

WeChat: China's popular mobile messaging app

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Indian Bollywood actors Varun Dhawan (L) and Parineeti Chopra joke during the launch of the WeChat messenger application in Mumbai on May 14, 2013

As Facebook snaps up smartphone messaging service WhatsApp for a monumental \$19 billion in cash and shares, focus has turned to its [rivals](#). Here are some background facts about China's popular mobile messaging application WeChat.

Background:

WeChat, or "Weixin" in Chinese, is a free instant [messaging](#) and social media mobile application developed by Chinese Internet giant Tencent and officially launched in January 2011. It has not only become a popular mobile communications tool in China, but has also attracted tens of millions of users in overseas markets.

Users:

The number of monthly active users worldwide reached 272 million as of end-September last year, more than doubling from a year earlier. The company does not specify how many are inside China or overseas.

Features:

WeChat provides text, photo, video and voice messaging services on major mobile platforms. The application has also incorporated a range of new services in its latest versions, including games, online payments and taxi booking. Its parent Tencent bought a 20 percent stake in restaurant listing platform Dianping.

Developer:

Founded in 1998 in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen, Tencent is one of the country's largest Internet service providers and rivals domestic search engine giant Baidu and e-commerce platform Alibaba. The company has a Hong Kong listed unit, Tencent Holdings, with a staggering market capitalisation of around HK\$1.1 trillion (\$140 billion). Besides WeChat, Tencent has a popular [instant messaging service](#) in China, QQ, that was launched in 1999.

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