

How Will the US Rollout of Facebook Dating Disrupt the Dating App Landscape?

ARTICLE |

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Facebook Dating launched in the US last week, giving users ages 18 and older access to typical dating app features like specialized profiles and matchmaking algorithms. Though the dating app space is crowded, Facebook has an opportunity to set itself apart by simplifying what's arguably the most vexing aspect of online dating: setting up a profile.

Jonathan Kay, founder of app analytics platform [Apptopia](#), explains that aside from offering users a new, more curated experience, Facebook could potentially ease the tedious process of putting together a profile —users' top dating app pain point.

"The real problem with dating sites is that the barrier to entry is extremely high," Kay said. "Not only do you need to invest time in actually setting up a profile, you also have to create this profile from scratch—finding pictures, crafting an 'About Me'—those things can be awkward and difficult to do."

While users who want to use Facebook Dating need to opt in to the service and create a distinct profile separate from their existing Facebook account, Kay said that the social media company could choose to change this in the future.

"Facebook Dating can solve this huge barrier to entry by making dating a 'one-click' experience," he said. "That is really powerful and the biggest differentiator they can have."

Roughly 65% of people who download dating apps like Tinder or Bumble delete the app on the same day they download it or never end up using it, according to August 2019 data from Apptopia. However, many of the users who engage on day one end up retaining for a long period of time after. "Getting the user past the barrier to entry is the entire key, and Facebook has all the data to make that seamless," Kay said.

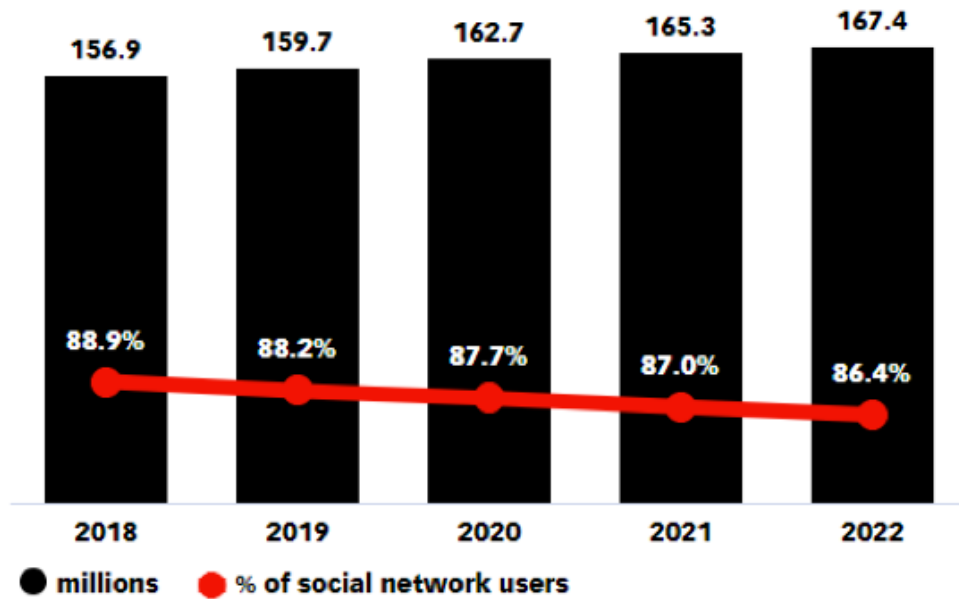
But this seamless experience could come at a cost for users. While Facebook isn't currently monetizing its Dating feature—setting up a profile is free, and users aren't yet subjected to ads—it will be able to gather even more user information that is likely more timely, relevant and intimate.

"Facebook Dating is another way for Facebook to collect information about its users and their behaviors, which always comes with privacy implications," said Nicole Perrin, principal analyst at eMarketer. "We have no way of knowing how Facebook will ultimately process this data and what applications it might ultimately have, but the platform likely has a ways to go for most users in Western countries to fully trust in the privacy of their information."

Privacy concerns aside, there could be many potential Facebook Dating users. We estimate that there are roughly 160 million Facebook users this year, which accounts for 88.2% of social network users.

Adult Facebook Users

US, 2018-2022



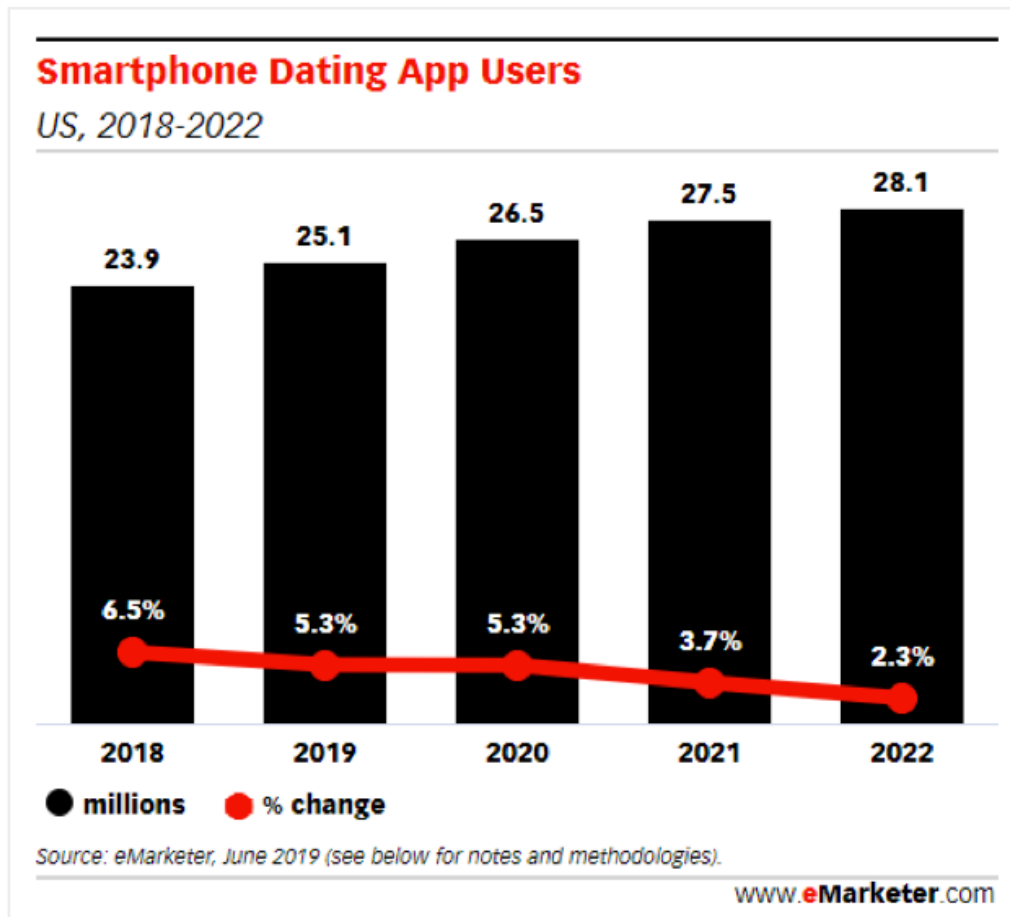
Source: eMarketer, March 2019 (see below for notes and methodologies).

www.eMarketer.com

“Considering the massive number of Americans who use Facebook regularly, and the fact that many have always used it for romantic purposes, it’s hard to imagine Facebook Dating won’t get significant traction,” Perrin said. Equipped with unique features like **indicating a Secret Crush** and **embedded privacy protection**, Facebook Dating has the potential to attract new and existing users of dating apps who are looking for more curated and accurate matches.

“Users who want to go back to more interest-based connections might find better luck with Facebook Dating as it will match users based on shared interests, events and groups, as opposed to more gamified ‘swipe to match’ app experiences like Tinder and Hinge,” Perrin said. “On the other hand, Facebook traditionally matches people less based on true ‘interests’ and more based on social connections, so only time will tell how accurate its dating match suggestions are perceived to be.”

If Facebook can curate user experiences in a meaningful way, it'll likely attract at least a portion of the 28.9% of smartphone users who will use a dating app this year. Up 5.3% year over year, dating app users will eclipse 25 million in 2019, and is expected to increase to 28 million by 2022.



For now, only time will tell if people are interested and comfortable with Facebook playing a role in their romantic lives.