

Mastodon usage spikes after Musk's Twitter takeover

Article

The news: Downloads of the **Mastodon** app have surged since **Elon Musk's** takeover of **Twitter**.

- Mastodon downloads on iOS and Google Play skyrocketed by 6,380% worldwide between the weeks of October 15–26 and October 27–November 7, per Sensor Tower. News that Musk had completed the acquisition broke on October 27.

- The growth seems to have struck a nerve with Musk, who on Monday posted a series of since-deleted derogatory posts about Mastodon before tweeting that Twitter usage was at an “all-time high.”

Worldwide Downloads from the App Store and Google Play

App	Oct. 15-Oct. 26	Oct. 27-Nov. 7	% Growth
Discord	3,200,000	3,200,000	0
Mastodon	15,000	972,000	6380%
Rumble	251,000	308,000	23%
Tumblr	170,000	294,000	73%
Truth Social	273,000	153,000	-44%
Flipboard	65,000	69,000	6%
Parler	149,000	27,000	-82%

Source: Sensor Tower

INSIDER
INTELLIGENCE | eMarketer

Mastodon 101: Mastodon is a free, decentralized open-source platform that aims to provide “a viable alternative to Twitter.” It shares some similarities with Twitter, but there are important differences:

- Twitter is a singular platform, while anyone can create a network, called a server, on Mastodon. Usage rules are the same for all on Twitter, while users set and enforce regulations on individual Mastodon servers.
- Twitter uses an algorithm to serve content to users based on their previous activity and interests, while Mastodon serves content chronologically.
- Mastodon does not host ads. The nonprofit organization maintains its two main servers, mastodon.social and mastodon.online, while other servers are primarily funded by their users.

Between the lines: Twitter downloads are keeping steady.

- Worldwide Twitter app downloads stood at 486,186 on October 27 and reached as high as 636,768 on November 3, but were 526,844 on November 7, according to Apptopia.

- As of November 8, Twitter was the seventh most-downloaded app on iOS and Google Play in the US, per data.ai.

And downloads are only part of the story: Mastodon has hit **1 million monthly users**, per a November 6 post by founder and CEO **Eugen Rochko**. That's still a far cry from the 368.1 million monthly users we expect Twitter will have worldwide in 2022.

Yes, but: Prior to the takeover, we were already forecasting Twitter's monthly user base in the US to decline 0.5% to 57.5 million this year. And close to half (489,003) of Mastodon's monthly users are new as of October 27, per Rochko.

- Many of Twitter's most active users are in revolt over the growth in controversial content, as well as Musk's plan to make verification, an important security feature, a paid perk available only to Twitter Blue subscribers.
- Twitter usage has long fluctuated with the news cycle, peaking around big events (including the takeover saga). Musk's tweet about Twitter usage being at an "all-time-high" is based on monetizable daily active users (mDAUs), a metric used only by Twitter that is more a measure of engagement rather than reach. As the dust around the deal settles, it's likely that usage will normalize.

Our take: Consumers are increasingly experimenting with alternative social networks, and the turmoil at Twitter is adding fuel to that trend. But brands leaving Twitter won't find Mastodon a "viable alternative."

- Mastodon is just one platform in a sea of social apps, from **Discord** to **Substack** to **Gas** to **Geneva**, gaining traction among certain subsets of consumers, and its unfamiliar user interface will be a significant roadblock to widespread adoption.
- Without an ad business, there are few options for marketers on Mastodon. Its open-source model also makes it susceptible to brand safety issues, which many advertisers suspending campaigns on Twitter are attempting to avoid.