

Meta expands paid verification subscription service to US

Article

The news: Meta is expanding the test of its paid verification feature, **Meta Verified**, to the US.

- Besides a blue check mark, **Meta Verified** also gives subscribers on **Facebook** and **Instagram** access to **impersonation protection and customer support**.

- At a monthly rate of **\$11.99 on the web and \$14.99 on iOS and Android**, Meta's offering is up to \$7 more expensive than **Twitter Blue**, which starts at \$8 per month.

The catch: As part of the expansion, Meta has removed increased reach and visibility as a subscriber perk. Meta said the decision was based on feedback and learnings from early testing of the feature, which launched in Australia and New Zealand last month.

A verified badge might not be enough: True, the blue check mark has become a status symbol on Instagram. But as the meager signups for Twitter Blue have shown, clout alone isn't sufficient to move the needle for most social users.

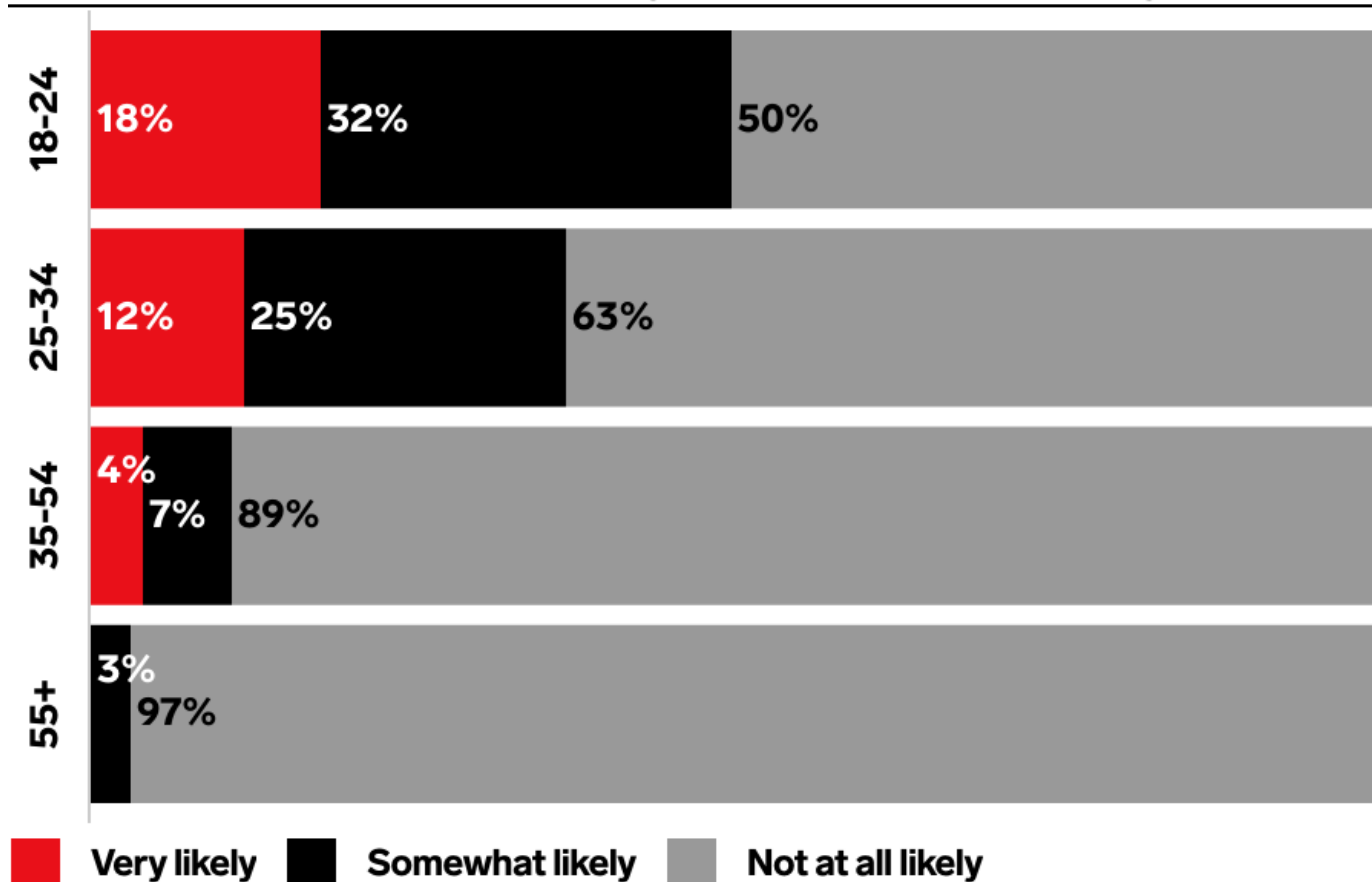
- As of mid-January, Twitter Blue had just 180,000 subscribers in the US, per The Information. That's less than 1% of the 55.1 million monthly US users we expect **Twitter** will have this year.
- According to CivicScience, 82% of US adult Facebook and Instagram users were not at all likely to sign up for Meta Verified as of February 28 vs. 6% who were very likely. At the time of the survey, the subscription still included increased reach and visibility.

Yes, but: Meta Verified is geared primarily toward creators, rather than ordinary users. And the potential for reach on Facebook and Instagram, which have a combined and unduplicated US monthly user base of 202.8 million, is already massive. Plus, impersonation protection will be key, given the botched initial rollout of the revamped Twitter Blue, which led to a host of brand and celebrity impersonations on the platform.

Our take: Nearly every social platform, including Snapchat, is experimenting with subscriptions, and Meta isn't one to get left behind. Unlike Twitter, Meta isn't trying to overhaul its monetization model, and any revenues it generates from Meta Verified would just be nice padding on its ad business. Meta Verified is also closer to providing real value for subscribers than Twitter Blue— with less controversy—and at under \$150 per year, it may be worth it for creators looking to build their brands and audiences on Instagram.

Likelihood of US Adults Paying for Meta Verified, by Age, Feb 2023

% of Facebook and Instagram users in each group



Note: 2,278 responses from 2/26/23 to 2/28/23; rebased to exclude those who don't use Facebook and Instagram. Respondents were asked their likelihood to sign up for Meta Verified while being informed of its pricing and features, including verification badges, increased security, and greater search visibility.

Source: CivicScience blog post, March 1, 2023

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