

Social media analysis of the UK's prospective international students

Italy deep dive

July 2022

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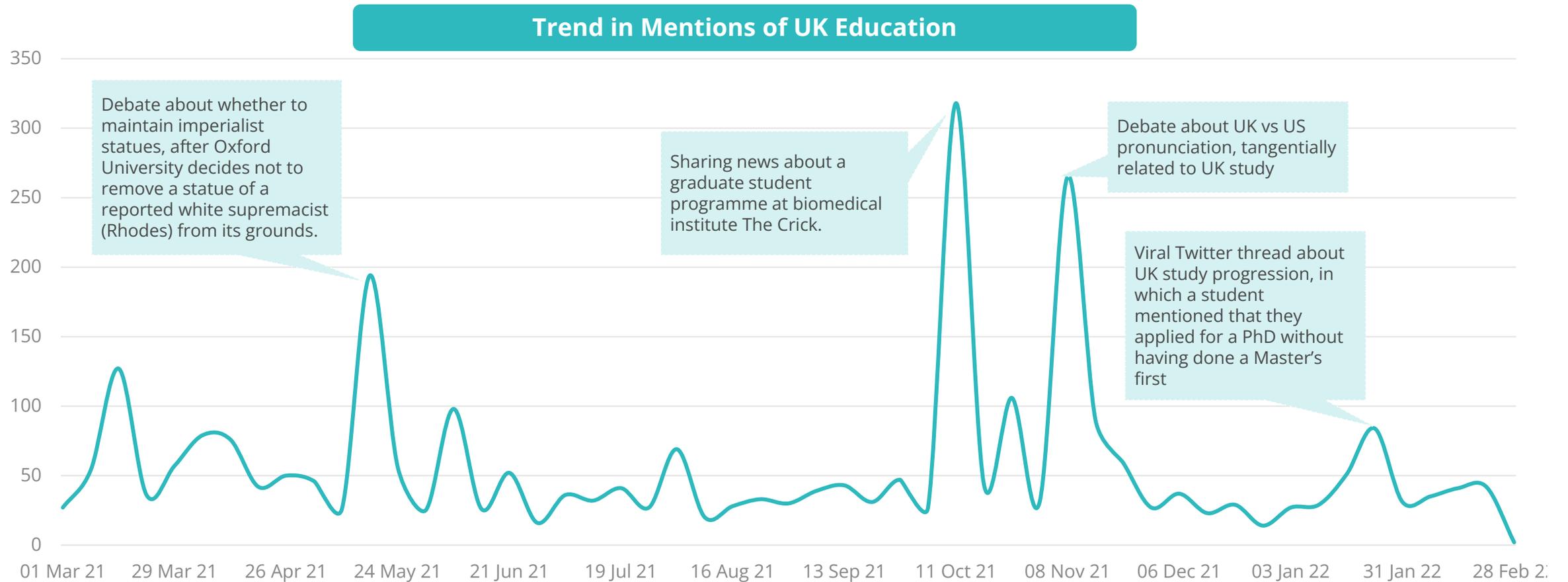
ITALY DEEP-DIVE



**Social media listening:
ITALY**

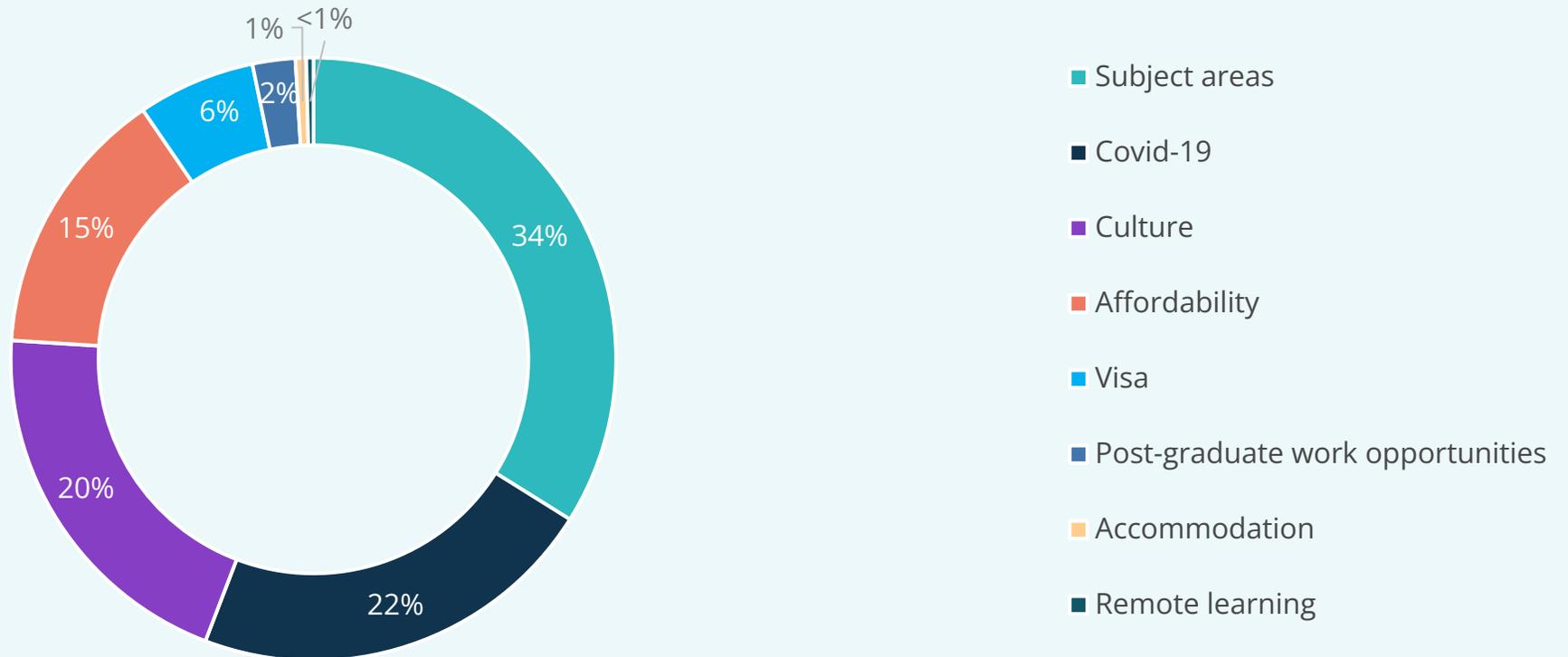


Peaks in social media conversation tend to be driven by viral stories and Twitter threads, rather than changes to institutional or governmental education policy



Specific subject areas are often mentioned in the Italian conversation, particularly Medicine, Law, Music and the Arts

KEY TOPICS SHARE OF CONVERSATION



Location and subject areas are discussed in the context of opportunities for career development and personal growth

SUBJECT AREAS

- Italians are mostly interested in subject areas such as Medicine, Law, Music and Arts. They are asking in forums about subject areas, and get answers that Medicine and Law can be very expensive and often not accessible for non-UK students. They are advised to look for some internship in Medicine or Law first, because these areas require very advanced English grammar and vocabulary. However, students in Finance or Economics admit that studying in the UK gives them big chances to get a well-paid job in London or even on Wall Street. A post saying that the University of Sheffield has started offering 'Learn Korean with BTS' courses, has got a lot of likes and retweets.

“
Hi reddit! I am a high school student in Italy and I want to study Medicine in the UK. Is it possible? If so, how? I google it before but I didn't find any exact answer. I would be interested in fees, what do I need in order to enrol to a university?
”

COVID-19

- Covid-19-related restrictions are mentioned as a big setback for studying in UK, especially in posts from 2021. The situation with gradual lifting of limitations in the UK in 2022 may give more hope to prospective Italian students that they will have the chance to study on-campus there after all. There are people who say that although the restrictions do not really stop the pandemic, they give more time to plan better on where to apply.

“
Me at 12: looking forward to turn 18, travelling and studying in London. The world when I turned 18: covid and brexit.
”

London offers a busy, modern and fast-paced life, however this can appear stressful to Italian students

CULTURE

- Prospective students see the UK as a multi-cultural hub that offers a motivating and attractive environment, providing chances to grow both professionally and personally.
- The opportunity to make new friends from around the world is also appealing. However, what bothers some is that in big cities and especially London, one is always busy and in a rush. The size of the UK cities and commuting are seen as frustrating for Italians. The rhythm of living in big UK cities contradicts with the Italian concept of “dolce far niente” (pleasant relaxation in carefree idleness in English). On the other hand, the rapid pace of life is seen as making people more productive.

“

Living in the suburbs I think I would have had a different view. I had several colleagues who were stressed by commuting. The times I would come back to London on a Monday morning at Waterloo station....

”

VISA

- The potential Italian students comment that enrolling in a British university is becoming more and more complicated, with bureaucratic procedures are becoming more expensive and demanding. If they do not yet have settled or pre-settled status or have not even applied for it, they need a visa. In addition, Italians share that travelling from Italy to England has become very complicated and coming back, even if one is sick, for example, is difficult. Forum users advise prospective students to apply for a visa and look for private insurance from Italy that has coverage in the UK.

“

Unfortunately the last year that you could apply for SFE support for EU students was academic year 2020/2021. The only thing you could do is move to the UK NOW and declare that you have been there before the 1st of January 2021, the deadline of pre-settlement application in at the end of March- if your dream is to be a musician than is worth to risk it, at the end of the day you are only 19 and nothing to loose at all; give it a try. The other option is to ask for adoption. LMAO. Good luck.

”

UK study is seen as increasingly unaffordable for Italian students

AFFORDABILITY

- Prospective international students find studying in the UK expensive and even quote sources saying that studying in the US is now three times cheaper. The cost of London universities in particular is described as “astronomical”.
- Erasmus is proposed as a potential alternative by some, while others seek scholarships, and student loans. The availability of “fantastic” studentships in UK is held in contrast with the worsened access to visas post-Brexit situation.
- With regard to cost of living London is viewed as a very expensive city, especially in terms of rent. Dublin is cited as a good, and geographically close alternative.
- Even while in the process of applying some potential students consider changing their plans and going instead to other countries, such as the Netherlands, where there are a lot of foreign students and classes are in English for many courses.
- There is some speculation as to why the services of Student Advisors are free.

“

Unless you're ready to dish out 40k per year on tuition alone, I would advise you to look elsewhere for studying. Brexit sadly closed the door on a UK uni education for many EU students.

”

Prospective students from Italy are eager to understand their chances of being able to study for a PhD in the UK

PG WORK OPPORTUNITIES

- Most of the prospective post-graduates want to know whether there is funding for PhDs as well. They seek advice on social media and student advisors from various UK universities respond that post-graduates can count on the so-called Doctoral Loan. Italian prospective students are sometimes confused about whether it is possible in the UK to study a PhD without having completed a Master's. Some want a confirmation that finding the right supervisor is essential for a successful PhD.

“ *Now we explain how I got to #Oxford. I applied for the #PhD in #Socialanthro, but because I was an #undergrad and #firstgen student I had NO idea how UK unis differed from the U.S. Turns out you can't apply to a PhD without a master's...oops.* ”

REMOTE LEARNING

- Prospective students from Italy appreciate the potential for remote learning uncovered during the pandemic. They recognise the possibility not only to learn online but also to take internationally recognised exams online. Students retweet online or on-campus programmes from their universities targeting potential Italian candidates.

“ *I did my three year degree in Italy and then took another qualification in Digital Marketing at a private institute here in London. It all depends on what you want to study. There are many universities, single courses and institutes, entirely online (with exams also online) that are 100% valid.* ”

Leisure and entertainment options drive a keen interest in living in London

UK LOCATIONS

- Italian prospective students are often seek recommendations and opinions on universities in the UK.
- Top picks are universities in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Brighton, Canterbury, or Cardiff.
- Italians appreciate the flexibility of the courses in UK universities offer, and see studying in UK as a great opportunity to improve their language skills.
- Personal growth is also a motivating factor. London is a popular destination for young people as it offers a great deal of leisure and entertainment opportunities.

COMPETITOR COUNTRIES

- Students try to understand the pros and cons of studying in the UK, especially in comparison to studying in the US or in other European countries.
- Holland, Hungary and Ireland are among other European countries mentioned as potential destinations.
- Some students discuss the availability of their preferred courses as dictating their choice.
- During the pandemic the UK was seen as a better place to study than the US, due to tighter restrictions.

“ *I'm looking for as many opinions as possible on King's College and NY Columbia; if anyone in the law/international relations world knows of these two universities, please write me privately 🙏🙏* ”

The leading questions asked by Italian students tend to be very exploratory and high-level, rather than hyper-specific

KEY QUESTION TYPES

- University in London: What to do to apply?
 - What do I need to do in order to study in UK?
 - Is it realistic to decide that I want to move to the UK for university?
 - Can I go to university there without having gone through the British version of college?
 - Is it possible for me to work a part-time job that pays good enough to allow me to live there and pay for my stay, as well as my studies?
 - I want to study Medicine in the UK. Is it possible?
 - What are the essential qualities of a PhD student?
 - Where to go to study in England?
 - Is there any way to study in England at a 'low price'?
 - Studying in England after Brexit – what chances for European students?
 - Is the UK still taking part in the Erasmus programme?
- Italian potential students often ask general questions such as what they need to do in order to study in the UK, and what to do to apply?
 - Other frequently asked questions include where to go to study in England, how to find a cheaper way to become a student, or how much would universities cost?
 - They also ask more specific questions on what are the procedures and requirements to become a student in Law or Medicine.
 - Some of them, who have heard that Erasmus could help, are asking whether the UK is still part of the programme.

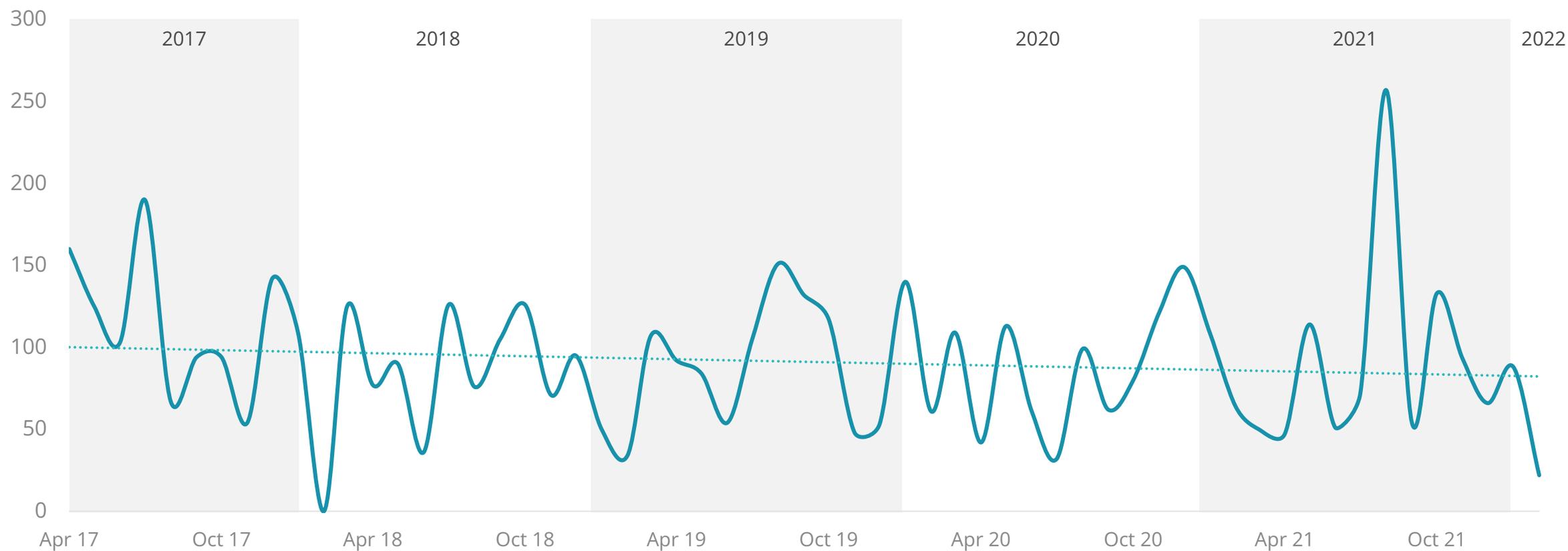
**Search & website traffic
analysis:
ITALY**



Search trend analysis

In Italy, there has been a slight downward trend in searches related to UK study over the past five years. Keyword search analysis shows some concern around the impact of Brexit on the cost to EU students studying in the UK, which may explain the falling interest.

Monthly searches for 'Study in UK' over the past 5 years

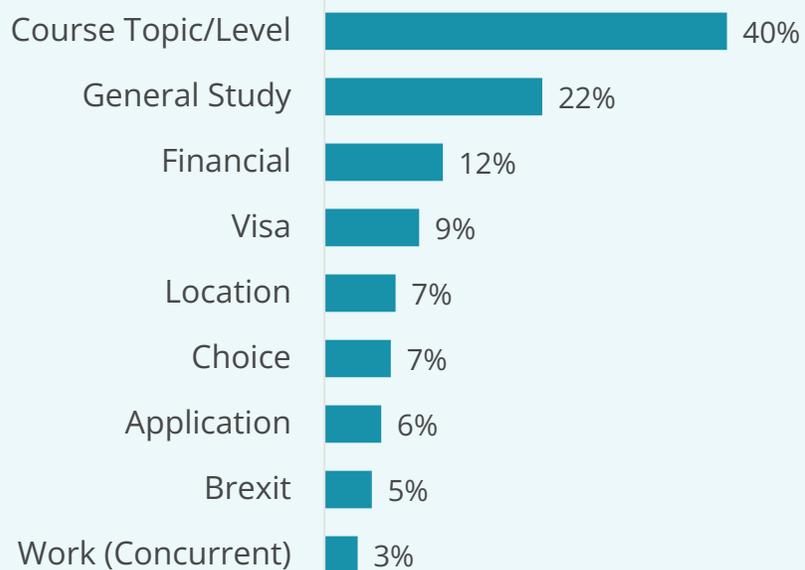


Search & website traffic analysis Overview

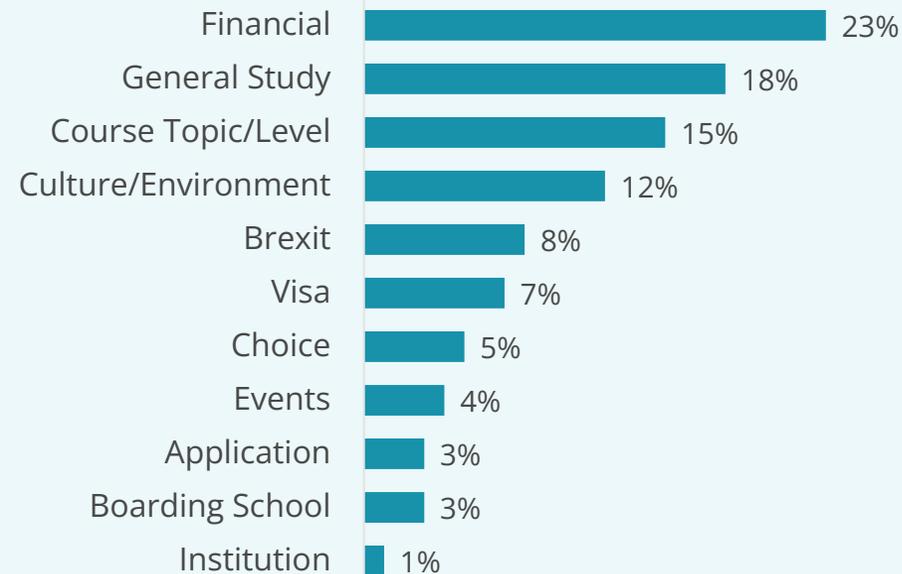
Finance-related questions are the strongest driver of Italian traffic to the Study UK website, followed by more general terms such as 'overseas study UK'.

While in general there is healthy alignment between the key search topics and those driving website traffic, there is space for the British Council to provide more information on how UK cities differ from each other. Location is a topic of interest in Italian search data.

Most Common Search Topics



Search Topics Driving Website Traffic



Search Data: Google.

General search topic data is from the last 12 months, while search topic data for website traffic is from February 2022. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Search Analysis

Course topic/level is the key subject area driving searches, often alongside location and institution. Countries mentioned in the choice topic indicates that prospective Italian students prioritise English-speaking and European countries when considering where to study.

Course Topic/Level (40%)

- Searches for information about subjects of study (e.g. English, medicine, business management, law, nursing), often in conjunction with institution (e.g. best universities) and location (e.g. London)

General Study (22%)

- The generic question; 'how to study in the UK' is the key term used in searches
- The eligibility and age criteria for settled EU citizens considering UK study are also searched for

Financial (12%)

- Looking for information about the cost of studying in the UK, scholarships and student loans
- Searches for a way to study 'without money' or 'for free'

Visa (9%)

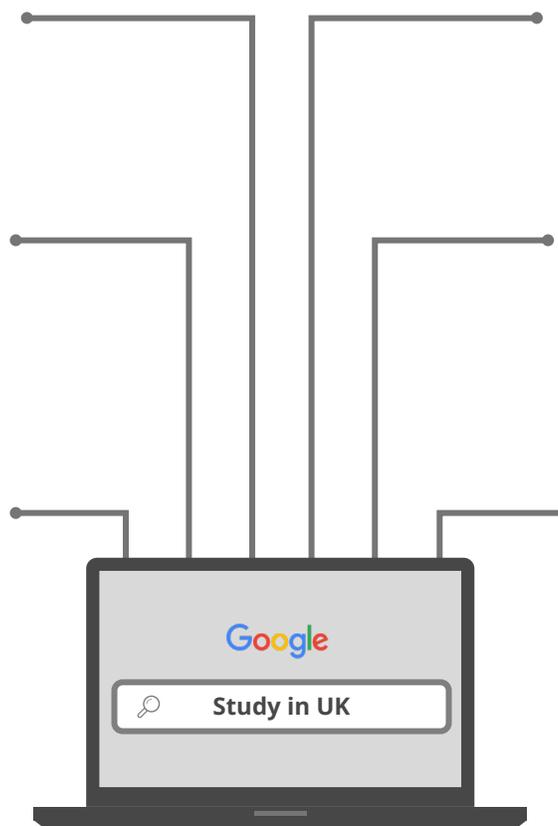
- Visa-related questions are heavily centred around whether prospective EU students need a visa to study in the UK

Location (7%)

- Searches for the 'best cities' to study in, and specific UK cities (e.g. London, Cambridge, Manchester, Leeds). Both in general and in relation to specific subjects, such as English and nursing

Choice (7%)

- Searches for the 'advantages' and 'benefits' of studying in the UK
- Comparing English-speaking countries (e.g. the US, Canada, Australia, Ireland) and European countries (e.g. Netherlands, France) to the UK to make a choice



Search Data: Google.

Search volume (%) by topic is based on the average number of monthly searches for a 'study in UK' keyword over a 12-month period. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Search Analysis: Sample Searches

Course Topic/Level

- *PhD in translation studies UK*
- *Study English in Cambridge UK*
- *Study architecture in UK*
- *Study digital marketing in UK*
- *Study medicine in the UK*
- *Study nursing in UK*
- *How to study law in UK*
- *How to study PhD in UK*

Visa

- *Do EU students need a visa to study in UK*
- *Do I need visa to study in UK*
- *Tier 4 visa to study in the UK*
- *Visa to study English in UK*
- *Who needs a visa to study in the UK*
- *Do you need a visa to study in the UK*

General Study

- *Study in UK*
- *Studying in Great Britain*
- *How to study in UK as international student*
- *I want to study in UK*
- *How to study in UK*
- *Study in UK universities*
- *British Council organises stages study in Great Britain*

Location

- *Study English in Cambridge UK*
- *Best cities to study in UK*
- *Study in UK London*
- *Study in Manchester UK*
- *The perfect city to study English in the United Kingdom*
- *Study English in Leeds UK*
- *Study nursing in London UK*

Financial

- *How much does it cost to study in UK*
- *How to study in UK without money*
- *Is studying nursing free in the UK*
- *Scholarship to study English in UK*
- *Study English in UK free*
- *Student loans for EU students studying in the UK*
- *Study in UK cost*

Choice

- *Advantages of studying in UK*
- *Why should I study in UK*
- *Benefits of studying in UK*
- *Is better studying in UK or in the Netherlands*
- *Work and study in UK America Canada Australia Ireland*
- *Study in Italy and UK comparison*
- *Study in Netherlands or UK*
- *Why study abroad in the UK*

Search Data: Google.

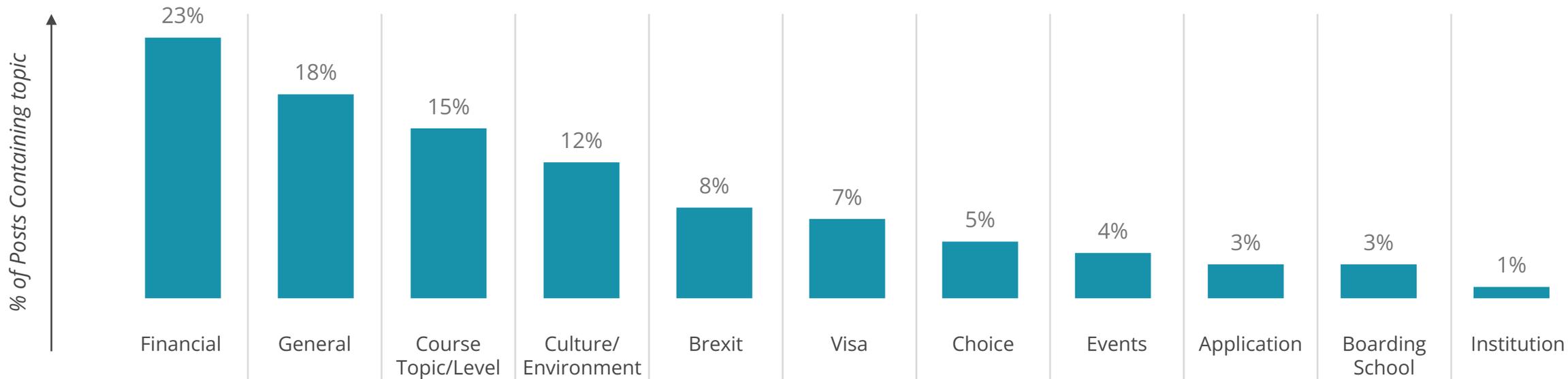
Search volume (%) by topic is based on the average number of monthly searches for a 'study in UK' keyword over a 12-month period. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Website Traffic Analysis

People based in Italy visited study-uk.britishcouncil.org 897 times in February 2022.

There are 939 key search terms leading people to visit the website, and we conducted an analysis of the **top 100 search terms** (driving 98% of website visits). Within this data, we identified 11 search topics that lead people to visit the site:

Topic Footprint in Website Traffic Search Data



Data covering February 2022. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, and searches consisting of single, unrelated words such as 'great' or 'commonwealth' were not included in the data reviewed for these slides, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Website Traffic Analysis: Sample Searches

Financial concerns and trying to understand what scholarships may be available are the key searches driving Italians to visit the website. From a subject perspective, those interested in gaming courses are most likely to visit the site, while search data also shows people wanting to know what to expect from UK weather and religious practices

Financial	General	Course Topic/Level	Culture/ Environment	Brexit	Visa
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How to get scholarship in UK</i>• <i>Medical insurance UK international students</i>• <i>British Council scholarship</i>• <i>Commonwealth scholarship for undergraduate</i>• <i>UK university fees EU students</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Study in UK</i>• <i>British Council University</i>• <i>High standard education</i>• <i>Education in UK</i>• <i>Overseas students UK</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Gaming courses UK</i>• <i>Postgraduate degree UK</i>• <i>Environmental engineering UK</i>• <i>Medicine UK</i>• <i>Business Management UK</i>• <i>Master's in England</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>UK religion</i>• <i>Summer in UK</i>• <i>UK religious demographics</i>• <i>Transport in Britain</i>• <i>London weather seasons</i>• <i>British religion</i>• <i>UK climate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>EU university fees after Brexit</i>• <i>European students after Brexit</i>• <i>Brexit consequences for Eu students</i>• <i>Brexit student loans</i>• <i>British universities Brexit</i>• <i>Brexit student loans</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>UK student visa</i>• <i>England study visa</i>• <i>Do EU students need a visa to study in UK</i>• <i>Student visa</i>• <i>UK visa</i>• <i>Visa to UK</i>• <i>ESTA per UK</i>

Data covering February 2022. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, and searches consisting of single, unrelated words such as 'great' or 'commonwealth' were not included in the data reviewed for these slides, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Website Traffic Analysis: Sample Searches

Some turn to the British Council subdomain to understand how to approach selecting a university, while some (potentially parents) use the site to seek information about sending children to UK boarding schools.

Choice	Events	Boarding School	Application	Institution
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How to choose the/a university</i>• <i>Why study in Glasgow</i>• <i>How to choose faculty in university</i>• <i>Find your university</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>British Council Study UK Fair 2020</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Boarding school UK</i>• <i>Boarding school English</i>• <i>International boarding school UK</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Apply UK</i>• <i>How does clearance work</i>• <i>Clearing what is it</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>University of Edinburgh</i>

Data covering February 2022. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, and searches consisting of single, unrelated words such as 'great' or 'commonwealth' were not included in the data reviewed for these slides, percentage data may not equal 100%.

Leading Study UK Subdomains

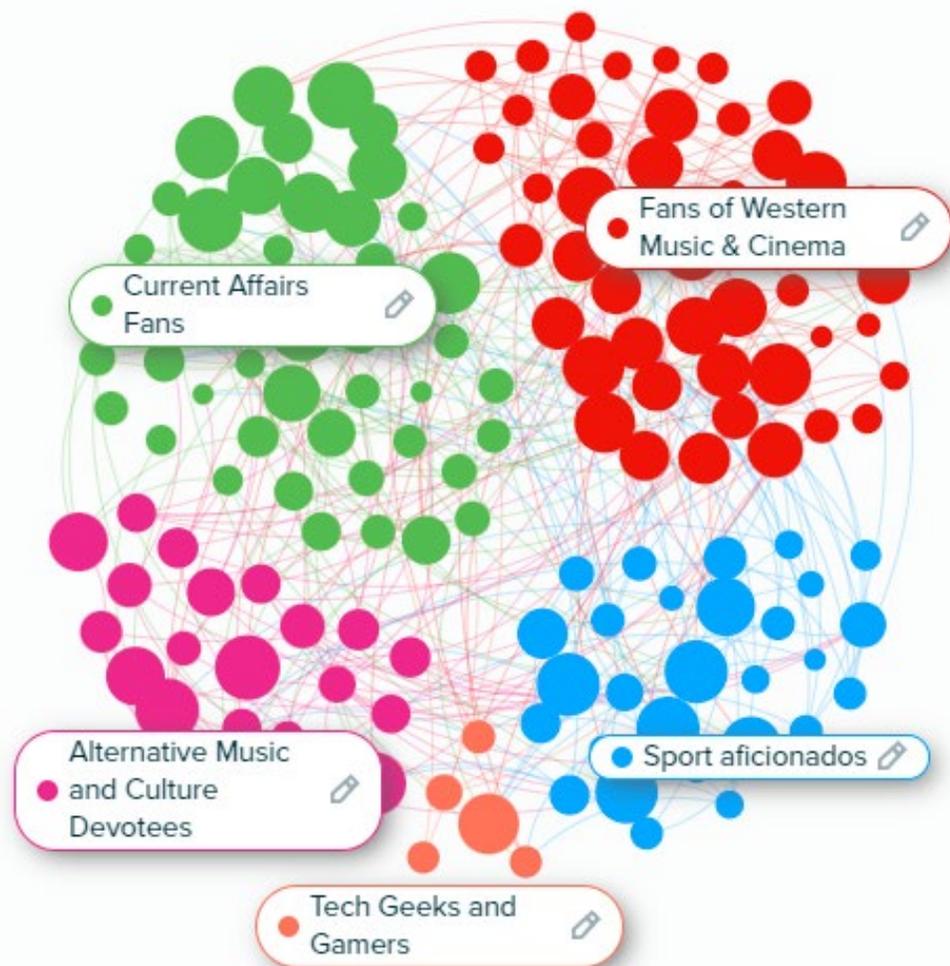
Subdomain	Traffic	Subdomain	Traffic
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships	132	https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/university	24
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/eu-students	122	https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/events	23
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/student-visas	70	https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/study-options/boarding	23
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/	69	https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships/great-scholarships	21
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/student-life/religion	59	https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/why-study/higher-standard-education	15
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/subject-areas/gaming	44	https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/de/sprache	14
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/student-life/weather	44	https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/choosing-university	14
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/student-life/health-safety	42	https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/coronavirus	11
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships/commonwealth-scholarships	37	https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/zn-hans/moving-uk/student-life/language	11
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/find/study-options/postgraduate	26	https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/th [...]	10

Data covering February 2022. Because multiple topics may be included in a single search, and searches consisting of single, unrelated words such as 'great' or 'commonwealth' were not included in the data reviewed for these slides, percentage data may not equal 100%.

**Student profile
estimation:
ITALY**



Audience segmentation of young Italian Twitter users



Fans of Western Music & Cinema (25%)

An active and dynamic mostly female group. They follow Western celebrities such as Justine Bieber and Selena Gomez, and show an affinity for Western music, cinema, and reality programmes. Their media consumption is often through Snapchat, SoundCloud, and YouTube.

Current Affairs Followers (24%)

Mostly male group of authority-challenging and philosophical people. They show an interest in current affairs, technology and travelling. They follow Report, Rai News, BBC News and are interested in investigative journalism, political confrontations, and international reports. This group is likely to use Medium, LinkedIn and Reddit.

Sport aficionados (15%)

This group is predominantly made of energetic men with a high interest in sports. They are fans of international and local sport stars such as Cristiano Ronaldo, Giuseppe Rossi and Mario Balotelli. The group prefers TV channels as SkySport24 and RaiSport, and is likely to use Twitch, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Alternative Music and Culture Devotees (12%)

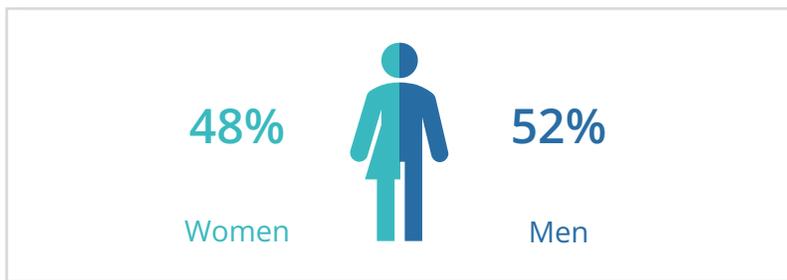
An excitable and social group dominated by female users, interested in alternative music and culture. They follow music reality TV shows, DJ podcasts and trendy radio stations. Sportify, Youtube, Instagram and SoundCloud are on the top of their social media ranking.

Tech geeks and gamers (2%)

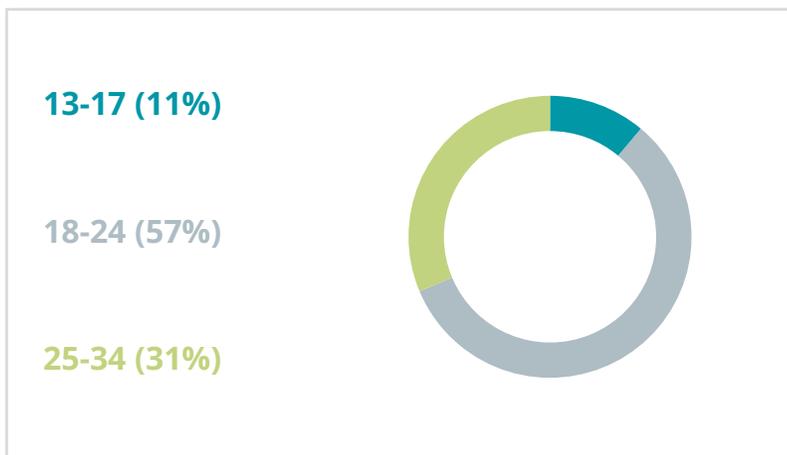
This small group is predominantly made of male users who are analytical and susceptible to stress. They show high interest in technology and gaming. They prefer to use Twitter, WhatsApp, Twitch and Facebook and are passionate about tech blogs.

Who are young Italian Twitter users?

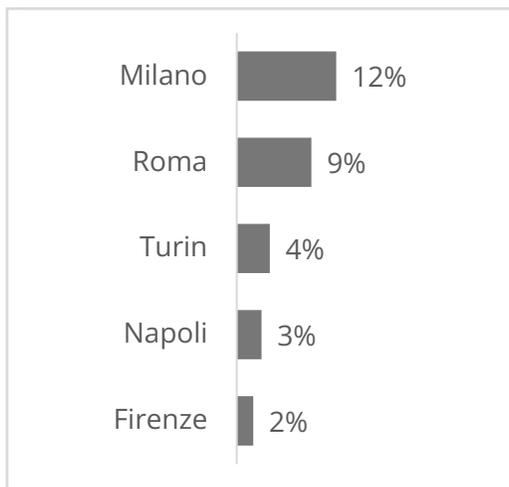
GENDER



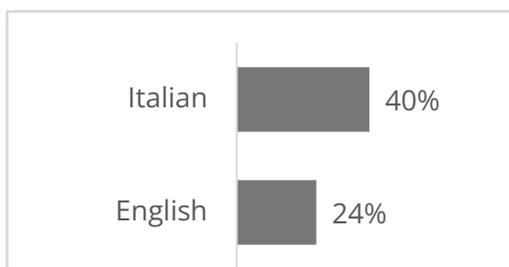
AGE



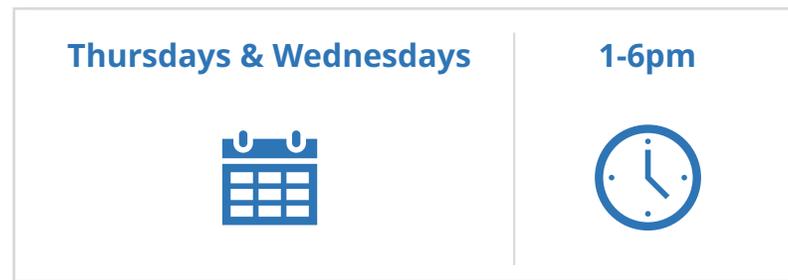
WHERE THEY LIVE



LANGUAGES USED*



WHEN THEY GO ONLINE (local time, based on last 30 days of data)



PREFERRED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS*



*Of Twitter users <35

The platforms listed are those for which this audience displays the strongest propensity to use in comparison to the country average. They are not the platforms with the highest penetration of platform usage among the audience analysed. Other platforms (e.g. YouTube) will command higher penetration, but the audience does not significantly over-index on these compared to the average. Twitter does not feature as the sample is derived from users of the platform.

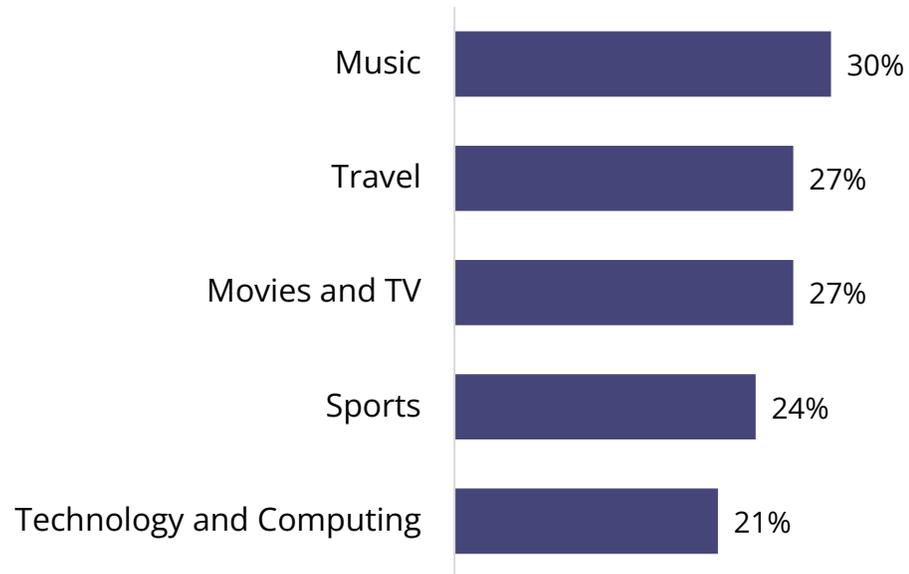
*Language use may not equal 100% as posts which consist only of links, user tags, emojis, pictures or videos have no language indicated. Languages are identified through machine learning algorithms which review user posts and bios.

What are young Italian Twitter users interested in?

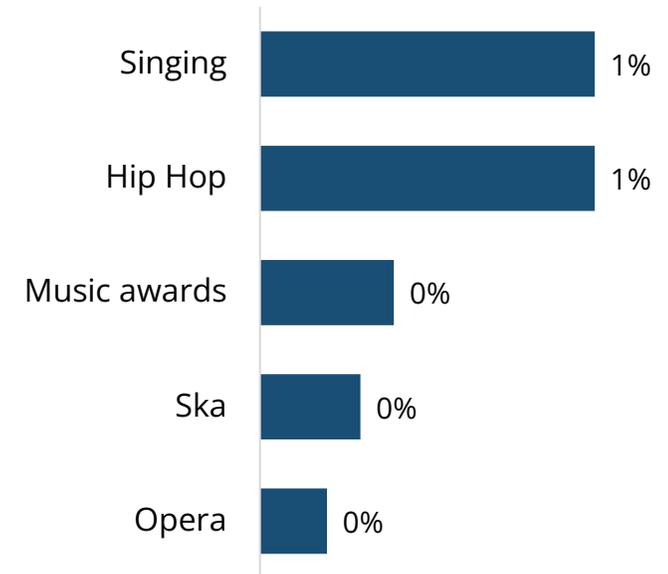
Italian users are mostly interested in music with a great deal of variety in the types of music they enjoy. In terms of education, they talk mostly about school, graduate school and university.

Interests

Areas of Interest



Deep Dive on Top Interest



Accounts that influence young Italian Twitter users

 NABA	NABA, Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti is an Academy of Fine Arts and Design and a dynamic artistic and cultural centre.	 Urban Dictionary	Mention @urbandictionary and this bot will tweet you the Urban Dictionary definition (if it's in there) ?
 Envato Tuts+	We teach creative & technical skills to millions worldwide, including design, coding, photography, video, computing & web design. Part of the @envato family.	 Poynter	School for journalism and democracy, with tweets by @itsren, @kristenhare, @TomWJones and @angelanfu. Contact: info@poynter.org / 727-821-9494
 Singularity Group	Our global community empowers leaders to leverage exponential technologies to solve global grand challenges. For tech news: @SingularityHub	 Dr. Sanjay Gupta	Associate Professor of Neurosurgery, Emory University Hospital; CNN Chief Medical Correspondent
 Udacity	The trusted market leader in talent transformation—changing lives, businesses, and nations by creating job-ready digital talent. Support? Tweet @UdacitySupport	 MIT OpenCourseWare	Free lecture notes, exams, and videos from @MIT. No registration required. Part of @mitopenlearning.
 C. S. Lewis	Inspiring Quotes From C. S. Lewis	 Oxford Languages	The home of Oxford's world-renowned language data, dictionaries, and thesauri.

Media enjoyed by young Italian Twitter users

International and Italian news and sports channels are at the top of their preferences, followed by music reality shows and radio stations. The most preferred digital magazines are news portals, sports dailies, music blogs and high tech news publications.

Most Popular TV



[CNN Breaking News](#)

World news platform for CNN.



[Il Volo Del Mattino](#)

Historical radio programme conducted by Fabio Volo.



[Michele Santoro Presenta](#)

Multimedia factory of Italian journalists and former MEP Michele Santoro.



[Radio DeeJay](#)

Radio DEEJAY station presenting a continuous show with music and extraordinary personalities



[La7](#)

Italian free-to-air television channel owned by Cairo Communication.



[X Factor Italia](#)

TV show and singing competition, the Italian version of Britain's The X Factor.



[Crozza nel Paese delle Meraviglie](#)

Crozza nel Paese delle Meraviglie (Crozza in Wonderland) was an Italian satirical TV programme aired on LA7 hosted by Maurizio Crozza.



[Rai News](#)

Italian news TV channel.



[Report](#)

Italian TV programme in the field of investigative journalism on TV hosted by Italian journalist Sigfrido Ranucci.



[Sky Sport](#)

British subscription sports channel.

Most Popular Digital Magazines



[Internazionale](#)

The Twitter account of international news portal Internazionale.



[La Gazzetta dello Sport](#)

La Gazzetta dello Sport, the most popular sports daily in Italy.



[Mashable](#)

International entertainment, culture, tech, science and social good digital media platform.



[Michael Ausiello](#)

The Instagram account of US TV industry journalist, author, and actor.



[Pitchfork](#)

US online music publication launched as an independent music blog.



[Smashing Magazine](#)

Website and eBook publisher for web developers and web designers.

[TNW](#)

Global digital brand that informs, inspires and connects people who love tech through media, events and services.



[TechCrunch](#)

US online newspaper focusing on high tech and startup companies.



[Sabias.es](#)

Page dedicated to curiosities and interesting facts in Spanish.



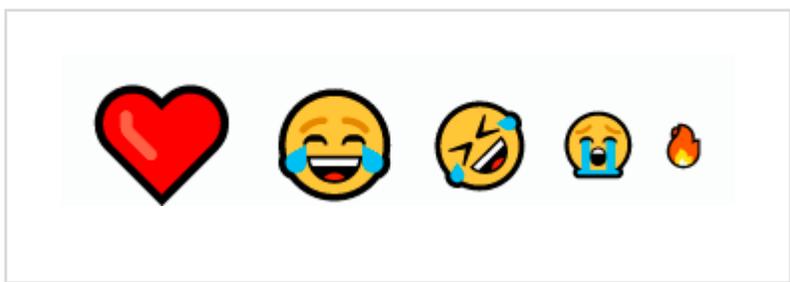
[Someecards](#)

A uniquely voiced ecard site.

Content shared by young Italian Twitter users

Users shared mostly pictures using hashtags linked to the San Remo music festival, TV reality show Big Brother VIP, and posts about the conflict in Ukraine. Their preferred domains are YouTube, Instagram and Positano News.

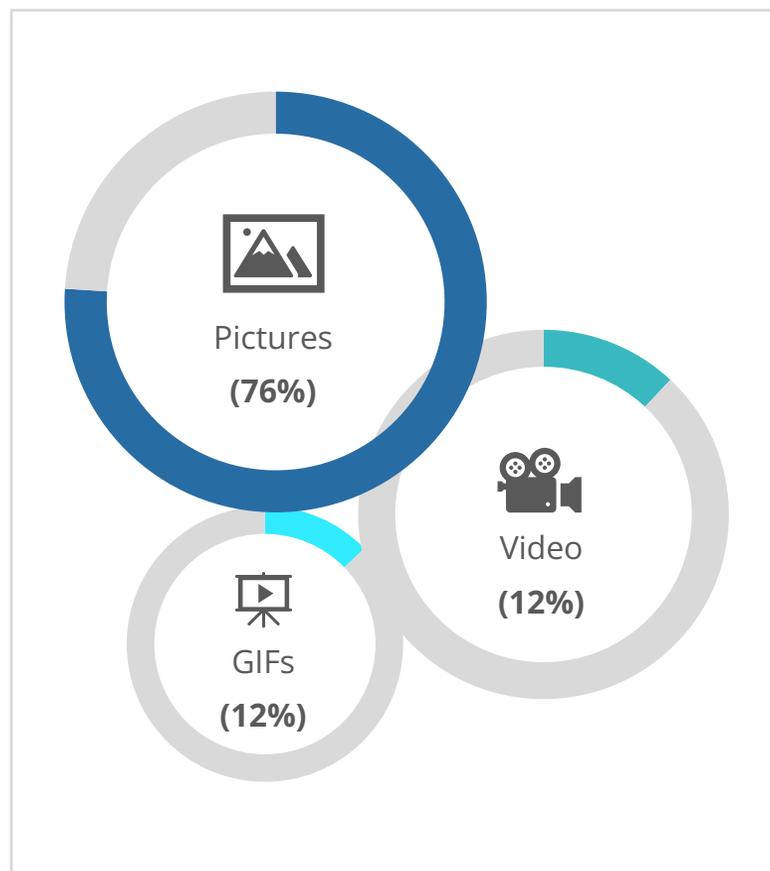
POPULAR EMOJI



POPULAR HASHTAGS

Hashtag	Meaning
#sanremo2022	Used in posts mentioning San Remo 2022 music festival
#gfvip	Used in posts on Big Brother VIP
#jeru	Used in posts mentioning Jeru, a participant in Big Brother VIP
#ucraina	In posts dedicated to Ukraine-Russia conflict
#sanremo22	In posts on San Remo 2022 music festival

MEDIA FORMAT



DOMAINS THEY SHARE LINKS TO

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