

# Telegram surpasses WhatsApp in Russia and gets banned in Brazil, all in one week

Article

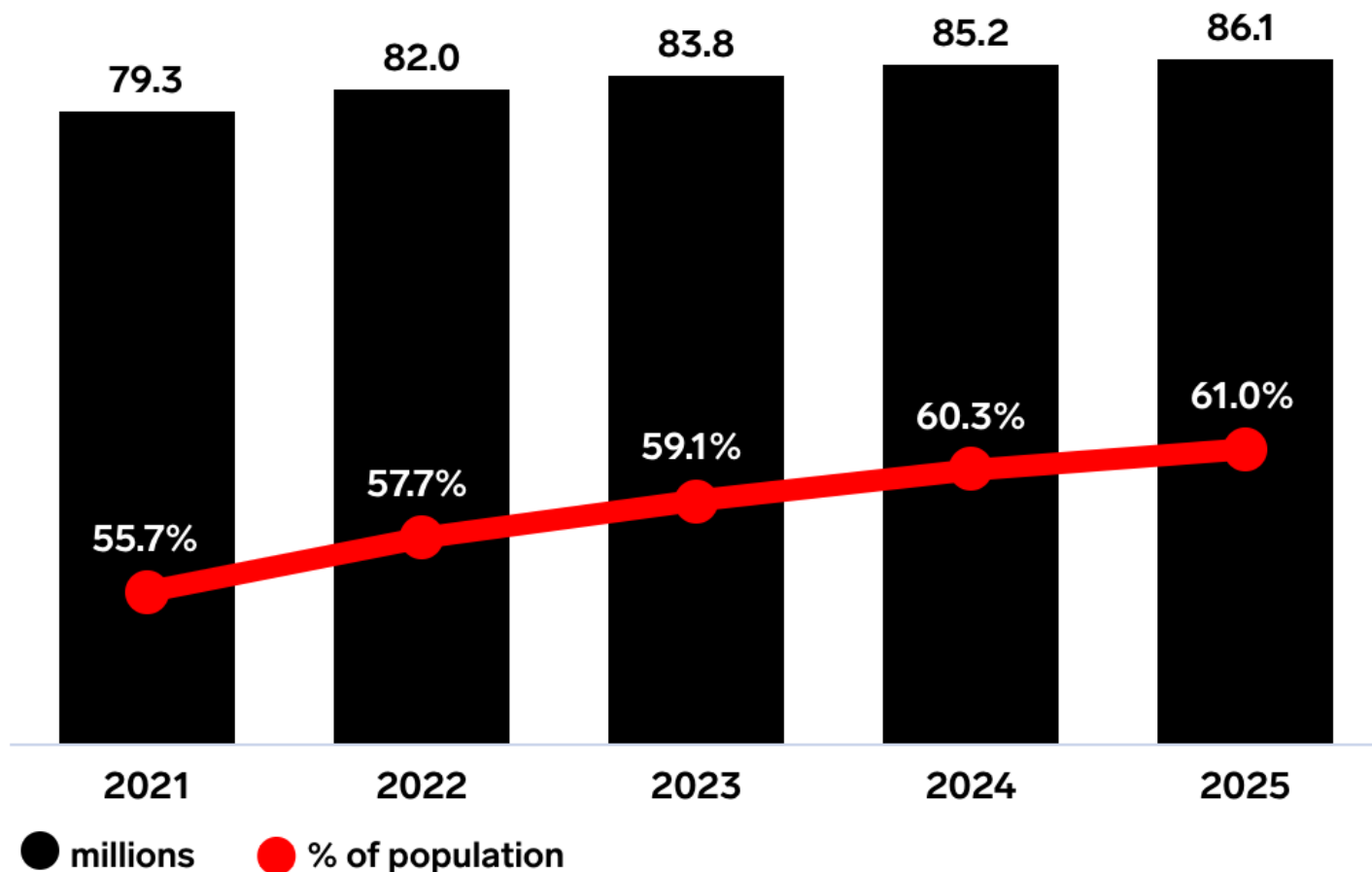
**The news:** Telegram is making headlines for its brief ban in Brazil and rapid growth in Russia—but there are reasons why it lags behind as a marketing vehicle for brands.

**Russian rise:** Telegram has surpassed **WhatsApp** as Russia's most popular messaging app, per Russian telecom Megafon, with Russians flocking to the service as their government tightens restrictions on social platforms.

- Telegram's share of mobile internet traffic increased to 63% in the first two weeks of March from 48% in the first two weeks of February, per Megafon data.
- WhatsApp's market share has plummeted from 48% to 32% as prosecutors sought to label its parent **Meta** as an “extremist organization.” It’s not the first time Telegram has grown because of missteps by WhatsApp.
- Russian authorities have actively promoted Telegram as they have banned other foreign platforms such as **Facebook**, **Instagram**, and **Twitter**.
- Telegram users consume 101 MB of data each day on average, compared with 26 MB for WhatsApp users.

## Mobile Phone Messaging App Users

Russia, 2021-2025



Source: eMarketer, June 2021

eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com

**Shortest ban ever?** After Brazilian government institutions were unable to reach Telegram for months, the service was banned in the country last Friday. That's when CEO **Pavel Durov** responded and apologized for missing court emails. (Really, that was the excuse).

- Over the weekend, Telegram acted rapidly to comply with court demands, including deleting confidential information on Brazilian President **Jair Bolsonaro**'s account and nixing the account of a political supporter accused of spreading misinformation.

- Telegram implemented other modifications to combat disinformation, including promoting verified material and flagging misleading posts.
- The messenger app is the fastest-growing platform in Brazil, where it is installed on 53% of mobile phones, according to government officials.

### More on Telegram:

- Founded by **Durov**, a Russian, in 2013, the messaging service has long been a popular news platform in Russia.
- The platform, which surpassed 1 billion users last fall, has traditionally taken a hands-off attitude to content on its app. That has endeared it to right-wing users who contend that their views are suppressed on other social platforms.

### Chaos agent: For many brands, Telegram is still the Wild West.

- Germany is clashing with Telegram over efforts to track down threats of political violence.
- The Anti-Defamation League has cited disturbing amounts of hate speech on Telegram directed at Black and Jewish Americans.
- Telegram's lack of default end-to-end encryption could prove to be a major problem, particularly for Ukrainians during the Russian invasion.
- Brands—especially multinationals—may be concerned about investing time and resources into a platform that could be taken offline in a major market just because the CEO didn't read his email.