

Live Video Is Replacing In-Person Interactions

Videoconferencing platforms see surge in usage due to the coronavirus

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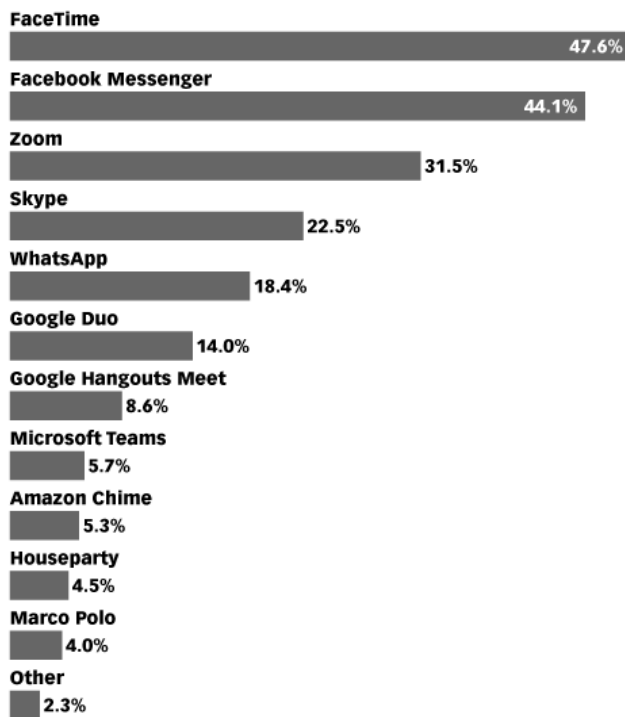
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With in-person interactions ground to a halt, consumers in countries affected by the coronavirus pandemic are turning to live video to stay connected.

In a March 31 survey by [Business Insider Intelligence](#), 47.6% of US adults had used Apple's pre-installed FaceTime app to chat with family and friends during the pandemic. Another 44.1% had used Facebook Messenger, followed by 31.5% for Zoom, 22.5% for Skype and 18.4% for WhatsApp.

Videoconferencing Services Used by US Adults to Chat with Family/Friends During the Coronavirus Pandemic, March 31, 2020

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+

Source: Business Insider Intelligence, "Coronavirus Consumer Survey," April 6, 2020

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In late April, Facebook **announced** the launch of Messenger Rooms, a new live videoconferencing service that would host up to 50 people at a time. The service is open to Facebook users and non-users alike, and it will eventually be integrated across Facebook's family of apps, including Instagram Direct, WhatsApp and Portal.

The announcement followed a March 24 **blog post**, in which Facebook said that much of the increased traffic to its apps in countries hardest hit by the coronavirus came from its messaging services. Voice and video calling on Messenger and WhatsApp, for example, had more than doubled over the previous month.

Even smaller social platforms with comparatively low usage rates have benefitted from the isolation measures that are driving people online. Take Houseparty, for example. Just 4.5% of respondents in the Business Insider Intelligence survey had used the live video and gaming app to connect with friends and family as of March 31. But more than

half (55.6%) of total US Houseparty users in the survey said they had joined the app as a result of the pandemic.

That growth reflects the deep need for human connection amid social distancing measures. It's unclear what the long-term impact will be on the social landscape, but it's unlikely that videoconferencing will remain as important to consumers once the pandemic ends and shelter-in-place measures are relaxed.