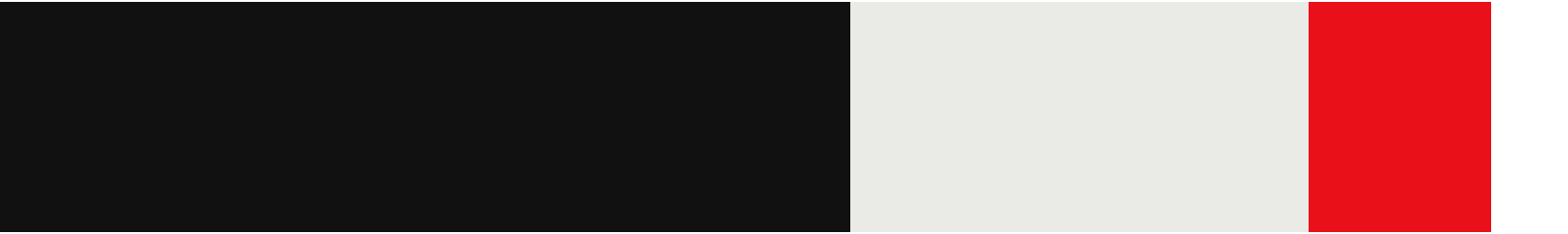


Facebook's Instagram Lite will help the app penetrate emerging markets, building on Instagram's strong user growth during the pandemic

Article

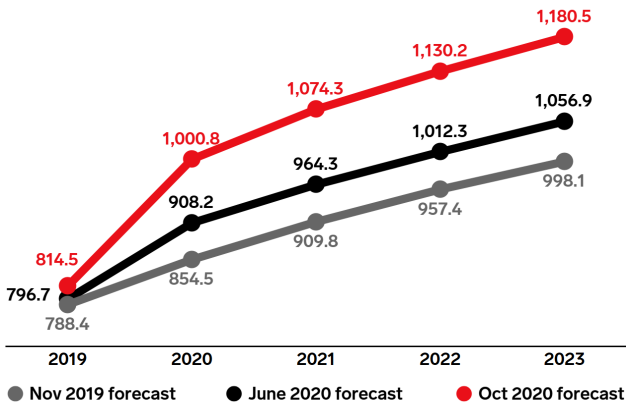


Facebook **rolled out** the less data-intensive, Android-only version of Instagram (Instagram Lite) to 170 countries this week. The app takes up only 2 MB and is geared toward emerging markets, where consumers are more likely to use Androids and/or be sensitive to the costs of excessive mobile data usage. Many mobile apps already create lite versions for this very reason, but Facebook noted that this was particularly challenging for Instagram given the app's wide array and ever-increasing set of features. The slimmed-down Instagram Lite will not include advertising, shopping, or the ability to make TikTok-like Reels, although users will still be able to view Reels. Facebook did, however, say that advertising will be coming to Instagram Lite in a future update.

Instagram's worldwide user base has seen strong growth over the past year, surpassing 1 billion users in 2020 for the first time. Due largely to the effects of the pandemic, Instagram hit the 1 billion mark roughly four years earlier than we had **previously anticipated** in our pre-pandemic forecast. India, Vietnam, and Mexico were the three fastest-growing countries for Instagram in 2020, and growth in the coming year could be aided by the launch of Instagram Lite. For context, last year, Instagram's global user base was about half the size of Facebook's, which had roughly 1.90 billion. But in three countries—Japan, South Korea, and Russia—Instagram actually had more users than Facebook.

How Our Forecast for Worldwide Instagram Users Has Changed, 2019-2023

millions



Note: internet users of any age who access their Instagram account via any device at least once per month
Source: eMarketer, October 2020

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India, in particular, will likely continue to be a key growth priority for Instagram this year as TikTok remains banned in the country. TikTok is **still banned** by the government of India, creating a sizable opportunity for Instagram and its new Reels format to fill the gap. In line with that, this year **we expect** that Instagram will reach 106.1 million users in India, which represents 7.9% of its national population—meaning there's plenty of room for the platform to grow. We should expect Facebook to lean heavily on Instagram Reels as a way of capitalizing on TikTok's absence in order to encourage adoption among Indian consumers.

For more insight into this topic, read our report, "**Global Instagram Users 2020.**"