Facebook's US User Growth Slows But Twitter Sees Double-Digit Gains

Contributed by eMarketer
Tuesday, 06 March 2012
Last Updated Tuesday, 06 March 2012

The social networking giantâ€™s US user base dwarfs that of Twitter, but Twitter maintains more rapid growth

As recently as 2010, growth in US Facebook usage was well into the double digits, at 38.6%, eMarketer estimates. But with 116.8 million US internet users already logging on to the site at least once monthly that year, growth rates were bound to plateau.

By 2011 Facebook user growth rose a comparatively small 13.4%, and this year will be the first when growth rates drop to the single digits.

Rates of change in the US will continue to decline throughout eMarketerâ€™s forecast period.

On Twitter, by contrast, growth is stronger. Last yearâ€™s 31.9% increase in users outpaced that of 2010, when growth was at 23.5%. Similar to Facebookâ€™s trajectory, Twitterâ€™s growth rate will also fall in the coming years, but still remain nearly four times higher than Facebookâ€™s growth rate in 2014.

Twitterâ€™s size, which is fairly small, is one factor that makes such growth rates possible. Facebook already reached an enormous audience of nearly 133 million US internet users at the end of 2011, a figure that will surpass 150 million by 2014.

Twitter, in comparison, had a US user base of less than 24 million at the end of last year.

Still, between 2010 and 2014, eMarketer predicts, Twitter will about double its US user base, reaching 37.6 million microbloggers by the period's end.

eMarketer bases its estimates of Facebook and Twitter usage on an analysis of survey and traffic data from research firms and regulatory agencies; company releases; historical trends; internet and mobile adoption trends; and demographic and socio-economic factors.

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