

Social Networks See Boosts in Engagement Among Users, but Not Equally

Instagram and Snapchat add more minutes than Facebook per day, narrowing gap

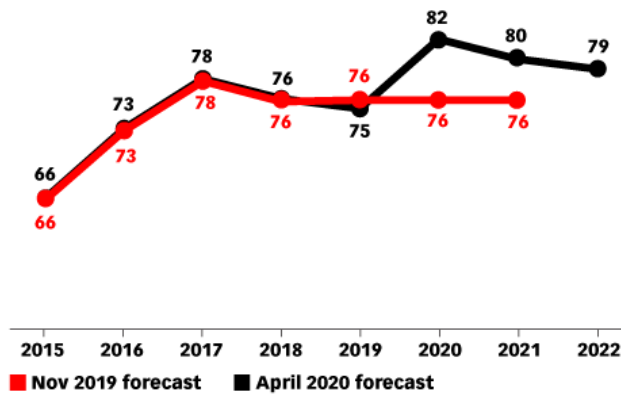
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eMarketer Editors

More time spent at home during the pandemic means more time being spent on social media. But not all social platforms are benefiting in the same way. In our latest forecast on time spent with media in the US, we expect adult social network users to log an average of 1 hour, 22 minutes (1:22) per day in 2020, up nearly 7 minutes over last year.

Social Networks: Average Time Spent by US Adult Social Network Users, 2015-2022

minutes per day, Nov 2019 vs. April 2020



Note: ages 18+ who use social networks at least once per month; time spent with each medium includes all time spent with that medium, regardless of multitasking or device
Source: eMarketer, May 2020

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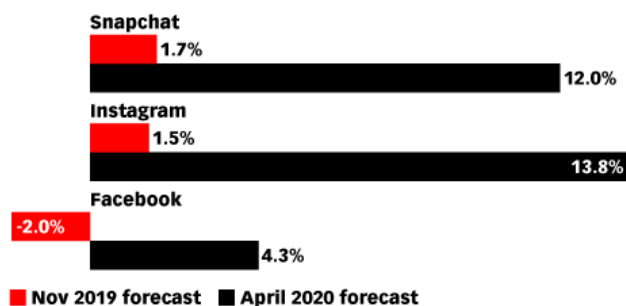
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For this forecast, we estimated total social network time* spent among adult users, which includes breakouts for adult users of Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. Compared with our previous forecast in Q4 2019, we have increased projections for overall social network usage in 2020, plus increased estimates for the three platforms. Our previous forecast had time spent by social network users growing by only 6 seconds—but the new forecast now shows an unexpected bump in engagement for 2020. This will be the first year of positive growth in time spent among US social users since 2017.

**Total social behavior includes all social networks, not just those broken out by eMarketer.*

Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat: Growth in Average Time Spent per Day by US Social Network Users, 2020

% change, Nov 2019 vs. April 2020



Note: ages 18+ who use each social network mentioned at least once per month; time spent with each medium includes all time spent with that medium, regardless of multitasking or device
Source: eMarketer, May 2020

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Instagram

Instagram will see the biggest percentage increase in time spent by users this year, compared with Facebook and Snapchat. Daily time among adult Instagram users will jump 13.8% this year to nearly 30 minutes per day. That's an increase of almost 4 minutes over last year. We previously estimated daily time among users to increase by just 24 seconds this year.

"Instagram has seen increased engagement recently through features such as Instagram Live and Stories," eMarketer principal analyst Debra Aho Williamson said. "Creators, celebrities and publishers have all used Instagram to demonstrate how they are dealing with stay-at-home orders."

Snapchat

Snapchat is a close second when it comes to increased engagement among users. While it's partly due to COVID-19, Snapchat was already seeing increased time spent with AR lenses, as well as original shows and other content on the Discover page. This year, daily time spent among adult Snapchat users will grow 12.0% to 29.5 minutes per day, a jump of 3 minutes over 2019. Our previous estimates had Snapchat adding just 30 seconds per day this year among adult users.

“For Snapchat, the increased time spent comes not only from users who are spending more time on the app communicating with friends, but also from rising viewership of Snapchat’s original shows and increases in video calling on the app,” Williamson said.

Facebook

Facebook (excluding Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp) will benefit the least from the 2020 bump, adding 1.4 minutes per day among adult users, bringing average daily usage to just over 34 minutes per day. Previous estimates had Facebook losing 42 seconds among adult users in 2020.

“We believe that some users who have increased their usage of core Facebook in recent months may revert back to former usage patterns by the end of the year,” Williamson said.

As stay-at-home orders slowly lift, we expect total social time among users to drop slightly going into 2021, but it will remain above 2019 levels. Some of the increased time on social networks will stick around, driven by TikTok, Instagram Live, Snap Originals and other Discover content.