

# Mark Zuckerberg

## Early Life

Zuckerberg was born on May 14, 1984 in White Plains, New York. He began using and interacting with computers as well as writing software around middle school. He was taught Atari BASIC Programming by his own father and his father even hired a private tutor (David Newman who was a software developer) to further develop his coding skills. He built a software program which was named ZuckNet which allowed all the computers between his house and the dental office to communicate with each other. This was due to the fact that his father's dental practice was operated from their home. This was considered a "primitive" version of AOL's Instant Messenger which proceeded to come out in the following year. During Zuckerberg's high school years he also worked under a company named Intelligent Media Group to build a music player which was called the Synapse Media Player. It was able to use machine learning to learn the user's listening habits which was posted to Slashdot.

## College Life

As we all know, Zuckerberg is a college dropout. However, what led to this? Zuckerberg enrolled into Harvard University in 2002. The New Yorker noted that by the time he had enrolled into Harvard he had already achieved a "reputation as a programming prodigy". He had built two major programs prior to Facebook: CourseMatch and Facemash. CourseMatch allowed users to make class selection decisions based on the choices of other students and it also allowed them to help form study groups. While this sounds fine, his other program was very controversial. Facemash allowed students to select the best-looking person from a choice of photos. According to Zuckerberg's roommate at the time, Arie Hasit, "he built the site for fun". The site went up over a weekend but it was quickly shut down on the following Monday morning because its popularity overwhelmed one of Harvard's network switches and as a result it caused issues and students couldn't access the internet. Not only this, but there were complaints by students that their photos were being used without permission. This caused Zuckerberg to publicly apologize for the incident.

In February 2004, Zuckerberg launched thefacebook.com which was obviously renamed to Facebook as we know it today in 2005 after writing code for it for about a month. It had fellow Harvard students enter their own information and photos into a template that he had devised. The website was a success and within two weeks half of

the student body had signed up. Zuckerberg's roommates, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes helped him improve the website and add features and they were also able to make the site available to other campuses across America. Facebook's success further spread as it quickly became popular in many other places as many people found it great to keep in touch with friends as well as upload photos and other media. It had an emphasis on networking with information circulating not just to a person's network of friends, but also to their friends of friends which is what was referred to by Zuckerberg as a "social graph". Eventually Zuckerberg became very passionate about Facebook and in 2005 dropped out of Harvard so he could focus on Facebook full time.

## **Career**

Zuckerberg, Moskovitz and some friends moved to Palo Alto, California in Silicon Valley where they leased a small house that served as an office. Over the summer, Peter Thiel met with Zuckerberg and he ended up investing in the company. Facebook got their first office in mid-2004 and altho Zuckerberg and the group were contemplating on returning to Harvard they ultimately decided to stay and remain in California. Offers to buy out the company by major corporations were declined and in an interview in 2007 he explained that he did this "not because of the amount of money. For me and my colleagues, the most important thing is that we create an open information flow for people". He also stated that having a media corporation owned by a "conglomerate" wasn't a great idea according to him. Based on this it is very obvious to me that money was never his primary goal and he is passionate about keeping the world connected and open. Rather than selling out, he was more focused on continuing to expand Facebook and he did things like open up his project to outside developers and added many more features.

On May 24, 2007, Zuckerberg announced Facebook Platform which was a software for programmers to create social applications within Facebook. Within as little as weeks, many applications were created and some even had as many as millions of users. It eventually grew to more than 800,000 developers around the world building applications for the Facebook Platform.

On November 6, 2007. Zuckerberg announced his new project: Beacon. Beacon was a social advertising system that enabled people to share information with their Facebook friends based on their browsing activities on other sites online. This program was controversial and came under scrutiny due to privacy concerns from multiple users. Zuckerberg wrote a blog post on Facebook on December 5, 2007 where he took responsibility for the concerns about Beacon and he also offered an easier way for users to opt out of the service.

At the age of 23 in 2008, Zuckerberg was able to become a billionaire and not only that, he was declared to be the youngest billionaire in the world.

Zuckerberg launched the Internet.org project in August 2013 via a public Facebook post. He explained that his aim for the project was to provide access to the internet to the 5 billion people that weren't connected as of the launch date. According to him Internet.org would also create new jobs and open up new markets using a 3-tier strategy. It faced criticism for violating net neutrality and by handpicking internet services that are included for discriminating against companies not on the list, which included rivals of Facebook. There was criticism especially from India.

In April 2018, Zuckerberg began testifying before the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation regarding the usage of personal data by Facebook in relation to the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data breach, claimed to be the largest known leak in Facebook history. Many people were not happy about this revelation and an online movement, #DeleteFacebook, which trended on twitter was created.

## **Conclusion**

Although Zuckerberg certainly has a lot of controversy, there is no doubt in my mind that he is passionate about keeping the world connected and I truly admire him for that. Himself along with his wife have pledged to give away 99% of their Facebook shares to charity which truly tells me that his end goal for all of this does not concern money. It is very obvious to me that he is already happy with his current lifestyle and is not greedy for more wealth and would rather use it for a good cause.