

Average Time Spent on Social Media Declines

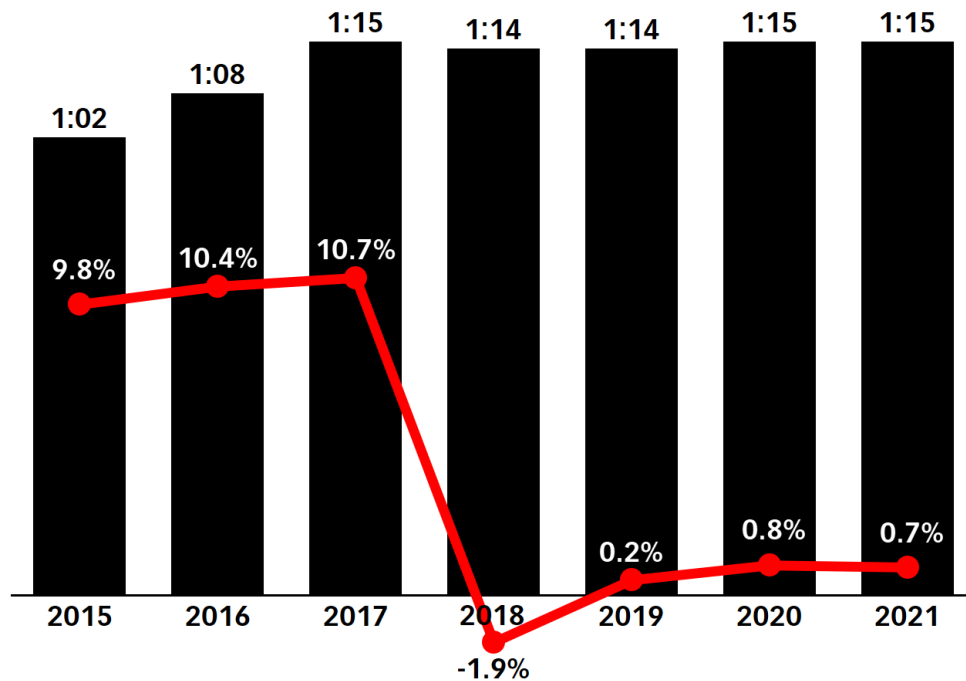
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Facebook users are spending less time on the social platform, and that is leading to a reduction in overall time spent with social media in the US. Time spent on social networks declined by 1 minute last year, a stark difference from the cumulative 13-minute gain in 2016 and 2017.

Social Networks: Average Time Spent by Users in the US, 2015-2021

hrs:mins per day and % change



■ Social networks

■ % change

Note: ages 18+ who access their social network account via any device at least once per month; time spent with each medium includes all time spent with that medium, regardless of device or multitasking; for example, 1 hour of multitasking on Facebook while using Snapchat is counted as 1 hour for Snapchat and 1 hour for Facebook

Source: eMarketer, April 2019

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After increasing 10.7% to 1 hour, 15 minutes (1:15) in 2017, average time spent declined by 1.9% to 1:14 in 2018, and we estimate that through 2021, user time will remain essentially flat.

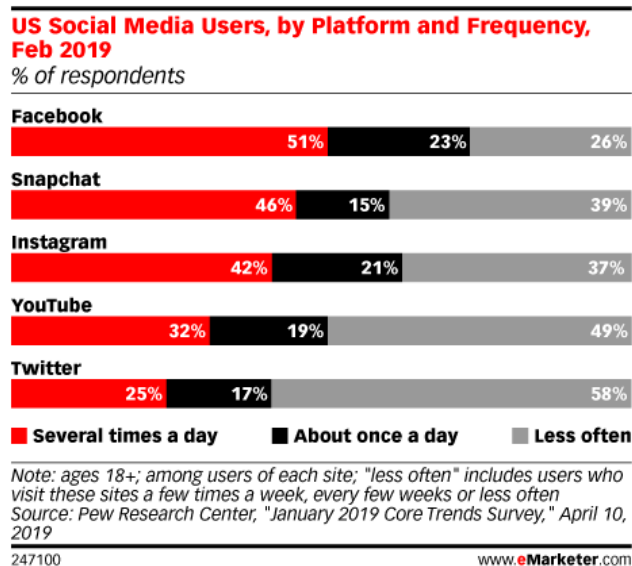
Because of Facebook's large user base—169.2 million in 2018—a decline in Facebook use was a primary factor contributing to the overall dip in social time spent. US adult Facebook users spent 0:38 a day last year, down 3 minutes from 2017, and we expect usage will decline again next year to 0:37.

The company continues to encourage its users to engage with more “meaningful” content, which de-emphasizes posts from brands, businesses and media, and instead allows users to see more posts from friends, family and groups. The company said that this move would negatively impact time spent on the platform, and it did.

On top of that, Facebook has continued to lose younger users, who are spreading their time and attention across other social platforms and digital activities.

Despite these decreases, Facebook still dominates social media usage. In a March 2019 Pew Research survey, 74% of adult users said they visited Facebook daily, with more than half (51%) saying they visited the platform multiple times a day.

“That frequency of usage continues to make Facebook an attractive place for marketers,” said eMarketer principal analyst Debra Aho Williamson. “This year, US marketers will invest \$28.52 billion on the platform.”



Instagram, however, paints a slightly happier picture for Facebook: Declines in time spent with the latter are mitigated by increases with the former. We expect user time spent on Instagram to surpass that of Snapchat this year.

Time spent on Snapchat will remain flat at 0:26 for the forecast period. The company is still feeling the effects of a widely-disliked app redesign, as well as increased competition from Instagram Stories and other digital activities.

"Some teens and younger adult internet users are gravitating toward engaging (and time consuming) activities such as gaming and video viewing," Williamson said. "Snapchat's recent launch of a gaming platform is an effort to mitigate the effect of this trend, but it's too soon to say whether it will succeed."

For further breakdowns on usage on major social media platforms and how it divvies up by device, eMarketer PRO subscribers can read our new report:

Report by Debra Aho Williamson May 30, 2019

US Time Spent with Social Media 2019

US TIME SPENT WITH SOCIAL MEDIA 2019

Users Decreased Time in 2018.
Will the Trend Continue?

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