

# Snap is distancing itself from social media—but it still must compete for social ad dollars

Article

**The news:** Snapchat has launched a new brand campaign, “Less social media. More Snapchat.” It’s Snap’s most aggressive marketing push yet, but it plays off themes from

previous campaigns, **highlighting positivity and what makes Snapchat unique.**

- **Snap** ran the ad during the Grammy's and at the Super Bowl, where a 30-second slot cost up to **\$7 million**.

**Why it matters:** Snap is attempting to distance itself from the problems of social media. The primarily consumer-focused campaign positions Snap as a safe platform based on real connections and messaging, rather than “comparison metrics” and algorithmically served content, Snap’s chief creative officer, **Colleen DeCourcy**, told us in an exclusive interview.

- “We’re not social. Snapchat opens to a camera, not a feed of content,” she said. “We started saying, ‘What if we did less of the broadcasting, more of the messaging platform, less of the meeting shares and likes, more of being able to be yourself?’”

**Zoom out:** Consumer and lawmaker momentum to hold **the platforms accountable** for their role in the youth mental health crisis and other real-world harm is mounting. Snapchat is also trying to expand its user base beyond its core Gen Z audience, with a focus on “resurrecting” users in North America, per its Q4 2023 earnings report.

- On January 31, Snap CEO **Evan Spiegel** **testified in Congress** alongside four other social media executives about online child exploitation. Prior to the hearing, Snap endorsed the **Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA)** bill.
- “We see a fatigue and a malaise across generations with social media,” DeCourcy said. “The expansion into other audiences is something we're naturally going to see. It's about making sure that people understand the use cases and the value.”

**By the numbers:** Snapchat will have 93.8 million monthly US users in 2024, of which 44.8% are ages 12 to 24, per our estimates. (Snapchat does not allow users under 13).

- Sending direct messages is a top use case for Snapchat users ages 15 to 24, used by roughly 63% of respondents in the month before our July 2023 “US Gen Z Social Media” survey.

**Yes, but:** Investors and advertisers will continue to bucket Snapchat with larger social media companies like **Meta**. And Snap has spent the past few years building out many of the app’s social media-like and **creator-friendly content features**, including TikTok clone **Spotlight** and **Public Stories**, to grow its user base and ad business.

- Snap's [Q4 earnings](#) sent its stock plummeting. While revenues were up 5% year over year, the company's ad rebound has not kept pace with the Big Tech titans.
- During the earnings call, Snap executives stressed the growth in engagement with content, particularly on Spotlight, which had a 175% YoY increase in time spent and a more than 35% increase in monthly active users (MAUs).
- Snap also said its verified creators, or "Snap Stars," increased their Public Stories output in Q4 by over 125% YoY. Those creators can earn a share of Stories ad revenues.

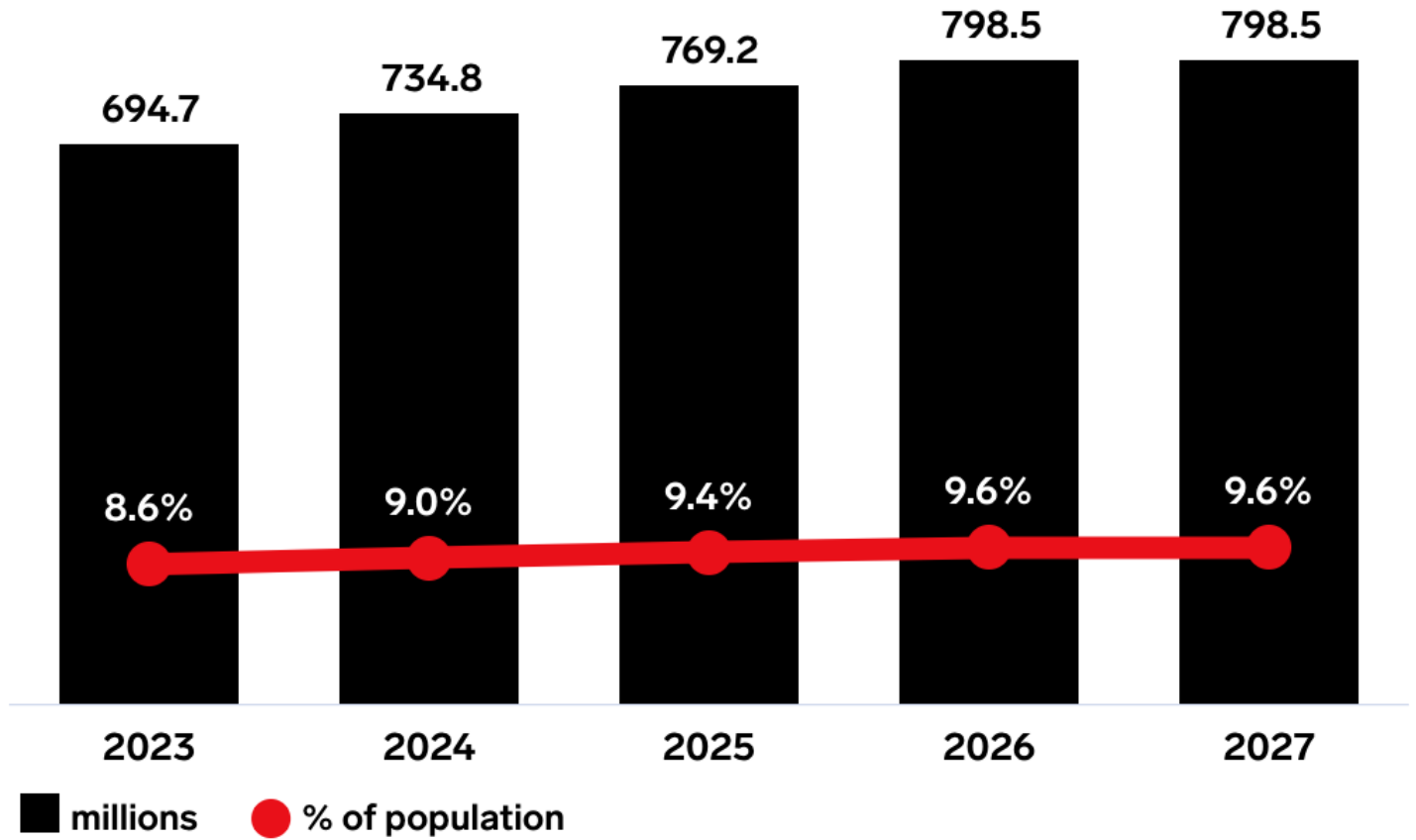
**Mixed messaging?** "This [campaign] is not a turning away from either creators or content," DeCourcy said. "It's not so much about whether there is content [on Snapchat], but what happens when that content is viewed. It's about designing for outcomes that aren't based on that content being widely or massively distributed."

**Our take:** Snapchat is different, but that has made it harder for the company to build a robust ad business. And as platforms like **Instagram** lean more heavily into messaging and other [more private interactions](#), competition for audiences will also intensify.

**Stay tuned:** *Our Youth and Social Media report will be published on March 8.*

# Snapchat Users

Worldwide, 2023-2027



Note: internet users of any age who access their Snapchat account via any device at least once per month

Source: Insider Intelligence | eMarketer, May 2023

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