**DSG**

The Twitter Migration Not Over: Shows Signs of Moving to a Lower - but Steady - Rate of "Quiet Quitting."

This is the first update of what will be a quarterly look at what has been widely recognized as the current #TwitterMigration.

This exodus had dramatically accelerated in the weeks following Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter and then has ebbed and flowed, mirroring the turmoil and key events occurring inside Twitter itself.

In these updates, we will track, using the most relevant and recent data available, the initial contours, extent, and direction of the migration. This builds on our original report from December 2022 on the Twitter Migration, which can be found here. As we have seen from the start, some users are completely abandoning the network, whereas most others are building new, alternate accounts in case Twitter slips deeper into disarray, goes out of business, or crashes and does not recover.
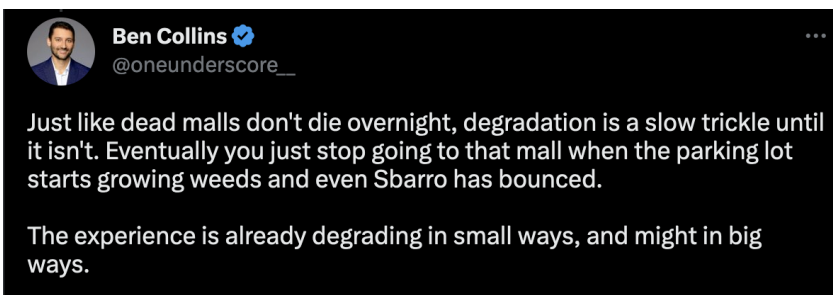
In this report, we present our most recent findings about the initial waves of users creating and promoting additional accounts on other platforms.

This is a real-time depiction of the migration patterns as of today, which we expect to be in continual flux. As with our first report, we have no direct Twitter data, so we look to indirect evidence as a guide.

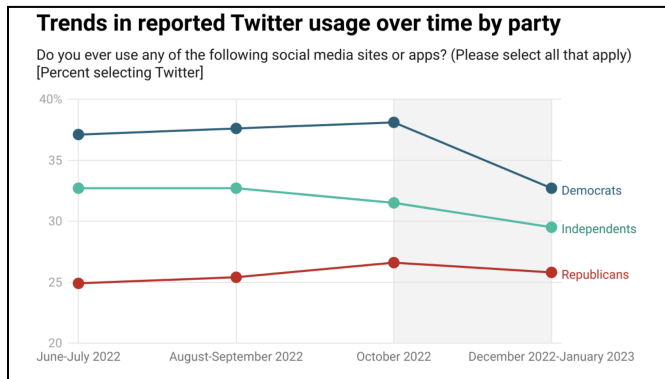**Key Updates to Our Research for This Quarter Year**

We continue to see an extremely clear correlation between chaos at Twitter and spikes and swells in the signs of the Twitter migration. This has not ended, although Twitter itself showed a somewhat slower-speed deterioration these last two months. And along with that slower-speed chaos, we saw the signs of the Twitter migration move to a lower **but steady pace.**

Mastodon, Post, and Tumblr are seeing most of the benefits in terms of new monthly active users and app downloads, while other new, smaller networks are diminishing.

As we mentioned, the Twitter platform chaos was at a lower level than during Elon Musk's initial takeover, but much of the uncertainty about the platform's (and the head office's) long-term stability is ongoing. In the past three months:

- Twitter has seen several [global outages.](#)
- Twitter temporarily issued a policy to [ban all mentions or links to alternative social platforms](#) but rescinded it due to user backlash.
- Twitter announced [highly unpopular policies for the API](#) that would impact thousands of researchers and independent developers; they then paused the move after backlash; but eventually resumed the policy.
- Twitter [ended support entirely to major third-party Application developers](#).
- Twitter dramatically increased the onboarding of users formerly banned from the platform.
- [New research showed](#) that "misinformation 'superspreader' engagement increased 44% on Twitter since Musk's purchase."

Several New Polls Show Evidence of US Twitter Users Lessening the use of the platform - but results are politically polarized.

Trends in reported Twitter usage over time by party

Do you ever use any of the following social media sites or apps? (Please select all that apply) [Percent selecting Twitter]

In [polling of American Twitter users](#) over the timeframe of the Musk takeover, research showed a meaningful slowing of usage overall but with a strong partisan divide. They note that "this decline was driven by Democrats, 38% of whom reported using Twitter in our survey before Musk took over the company, which dropped to 33% after."

Other research [from Similarweb](#) showed that traffic referrals from Twitter to the top 12 news sites showed a 13 percent reduction in traffic to them (other than to Fox News and the New York Post).

The tech and business newsletter, [The Logic, surveyed its subscribers](#) made up of heavy news consumers, on their Twitter usage, and found that **"about 52 percent said they've used the platform less since Musk took over."** Of those using Twitter less it found that " 70 percent reported simply using Twitter less, while 21 percent found a new platform and roughly nine percent started using another platform more often." They found that "replacements of choice included Mastodon or Post, while others said they found themselves spending more time on LinkedIn and Instagram."

Additional research from the Tow Center on Digital Journalism looked at journalists' usage rate on Twitter since the Musk takeover. Journalists are clearly a group that is one of the key traffic drivers on the platform - [saw an overall reduction of the use of the platform](#) after the Musk takeover, even as some journalists from right-wing leaning publications used it more.

As Darren Linvill, a social media forensics researcher and Associate Professor at Clemson University, mentions in the study:

"There's leaving Twitter and there's leaving Twitter...Very few people are going to do the dramatic shutting down of their accounts, but there's probably going to be a lot of people who just kind of slowly stop using it."

A new "developer migration" off of Twitter did begin to occur this quarter
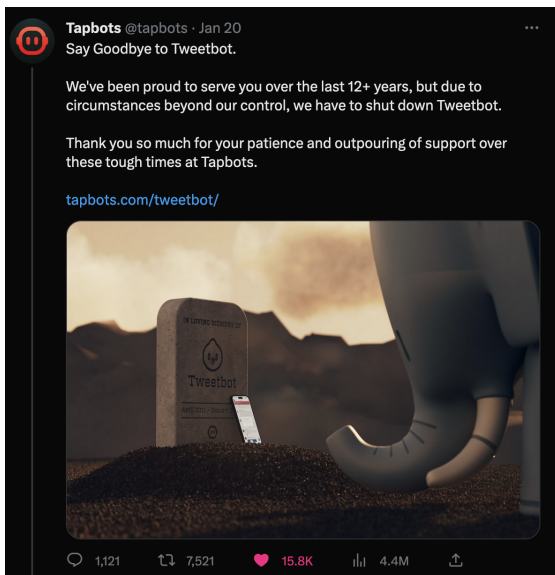
During the last quarter of 2022, Twitter ended API access to a number of mobile app developers who had been major developers for the platform, including TweetBot and Twitterific.

Those mobile application developers were forced to shut down their long-standing Twitter apps immediately. Then many of the major developers announced and launched Mastodon versions of those applications.

Twitter also announced eliminating its free API access which also alienated a larger number of social web application developers and social media researchers.

The most prominent new application that has launched is Tapbot's launching of its new Ivory app. This has quickly become more popular on the Mastodon network than any other third-party mobile application thus far.

Other former Twitter developers also launched major new offerings for Mastodon, such as the developer who created the popular Twitter Spring App. They have now launched their new Mastodon Mona application for iOS. The developer of Twitter client Aviary 2, has launched Mammoth, an effort partially funded by the Mozilla Foundation.

The mobile application development space is crucial for any social media platform. Many of Twitter's most recognized and used features came from third-party application developers that are now leaving the platform.

In other developer news, Buffer, one of the major content management systems for social media managers, launched Mastodon support for publishing, managing, and scheduling Mastodon social media content, as did another smaller social media management service Tweepmaps.

New Branded Mastodon Servers from Medium.com and Flipboard

The social brands Medium.com and Flipboard.com both launched new Mastodon servers and began integrating them into their legacy offerings and applications.
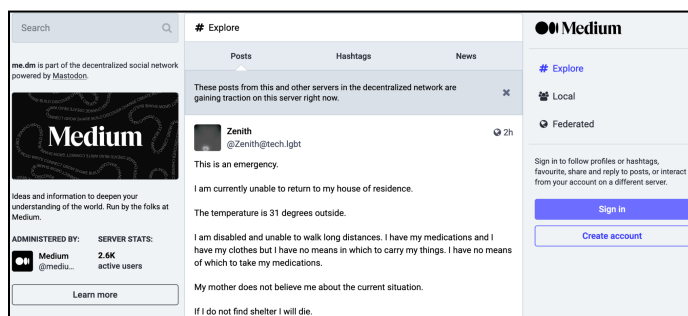
In both cases, these are Mastodon servers that offer custom accounts to either paid users of the main offerings or top curators initially. This shows early experiments to add

Mastodon offerings to legacy brands and offer moderation and hosting of these accounts as a concierge service to their top users.

The Mozilla Foundation is still developing its own Mastodon community server that has not yet launched, and Flickr has stated that it is actively exploring interoperability with the Mastodon/Fediverse networks for its future roadmaps.

Lastly, the social media sites Tumblr and Post both reaffirmed that interoperability with Mastodon was on their product roadmaps. Nostr and "BlueSky" both had early efforts to bridge their emerging new social platforms into the Mastodon/Fediverse networks.

This "developer migration" across apps, web applications, and services trend this quarter was well summarized by the Editor in Chief of the Verge, Nilay Patel, who stated:

> "It's clear all the action is on Mastodon. That is where the app developers are, the platform is accelerating, and the underlying fediverse boundaries are growing. That's where the activity is. But Elon is shutting down the API... It is clear that [Elon] is feeling the heat."

Direct Evidence of Which Alternative Platforms Are Benefiting from the Twitter Migration

With its open API, the Mastodon network is the easiest to track user growth patterns occurring. Over the course of the Musk takeover, Mastodon grew to over **9.7+ million accounts created**. It is currently seeing approximately **2.4 million monthly active users,** up from approximately 300K monthly active users before Twitter was acquired.

As all social platforms experience, there was a drop in new users after an initial surge of traffic that occurred when Elon Musk purchased Twitter, but unlike some of the tech press's early depictions of this as a "plunge," it has shown to stabilize at monthly active user rate far higher than it was prior, while still seeing a growth in total posts. New users are signing up at a rate of approximately **300 to 400 thousand new users per month.**

You can see the current monthly active users for the Mastodon network in this visualization:

(source: https://the-federation.info)

Thus far, the Mastodon network server infrastructure has shown it can scale to meet this traffic load. Anil Dash, the CEO of Glitch, and formerly the founder of the blogging platform Six Apart, noted:

"And Mastodon alone, which is only part of the fediverse, is going to pass — across all the different instances — 10 million users in the next couple of weeks. And you and I well remember, at less than that scale there was a 'fail whale' every day."

The Post Offers Its Latest Numbers of Onboarded Users to Date

The social media platform Post also has offered official numbers for its new users. After a long waitlist for the early versions of the service lifted, and recently the founder and CEO of the Post, Naom announced the following:

*"**We have onboarded 403,000 users** during this period, launched features, fixed (and created) many bugs, and built the infrastructure for opening up."*

Twitter Users Adding Emerging Social Platforms to Their Bios

Viewing real-world Twitter activity is one of the most valuable measurements we have, and we will update this each quarter. A major indicator of the #TwitterMigration is the content in the bios of Twitter users and their direct posting about creating accounts on other networks.

Tracking these techniques has proved valuable and shown a great deal of activity. It was such a popular tactic that Twitter enacted a policy of banning all users from Mastodon, Post, and other emerging new platforms; disallowing links in user bios to these competitors.

Even with that short-lived ban, it has become common for Twitter users to include links to their other social media profiles in their Twitter biographies. While not all users who begin to migrate to other platforms add this information to their account bios, many do and it is an important metric to track.

This method of promoting other social media accounts has been regularly in use by content creators who use multiple platforms - long before Musk took over, so it is much less useful for monitoring migration to established platforms, but it is ideal for seeing who has signed up for emerging services.

We looked at the trends of all Twitter users who were actively posting on Twitter each month, and those who have added alternative social accounts to their Twitter bios.
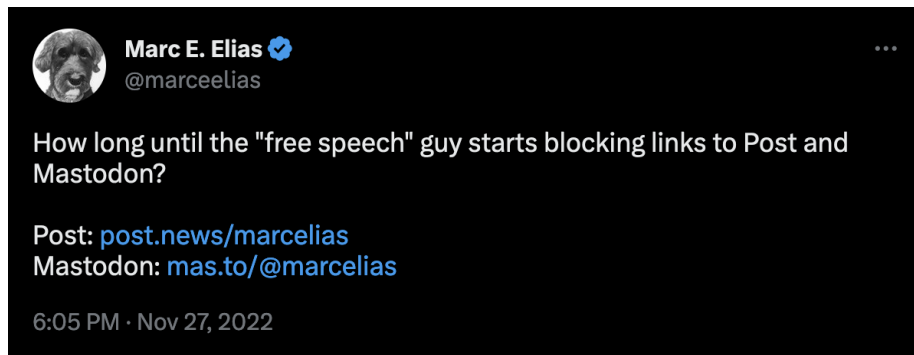
We found that each of these alternatives are seeing consistent growth month to month since the shift began, but that Mastodon and then secondarily the Post continue to be the two largest beneficiaries of new activity by a large percentage.

You can see this data visualized below:

Alternative Social Accounts in Twitter Bios - 12/22 to 2/23
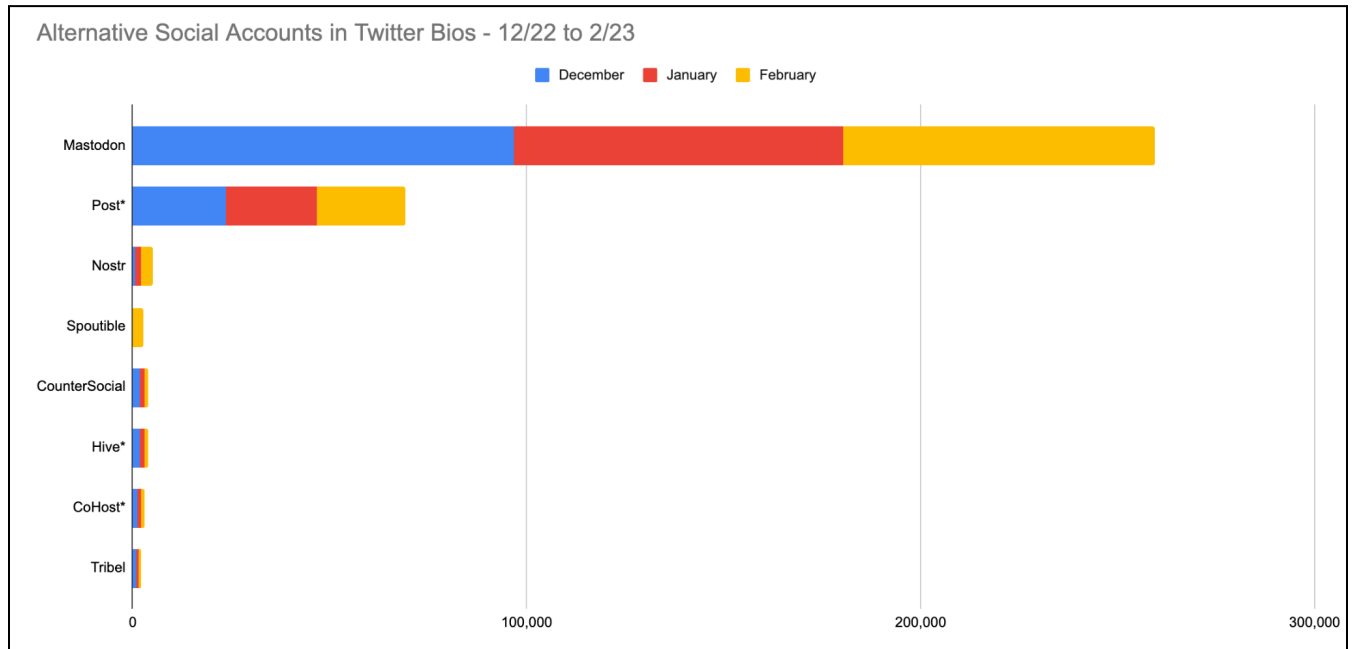
Next, we looked at users across Twitter during this last quarter who - regardless of the terms in their Twitter bios - **actively posted about accounts on other platforms.** Here is an example of this sort of tweet:

Marc E. Elias ✓
@marceelias

How long until the "free speech" guy starts blocking links to Post and Mastodon?

Post: post.news/marcelias
Mastodon: mas.to/@marcelias

6:05 PM · Nov 27, 2022

When we did scans across all of Twitter for a set of common "migration terms" in users' posts referencing alternative new social platforms, we found this in terms of which platform they were citing as their new home:

Migration Post Users - 12/22 to 2/23
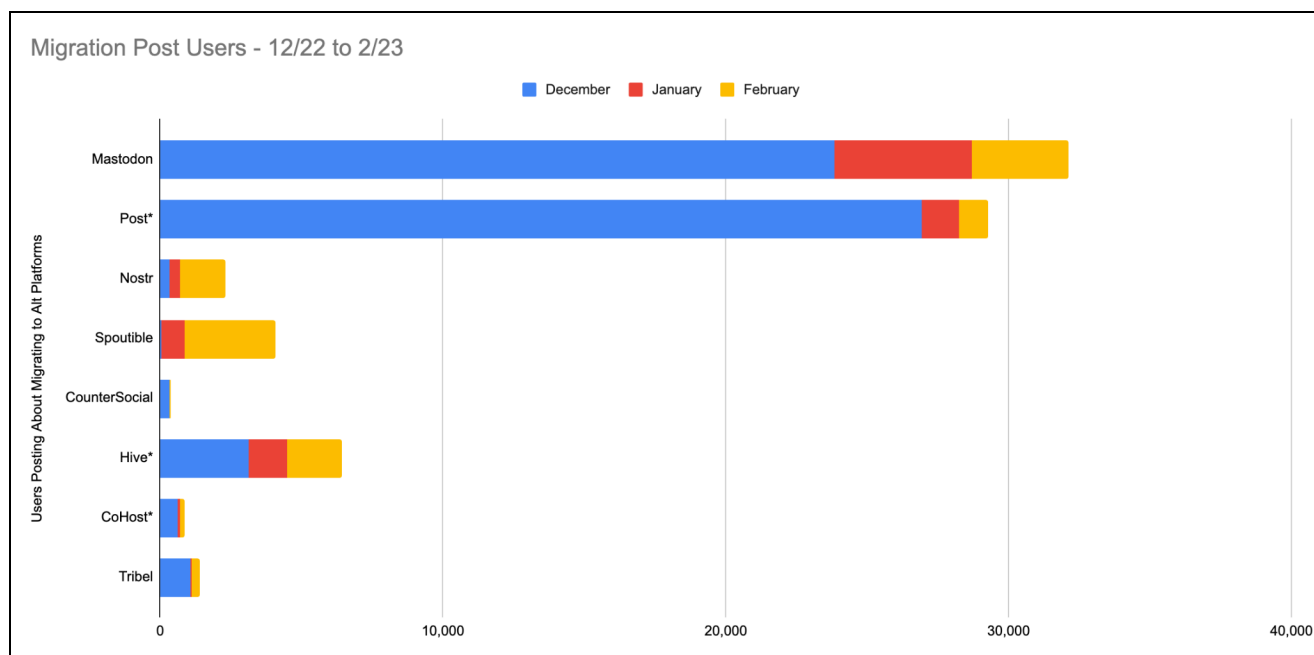
As we found with the Twitter bio scans earlier, here too, we saw Mastodon continue to be the largest site referenced each over the quarter, followed by Post.

Even though Mastodon and Post were dominant each month compared to the others in both metrics, we do think we suspect users of both of these two platforms may also be posting less in the last two months as they already have "quiet quit" the platform or fully left Twitter.

The marketing push before Post's launch had prompted users to post on Twitter and other established platforms as a means to move up the ranks on the waiting list, so it was likely that contributed to the drop-off after they officially launched. We have similarly seen boosts in posts about new platforms Nostr and Spoutible around their launches and will have to wait and see if they continue to grow or fizzle out like other startup platforms CoHost, CounterSocial, and Tribel.

While not everyone that joins a new platform will add the new account to their Twitter bio or post about it, we view this as a subset of serious users that provide a glimpse of the mindshare and "market share" of each alternative platform for those migrating away from Twitter or at least those beginning to branch out to new platforms.

Mobile Application Download Numbers

The last metric we highlight in this update is that of mobile application downloads. Almost all of these social media platforms have substantial usage from smartphone and tablet applications, and the data from Android and Apple's app store as to downloads and usage can also be a key metric.

[Tech Crunch looked at the numbers](#) from the mobile analytics platform Data.ai for Twitter and alternative social media platforms since the Twitter purchase:

"The data indicates that many apps continue to grow to a lesser degree while other apps have seen growth decline...." while it also shows that downloads for Twitter have remained overall the same, after a drop in downloads in November.

"Data.ai's analysis of worldwide app installs across iOS and Android also indicates **Mastodon's app adoption is still growing,** though to a lesser degree. Its installs are down quite a bit from November's peak of 2.9 million monthly downloads. It still managed to gain 180,000 new installs in January — **that's 169,000 more installs than it had in September 2022."** This is for the official Mastodon app, and they note many new apps such as Ivory are also important to view, **"To date, Ivory is nearing 100K installs**, data.ai's early estimates indicate."

They show that the Tumblr application also saw a strong swell of new installs early, but has since slowed, however, "Tumblr is still slightly higher than the prior baseline." Another social media data source, [Sensor Tower,](#) offered this look at Tumblr downloads: "Since November 2022, iOS installs [for Tumblr] jumped 56% compared to the prior three months, totaling 934,000."

And Tech Crunch's analysis also notes that not all applications that saw early interest

are sustaining that attention: "While Mastodon continues to hang in there, other Twitter alternatives have seen their download growth stall or slow." **They specifically call out the mobile app downloads for Tribel, Hive, and others as dropping off precipitously.**

The Path From Here

Our team will continue to monitor all of these and other metrics as each turn in the post-Musk "Twitter 2.0" story continues. We will be releasing quarterly Twitter Migration reports in 2023 updating the details of each trend going forward.

We will be watching the impact that each quarter brings to existing Twitter active users and how this impacts those that are at varying stages of looking for new social platforms beyond their previous Twitter usage.