

Facebook

‘Parents killed it’: why Facebook is losing its teenage users.

This year more than 3 million under-25s in the UK and US are expected to leave the site.

Mark Sweney and Ana De Liz

When Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook, he was a 19-year-old living in a dorm in his second year at university. Fast-forward 14 years and it is the young people he was so successful in luring to Facebook to propel it to become the world’s biggest social networking site that are now his biggest problem.

This year more than 3 million under-25s in the UK and US will either quit Facebook or stop using it regularly, and they are pretty vocal about why.

“As soon as parents got in they killed it,” says 24-year-old Jordan Ranford, a now minimal Facebook user who ditched his mum as a friend because she was “just jarring”.

Georgia Davey, 21,

predicts a bleak future for the increasingly uncool Facebook. “I don’t know if I should say this, but I think Facebook might shut down one day,” she says. “There will be a new thing soon and no one will be on it anymore.”

With 2 billion registered users it is impossible to see Facebook closing. But her comment highlights an inherent truth of internet life. Facebook is managing to keep a proportion of disaffected youngsters: many have moved to Instagram, which it bought in 2012 for \$1bn, but the big winner is increasingly Snapchat.

About 44% of Snapchat users are aged 18 to 24, while just 20% of Facebook’s are now in that key age range, according to Ampere Analysis.

Jordan Ranford, 24

“As soon as the parents got in, they killed it,” Jordan says. “I mainly pay attention to what my older sisters are doing or keeping track of things that are funny ... I deleted my mum as a friend on Facebook because she was just jarring.” Most people he knows have had Facebook for eight or nine years. Back then it was a way for everyone to upload photos to show what they had been up to, “like WhatsApp but on a bigger scale ... and after the parents started getting involved it kind of lost the fun-ness of it, so it started to be a bit sad when you realised: ‘Hold up, my mum is posting more than me, like, why?’” Jordan thinks the purpose of Facebook is to feed egos, occasionally to post something with a nice message and for businesses: “It’s not what it used to be. There’s just so many more advertisements now. It’s losing the appeal it used to have.” He says he deleted Snapchat when Instagram launched its Stories feature. He mainly uses Instagram, and Twitter is “quite good for political items, which you don’t really get on Facebook.”

Emily McClymont, 17, and Cameron Cavens, 18

Cameron says he tries not to use Facebook because he finds it too intrusive. Emily is also using it less: “I find it a bit boring now. It deals too much with people’s lives.” However, she says: “I don’t think I’d delete it because it’s a way of speaking to my family. That’s the only reason I keep it.” She says Facebook is good if you lose touch with people because you can find them again.

“If all my friends stop using it, I might delete it,” says Cameron. He uses Twitter a lot: “I just hate the amount of ads on Facebook. It’s become unusable. Twitter is not as bad.” Emily also uses Twitter, and that’s where she gets most of her news. They also use Instagram and WhatsApp.

Read the text and decide if the following statements are facts or opinions.

1. This year more than 3 million under-25s in the UK and US are expected to leave the site.	2. Facebook was introduced by a second-year university student.
3. About 44% of Snapchat users are aged 18 to 24	4. With 2 billion registered users it is impossible to see Facebook closing.
5. Instagram was bought by Facebook.	6. The aim of Facebook is to feed egos.
7. Facebook deals too much with people's lives.	8. Facebook is a way of speaking to families.
9. Twitter is better than Facebook.	10. There are lots of ads on Facebook.

Fact	Opinion

Read the statements and write whose opinion it is.

1. This year more than 3 million under-25s in the UK and US are expected to leave the site.				
Mark Sweney and Ana De Liz	Jordan Ranford	Emily McClymont	Cameron Cavens	

2. With 2 billion registered users it is impossible to see Facebook closing.

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3. The aim of Facebook is to feed egos.

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4. Facebook deals too much with people's lives.

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5. Facebook is a way of speaking to families.

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6. Twitter is better than Facebook.

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7. There is lots of ads on Facebook.

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Read the text again and find these numbers. What do the numbers refer to?

3 million registered users of Facebook

19-year-old dollars Facebook paid for Instagram

24-year-old Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook

2 billion under-25s in the UK and US are expected to leave Facebook

1 billion now minimal Facebook user who ditched his mum as a friend because she was "just jarring"