

US Adults' Time Spent with Mobile Messaging Apps Is Increasing amid the Pandemic

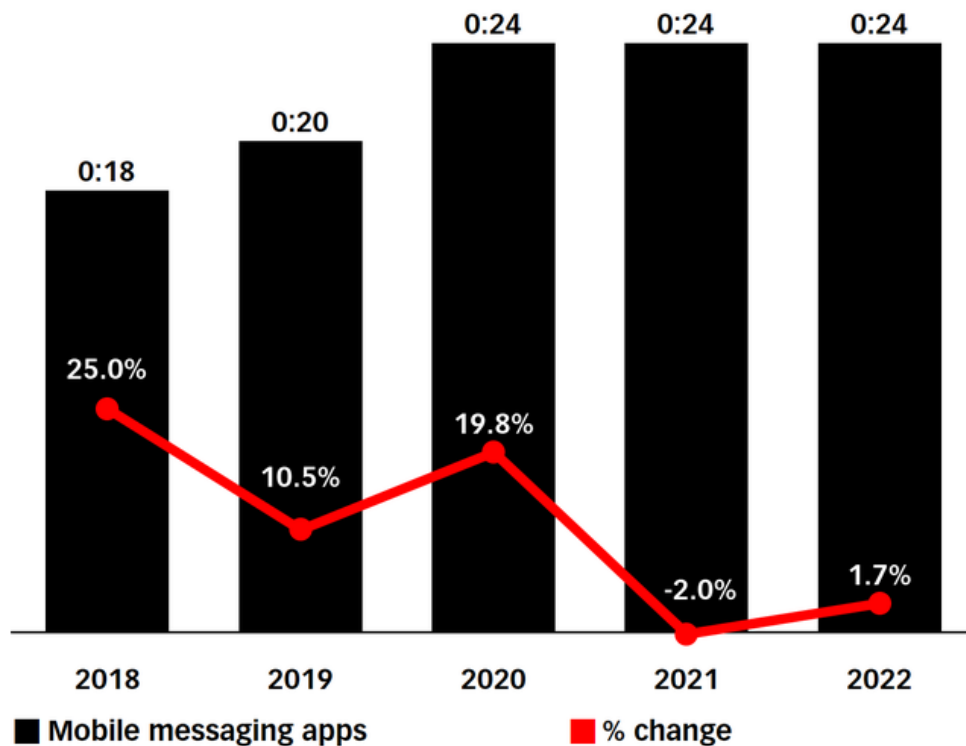
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This year, US adults will spend an average of 24 minutes per day on mobile messaging apps — like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger — which is up 4 minutes from 2019 estimates, according to our newest figures.

Mobile Messaging Apps: Average Time Spent in the US, 2018-2022

hrs:mins per day and % change among population



Note: ages 18+; includes all time spent with over-the-top (OTT) messaging apps via mobile devices (browser or app), regardless of multitasking

Source: eMarketer, April 2020

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www.eMarketer.com

This increase is partially due to the pandemic. Use of mobile messaging apps during the quarantine is up, as users seek alternative modes of communication with loved ones while shelter-in-place measures continue. April survey data from GlobalWebIndex found that 19% of US internet users said they're spending more time on messaging services as a result of the pandemic.

But even before the pandemic, there has been a gradual shift away from traditional texting to messaging apps. Our latest forecast includes new data indicating that Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Apple iMessage and others were experiencing strong growth in engagement even before the pandemic.

Messaging apps' advanced functionality — the ability to share videos, GIFs and memes is simpler through messaging apps than through text messaging — is a driver in adoption across many demographics. In the future, Messenger Rooms — Facebook's answer to Zoom video conferencing — could also drive more time spent with Messenger (our forecast was finalized before Facebook announced Messenger Rooms).

As messaging app usage surges, marketers should think of messaging like consumers do. It's less about sending written messages and more about using the full array of creative tools to share and connect. And pay attention to the evolution of Messenger Rooms. If consumers gravitate toward this style of video chatting over alternatives like Zoom, it could become another platform to connect with customers or a new cross-team marketing tool.