

# 15 Years Later, What Is Facebook? | WIRED

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*Fifteen years ago this week, Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg created TheFacebook.com, a social network for college students that looked a lot like Friendster or Myspace. The company moved from his dorm room to Silicon Valley a few months later, and began expanding to other universities. In the beginning, Zuckerberg didn't take his role too seriously. His first business card notoriously read: "I'm CEO ... bitch."*

*A decade and a half later, Facebook apps are used by roughly a third of the world's people each month. The company has acquired or crushed most of its main competitors, including Instagram, WhatsApp, and Snapchat. It's now equivalent to approximately seven Twitters in terms of monthly active users. Facebook is where nearly half of Americans get their news, the place where millions of nonprofits collect donations, a venue for state-sponsored propaganda, and where people announce their engagements, babies, or even divorces. It is perhaps the largest repository of personal information about humankind to ever exist. Zuckerberg, meanwhile, still makes time to allegedly stage photos so he looks taller than he actually is and smoke his own meats.*

*Facebook isn't just a social network and messaging platform powered by advertisements; it's also a marketplace for secondhand goods, a virtual reality headset manufacturer, a VPN company, and a satellite developer. The company has lured some of the most talented artificial intelligence researchers and developed one of the most powerful facial recognition algorithms. It has swallowed more than 70 companies, most which made technical software, according to the investment site Crunchbase. Facebook is also generating significant wealth for its 35,000-odd employees: The median salary in 2017 was more than \$240,000, though that figure excludes the company's legions of contract workers.*

*As Facebook turns 15, it's confronting some of its biggest challenges yet, including a looming Federal Trade Commission investigation and potential federal regulation from Congress. To celebrate the milestone, we're taking a comprehensive look at what Facebook has become. Here's everything the social network has touched. Facebook did not respond to a request for comment.*

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