

# Can Meta transform WhatsApp into a super app?

Article

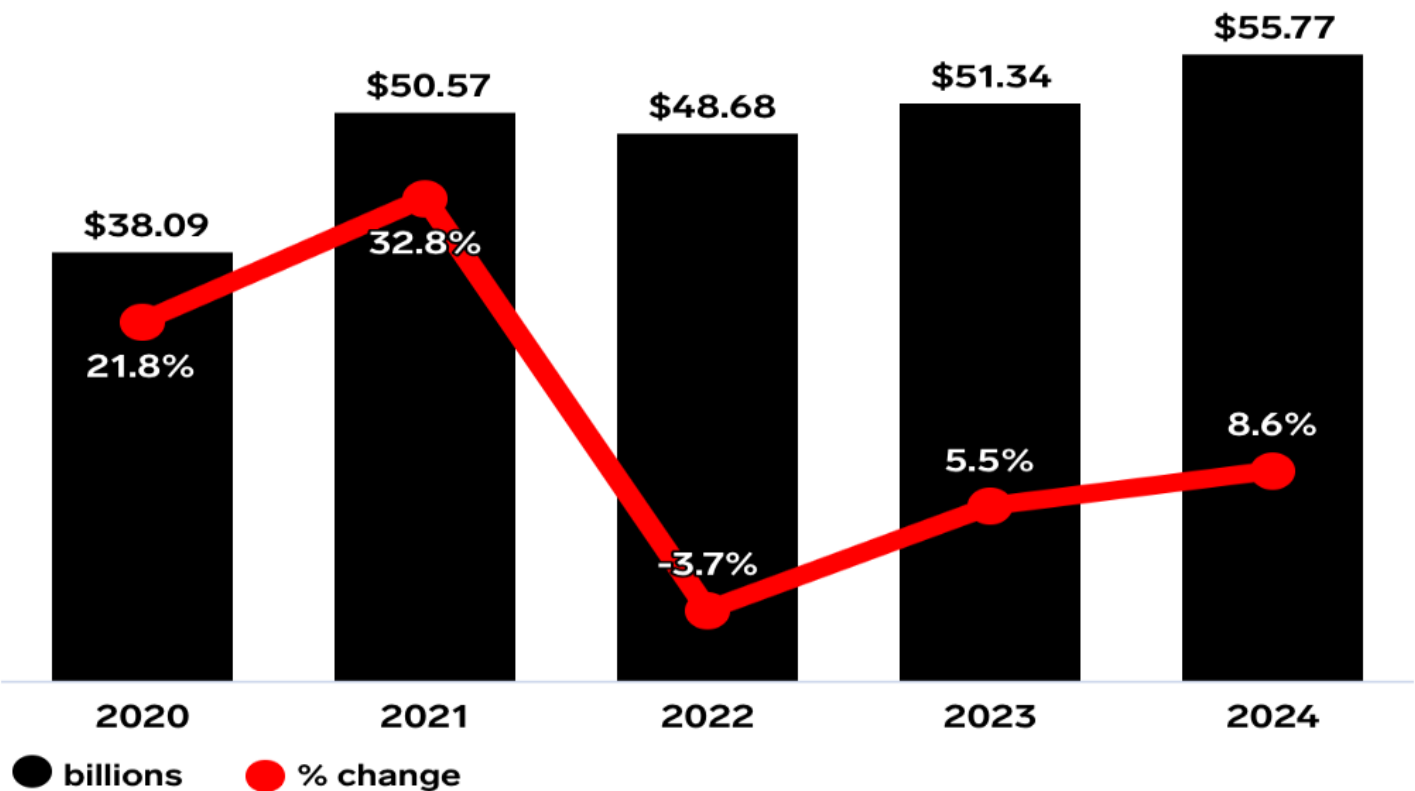
**The news:** Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg on Thursday mapped out a super app-like vision for WhatsApp that would enable consumers in Brazil to find, message, and buy something from a business all within the same chat.

- “The ultimate goal here is to make it so you can find, message, and buy from a business all in the same WhatsApp chat,” he said.

- The in-app end-to-end shopping would mirror the experience WhatsApp [launched](#) with **JioMart** in India this August, but in Brazil it is working with multiple payment partners.
- The timing of the plan is significant given that Meta is at a critical juncture. Its main revenue source, advertising, is declining; our newly updated forecast sees **the company's ad revenues dropping 3.7% in the US this year**. Yet even though we expect its ad revenues to rise in 2023, the company's two-year annualized growth will come to less than 1%.

## Meta Ad Revenues

US, 2020-2024



*Note: paid advertising only; includes advertising that appears on desktop and laptop computers as well as mobile phones, tablets, and other internet-connected devices includes Facebook and Instagram ad revenues; net ad revenues after companies pay traffic acquisition costs (TAC) to partner sites; excludes spending by marketers that goes toward developing or maintaining a Facebook and/or Instagram presence; excludes revenues reported under Meta's Reality Labs segment*

Source: eMarketer, October 2022

eMarketer | [InsiderIntelligence.com](#)

**Monetization is hard:** The move to transform WhatsApp represents a major effort by Meta to monetize a significant resource that until now has generated relatively small revenues—though how the company plans to generate revenue from the feature remain hazy.

- Meta paid \$22 billion for the platform in 2014, making it the company's most expensive acquisition. Yet **messaging across Facebook's apps pulled in a relatively paltry \$218 million in the most recent quarter**, driven by paid messaging on WhatsApp, per Insider. That's not even a rounding error for a company that generated nearly \$29 billion in total revenues.
- But as the company looks for growth opportunities, it can't help but daydream about transforming WhatsApp into a **WeChat**-like super app. WeChat has 820.2 million users in China, per our [forecast](#), and its mini-program economy was estimated last year to be valued at \$240 billion, with 450 million users transacting through the program.
- Those eye-popping numbers help explain why Meta has made several [strategic investments](#) and [updates to its platforms](#) aimed at bolstering chat-based commerce revenues.

**The big takeaway:** Amid Meta's current challenges with advertising, it is hardly surprising to see it reimagine WhatsApp as a super app that consumers turn to for everything from messaging to commerce.

- While conversational commerce has not gained traction in the United States and Europe, Meta is wise to see if it can gain a foothold in Brazil, India, and other markets.
- If those efforts prove successful, conversational commerce could provide a fresh revenue stream for Meta and, at the same, shield it from some of the detrimental impact that **Apple's** privacy changes have had on its advertising business.

**Go further:** Read our [Future of Meta](#) report.

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