[Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates" \o "Template:Use mdy dates) [Template:Infobox software](/wiki/Template:Infobox_software) [Template:Infobox dot-com company](/wiki/Template:Infobox_dot-com_company)

**WhatsApp Messenger** is a [proprietary](/wiki/Proprietary_software) [cross-platform](/wiki/Cross-platform), [encrypted](/wiki/Encryption_software), [instant messaging](/wiki/Instant_messaging) client for [smartphones](/wiki/Smartphone).[[1]](#cite_note-1) It uses the [Internet](/wiki/Internet) to send [text messages](/wiki/Text_message), documents, images, video, user location and audio messages[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3) to other users using standard [cellular](/wiki/Cellular_network) [mobile numbers](/wiki/Telephone_number).

As of February 2016, WhatsApp had a user base of one billion,[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5) making it the most [popular messaging application](/wiki/List_of_virtual_communities_with_more_than_100_million_active_users).[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) **WhatsApp Inc.**, based in [Mountain View](/wiki/Mountain_View,_California), California, United States, was acquired by [Facebook](/wiki/Facebook) Inc. on February 19, 2014, for approximately [US$](/wiki/United_States_dollar)19.3 billion.[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8)

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## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

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WhatsApp Inc., was founded in 2009 by [Brian Acton](/wiki/Brian_Acton) and [Jan Koum](/wiki/Jan_Koum), both former employees of [*Yahoo!*](/wiki/Yahoo!). After Koum and Acton left Yahoo! in September 2007, the duo traveled to South America as a break from work.[[9]](#cite_note-9) At one point they applied for jobs at Facebook but were rejected.[[9]](#cite_note-9) For the rest of the following years Koum relied on his $400,000 savings from Yahoo!. In January 2009, after purchasing an iPhone and realizing that the seven-month-old [App Store](/wiki/App_Store_(iOS)) was about to spawn a whole new industry of apps, he started visiting his friend Alex Fishman in [West San Jose](/wiki/West_San_Jose) where the three would discuss "...having statuses next to individual names of the people," but this was not possible without an iPhone developer, so Fishman introduced [Koum](/wiki/Jan_Koum) to Igor Solomennikov, a developer in Russia that he had found on RentACoder.com. Koum almost immediately chose the name "WhatsApp" because it sounded like "what's up", and a week later on his birthday, on February 24, 2009, he incorporated WhatsApp Inc. in California. However, early WhatsApp kept crashing or getting stuck and at a particular point, Koum felt like giving up and looking for a new job, upon which Acton encouraged him to wait for a "few more months".[[9]](#cite_note-9) In June 2009, [Apple](/wiki/Apple_Inc.) launched [push notifications](/wiki/Push_technology), letting developers ping users when they were not using an app. Koum updated WhatsApp so that each time the user changed their statuses, it would [ping](/wiki/Ping_(networking_utility)) everyone in the user's network.[[9]](#cite_note-9) WhatsApp 2.0 was released with a messaging component and the active users suddenly swelled to 250,000. Koum visited [Acton](/wiki/Brian_Acton), who was still unemployed while managing another startup and decided to join the company.[[9]](#cite_note-9) In October Acton persuaded five ex-Yahoo! friends to invest $250,000 in [seed funding](/wiki/Seed_funding), and as a result was granted co-founder status and a stake. He officially joined on November 1.[[9]](#cite_note-9) After months at beta stage, the application eventually launched in November 2009 exclusively on the [App Store for the iPhone](/wiki/App_Store_(iOS)). Koum then hired an old friend who lived in Los Angeles, Chris Peiffer, to make the [BlackBerry](/wiki/BlackBerry) version, which arrived two months later.[[9]](#cite_note-9) WhatsApp was switched from a free to paid service to avoid growing too fast, mainly because the primary cost was sending verification texts to users. In December 2009 WhatsApp for the iPhone was updated to send photos. By early 2011, WhatsApp was in the top 20 of all apps in Apple's U.S. App Store.[[9]](#cite_note-9) In April 2011, [Sequoia Capital](/wiki/Sequoia_Capital) was the only venture investor in WhatsApp and paid approximately $8 million for more than 15 percent of the company in 2011 on top of their $250,000 seed funding, after months of negotiation with Sequoia partner [Jim Goetz](/wiki/Jim_Goetz).[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12) By February 2013, WhatsApp's user base had swollen to about 200 million active users and its staff to 50. Sequoia invested another $50 million, valuing WhatsApp at $1.5 billion.[[9]](#cite_note-9) In a December 2013 blog post, WhatsApp claimed that 400 million active users use the service each month.[[13]](#cite_note-13)As of April 22, 2014, WhatsApp had over 500 million [monthly active users](/wiki/Monthly_active_users), 700 million photos and 100 million videos were being shared daily, and the messaging system was handling more than 10 billion messages each day.[[14]](#cite_note-14) On August 24, 2014, Koum announced on his [Twitter](/wiki/Twitter) account that WhatsApp had over 600 million active users worldwide. At that point WhatsApp was adding about 25 million new users every month, or 833,000 active users per day.[[15]](#cite_note-15)[[16]](#cite_note-16) With 65 million active users, about 10% of the total worldwide users, [India](/wiki/India) was the largest single country in terms of number of users.[[17]](#cite_note-17) In January 2015, WhatsApp was the most globally [popular messaging app](/wiki/List_of_virtual_communities_with_more_than_100_million_active_users), with more than 600 million active users.[[15]](#cite_note-15) In April 2015, WhatsApp reached [800 million active users](/wiki/List_of_virtual_communities_with_more_than_100_million_active_users).[[18]](#cite_note-18) By September 2015, the user base had grown to 900 million,[[19]](#cite_note-19) and by February 2016 it had grown to one billion.[[4]](#cite_note-4) As of November 30, 2015, the [Android](/wiki/Android_(operating_system)) client for WhatsApp started making links to another messenger called [Telegram](/wiki/Telegram_(software)) unclickable and uncopiable.[[20]](#cite_note-20)[[21]](#cite_note-21)[[22]](#cite_note-22) It has been confirmed by multiple sources that WhatsApp is actively blocking domains with the word *telegram* in the [source code](/wiki/Source_code) of the Android app.[[22]](#cite_note-22) WhatsApp has not yet given an explanation for this behavior.

By June 2016, WhatsApp hits more than 100 million voice calls per day on its service according to a post on the company blog.[[23]](#cite_note-23)

### Acquisition by Facebook[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

On February 19, 2014, months after a venture capital financing round at a $1.5 billion valuation,[[24]](#cite_note-24) Facebook announced it was acquiring WhatsApp for US$19 billion, its largest acquisition to date.[[8]](#cite_note-8) At the time, the acquisition was the largest purchase of a venture-backed company in history. Sequoia Capital received an approximate 50x return on its initial investment.[[25]](#cite_note-25) Facebook, which was advised by Allen & Co, paid $4 billion in cash, $12 billion in Facebook shares, and an additional $3 billion in [restricted stock](/wiki/Restricted_stock) units granted to WhatsApp's founders (advised by [Morgan Stanley](/wiki/Morgan_Stanley)), [Koum](/wiki/Jan_Koum) and [Acton](/wiki/Brian_Acton).[[26]](#cite_note-26) Employee stock was scheduled to vest over four years subsequent to closing.[[8]](#cite_note-8) The transaction was the largest purchase of a company backed by venture capitalists to date.[[7]](#cite_note-7) Days after the announcement, WhatsApp users experienced a loss of service, leading to anger across social media.[[27]](#cite_note-27) The acquisition caused a considerable number of users to move, or try out other message services as well. Telegram claimed to have seen 8 million additional downloads of its app.[[28]](#cite_note-28) [Line](/wiki/Line_(application)) claimed to have seen 2 million new users for its service.[[29]](#cite_note-29) At a keynote presentation at the [Mobile World Congress](/wiki/Mobile_World_Congress) in [Barcelona](/wiki/Barcelona) in February 2014, Facebook CEO [Mark Zuckerberg](/wiki/Mark_Zuckerberg) said that Facebook's acquisition of WhatsApp was closely related to the [Internet.org](/wiki/Internet.org) vision.<ref name=techcrunch-whatsapp-io>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[30]](#cite_note-30) According to a [*TechCrunch*](/wiki/TechCrunch) article, Zuckerberg's vision for Internet.org was as follows: "The idea, he said, is to develop a group of basic internet services that would be free of charge to use – 'a 911 for the internet.' These could be a social networking service like Facebook, a messaging service, maybe search and other things like weather. Providing a bundle of these free of charge to users will work like a gateway drug of sorts – users who may be able to afford data services and phones these days just don’t see the point of why they would pay for those data services. This would give them some context for why they are important, and that will lead them to paying for more services like this – or so the hope goes."[[31]](#cite_note-31) On May 9, 2014, the government of Iran announced that it had proposed to block the access to WhatsApp service to Iranian residents. "The reason for this is the assumption of WhatsApp by the Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who is an American Zionist," said Abdolsamad Khorramabadi, head of the country's Committee on Internet Crimes. Subsequently Iranian president [Hassan Rouhani](/wiki/Hassan_Rouhani) issued an order to the Ministry of ICT to stop filtering WhatsApp.[[32]](#cite_note-32)[[33]](#cite_note-33) Just three days after announcing that WhatsApp had been purchased by Facebook, Koum said they were working to introduce voice calls in the coming months. He also advanced that new mobile phones would be sold in Germany with the WhatsApp brand, as their main goal was to be in all smartphones.[[34]](#cite_note-34) By early January 2015, WhatsApp had 700 million monthly active users with over 30 billion messages being sent every day.[[35]](#cite_note-35) In April 2015, [*Forbes*](/wiki/Forbes) predicted that between 2012 and 2018, the telecommunications industry will lose a combined total of $386 billion because of [OTT](/wiki/Over-the-top_content) services like WhatsApp and Skype.[[36]](#cite_note-36) That month, WhatsApp had over 800 million active users.[[37]](#cite_note-37) On January 18, 2016, WhatsApp's founder Jan Koum announced that the service would no longer charge their users a $1 annual subscription fee in an effort to remove a barrier faced by some users who do not have a credit card to pay for the service.[[38]](#cite_note-38)[[39]](#cite_note-39) He also explained that the app would not display any third party advertisement and instead would bring new features such as the ability to communicate with business organizations.[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[40]](#cite_note-40)

## Platform support[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

After months at beta stage, the application eventually launched in November 2009 exclusively on the App Store for the iPhone. In January 2010, support for BlackBerry smartphones was added, and subsequently for [Symbian](/wiki/Symbian) OS in May 2010 and for [Android OS](/wiki/Android_(operating_system)) in August 2010. In August 2011 a beta for Nokia's non-smartphone OS [Series 40](/wiki/Series_40) was added. A month later support for [Windows Phone](/wiki/Windows_Phone) was added, followed by [BlackBerry 10](/wiki/BlackBerry_10) in March 2013.[[41]](#cite_note-41) In April 2015, support for Samsung's [Tizen](/wiki/Tizen) OS was added.[[42]](#cite_note-42) An unofficial port has been released for the [MeeGo](/wiki/MeeGo)-based [Nokia N9](/wiki/Nokia_N9) called *Wazzap*,[[43]](#cite_note-43) as well as a port for the [Maemo](/wiki/Maemo)-based [Nokia N900](/wiki/Nokia_N900) called *Yappari*.[[44]](#cite_note-44) The oldest device capable of running WhatsApp is the Symbian-based [Nokia N95](/wiki/Nokia_N95) released in March 2007.

In August 2014, WhatsApp released an update to its Android app, adding support for [Android Wear](/wiki/Android_Wear) smartwatches.[[45]](#cite_note-45) In 2014 an unofficial open source plug-in called *whatsapp-purple* was released for [Pidgin](/wiki/Pidgin_(software)), implementing its [XMPP](/wiki/XMPP) and making it possible to use WhatsApp on a Windows or Linux PC.[[46]](#cite_note-46)[Template:Third-party inline](/wiki/Template:Third-party_inline) WhatsApp responded by automatically blocking phone numbers that connected to WhatsApp using this plug-in.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

On January 21, 2015, WhatsApp launched WhatsApp Web, a web client which can be used through a web browser by syncing with the mobile device's connection.[[47]](#cite_note-47) On February 26, 2016, WhatsApp announced they would cease support for BlackBerry by the end of 2016.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Telegram, another messaging service, is known to be used by ["Islamic State"](/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Iraq_and_the_Levant) extremists.<ref name=bbc160406/>

WhatsApp is not the only [messaging service that provides end-to-end encryption](/wiki/Comparison_of_instant_messaging_clients#Secure_messengers); [Threema](/wiki/Threema), [Wickr](/wiki/Wickr), [Signal](/wiki/Signal_(software)), [Silent Phone](/wiki/Silent_Circle_(software)), and [Cryptocat](/wiki/Cryptocat) also provide such encryption by default. [iMessage](/wiki/IMessage) provides it if the correspondent is online and also using an [iPhone](/wiki/IPhone), but does not display key fingerprints for verification.[[103]](#cite_note-103) Telegram and [Line](/wiki/Line_(application)) provide end-to-end encryption if selected by the user, but do not support end-to-end encrypted group messaging.[[5]](#cite_note-5) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), WhatsApp has a score of 6 out of 7 points on the [Electronic Frontier Foundation's](/wiki/Electronic_Frontier_Foundation) "Secure Messaging Scorecard". It has received points for having communications encrypted in transit, having communications encrypted with keys the provider doesn't have access to, allowing users to verify contacts' identities, having past messages secure if the encryption keys are stolen, having completed a recent independent security audit, and having the security designs properly documented. It is missing a point because the code is not open to independent review.[[104]](#cite_note-104)

#### Brazilian court orders[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

On December 17, 2015, mobile providers in Brazil were ordered to block WhatsApp for 48 hours. The ban was ordered for the service's failure to cooperate with criminal court orders in July and August 2015. The following morning, however, a judge from the appeals court ordered that the ban be lifted for being an unreasonable response, recommending that the company be fined instead. Following the ban, but prior to its reversal, Facebook CEO [Mark Zuckerberg](/wiki/Mark_Zuckerberg) responded by stating that he was "stunned that our efforts to protect people's data would result in such an extreme decision by a single judge to punish every person in Brazil who uses WhatsApp. We hope the Brazilian courts quickly reverse course." The competing service Telegram reported that 1.5 million Brazilians had downloaded its app while the WhatsApp ban was in place.<ref name=wsj-whatsappban>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref><ref name=guardian-whatsappban>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

On March 1, 2016, Diego Dzodan, Facebook's vice-president for Latin America was arrested in Brazil for not cooperating with an investigation in which WhatsApp conversations were requested.[[105]](#cite_note-105) On March 2, 2016, at dawn the next day, Dzodan was released because the Court of Appeal held that the arrest was disproportionate and unreasonable.[[106]](#cite_note-106)