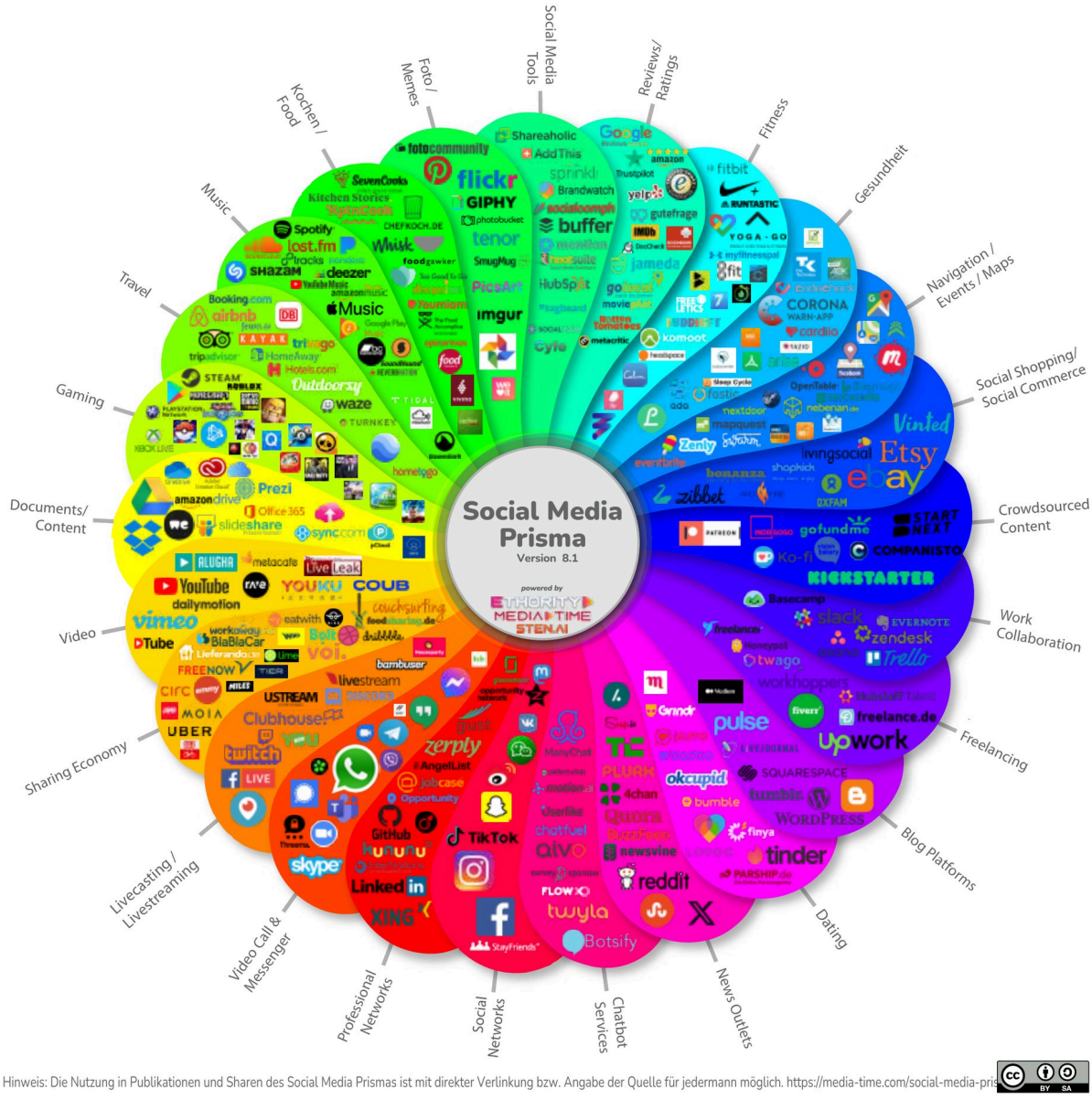


Social Media Prisma version 8.0, 2021. 25 petals.

VERSION 8.1 · 2025

The latest edition

Version 8.1, whose master file is dated June 2025, describes itself as a map of the global landscape of the most important social media apps, platforms and tools. Twitter appears as X. ETHORITY publishes it with MEDIA-TIME and STEN.AI, and invites use in publications and presentations with a link to the source, under the notice on the artwork.



Social Media Prisma version 8.1, June 2025.

RECEPTION

How the map travelled

Where the map was used: a selection of press, research and teaching sources verified for this paper.

Press and trade media

- BASIC thinking, 2009
- Cool Infographics (US), 2010
- Hellmuth Broda (English), 2011
- DIM-Marketingblog, 2011
- comspace, 2012
- ADZINE and onlinemarketing.de, 2012
- gutkommuniziert.ch (Switzerland), 2014/15
- unternehmerweb.at (Austria), 2015

Research and books

- HMD Praxis der Wirtschaftsinformatik (Springer), 2014
- Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology, 2016
- Pfaffenberger, chapter “Grundlagen”, 2016
- Thambimuthu, Klein & Asprion, “Social Media Controlling”, 2017
- Olek & Vomberg, Hochschule Niederrhein working paper, 2020
- Römmelt, Social Selling im B2B (Springer Gabler), 2021
- Säugling, “Wissensgenese 2.0” (Springer), 2021
- Decker & Gust, Der Social-Media-Zyklus (Springer Gabler), 2026

Teaching and reference

- Bachelor theses: Hochschule Mittweida, 2013 and 2017; HAW Hamburg, 2019
- Social Media Manager distance-learning course wiki
- Austrian ministry guide for hospitality businesses
- Wikibooks “Social Web”
- Social-Media-ABC wiki
- EverybodyWiki entry

Its encyclopaedia entries describe uses in presentations, textbooks, trade press, association newsletters, theses and conference talks.

METHOD

How the map worked, and what it taught

- One circle, one market. Each edition mapped a single market or audience: Germany, China or the world.
- Petals as categories. About 25 petals, each a type of social channel; categories were added, merged and retired as use changed.
- Logos as services. Services were chosen for their relevance in that market and placed by category.
- Free to cite. Editions were offered for use with a link to the source, in desktop, mobile and print formats; the exact terms were set per edition.

How the petals changed

2012 · 5.0	Added social media tools and mobile apps; blog search removed; reviews and gaming petals merged.
2014 · 6.0	Microblogging folded into social networks; monitoring and online dating added.
Global, later edition	Online dating and monitoring tools replace micromedia and interest networks.
2021 · 8.0	Health and fitness split; navigation, events and maps added; sports talk and monitoring tools removed; messengers become video call & messenger.
2025 · 8.1	Same 25 petals; Twitter shown as X.

THREE LESSONS FOR THE GOOD AI PRISM

A map is used when it is free to cite, and while its link works.

Open use carried the Prisma into newsrooms, lecture halls and books. A 2026 Springer chapter still cites it but notes that the old address no longer holds it.

Categories and entries must move with the market.

Petals for apps, tools, health and chatbots appeared when they mattered. Reviewers noticed when entries went stale, such as Qype after it closed.

A logo on a map is a claim.

The Prisma placed services by relevance. The Good AI Prism records a dated source for every entry.

LEGACY

From the Social Media Prisma to the Good AI Prism

The Good AI Prism keeps the circle and the petals. It changes what stands behind each mark: the map holds 998 market entries, including 961 AI offerings, across 24 business areas, 8 data types and 6 technology layers, and each entry is recorded with a dated source from the provider's own pages.

> **The Good AI Prism is ETHORITY's visual entry point into the AI ecosystem—connecting market intelligence with selection, implementation and the development of its Marketplace.**



The Good AI Prism, 2026.

SOURCES AND CREDITS

Sources and credits

- Conversation Prism: Brian Solis and JESS3 (2008). The Social Media Prisma was inspired by it, and its editions say so.
- Social Media Prisma artworks: Sten Franke and ETHORITY, each under the licence notice printed on that edition; versions 8.0 and 8.1 also credit STEN.AI and MEDIA-TIME.
- Logos shown in the historical maps are trademarks of their owners and appear as a record of each edition.

MAIN SOURCES

- ETHORITY release posts as retained in the website export of 15 Aug 2022: posts 4508 (21 Sep 2009), 6204 (15 Apr 2010), 8474 (19 Sep 2011), 9715 (14 Mar 2012), 9870 (28 Mar 2012), 11500 (12 Sep 2012), 16545 (16 Oct 2017)
- Brian Solis & JESS3, The Conversation Prism (2008) — via Social-Media-ABC wiki, social-media-abc.de/wiki/Social_Media_Prisma
- BASIC thinking, 12 Oct 2009 — basicthinking.de/blog/2009/10/12/social-media-prisma-ueberblick-ueber-social-media-dienste-in-deutschland/
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- DIM-Marketingblog, 12 Oct 2011 — marketinginstitut.biz/blog/das-social-media-prisma-im-wandel-der-zeit/
- comspace.blog, 4 Apr 2012 — blog.comspace.de/uebersicht-der-deutschen-social-media-landschaft-im-ethority-prisma-4-0/
- onlinemarketing.de, 20 Sep 2012 — onlinemarketing.de/social-media-marketing/social-media-prisma-5-0
- Daniel Schöberl, 22 Oct 2014 — danielschoeberl.com/social-media-prisma-6/
- Säugling (2021), “Wissensgenese 2.0: Social-Media-Analysen”, Springer — doi 10.1007/978-3-658-35121-2_3
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- Decker & Gust (2026), Der Social-Media-Zyklus, Springer Gabler — doi 10.1007/978-3-658-49493-3_8
- Rothe (2019), Bachelor thesis, HAW Hamburg — reposit.haw-hamburg.de
- gutkommuniziert.ch, “Die Social Media-Landschaft ins Prisma gelegt” — gutkommuniziert.ch
- Artwork footers of the Chinese Edition 1.0, Version 5.0, 2017/2018, Version 8.0 and Version 8.1

ETHORITY
AI BUSINESS OPERATING SYSTEM



FROM BUSINESS AMBITION TO AI THAT WORKS

Put AI to work, with evidence.

ETHORITY helps organisations choose, govern and prove AI: from independent market evidence to decisions that can be defended and outcomes that can be measured.

CONTACT



Sten Franke
Founder, Principal Architect & Lead Creator
sten@ethority.ai
linkedin.com/in/stenfranke



Severin L. Wilson
Chief Business & Transformation Officer
severin@ethority.ai
linkedin.com/in/severinwilson

STUDY REPOSITORY AND UPDATES

ethority.ai/ai-prism-study

ethority.ai

THE ETHORITY STUDY SUITE

01	**Put AI to Work: The Good AI Prism Global Market Study 2026/27**	Global edition · EN and DE
02	**Put AI to Work: The Good AI Prism Market Study 2026/27**	Germany–US focus · EN and DE
03	**Good AI Prism sector briefs 2026/27**	HR & Workforce · Health & Life Sciences · Financial Services & Insurance · Public Sector · Education · Energy & Utilities · Mobility & Logistics · Global EN and DE
04	**AI for Care in Ageing Societies**	Study 2026/27 · EN, DE, US and Global editions
05	**AI in Pharma, Biotech and Longevity**	Study 2026/27 · Global EN and DE
06	**The Social Media Prisma 2009–2025**	Historic paper · EN and DE · YOU ARE READING

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The Social Media Prisma 2009–2025 · Historic paper · Edition 1.4, 22 October 2026 · Social Media Prisma artworks: Sten Franke and ETHORITY. The Conversation Prism: Brian Solis & JESS3.