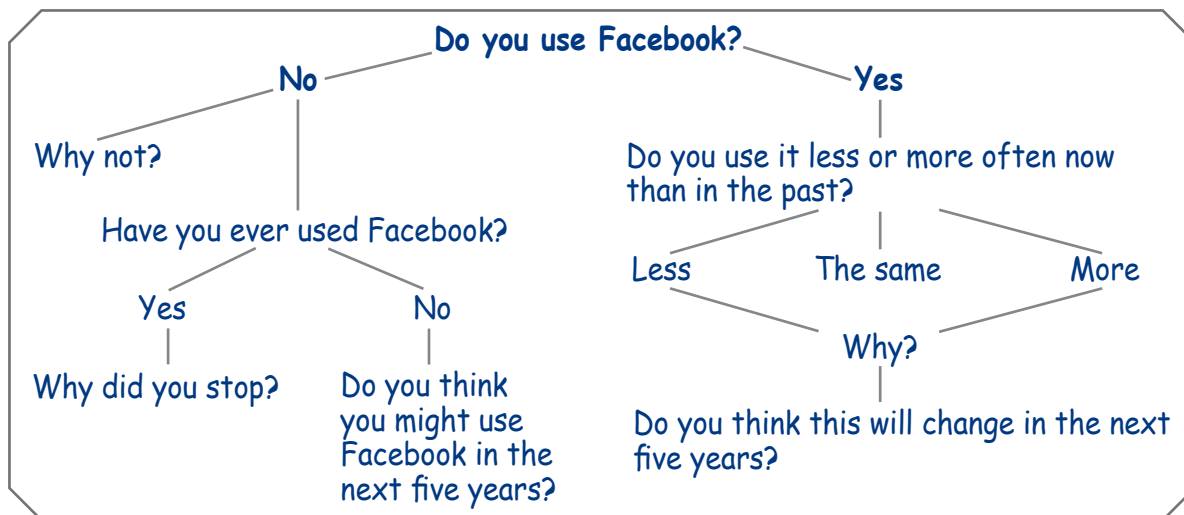


Facebook deserted by millions of users

Level 2 • Intermediate

1 Warmer

Mark your answers and add any necessary details. Then talk about your answers.



2 Key words

Match these words from the article with their definitions below. Then find them in the article to read them in context. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

compensate for declines fraction peaked surges topped

- reached the highest amount or level, before becoming lower _____ (para 2)
- sudden increases in something such as price, value or interest _____ (para 5)
- became larger than a particular amount _____ (para 6)
- a small part or amount _____ (para 7)
- reductions in the amount or quality of something _____ (para 8)
- make up for or remove the bad result of something _____ (para 12)

shareholders dwindling initiatives performance revenues substitute

- becoming gradually less or smaller over a period of time until almost nothing remains _____ (para 12)
- the degree of success of an investment in making money _____ (para 13)
- income from business activities _____ (para 13)
- people who own parts of a company _____ (para 14)
- something that is used instead of something else _____ (para 16)
- important new actions that are intended to solve a problem _____ (para 17)

Facebook deserted by millions of users

Level 2 • Intermediate

Facebook deserted by millions of users in biggest markets

Juliette Garside
28 April, 2013

- 1 Facebook has lost millions of users per month in its biggest markets. In the last six months, Facebook has lost nearly 9m monthly visitors in the US and 2m in the UK.
- 2 Studies suggest that its expansion in the US, UK and other major European countries has peaked. In the last month, the world's largest social network has lost 6m US visitors, a 4% fall, according to analysis firm Socialbakers. In the UK, 1.4m fewer users visited in March, a fall of 4.5%.
- 3 Users are also turning off in Canada, Spain, France, Germany and Japan, where Facebook is extremely popular.
- 4 "The problem is that, in the US and UK, most people who want to sign up for Facebook have already done it," said new media specialist Ian Maude at Enders Analysis. People get bored, he says, and they "like to try something new".
- 5 Alternative social networks have seen surges in popularity with younger people. Instagram, the photo-sharing site, got 30m new users in the 18 months before Facebook bought the business.
- 6 Path, the mobile phone-based social network founded by former Facebook employee Dave Morin, which only allows its users to have 150 friends, is gaining 1m users a week. It has recently topped 9m users, with 500,000 Venezuelans downloading the app in a single weekend.
- 7 Facebook is still growing fast in South America. Monthly visitors in Brazil were up 6% in the last month to 70m, according to Socialbakers, whose information is used by Facebook advertisers. India has seen a 4% rise to 64m – still only a fraction of the country's population, so there is room for more growth.
- 8 But in developed markets, other people watching Facebook are reporting declines.
- 9 Analysts at Jefferies bank saw global numbers of visitors to Facebook peak at 1.05bn a month in January, before falling by 20m in February. Numbers rose again in April. The network has now lost nearly 2m visitors in the UK since December, according to research firm Nielsen, with its 27m total the same as a year ago.
- 10 The number of minutes Americans spend on Facebook appears to be falling, too. The total was 121 billion minutes in December 2012, but that fell to 115 billion minutes in February, according to comScore.
- 11 As Facebook itself has warned, the time spent on its pages from those sitting in front of personal computers is decreasing fast because people now prefer to use their smartphones and tablets.
- 12 Although smartphone minutes have doubled in a year, to 69 a month, that growth may not compensate for dwindling desktop usage.
- 13 Facebook will tell investors about its performance for the quarter. Wall Street expects revenues of about \$1.44bn, an increase from \$1.06bn a year ago.
- 14 Shareholders will want to know how fast the number of mobile Facebook users is growing, and whether advertising revenues are increasing at the same rate.
- 15 Mobile usage represented nearly a quarter of Facebook's advertising income at the end of 2012, and the network had 680m mobile users a month in December.
- 16 The company said that it might be losing "younger users" to "other products and services similar to, or as a substitute for, Facebook".
- 17 Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg has created a series of new initiatives designed to appeal to smartphone users. One initiative, Facebook Home, is software that can be downloaded onto Android phones to feed news and photos from friends – and advertising – directly to the owner's locked home screen.

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Facebook deserted by millions of users

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3 Comprehension check

Choose the correct answers according to the information in the article.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. The world's largest social networking site is ... | 4. In the last financial quarter, Facebook's revenue was ... |
| a. ... Facebook. | a. ... the same as the quarter before. |
| b. ... Instagram. | b. ... higher than the quarter before. |
| c. ... Path. | c. ... lower than the quarter before. |
| 2. Facebook is losing users in ... | 5. People are spending ... |
| a. ... India. | a. ... more time on their PCs. |
| b. ... South America. | b. ... less time on their smartphones. |
| c. ... the US and the UK. | c. ... more time on their smartphones. |
| 3. Facebook is gaining users in ... | 6. Facebook has recently introduced ... |
| a. ... Spain and Japan. | a. ... a new website. |
| b. ... India and South America. | b. ... new software. |
| c. ... the US and the UK. | c. ... a new smartphone. |

4 Describing trends and movements

- Go through the article and highlight all the verbs and nouns – in all their forms – that describe trends or movements in numbers or (users') interest.
- Which three words (in different forms) are used most often?
- Use these three words or their derivatives to make sentences of your own to describe trends in a different context.

5 Discussion

Answer the questions and then use them as the basis for a discussion.

- If you use Facebook, do you use it via the website on your PC or an app on your smartphone or tablet?
Which method do you think is better and why?
- Have you used Instagram or Path?
How would you describe them to someone who doesn't know them?
- Do you use any other social networking sites or apps?
What do you like about them?

Facebook deserted by millions of users

Level 2 • Intermediate

KEY

2 Key words

1. peaked
2. surges
3. topped
4. fraction
5. declines
6. compensate for
7. dwindling
8. performance
9. revenues
10. shareholders
11. substitute
12. initiatives

3 Comprehension check

1. a
2. c
3. b
4. b
5. c
6. b

4 Describing trends and movements

a.

para 1 – has lost
para 2 – expansion; has peaked; has lost; fall
para 5 – won; surges
para 6 – is gaining; has topped
para 7 – is growing; rise; growth
para 8 – declines
para 9 – peak; falling; rose; has lost
para 10 – falling; fell
para 11 – is decreasing
para 12 – have doubled; growth; dwindling
para 13 – increase
para 14 – is growing; are increasing
para 16 – be losing

b.

lose; fall; grow