

# Instagram overtakes TikTok as world's most downloaded app

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Instagram has overtaken TikTok as the world's most downloaded app after its copycat video feature Reels helped it recover ground lost to its Chinese-owned rival. The photo- and videosharing app soared in popularity after its launch in 2010 alongside reality royalty such as the Kardashians and is a cornerstone of the influencer phenomenon, but has faced stiff competition on its own territory in recent years from TikTok, the short video platform. However, Instagram's launch in 2020 of a short-form video feature widely seen as an imitation of TikTok has ultimately helped it stage a fightback. The app was downloaded 767m times worldwide in 2023, a rise of 20% on the previous year, compared with 733m for TikTok, which grew by 4%. TikTok had been the most popular download globally between 2018 and 2022. The market intelligence company Sensor Tower, which compiled the data, said Instagram's revival was "likely driven by the popularity of its Reels feature", as well as its other functions such as photo-sharing and its Stories disappearing-video feature, itself an apparent copy of the Snapchat app. Instagram has benefited from reacting quickly to the TikTok threat, according to Farhad Divecha, the owner and managing director of the UK-based digital marketing agency Accuracast. Its broader demographic appeal also helps, he added. "One thing I think goes in Instagram's favour is, it appeals to a broader audience demographic, and doesn't have the 'it's for the kids only' connotation that some people associate with TikTok," he said. Instagram has nearly 1.5 billion monthly active users, according to Sensor Tower, with TikTok at just over 1.1 billion. However, TikTok has more active users, who spend an average of 95 minutes a day on the app, compared with 62 minutes for Instagram. Mark Zuckerberg, the Facebook founder and the chief executive of Instagram's parent, Meta, has identified TikTok as a serious competitive threat in recent years. In 2022 he said his company's apps had numerous competitors for users' attention and that platforms like TikTok were "growing very quickly". It was also reported the same year that Meta had paid a Republican consulting firm to create public distrust around its rival. TikTok also faces serious political opposition in the US amid ongoing concern about the ramifications of its Chinese ownership. This week a bipartisan group of US lawmakers introduced legislation giving the Beijing-based ByteDance – TikTok's parent – about six months to divest the app or face a ban. US lawmakers, and politicians elsewhere in the western world, are concerned that TikTok user data could be accessed by the Chinese state – a claim that TikTok has consistently denied.