

Facebook now home to 1 billion monthly users (Update 2)

October 4 2012, by Barbara Ortutay



In this Sept. 11, 2012 photo, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks during a "fireside chat" at a conference organized by technology blog TechCrunch in San Francisco. Zuckerberg updated his Facebook status on Thursday, Oct. 4, 2012, to announce that the social networking site has more than 1 billion active users each month. He thanked users and said that he is committed to making Facebook better. The Menlo Park, Calif.-based company has had a difficult time of late. There were trading glitches the day it went public in May and concerns since then about its revenue potential. It's also facing lawsuits from disgruntled shareholders. (AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

More than a billion people now log into Facebook each month to check up on old friends, tag photos of new ones and post about politics, religion, cats or what their kids are doing.

That's double the 500 million it hit in July 2010—what now seems like a lifetime but was a little more than two years ago. August 2008 marked

another big juncture, 100 million users.

The latest milestone also amounts to nearly half of the world's roughly 2.5 billion Internet users, as measured by the International Telecommunications Union.

So who are these people?

Most of them—81 percent—live outside of the U.S. and Canada. Many of them log in on mobile devices rather than personal computers, and the company now has 600 million mobile users.

The people joining now are young, with a median age of 22. It was 23 in 2010 and 26 in 2008 and 2007. Most of them are from Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico and the United States. They are unlikely to be from China, the world's most populous country and home to its largest Internet population. And millions of them are not actual people. Facebook acknowledged in August that 8.7 percent of its then-955 million users may be duplicate or false accounts. At that rate, as many as 87 million accounts are fake.

As expected, the longer users are on Facebook, the more "friends" they have on the site. A user who signed up two years ago has an average of 305 friends. Someone who signed up in December 2005, when Facebook had nearly 6 million users, now has nearly 600 friends, on average.

CEO Mark Zuckerberg marked the milestone on his Facebook page, as he has in the past when the site's users hit nice round numbers.

"If you're reading this: thank you for giving me and my little team the honor of serving you," he wrote. "Helping a billion people connect is amazing, humbling and by far the thing I am most proud of in my life."

But he acknowledged in a "Today" show interview that the company is going through a difficult patch.

"We're in a tough cycle now and that doesn't help morale, but people are focused on what they're building," he told Matt Lauer during the interview.

The Menlo Park, California-based company's stock never recovered from a botched initial public offering in May, at one point seeing its value slashed in half by shareholders who don't think it's increasing revenue fast enough, especially from its fast-growing mobile user base.

Last month Zuckerberg gave his first interview since Facebook's shaky IPO and since that time he's been working hard to boost confidence among investors, employees and the public.

The 28-year-old executive also continued to reassure that he is the right person to lead Facebook, as some on Wall Street have questioned whether he has the ability to lead a large public company.

"I take this responsibility very seriously," he said.

To further mark the occasion, Facebook also released a video Thursday that, somewhat abstractly, seeks to illustrate its ubiquity and utility in connecting people to one another. Directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu ("Babel," "21 Grams" and "Amores Perros"), the video starts off with an empty red chair suspended in midair in a forest. Then it moves to chairs with people, first just one then two, and groups around a dinner table, dancing, playing. Then more chairs.

"Chairs. Chairs are made so that anyone can sit down and take a break. Anyone can sit on a chair," a woman's voice assures the viewer. "And if the chair is large enough, they can sit down together. And tell jokes. Or

make up stories. Or just listen. Chairs are for people. And that is why chairs are like Facebook."

See also: doorbells, airplanes and bridges.

"These are things people use to get together so they can open up and connect," the ad continues. The conclusion? The universe is vast and dark and makes us wonder if we are alone. And there is Facebook. And chairs, of course.

It's Facebook's first advertising campaign surrounding its brand. So far, though, the company is not saying whether the video will air on television.

Facebook Inc.'s stock slipped a penny to \$21.82 in afternoon trading. The shares are 43 percent below their \$38 IPO price.

More information: The Facebook chair video:
www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=3802752155040

Copyright 2012 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Facebook now home to 1 billion monthly users (Update 2) (2012, October 4) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-10-facebook-tops-billion-users.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.