

15 Years Later, What Is Facebook? | WIRED

By Paris Martineau & Louise Matsakis

February 12, 2019

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.

[...]

Source: [15 Years Later, What Is Facebook? | WIRED](#)