

2023 will be a year of change and opportunity for social media

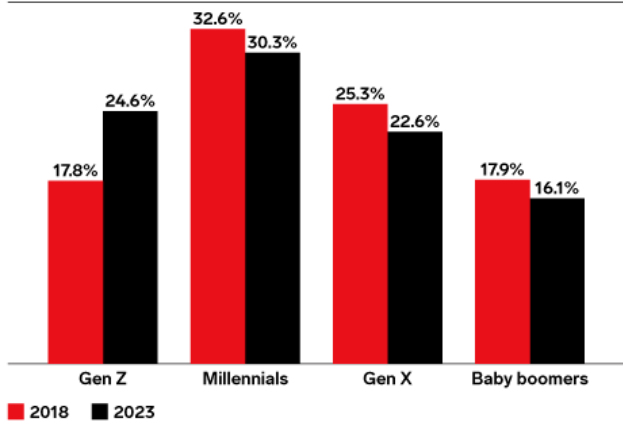
Article

2022 was a year of crisis for social media in the US, but 2023 will be a year of recovery and new beginnings. The social audience remains massive: This year, for the first time, roughly two-thirds of the US population will use a social network at least monthly, per our estimates. But the landscape will become increasingly fragmented, driven both by Gen Z and turmoil at the established social platforms.

Gen Z will make up almost one-quarter of US social users. In another first, there will be more Gen Z than Gen X monthly social users in the US in 2023. To put it another way, there are now almost 20 million more US Gen Z social users than there were in 2018, when ByteDance merged Musical.ly with TikTok and the app started to take off in the US. As Gen Z grows up (the oldest members will turn 26 this year), their social media preferences and habits will transform the US social landscape.

US Social Network Users, by Generation, 2018 & 2023

% of total



Note: internet users of any age who use a social network via any device at least once per month; Gen Z are individuals born between 1997 and 2012; millennials are individuals born between 1981 and 1996; Gen X are individuals born between 1965 and 1980; baby boomers are individuals born between 1946 and 1964
Source: eMarketer, Dec 2022

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Meta remains massive, but its dominance is waning. Meta's ad business will return to growth this year, after its first-ever revenue decline in 2022. Meanwhile, Meta's US monthly user base (excluding WhatsApp, Messenger, and Oculus/Reality Labs) will continue to grow in 2023 after surpassing 200 million last year. The catch is that Instagram now accounts for all that user growth.

TikTok's future has never been more uncertain. The app will have more than 100 million monthly users in 2023. That means TikTok's US user base will be almost five times the population of Florida, the home state of Sen. Marco Rubio, who introduced legislation to ban TikTok in the US in December. Any measure to curtail TikTok's growth would create space for other apps to gain share.

The continued chaos at Twitter will also cause shifts in the market. Twitter managed to stave off a user decline in 2022, but that won't be the case this year. Twitter's user losses will

be mostly LinkedIn's and Reddit's gain, as Mastodon (an app similar to Twitter) is too complicated for mainstream users to use.

In crisis and chaos lies opportunity. As challenges continue, the social platforms will have a strong impetus to develop new ad formats and technologies—to the benefit of advertisers. Meanwhile, new apps will provide marketers with other avenues to reach users, such as organic and influencer marketing.

Report by Jasmine Enberg Jan 25, 2023

US Social Media Outlook 2023

