



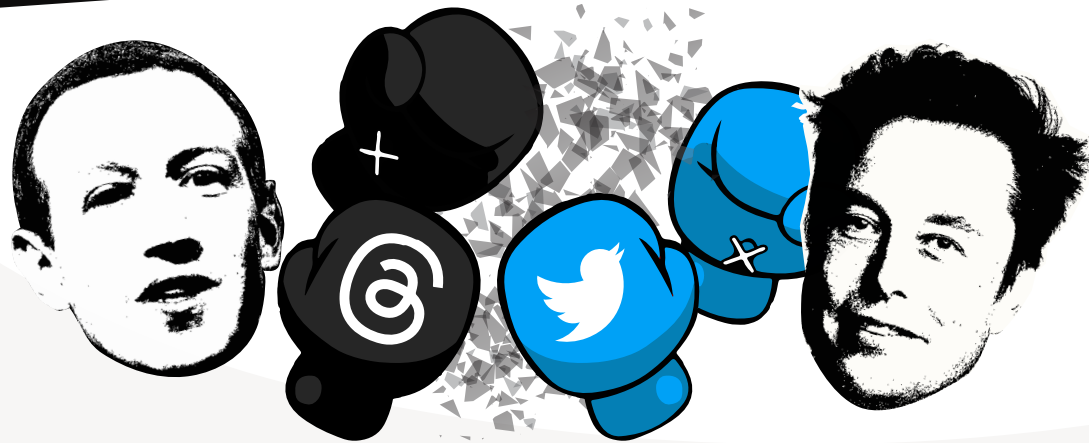
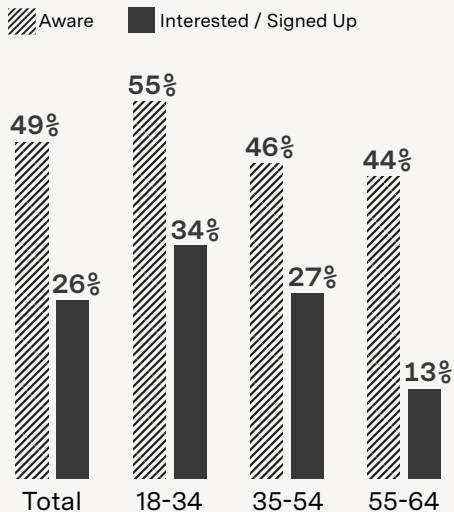
Threads strikes a chord

The battle between Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk just got a lot more interesting. No, we're not talking about the proposed cage match, but something far more consequential: Meta's launch of Threads. Positioned as a friendlier social media app that enables "positive, productive conversations," Threads hit 30M global signups overnight and eclipsed 100M users in less than a week.

While industry pundits debate whether Threads is truly the "Twitter killer app," we wanted to take a quick pulse on what consumers think Threads does—or does not—offer compared to Twitter and other social apps, so we surveyed 1,000 U.S. consumers from July 7-8, 2023.

Threads hit the ground running

Threads undoubtedly has made a splash. Half of Americans (49%) had heard of Threads just 2 days after its release and a quarter (26%) say they are interested in or have already signed up for Threads, with younger consumers leading the way.



Does Threads offer more than "Twitter without Elon?" Or is that enough?

Meta is positioning Threads as a more welcoming alternative to Twitter, describing the app as a "positive and creative space." So far, this message isn't the one generating the most excitement: among interested users, 36% cite being a friendlier, more fun platform than Twitter as a benefit of Threads.

Instead, many simply view Threads as a good alternative to Twitter, and a good place to connect with friends, family, other fans, and like-minded people. In today's saturated social landscape, that may not be enough. Many say they don't need another social media app unless there's real differentiation.

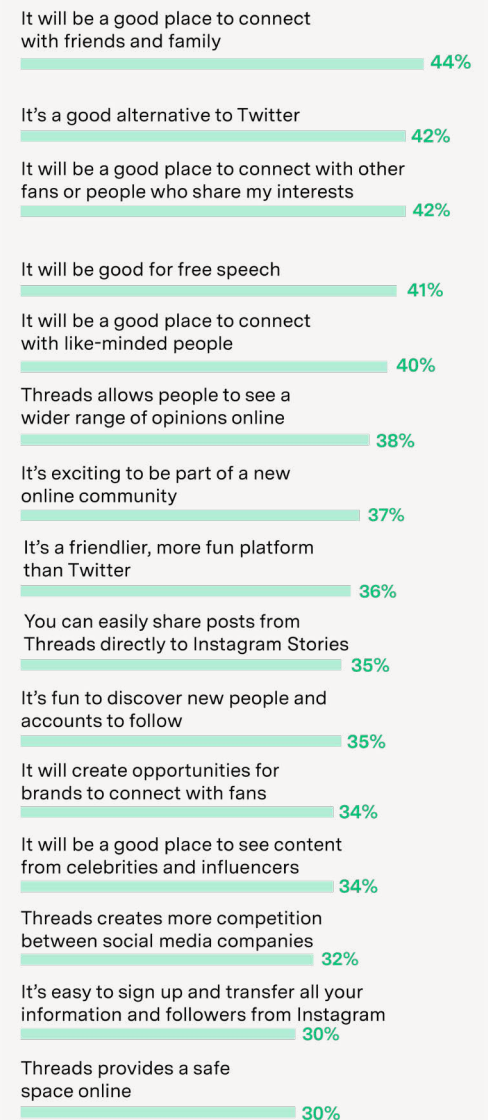
“Just another social media site and we already have enough of them. **How is this one any different or better?**”

“I already have so many social media apps to keep up with, **it would have to be very different.**”

To build on its early success and build a loyal, engaged user base, Threads will need to experientially deliver on its brand promise. Sign-ups are one thing; sustained engagement is another. If Threads fails to deliver meaningful value that keeps users engaged, it risks high churn as users return to their established platforms.

Connection is the key need driving interest

👍 Among those interested in signing up for Threads... (n=227)





BUILDING TRUST AND ENSURING PRIVACY WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR SUSTAINED SUCCESS.

Despite strong early sign-up numbers, there are some signs that Threads will face obstacles in gaining traction. While media coverage has been quick to call out the initial UX shortcomings of the app, these are less of a barrier for consumers than trust and privacy.

Trust

A quarter (26%) of those who are not interested in Threads say distrust of Meta is the reason.

“ I don't trust anything coming from Meta other than Facebook which I'm already very limited in what I share and expose on there.

“ I don't really trust Facebook/Meta, so I don't think I'm likely to trust Threads.

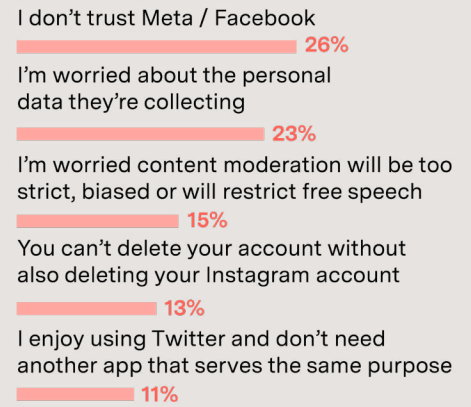
Privacy

Nearly as many (23%) say they are worried about the personal data Threads is collecting; abroad, where data privacy can be even more top-of-mind for consumers, data privacy is likely an even more impactful barrier (as evidenced by Threads' delayed launch in the EU where it is trying to navigate privacy regulations).

“ I have no reason to sign up for another social media app whose only goal is to sell advertising and steal personal data.

Distrust and privacy concerns

Top reasons among those who are not interested in Threads... (n=472)



Show me the money

Threads launched without any advertising on the platform, consistent with Meta's track record of allowing apps to hit a critical mass before attempting to monetize. Most consumers (57%) would prefer to see Threads take a traditional advertising route with sponsored posts similar to Facebook and Twitter advertising today.

However, those interested in signing up for Threads are more likely to be willing to pay for a premium version with limited or no ads

(36% vs. 29% who aren't interested).

Most consumers expect the Threads advertising experience to be similar: 58% expect the advertising experience to be about the same on Threads compared to Twitter. But prospective Threads users have higher expectations:

63% of those interested in Threads expect Threads to deliver a better advertising experience than Twitter.

To drive and maintain user interest, Threads will need to strike the right balance between enabling users to connect with others and promoting sponsored posts.





After Musk's takeover, big shifts in how Republican and Democratic Twitter users view the platform



Twitter Is a Far-Right Social Network




One Group Loves the New Twitter: Republicans



Battle of the billionaires, or battle of the parties?

Political leaning plays a strong role in interest in Threads: Conservatives are significantly less interested in signing up for Threads (49% are not interested) compared to Liberals (39%).

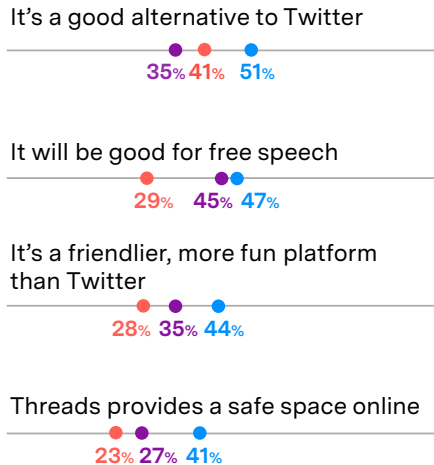
When looking at reasons to use or not use Threads, political leaning also comes into play:

 Conservatives are more likely to reference concerns around content moderation limiting free speech and loyalty to Twitter and Elon Musk as reasons not to use Threads.

● Conservative ● Liberal ● Moderate

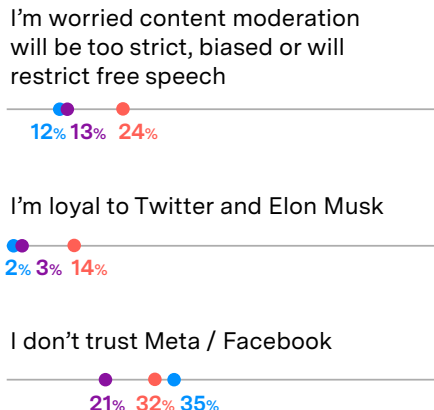
Benefits of / reasons to use Threads


Among those interested in signing up for Threads...



Drawbacks of / reasons NOT to use Threads


Among those not interested



 Threads' promise of a friendlier platform is resonating among Liberals:

They're more likely to see it as a good alternative to Twitter, good for free speech, friendlier and more fun than Twitter, and a safe space online.

“ I hope it succeeds and does better than Twitter, now that Twitter is owned by someone who supports the spread of harmful misinformation, both on his platform (he calls it "free speech") and through his own words. He spreads misinformation supporting narratives of the Republican party, Russia, and China.

 One thing both sides of the aisle can agree on? Distrust of Meta / Facebook is a key reason not to use Threads for both Liberals and Conservatives.

Thought Starters & Implications

As we look ahead, a few themes to keep an eye on...

Standing Out in a Saturated Market

While some welcome new alternatives, many also express social media and app fatigue. With Threads' launch, most see the new app as a Twitter alternative but fail to understand the need for a new social media app or how Threads differs from existing social media apps. For Threads to succeed, it needs to quickly find and deliver on its brand differentiators.

Though Threads is most obviously a direct Twitter competitor, which has already sent a cease and desist to Meta, they're not the only ones who face a competitive threat. TikTok, Snapchat, Reddit, and really any social platform with a feed will need to monitor the situation closely and double-down on their value propositions and what differentiates them from this new player in the market.

Ideological Divides

Many are looking for a Twitter alternative that feels less inundated with trolls and hate. Threads is trying to fill that gap by offering a friendlier platform and Liberals are embracing Threads' more positive framing. How will Threads navigate content moderation in a way that does not feel ideologically skewed? How can Threads avoid creating echo chambers that could inadvertently deepen ideological divides?

Anti-Trust

While competition is key to driving innovation in the free market, if Threads succeeds, Meta could come under fire by critics—and regulators, yet again—for its huge market power and influence on consumers' access to information.

Reputation

Threads critics have been quick to jump on how the experience had some misses, including the inability to have a follower-focused feed. Adam Mosseri, Instagram's CEO, conceded that "there are tons of basics that are missing," but Threads may face bigger battles. Threads provides a unique opportunity for Meta to build its reputation as a company that's doing the right thing: giving users more choice, acting with clear integrity and principals on content moderation, protecting data privacy, and providing a safe space online. But should Meta fail to address these needs, there will be risks to the app's success and to the company's reputation more broadly.

Want to learn more?

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