

I'm not a robot

































[illegible]



source is from all internet users across 53 countries, aged 16 and over, and on any device. Time (minutes) Q2021147Q3 2021147Q4 2021149Q1 2021149Q2 2021148Q3 2021151Q4 2021214Q1 2021146Q2 2021314Q3 2021143Q4 2021314Q1 2021214Q2 2021139Q4 2021411 Source: DataReportal/ConclusionThere you have it for my rise of social media statistics roundup. In terms of technology adoption, its mind-blowing to see how quickly social media adoption rate grew across the world. Furthermore, theres a growing number of new social media networks adding more users. The top headline in DataReportals huge Digital 2024 Global Overview Report is that active social media user identities have passed the 5 billion mark.Kepios analysis of the latest data from around the world shows that the cumulative total of active users on the top platform in each country reached 5.04 billion by the start of 2024.And while this user identities figure may not equate to unique, human individuals, it still marks a momentous milestone on social medias journey. Social media user identities have increased by 266 million over the past twelve months, delivering year-on-year growth of 5.6 percent.On average, that equates to almost 730,000 new user identities every single day during 2023, at a rate of 8.4 new users every single second.And despite the fact that social media growth has slowed somewhat recently as weve seen some signs of saturation in some regions, the overall trend remains positive. Social media continues to grow globally, with significant gains in emerging markets. And these figures suggest that growth in the final quarter of 2023 was actually higher than the average for the year as a whole, with increases averaging 9.4 new users every second over those final three months of the year. Meanwhile, research from GWI reveals that social media is the most popular online activity in the world.At a global level, 94.7 percent of internet users between the ages of 16 and 64 say that they use online chat and messaging services each month. GWIs findings focus on working-age adults in 53 of the worlds largest economies, but their findings echo those of a recent study covering other locations.GSMA Intelligence reports that roughly 9 in 10 mobile internet users across lower- and middle-income countries now use instant messaging, making it even more popular than making or receiving calls.Meanwhile, GWI reports that social networking attracts only slightly fewer users than instant messaging.The companys latest research indicates that94.3 percent of internet users aged 16 to 64 use social networking platforms each month just 0.4 percentage points behind chat apps.And perhaps surprisingly younger users are more likely to use social networking services than they are to use chat and messaging platforms. For context, search engines rank third across all age groups, but with only 80.7 percent of working-age internet users visiting these platforms each month, social media is clearly the top online activity.And for added perspective, a massive 97.4 percent of GWIs survey respondents say that they use either a chat app or a social network each month, meaning that almost all of the worlds internet users engage in some form of social media activity on a monthly basis.But social medias popularity isnt just measured in user numbers.Social media also accounts for a significant share of the worlds online time, as we explore in this separate, detailed article.The history of social mediaBut how did we get here?Well, despite todays impressive stats, it actually took a few decades for social media to gain momentum.Lets take a closer look back over the worlds journey to 5 billion social media users. Platforms like WhatsApp and WeChat may seem like relatively recent additions to the communications landscape, but you may be surprised to learn that instant messaging has a long and storied past.In fact, computer-mediated instant messaging has existed since before the first email, with early examples appearing in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These systems were often limited to specific channels such as a chat room and each of these channels could host a maximum of five chat participants at any one time.Interestingly, Talkomatic users could see what other users were typing in real-time, and participants didnt need to wait for a person to hit send before they could read what the person was sharing.Talkomatic ran on the PLATO system, which offered educational services through a series of networked mainframe systems.As a result, Talkomatic access was largely restricted to people in educational environments.The first commercially available online chat service was CompuServe CB Simulator, which launched in February 1980 [random aside: the Rolling Stones Mick Jagger held the first online multimedia conference using CompuServe CB in December 1995].Talkers also came to prominence in the mid-1980s, and in many ways, these services laid the groundwork for much of what we see in todays instant messengers.Around the same time, Quantum Link colloquially known as Q-Link brought instant chat and messaging services to Commodore computers, via dial-up modem connections.Instant messaging then started to gain more significant momentum with the launch of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) in 1988, and there were already around 40 IRC servers worldwide by the middle of 1989.Messaging in the 90sBut it was the advent of standalone messenger platforms in the 1990s that supercharged the growth of instant messaging.Launched in 1994, PowWow was one of the first applications to bring instant messaging to the burgeoning Microsoft Windows operating system, alongside voice chat (VoIP) and shared whiteboards.But perhaps the most famous of these early messenger platforms wasICQ, whichlaunched in 1996.By the time it was acquired by AOL in 1998, ICQ had already attracted close to 12 million users.Just three years later, ICQs user base had grown by a factor of eight, and the service passed the 100 million registered user mark in May 2001.For perspective, at that time, the world was home to just under 500 million internet users. These figures suggest that more than 1 in 5 internet users had created an ICQ account by 2001, and roughly 2 in 3 ICQ users lived outside of the United States.However, not all of ICQs 100 million registered members were active.Users at the time suggested that between 25 and 30 percent of ICQs registered users accessed the platform each month, meaning that roughly 30 million users were active each month.ICQ peaked its IQ at over 150 million registered users in 2003, but by 2004, the service had already attracted more than 61 million registered users, 20 million of whom were active users.Around that time, audience analysts Media Matrix reported that AIMS active user base was growing at just under 20 percent per year.Dig deeper: if youd like to learn more about AIM and its impact, try this and this.Not to be outdone, Yahoo! one of the other great tech behemoths of the time had also launched a messenger service in the late 1990s.Yahoo! Messenger officially launched in June 1999, but the platform was ostensibly an amalgamation of the Yahoo! Pager service that had launched in March 1998, and the companys earlier Yahoo! Chat rooms.Estimates suggest that Yahoo! Messenger had gained more than 10 million active users by August 2000, but its unclear whether this figure refers to its total global user base, or if it only includes users in the United States.Yahoos 2001 annual report also reveals that the service averaged more than 6 billion messages per month in the final three months of that year.Dig deeper: read more on Yahoo! Messenger here.Meanwhile, Microsofts rival MSN Messenger was also gaining momentum at the start of the century.The service had launched in July 1999, and by March 2001, MSN Messenger had almost 30 million monthly active users.At the time, Microsoft revealed that the use of MSN Messenger had grown by more than 200 percent over the preceding 12 months, making the platform the single most-used instant messaging service in the world.Dig deeper: explore some great MSN Messenger nostalgia here.However, by the late 90s, the Chinese government had already activated its Great Firewall.With the countrys internet users increasingly unable to access platforms that had gained popularity elsewhere, Chinas companies started building their own social platforms, and in February 1999, Tencent launched its now legendary QQ platform.QQ started out as an ICQ clone, but the messenger quickly grew to become the most widely used social platform in China, and offered many unique features and innovations of its own.Tencents investor earnings announcements show that the platform had already attracted 50 million active users by the end of 2002, and this active base had grown to more than 100 million users by 2004.Meanwhile, back in the United States, Skype launched in 2003, and while the platform is probably best known for its VoIP capabilities, it also offered instant messaging services.Originally, MSNs Messenger and AOLs Instant Messenger were the dominant forces in the market, but by 2004, both had lost ground to Google Talk, and by 2005, Google Talk had surpassed them both. By 2006, Google Talk had surpassed MSN Messenger and Skype someone told me in 2013, but Tencents Weixin also known as WeChat outside of China didnt overtake QQ until late 2016.Somewhat frustratingly, Meta doesnt publish regular user figures for WhatsApp, and the latest official update was in 2020, when the platform announced 2 billion monthly active users.That figure is still the one touted on the platforms Business site today, but Kepios analysis suggests that WhatsApp likely has around 2.3 billion monthly active users at the start of 2024.Meanwhile, Tencent reports that the combined active user bases of Weixin and WeChat had grown to 1.34 billion by September 2023.At a worldwide level, WhatsApp and Weixin dominate the instant messaging market, but two other services are also worthy of note.LINE is currently the messenger of choice in Japan, and the companys business resources (in Japanese) indicate that the platform now has 96 million monthly active users in the country.Meanwhile, KakaoTalk is the most popular messaging service in South Korea, and the company reported more than 48 million monthly active users in the country for Q3 2023.Our analysis of these figures suggests that the combined audience of the most popular messaging platform in each country is roughly 3.7 billion users, while the total number of instant messaging users around the world now exceeds 5 billion. Social networksBut instant messengers are just one side of the social media story, so lets shift our focus to social networks.Interestingly, the first web-based social media platforms had already emerged before ICQ.The early daysLaunched in 1994, some might argue that GeoCities was the first of these social media platforms, especially after the site started offering chat, bulletin boards, and other community elements in mid-1995.Similarly, theGlobe is another example of early social media.The platforms website launched in 1995, and reportedly attracted 44,000 visits in its first month.That may not sound like a lot by todays standards, but there were fewer than 50 million internet users at that time, and the site launched six months before the first web banner ad.As a result, theGlobe relied on TV advertising to promote its service, and even distributed CD-ROMs to help build momentum.By the time of its record-breaking IPO in 1998, theGlobe.com claimed 1.3 million registered users.However, the site effectively shut down in 2000, and its successor, GeoCities, followed suit in 2001. Around the same time, MSNs Messenger and AOLs Instant Messenger were the dominant forces in the market, but by 2004, both had lost ground to Google Talk, and by 2005, Google Talk had surpassed them both. 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