

- WhatsApp was founded by [Brian Acton](#) and [Jan Koum](#), former employees of [Yahoo!](#). It was initially not intended to be used as a messaging app.
- In January 2009, after Koum purchased an [iPhone](#), he and Acton, keen to jump into what they saw foresaw as a newly burgeoning multi-million dollar app industry created by the [Apple App Store](#), Koum came up with an idea for an app to provide dynamic information about the people listed in your address book: it would show statuses for each person
- They realized that to take the idea further, they would need an iPhone developer. Fishman visited RentACoder.com, found Russian developer Igor Solomennikov, and introduced him to Koum.^[59]
- Koum named the app WhatsApp to sound like "what's up". On February 24, 2009, he incorporated^[60] WhatsApp Inc. in California. However, when early versions of WhatsApp kept [crashing](#), Koum considered giving up and looking for a new job. Acton encouraged him to wait for a "few more months".
- In June 2009, when the app had been downloaded by only a handful of Fishman's Russian-speaking friends, Apple launched [push notifications](#), allowing users to be pinged although not using a relevant app.
- Koum updated WhatsApp so that everyone in the user's network would be notified when a user's status changed. This new facility, to Koum's surprise, was used by users to ping "each other with jokey custom statuses like, "I woke up late" or "I'm on my way."
- Fishman said "At some point it sort of became instant messaging ... We started using it as 'Hey how are you?' And then someone would reply." Jan watched the changing statuses on a Mac Mini at his town house in Santa Clara, and realized he had unintentionally created a messaging service.
- WhatsApp 2.0 was released in August 2009 with a purpose-designed messaging component; the number of active users suddenly increased to 250,000.
- After months at [beta](#) stage, the application launched in November 2009 on the App Store, exclusively for the iPhone. Koum then hired a friend in [Los Angeles](#), Chris Peiffer, to develop a [BlackBerry](#) version, which arrived two months later
- Subsequently, WhatsApp for Symbian OS was added in May 2010, and for Android OS in August 2010.^[61] In 2010 Google made multiple acquisition offers for WhatsApp, which were all declined.
- To cover the cost of sending verification texts to users, WhatsApp was changed from a free service to a paid one. In December 2009, the ability to send photos was added to the iOS version. By early 2011, WhatsApp was one of the top 20 apps in the U.S. Apple App Store.
- In April 2011, [Sequoia Capital](#) invested about \$8 million for more than 15% of the company, after months of negotiation by Sequoia partner [Jim Goetz](#)
- By February 2013, WhatsApp had about 200 million active users and 50 staff members. Sequoia invested another \$50 million, and WhatsApp was valued at \$1.5 billion.^[24] Some time in 2013^[66] WhatsApp acquired Santa Clara-based startup SkyMobius, the developers of Vtok,^[67] a video and voice calling app.
- In a December 2013 blog post, WhatsApp claimed that 400 million active users used the service each month.
- On February 19, 2014, one year after a venture capital financing round at a \$1.5 billion valuation,^[70] Facebook, Inc. (now [Meta Platforms](#)) announced it was acquiring WhatsApp for US\$19 billion, its largest acquisition to date.
- Facebook, which was advised by Allen & Co, paid \$4 billion in cash, \$12 billion in Facebook shares, and, advised by [Morgan Stanley](#), an additional \$3 billion in [restricted stock](#) units granted to WhatsApp's founders Koum and Acton.^[72] Employee stock was scheduled to vest over four years subsequent to closing.
- The acquisition was influenced by the data provided by [Onavo](#), Facebook's research app for monitoring competitors and trending usage of social activities on mobile phones, as well as startups that were performing "unusually well".
- Three days after announcing the Facebook purchase, Koum said they were working to introduce voice calls. He also said that new mobile phones would be sold in Germany with the WhatsApp brand, and that their ultimate goal was to be on all [smartphones](#).
- In August 2014, WhatsApp was the most popular messaging app in the world, with more than 600 million users.^[82] By early January 2015, WhatsApp had 700 million monthly users and over 30 billion messages every day.