

# How the OpenAI drama could affect social media

## Article

**The news:** On the surface, last week's dramatic shakeup at **OpenAI** may seem unrelated to the social media world, but it intersects with the platforms (and their executives) in a number of ways.

**Why it matters:** The strong links between OpenAI and several major social platforms could have implications for their operations. Meanwhile, the chaos could open up the genAI market to social platforms that are building their own large language models (LLMs).

*Catch up quick:* Open AI's CEO **Sam Altman** was ousted on November 17. Two days later, **Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella** swooped in to hire Altman and OpenAI president **Greg Brockman** to run a new "advanced research division." By late November 21, Altman had been reinstated as CEO, following an executive shuffle during which both OpenAI CTO **Mira Murati** and **Twitch** co-founder (and social industry veteran) **Emmett Shear** served briefly as CEO.

- **LinkedIn owner Microsoft is a key investor in OpenAI:** Given Microsoft's heavy focus on AI, it's hardly a surprise that LinkedIn has integrated the tech across its platform, including an AI writing tool that automatically generates a text post. LinkedIn has also leveraged its tie to OpenAI to help develop an AI-powered experience for Premium members.
- **Snap's My AI runs on OpenAI's ChatGPT:** **Snap** was the first major social platform to go to market with its own AI-powered chatbot, My AI. Unlike standalone **ChatGPT**, My AI can also surface content from across **Snapchat**, including Lenses and Snap Map. My AI now has over 200 million users, though CEO **Evan Spiegel** said during Q3 earnings that it is not yet a daily use case for users. Snap has also partnered with Microsoft to serve sponsored links in My AI.
- **X owner and early OpenAI investor Elon Musk is launching a ChatGPT competitor:** X felt like its former **Twitter** self during the OpenAI turmoil as journalists filled the feed with real-time news updates. While that's good news for the platform, which is suffering from another advertiser pullback, Musk isn't one to give up the spotlight easily: As Altman was being reinstated at OpenAI, Musk announced via a reply to a post on X that his AI venture **xAI's** chatbot, **Grok**, "should" be available to all X Premium+ subscribers this week.
- **Meta is waiting in the wings:** **Meta** is developing its own genAI models, which are partially trained on data from its own platforms, to power its new Meta AI chatbot for **WhatsApp**, **Messenger**, and **Instagram**. In a somewhat surprising twist, Meta has integrated Microsoft's Bing search engine into the chatbot. Meta has also touted its prowess in AI as a major reason for its ad revenue rebound and time spent increases on **Facebook** and Instagram.

**Between the lines:** OpenAI has become synonymous with genAI, and Altman is a poster child for the technology. We expect 79.0% of US genAI users to use ChatGPT in 2023. But it's hardly the only big-name player in the space, and **the market is OpenAI's to lose**. By 2025, we expect ChatGPT's share of the genAI user market to drop slightly to 75.2%.

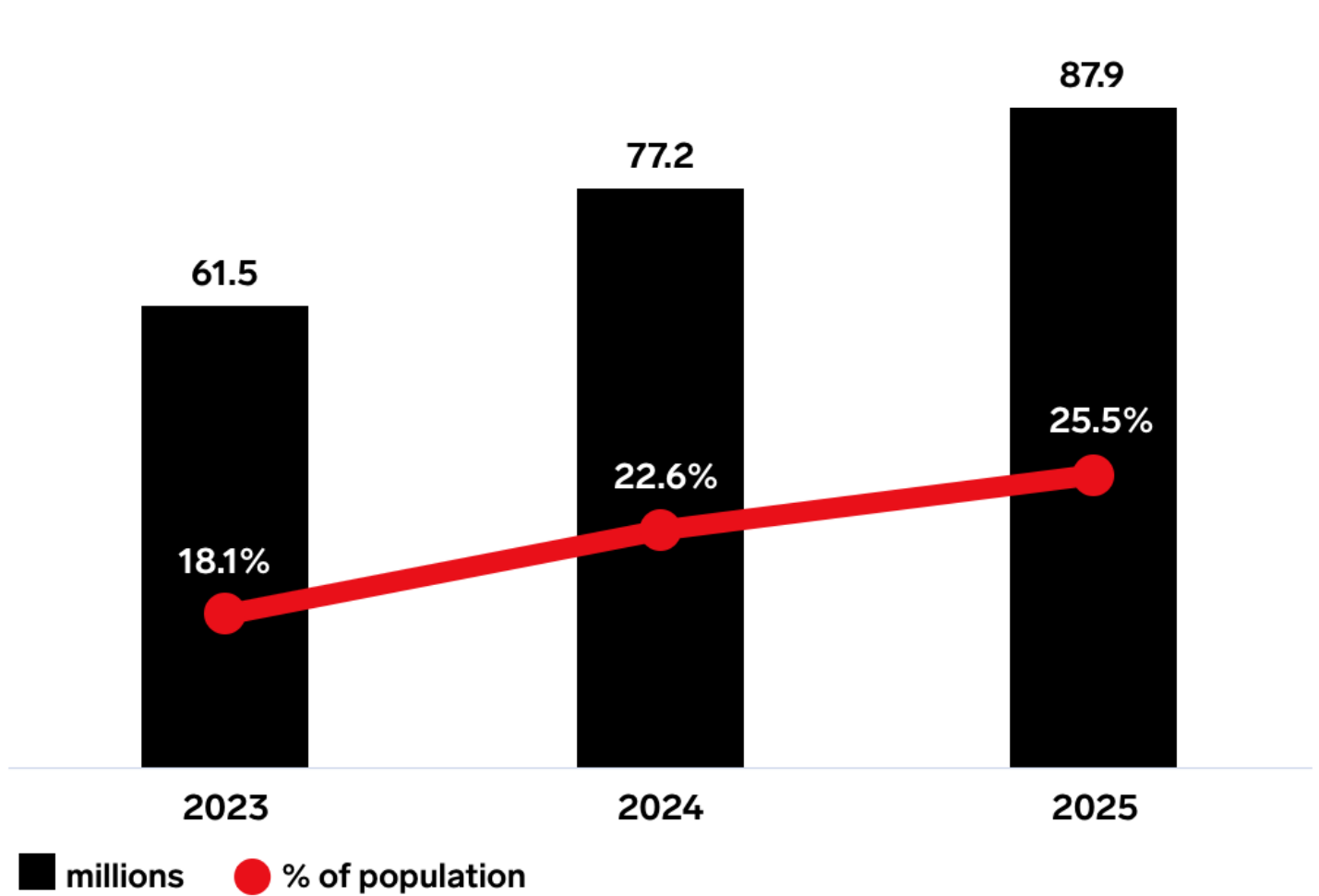
**What's next:** Altman has reportedly agreed to an internal investigation as a condition of his return. The continued uncertainty at OpenAI could impact social platforms in several ways:

- **It could serve as a warning sign for social platforms' AI ambitions:** The reasons for Altman's firing are still unclear, but reports suggest that the board didn't feel Altman was candid and was moving too fast to commercialize AI. That may not bode well for platforms like Meta, which has already come under fire for dismantling most of its responsible AI team.
- **It could speed up development of social AI features:** If the reports are true, executives could view Altman's return as a triumph of speed over safety. Meanwhile, Microsoft's swift intervention is a signal of how intense the need to win the AI race has become. That could mean faster development and shipping of AI features and tools from across the social sphere.

**The big picture:** The competition in AI is about to get even more intense. The social platforms won't only have to contend with OpenAI, but likely a new batch of startups as well as rivals like **Anthropic** that will aim to capitalize on the turmoil.

# ChatGPT Users

US, 2023-2025



Note: internet users of any age who enter a prompt into ChatGPT on openai.com (browser or app) via any device at least once per month

Source: Insider Intelligence | eMarketer, June 2023

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