

WhatsApp Is Becoming a Key Driver of Mobile Messaging Growth

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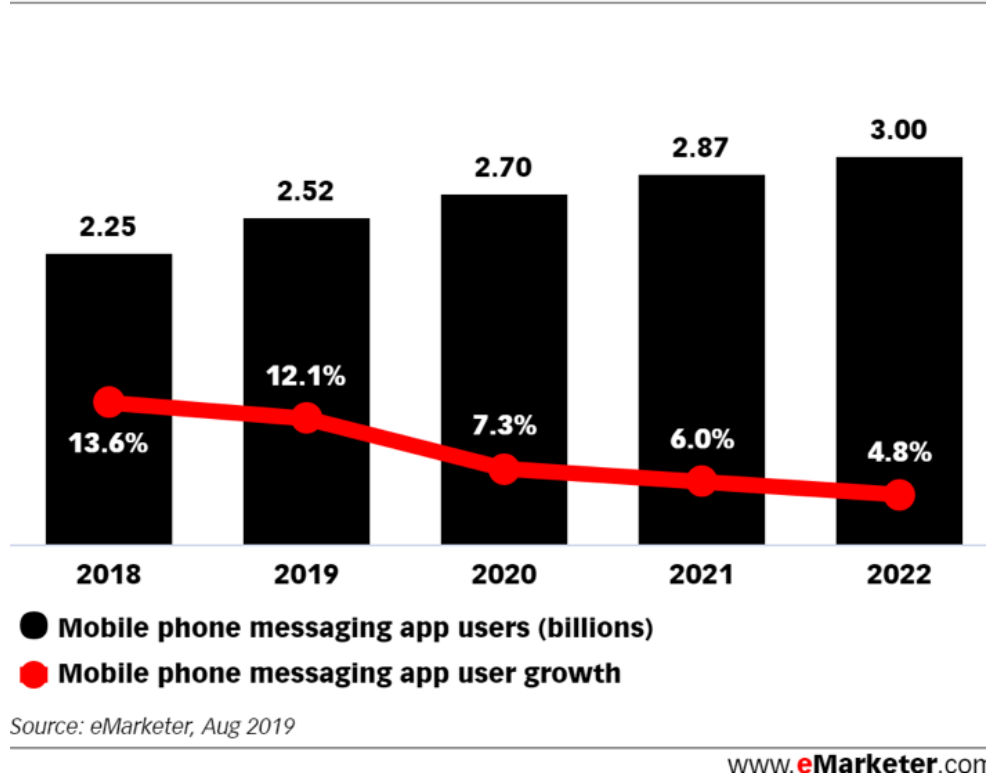
eMarketer Editors

In our latest [report on global messaging apps](#), we dive into our forecast for the number of mobile messaging app users—which will increase through 2022, though at slowing rates each year. Our forecast also shows that WhatsApp is a key driver of that growth.

This year, the total number of messaging app users worldwide will increase 12.1% to 2.52 billion people, we estimate. Growth will slow to 7.3% next year, reaching 2.70 billion users.

Mobile Messaging App Users

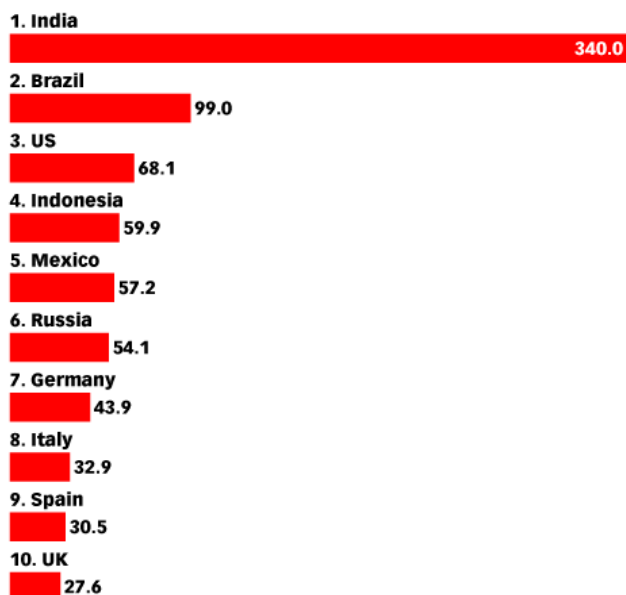
Worldwide, 2018-2022



WhatsApp's largest market in terms of net users is India. It will reach 340.0 million users there this year, followed by 99.0 million users in Brazil and 68.1 million in the US, per our forecast. In terms of user penetration among smartphone users, Brazil, Argentina and India are the top three markets, where more than 90% of smartphone users in each country will use WhatsApp this year.

Top 10 Countries, Ranked by WhatsApp Users, 2019

millions



Note: internet users of any age who access their WhatsApp account via any device at least once per month
Source: eMarketer, Aug 2019

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Importantly, our figures differ from Facebook’s, as we factor out fake and duplicate accounts—something WhatsApp has recognized is a problem in India and Brazil. In both countries, the app has been used to spread misinformation ahead of elections.

“India has been able to amass such a high number of WhatsApp users, partly because the platform can be used on some feature phones, like the JioPhone, which is popular there,” eMarketer senior analyst Jasmine Enberg said. “India’s wide user base has also made it a testing ground for new WhatsApp capabilities, including a payment system. The company has been testing the service in India since 2018, and it is expected to launch nationwide this year, pending regulatory approval.”

At 68.1 million, the US is in third place for number of net WhatsApp users, but that equates to just 7.7% of all users in the 18 countries we currently track. That’s because widespread use of regular SMS, Facebook Messenger and iMessage have held back WhatsApp adoption.

This year, for example, we expect the number of US Facebook Messenger users will be close to double that of WhatsApp users—

117.6 million vs. 68.1 million, respectively.

However, the two apps are not mutually exclusive. Four of the top 10 countries for WhatsApp user penetration among smartphone users in 2019—Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Italy—are also among the top 10 countries for Messenger user penetration. And in the UK, where we expect 53.5% of smartphone users to use Messenger this year, 60.1% will use WhatsApp.

Read our report for further analysis of global messaging app users.

Report by Jasmine Enberg Sep 11, 2019

Global Messaging Apps 2019



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