



## Emerging Social Media Platforms

### Research Context:

*Conventional wisdom suggests that Meta, Google, TikTok, X, and Snap have an unshakeable hold on the social media landscape, controlling how billions connect online with little room for alternatives. But what if there is meaningful innovation occurring beyond the dominant platforms? We set out to discover whether a new social media ecosystem is emerging—one built on different values, architectures, and business models. This research maps an alternative social media universe that challenges the assumption that today's giants will forever define our digital social experiences.*

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# Emerging Social Media Platforms: A Research Exploration

4.5.25

## Executive Summary

This research investigation presents a systematic analysis of the alternative social media ecosystem, documenting 67 distinct platforms that function as alternatives to mainstream social networks. Our methodological approach categorized these platforms according to their technological architecture and foundational values.

The Fediverse ecosystem comprises platforms such as Mastodon and Pixelfed, which operate on decentralized protocols facilitating interoperability across independent instances. Platforms prioritizing decentralization and ethical frameworks, including Bluesky and Vero, implement design principles centered on user sovereignty, data privacy, and non-advertising revenue models. The "healthier social media" classification encompasses platforms such as Cosmos and Retro that incorporate intentional design constraints to mitigate addictive engagement patterns.

Our investigation identified numerous innovative conceptual approaches, exemplified by Slowly, which reconceptualizes digital communication through temporal constraints, and Corner, which restructures social interaction through geospatial integration. The ecosystem further includes demographically specialized platforms serving specific communities, such as Diem (designed for women and non-binary individuals) and youth-oriented platforms like Zigazoo with enhanced safety protocols.

The financial architectures sustaining these alternatives demonstrate significant heterogeneity, ranging from traditional venture capital financing to subscription-based models, collective funding mechanisms, and community-supported operations—representing diverse approaches to establishing sustainable alternatives to advertisement-dependent social media paradigms.

This research contributes to the emerging understanding of social media evolution where users increasingly gravitate toward alternatives aligned with values emphasizing privacy protection, authentic engagement, and ethical design principles

## Introduction

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## Methodology

Our research employed a comprehensive survey methodology to identify and categorize alternative social media platforms. We defined "alternative" platforms as those explicitly positioning themselves as alternatives to mainstream social networks through their mission, design principles, or business models. Platforms were evaluated based on multiple criteria, including:

- Technological architecture (centralized vs. decentralized)
- Business model (advertising, subscription, crowdfunding, etc.)
- Core values and design principles
- Target demographics
- Unique features and approaches
- Stage of development and user adoption

These criteria enabled us to organize the 135 identified platforms into distinct categories reflecting their primary approaches and values. For each platform, we documented key details including founding information, user numbers where available, core concepts, and business models.

# Findings: Categories of Alternative Social Media

## Fediverse Platforms

The Fediverse represents a significant architectural alternative to centralized social networks, consisting of interconnected servers operating on open protocols, primarily ActivityPub. Key examples include:

**Mastodon:** <https://joinmastodon.org/>

- With 1.8 million monthly users, this Twitter alternative operates across interconnected servers without ads or algorithms. Founded by Eugen Rochko and Felix Hlatky, it generates revenue through crowdfunding, sponsorships, and grants. Despite its innovative approach, Mastodon faces challenges including a confusing multi-server setup and difficulty retaining new users.

**Pixelfed:** <https://pixelfed.org/>

- This Instagram alternative focuses on creativity, authenticity, and privacy. Founded by Daniel Supernault and funded through a Kickstarter campaign, it operates on the ActivityPub protocol with approximately 300,000 users.

**Peertube:** <https://joinpeertube.org/>

- A YouTube alternative built on decentralized principles, Peertube enables users to upload and discover videos while maintaining control over their data. Developed by programmer Chocoboxxx and operated by the non-profit Framasoft, it relies on funding from the NLnet Foundation and crowdfunding efforts.

**Loops:** <https://loops.social/>

- Currently in development, this Fediverse-based TikTok alternative focuses on short video sharing without corporate control. Created by Daniel Supernault (also the founder of Pixelfed), it is supported through grants, sponsorships, and donations.

**Flipboard:** <https://flipboard.com/>

- With over 145 million monthly active users, this established news and social media aggregator recently integrated with the Fediverse using ActivityPub. Founded by Mike McCue, it generates revenue through advertising.

**Surf Social:** <https://surf.social/>

- An invite-only beta platform created by Mike McCue, Surf Social functions as a decentralized web browser aggregating feeds from ActivityPub platforms, Bluesky, and RSS. The platform is currently bootstrapped.

## Decentralized and Ethical Platforms

Beyond the Fediverse, numerous platforms emphasize decentralization, user control, and ethical design principles:

**Bluesky:** <https://bsky.social/>

- Founded by Jack Dorsey and led by CEO Jay Graber, this decentralized Twitter alternative built on the AT Protocol has attracted 20 million users. It offers custom feeds, federation, and open-source interoperability, with funding from an \$8 million seed round in 2023.

**Flashes:** <https://flashes.app/>

- A Bluesky-based Instagram alternative released in February 2025, focusing on simple, organic content sharing without ads or algorithms. Led by Jay Graber and Sebastian Vogelsang, it achieved 30,000 downloads in its first 24 hours.

**Pools:** <https://pools.app/>

- This early-stage, privacy-focused platform enables meaningful sharing within close connections, free from ads and performance pressures. Created by Protegra Software Development, it is funded through the company's other business software development.

**Vero:** <https://vero.co/>

- Launched in 2015 by Ayman Hariri, this ad-free, subscription-based platform emphasizes authenticity and privacy with 6 million users. It features a chronological feed and granular sharing controls, supported by a one-time subscription fee.

**Sparkable:** <https://sparkable.ai/>

- This recently launched platform uses "bridging-based ranking" to amplify posts based on cross-divide engagement rather than popularity. Founded by Vardon Hamdiu, it operates on a volunteer basis with original foundation support.

**Weare8:** <https://weare8.com/>

- Launched in 2022 by Zoe Kalar, this platform has 1.4 million users in the UK. Its distinctive model pays users to watch ads and directs a portion of revenue to charity, while maintaining no anonymity and avoiding algorithmic manipulation.

**Mewe Network:** <https://mewe.com/>

- With over 20 million global users, this privacy-focused network operates without ads, targeting, or feed manipulation. Founded by Jeffrey Edell and Jonathan Wolfe, it generates revenue through premium subscriptions and support from Project Liberty.

**Orb Social:** <https://orb.social/>

- Built on Lens Protocol, this Web3 social app connects creators, artists, and crypto enthusiasts. Founded by Nilesh Rathore and Kimmo Sirén with \$2.3 million in funding, it features interest-based clubs and on-chain interactions.

**Seam:** <https://www.seam.so/>

- This seed-stage, VC-backed platform creates a social network for building and selling open-source mini-apps. Founded by Nick Confrey with \$2.5 million in funding, it monetizes through user-created content and a points-based economy.

## Healthier Social Media Platforms

Several platforms explicitly position themselves as "healthier" alternatives through design choices that reduce addictive patterns, comparison, and negative social dynamics:

**Daylyy:** <https://daylyy.com/>

- This BeReal alternative focuses on authentic, unfiltered sharing with 47,000 users. Founded by Austin Anderson in 2022, it generates revenue through ads, with the distinctive requirement that businesses participate in the daily photo trend.

**Foto:** <https://foto.app/>

- Launched in February 2025 by Michael Howard, Sahil Limbe, and Adam Simms, this minimalist photo-sharing app for photographers and artists has attracted over 56,000 users. It operates without likes, follower counts, ads, or video content, generating revenue through a freemium model.

**Cosmos:** <https://cosmos.so/>

- This AI-powered Pinterest alternative serves designers, artists, and architects with over 100,000 users since its 2023 launch. Founded by Andy McCune, it operates without likes or comments and features a distinctive UI, supported by a freemium model.

**Minutiae:** <https://minutiae.co/>

- Conceptualized as an "anti-social media art project," this platform prompts users to simultaneously take a daily picture for 1,440 consecutive days. Founded by Martin Adolfsson and Daniel J. Wilson in 2016, it operates without profiles, likes, or comments, funded through art grants.

**Hive Social:** <https://hivesocial.app/>

- With 1.5 million users as of November 2022, this community-focused app features a chronological feed and MySpace-like profile customization. Founded by Raluca Pop, it emphasizes self-expression without ads or significant algorithmic manipulation.

**Applaudable:** <https://applaudable.social/>

- Currently testing in Spanish schools with over 5,000 investors, this platform replaces likes with "applauds" and was designed with input from psychologists. Founded by Andrew Christodoulides and Ilan Berker in 2016, its business model remains undisclosed.

**Joinable:** <https://joinable.us/>

- Currently in beta testing, this platform focuses on facilitating real-life activities among friends. Founded by Teg Grenager and Martin Hak, it emphasizes trusted communities without ads or data sharing, operating as a for-profit venture not yet monetizing.

**Mozi:** <https://mozi.com/>

- Launched at SXSW 2025 by Twitter co-founder Ev Williams, this private social network helps users coordinate real-life meetups by alerting them when friends are nearby or at the same events.

**Retro:** <https://retro.app/>

- This weekly photo journal app became the #1 social platform in Taiwan after its 2023 launch. Founded by Ryan Olson and Nathan Sharp with \$9 million in funding, it focuses on strengthening real connections through mindful sharing, operating on a freemium/subscription model.

**Hipstamatic:** <https://hipstamatic.com/>

- Recently relaunched as a social network after peaking at 4 million users in 2010, this vintage-style photo-sharing app limits users to 99 follows (9 for "close friends"). Founded by Lucas Allen Buick and Ryan Dorshorst, it features a chronological feed without ads or algorithms, generating revenue through paid filters.

**Minus:** <https://minus.social/>

- This "finite social network" gives users just 100 lifetime posts, featuring a reverse chronological feed without ads, data sales, likes, follows, or precise timestamps. Created by Ben Grosser in 2021, it was commissioned for an art exhibition called "Software for Less."

**Supernova:** <https://supernova.app/>

- This ethical Instagram alternative donates ad revenue to charities chosen by users. Founded by Dominic Omeara, it features 24/7 human moderation to maintain a positive environment.

## Innovative Conceptual Approaches

Our research identified numerous platforms introducing innovative conceptual approaches to social connection:

**Shelf:** <https://shelf.io/>

- Launched in September 2024 by Jad Esber with \$7 million in funding, this platform enables users to track and discover music, movies, and books by integrating with services like Spotify, Netflix, and Goodreads.

**Slowly:** <https://slowly.app/>

- With 9 million downloads and 5 million users, this platform recreates the pen pal experience by facilitating slower-paced letter writing. Founded by Kevin Wong Ho-Yin, it generates revenue through a freemium model, stamp store, and advertising.

**Lapse:** <https://lapse.com/>

- This photo-sharing app simulates disposable cameras by hiding photos until they "develop" hours later. Founded by Dan and Ben Silvertown in

2021 with \$30 million in Series A funding, it reached 1.2 million users by October 2023 but has since declined.

**Ar.ena:** <https://www.arena.net/>

- Described as "playlists for ideas" or an "Internet memory palace," this 13-year-old platform enables users to save and organize content. Founded by Charles Broskoski, Daniel Pianetti, Chris Barley, and Chris Sherron, it generates revenue through 16,788 paying subscribers.

**Corner:** <https://corner.app/>

- This social mapping app allows users to curate personalized maps of favorite places. Founded by Eliza Wu and Jake Xia in 2022 and available in over 400 cities, it partners with restaurants and venues for revenue.

**Pie:** <https://pie.social/>

- Founded by Andy Dunn in 2020 with \$11.5 million in funding, this platform connects people through local group activities using AI-based matching, currently serving 130,000 monthly active users in San Francisco and Chicago.

**TimeLeft:** <https://timeleft.co/>

- This platform facilitates social dining experiences by matching five strangers for dinner based on personality algorithms. Founded by Maxime Barbier, it operates in over 320 cities across 65 countries with 25,000+ participants, generating revenue through ticket sales and partnerships.

**Rodeo:** <https://rodeo.app/>

- Currently preparing for release after completing fundraising, this platform reimagines calendars to facilitate in-person social interactions by syncing schedules. Founded by former Hinge and Facebook employees Sam Levy,

Tim MacGougan, and Doug Beaver, it plans to generate revenue through affiliate booking fees and a subscription tier.

**Perfectly Imperfect:** <https://perfectlyimperfect.social/>

- Described as a "social network for taste," this platform enables users to share recommendations and create customized profiles reminiscent of MySpace and Tumblr. Founded by Tyler Bainbridge and Alex Cushing, it serves 10,000 users with 50,000 newsletter subscribers through a freemium model.

**Volv:** <https://volvmedia.com/>

- This social news app condenses news into 9-second, bite-sized stories, achieving 5 million monthly impressions and 60 million stories read since its 2020 launch. Founded by Shannon Almeida and Priyanka Vazirani with backing from Snapchat.

**Confinity:** <https://confinity.io/>

- Launched recently by Ryan Ward and Neeraj Vir, this platform focuses on preserving personal stories and legacies, inspired by the founder's experience with loss. It aims to create a digital archive for personal and historical memories.

**Noplace:** <https://noplace.app/>

- This Gen Z-focused social app reached #1 on the App Store in mid-2024, channeling early 2000s networks like MySpace with an emphasis on customization and authenticity. Founded by Tiffany Zhong, it uses AI for suggestions while avoiding an edited feed.

**Rooms:** <https://rooms.xyz/>

- Launched in 2023 with \$10 million in funding, this platform enables users to design 3D spaces filled with furniture, décor, pets, and avatars. Founded by Jason Toff, Bruno Oliveira, and Nick Kruge, it combines elements of social media and gaming with 40,000 users.

**Swell:** <https://swell.live/>

- This audio platform facilitates the creation of short podcasts ("Swellcasts") and audio group chats without ads. Founded in 2020 by Sudha KV and Arish Ali, it generates revenue through premium tools for creators.

**Tapereal:** <https://tapereal.com/>

- This video platform enables creators to upload content and monetize by selling access to individual videos without algorithms or ads. Founded by Ali Shah in Canada in 2018, creators set their own prices and keep all earnings.

**Goodwall:** <https://goodwall.io/>

- This skills-based social media and community app helps young people develop skills, connect with others, and access opportunities like jobs and scholarships. Founded by Omar and Taha Bawa, it serves 2 million users across 150+ countries with over \$16 million in funding.

## **Inclusive Social Platforms**

Several platforms explicitly serve specific communities with unique needs:

**Spoony:** <https://spoony.social/>

- Designed as a safe space for neurodivergent, chronically ill, and disabled people, this social app uses "spoons" to signal openness to conversation.

Founded by Nicholas Carlton and Kenneth Liang, it has 22,000 users and \$1 million in funding.

**Lex:** <https://thisislex.app/>

- Originally a dating app now focused on social networking for LGBTQ+ individuals, this platform features queer trivia groups and meetups. Founded by Jennifer Rhiannon Lewis and acquired by 9 Count Inc. (led by Alex Hofmann and Joe Viola), it has over 1 million users and generates revenue through premium features and advertising for queer-owned businesses.

**Diem:** <https://askdiem.com/>

- This social search engine for women and non-binary people provides AI and community-driven answers in a supportive, bias-free space. Founded by Emma Bates and Divia Singh in 2024, it has achieved 40% growth with over 40,000 users and \$3.7 million in funding.

**Sunroom:** <https://www.sunroom.so/>

- This subscription-based platform enables women and non-binary creators to connect with audiences and monetize content. Founded by Lucy Mort and Michelle Battersby with \$10 million in funding, it serves over 20,000 creators as a safer alternative to platforms like OnlyFans.

**Communia:** <https://www.communia.app/>

- Launched in 2020 with 100,000 downloads, this globally-facing social network uses trusted wellness tools and safety innovations for women. Founded by Olivia DeRamus, it is currently raising venture capital.

**Collective:** <https://www.collective.lgbt/>

- This social network helps LGBTQ+ people make friends and go on dates. Founded by Callum Smith, it serves over 75,000 users.

## Platforms for Children

A small but significant category focuses on providing safe social experiences for children:

**Zigazoo:** <https://www.zigazoo.com/>

- This kid-friendly platform enables short-form video creation and sharing in a safe, positive environment with human moderation, verified users, no text messaging, and a "positive-only" algorithm. Founded by Zak Ringelstein with millions of users and \$17 million in funding, it monetizes through virtual goods and advertising.

**Coverstar:** <https://coverstar.com/>

- This TikTok-style app for kids and tweens features short video challenges, music, and creativity in a fully moderated environment without private messaging. Founded by Ryan So and Peter Moser with \$2 million in recent funding, it operates on a freemium subscription model with in-app purchases.

# Analysis: Key Trends and Patterns

## Business Model Innovation

Our research reveals significant innovation in business models beyond the dominant advertising-based approach of mainstream platforms:

- **Subscription and Freemium Models:** Platforms like Vero, Retro, and Ar.ena demonstrate the viability of direct user payment models, offering ad-free experiences in exchange for subscription fees.
- **Creator-Focused Monetization:** Platforms like Tapereal and Sunroom enable direct creator monetization without platform algorithms or intermediaries, potentially offering more sustainable economics for content creators.
- **Mission-Aligned Revenue:** Some platforms align their revenue models with their values, such as Weare8 directing advertising revenue to charity and Sparkable operating on a volunteer basis.
- **Diversified Funding:** Many alternatives rely on diverse funding sources, including venture capital (particularly for technically innovative platforms), crowdfunding (common among Fediverse platforms), grants, and bootstrapping.

## Technical Architecture Innovations

The technical approaches to building alternative social media demonstrate significant innovation:

- **Decentralization:** The Fediverse represents the most developed decentralized ecosystem, with interconnected servers using the ActivityPub protocol. Other approaches include Bluesky's AT Protocol and blockchain-based platforms like Orb Social using Lens Protocol.

- **Algorithmic Innovation:** Platforms like Sparkable explicitly reimagine recommendation algorithms to promote cross-divide engagement rather than engagement maximization, while others like Hipstamtic eliminate algorithms entirely.
- **Minimalist Design:** Many alternatives deliberately constrain features to promote healthier usage patterns, such as Minutiae's single daily photo or Minus's 100-post lifetime limit.
- **Integration Models:** Platforms like Shelf and Corner integrate with existing services or real-world locations rather than creating closed ecosystems, suggesting a more interoperable future for social platforms.

## Community and Value-Based Design

Many alternatives explicitly design around specific community needs or values:

- **Specialized Demographics:** Platforms serving specific communities, such as Diem (women and non-binary people), Lex (LGBTQ+), and Spooky (neurodivergent individuals), demonstrate the opportunity for community-specific design.
- **Ethical Priorities:** Many platforms explicitly prioritize values like privacy (Mewe), authenticity (Foto), or cross-viewpoint dialogue (Sparkable) in their core design.
- **Mental Health Considerations:** Numerous platforms specifically address mental health concerns through design choices that reduce comparison, addiction, and negative social dynamics.

## Challenges and Limitations

Despite their innovative approaches, alternative social media platforms face significant challenges:

- **Scale and Network Effects:** Most alternatives struggle to achieve the critical mass necessary for social networks, with only a handful exceeding 10 million users compared to billions on mainstream platforms.
- **Retention Difficulties:** Several platforms show strong initial growth followed by user decline, suggesting challenges in retaining users beyond initial curiosity.
- **Sustainable Business Models:** Many alternatives have not yet demonstrated long-term financial sustainability, particularly those rejecting advertising revenue without establishing clear alternative revenue streams.
- **Technical Complexity:** Decentralized approaches like the Fediverse often introduce technical complexity that creates barriers to adoption for non-technical users.
- **Discovery and Growth:** Without large marketing budgets or built-in virality mechanisms, many alternatives struggle with discovery and growth beyond niche communities.

# Conclusions and Implications

This research demonstrates a vibrant ecosystem of alternative social media platforms developing diverse approaches to digital social connection. While mainstream platforms continue to dominate in terms of user numbers, the alternatives showcase significant innovation in business models, technical architectures, and value-based design.

Key implications from this research include:

- **Diversification of Social Media:** The social media landscape is likely to become more diverse and specialized, with users participating in multiple platforms serving different social needs rather than relying on a single generalist platform.
- **Values-Based Selection:** Users increasingly select platforms based on alignment with personal values around privacy, mental health, and community rather than simply following network effects.
- **Technical Innovation:** Decentralized architectures like the Fediverse and AT Protocol represent significant technical innovations that may influence future platform development, particularly as concerns about platform power grow.
- **Business Model Evolution:** The diversity of business models suggests potential evolution beyond the dominant advertising model, particularly as user awareness of the costs of "free" social media increases.

# Recommendations for Further Research

Based on our findings, we recommend several areas for further investigation:

- Longitudinal studies of user retention and satisfaction across alternative platforms
- Comparative analysis of mental health impacts between mainstream and alternative social media
- Technical research on improving usability of decentralized architectures
- Investigation of sustainable business models for ethical social platforms
- Research on the potential for regulatory frameworks to support platform diversity

# About The Team

## About the Researcher

Kendall Schrohe is a digital researcher, youth activist, and Gen Z technologist focused on ethical design, digital well-being, and reimagining online spaces. She serves on the **Gen Z Board of Advisors at the Sustainable Media Center** and produced this research in collaboration with the **Sustainable Media Center and its partner, Accountable Tech**. Kendall has collaborated with advocacy groups, educators, and platform founders in her mission to build a better internet.

## About the Sustainable Media Center

The **Sustainable Media Center (SMC)** is a nonprofit think-and-do tank focused on reimagining a healthier, more sustainable information ecosystem. By convening journalists, technologists, researchers, and creators, SMC advances new models for trustworthy media, equitable platforms, and a digital environment that supports democracy and human well-being. Learn more at [SustainableMedia.Center](https://SustainableMedia.Center)

## About Accountable Tech

**Accountable Tech** is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to curb the harms of Big Tech and advance a safer, more ethical digital future. Through campaigns, policy reform, and coalition-building, Accountable Tech challenges the unchecked power of social media giants and uplifts people-first alternatives that respect users' rights and democracy. Learn more at <https://accountabletech.org/>

*Press Release:*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **A New Generation Demands Better: Groundbreaking Research Uncovers 150+ Ethical Alternatives to Mainstream Social Media**

**DATE TBD, 2025 – New York, New York** — In a time when social media is facing mounting scrutiny over its impact on mental health, democracy, and human connection, 22-year-old digital researcher and activist **Kendall Schrohe** is offering a bold, hopeful vision of what comes next.

Her new report, *The Future of Social Media: There is Hope*, unveils the results of an independent study exploring more than **135 emerging social platforms** — from decentralized and open-source networks to small, community-driven apps focused on creativity, well-being, and real-world connection.

“We’ve been told social media is broken, but that’s not the full story,” said Schrohe. “There’s a growing movement of developers, activists, and everyday users who are building alternatives — spaces that prioritize privacy, authenticity, and human-centered design. My research shows the future is already here. We just have to support it.”

The study highlights:

- A sweeping shift away from algorithm-driven feeds toward **chronological, ad-free, and minimalist designs**
- A rise in **niche platforms** tailored to specific communities — from neurodivergent users and LGBTQ+ creators to outdoor explorers, artists, and book lovers

- A new wave of apps using **technology to facilitate real-world friendships**, intentional sharing, and ethical monetization
- Case studies of **10 standout platforms** personally tested by Schrohe, including the post-limited network *Minus*, the decentralized messaging platform *Pools*, and the “anti-algorithm” recommendation app *Perfectly Imperfect*

Unlike traditional social media that thrives on surveillance capitalism, many of these platforms operate through **subscriptions, grants, crowdfunding, or creative revenue models** — proving that connection doesn’t have to come at the cost of our data or well-being.

As lawmakers and educators debate how to regulate Big Tech, *The Future of Social Media: There is Hope* serves as a roadmap for what’s possible — and a call to action for young users, parents, technologists, and policymakers alike.

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### **Press Contact:**

**Lana McGilvery**

**Purpose Worldwide**

Lana@purposenorthamerica.com

512-970-8310

## Appendix A: Complete Platform List

The research identified and categorized 135 alternative social media platforms. The platforms are organized into several categories:

- Fediverse Platforms (15): Mastodon, Pixelfed, Peertube, Loops, FunkWhale, Lemmy, Bookwyrms, Plemora, Misskey, Mobilizon, Vidzy, Castopod, WriteFreely/Write.as, Diaspora\*, Friendica, Hubzilla
- Decentralized Platforms (10): Bluesky, Flashes, Skylight Social, Pools, Sparkable, Mewe Network, Seam, Nostr, Scuttlebutt, Spoutible, Countersocial, Tribel, Trust Cafe
- Blockchain-based (3): Orb Social, Minds, Steemit
- Healthier Social Media Platforms (12): Daylyy, Weare8, Foto, Cosmos, Minutiae, Hive Social, Applaudable, Joinable, Mozi, Retro, Hipstamtic, Minus, Supernova
- Innovative Ideas (19): Shelf, Slowly, Lapse, Ar.ena, Corner, Fitted, Pie, TimeLeft, Rodeo, Perfectly Imperfect, Volv, Confinity, Noplace, Rooms, Swell, Tapereal, Goodwall, Yope, Zeemee, Swarm, Imgurr, Zapshot, Clubhouse, Tenten, Airchat, Ping, Agora Citizen Network
- Inclusive Social Platforms (7): Spoony, Lex, Diem, Sunroom, Communia, Collective, Peanut
- For Kids (2): Zigazoo, Coverstar
- Niche Platforms (24): Strava, Letterboxd, Goodreads, Beli, Co-Star, Bow Shock, Glass, Oku, Fable, Tome, Wattpad, Criticker, Stack Overflow, Serializd, Rate.house, Backloggd, Kitsu, The Pattern, Outside Inc, Ravelry, Dribbble, Wellbee Social, Petzbe, Superfan, CARA, ArtStation, Permies, Days at Dunrovin, Bloom Network
- Still in Concept Stage (3): New Public, Be to Belong, ReNews Media
- Innovative Dating Apps (3): InPress, Left Field, Cerca
- Bigger Tech (9): Lemon8, Whee, BeReal, Tumblr, Pinterest, VSCO, Snapchat, Slingshot, Discord, Xiaohongshu/Rednote, Nextdoor

- Miscellaneous (5): Holy Spear, My Praize, Not the Bee, Sqabblr, Gab Social, Truth Social, Parler

There are 135 unique social media platforms in this comprehensive list, showing the diverse landscape of both mainstream networks and alternative options focused on different priorities.

## Alternative Social Media Platforms

### *Fediverse Platforms*



#### **Mastodon**

[Website](#) | [App Store](#)

**Stage:** 1.8M monthly users

**Founder:** [Eugen Rochko](#), [Felix Hlatky](#) (transitioning to nonprofit in 2025).

**About:** Decentralized, ad-free, algorithm-free twitter alternative. Part of the Fediverse (interconnected servers), built on ActivityPub Protocol.

**Business Model:** Crowdfunding, sponsorships, grants

**Challenges:** Confusing multi-server setup, niche tech-focused audience, struggles with retention.



#### **Pixelfed**

[Website](#) | [App Store](#)

**Stage:** 300,000 users

**Founder:** [Daniel Supernault](#)

**About:** Instagram alternative focused on creativity, authenticity, and privacy. Operates on the ActivityPub protocol, part of the Fediverse, giving users control over their content and data. Mainly for photos.

**Business Model:** Funded through a Kickstarter campaign.



#### **Peertube**

[Website](#) | [App Store](#)

**Stage:** 250,000 users

**Founder:** [Chocobozzz](#) (programmer), run by non-profit [Framasoft](#)

**About:** YouTube alternative built on decentralization. Users can upload, share, and discover videos. Part of Fediverse, uses the ActivityPub protocol.

**Business Model:** [NLnet Foundation](#) funds + crowdfunding


## Loops

 [Website](#)

 **Stage:** In development, mobile apps in beta

 **Founder:** [Daniel Supernault](#) (also behind PixelFed)


 **About:** Fediverse-based alternative to TikTok, focused on short video sharing without corporate control. Currently available for signups.


 **Business Model:** Grants, sponsorships, donations...

## FunkWhale

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** developed and supported by the [NLnet Foundation](#)

 **Stage:** Actively maintained open-source project, widely used within the fediverse

 **About:** A free, decentralized, and open-source audio streaming and sharing platform built on the ActivityPub protocol.


 **Business Model:** Funded by NLnet Foundation


## Lemmy

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** [‘nutomic’](#)


 **Stage:** Launched in 2019, ~66K monthly users, 1.5K+ instances


 **About:** A decentralized, federated Reddit alternative built on ActivityPub. Users post in communities, comment, and vote across instances.


 **Business Model:** Open-source, donation and community-supported


## Bookwyrms

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** Maintained by [‘Mouse Reeve’](#)

 **Stage:** 7,000 active users, founded in 2020


 **About:** A decentralized, ad-free alternative to Goodreads where you can track reading, talk about books, and follow friends across the fediverse.


 **Business Model:** community supported, donation based


## Pleroma

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** [Lain](#)


 **Stage:** Founded in 2016, 138,000 users


 **About:** A free, open-source, federated microblogging platform built on ActivityPub. Pleroma lets users create and manage their own Twitter-style instances, fully compatible with Mastodon and other fediverse platforms.


 **Business Model:** Crowdfunding and support from NLnet Foundation


## Misskey

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** Shinoda Eiji (aka [Syuilo](#))

 **Stage:** Incorporated in April 2023; 900,000 total users with ~25,000 active users


 **About:** A decentralized, open-source microblogging platform in the Fediverse, built on ActivityPub.


 **Business Model:** Funded through crowdfunding, community donations, and support from the NLnet Foundation.


## Mobilizon

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** Created by [Framasoft](#) in 2019; maintained by [Kaihuri](#) since 2024

 **Stage:** 50,000 users, made in 2019


 **About:** A decentralized, ethical alternative to Facebook Events. Mobilizon lets users create, find, and organize events or groups—without algorithms, likes, or feeds. Built on the ActivityPub protocol to support a federated network of instances.


 **Business Model:** Funded by NLnet, crowdfunding, and community support.


## Vidzy

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [ProgramminCat](#)

 **Stage:** 500 users

 **About:** An open-source, federated alternative to TikTok. Vidzy allows users to share, connect, and discover in a decentralized, ad-free space. Built on the ActivityPub protocol for a federated social experience.


 **Business Model:** Self-funded by the creator, no external monetization.

## Castpod

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** [Benjamin Bellamy](#) and [Yassine Doghri](#)

 **Stage:** n/a

 **About:** An open-source podcast hosting solution that connects to the Fediverse via the W3C ActivityPub standard. Castpod enables decentralized podcast hosting, allowing for greater control and freedom in sharing audio content.


 **Business Model:** Sponsored by NLnet and supported by [Ad Aures](#).


## WriteFreely / Write.as

 [WriteFreely](#) | [Write.as](#)

 **Founder:** Matt Baer

 **Stage:** Launched in 2018, over 500,000 blogs through its hosted service, Write.as


 **About:** A minimalist, open-source alternative to traditional blogging platforms. Built for distraction-free writing and publishing, it supports personal blogs and writing communities—plus federation via the ActivityPub protocol. Great if you want a clean, ad-free space to write.


 **Business Model:** Makes money through paid hosting plans for individuals and communities who want custom domains, plus donations.

## Diaspora\*

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** Originally founded by Ilya Zhitomirskiy (deceased), [Daniel Grippi](#) (now at Snap) and [Maxwell Salzberg](#) but ran by the Free Software Support Network (FSSN) which is run by [Eben Moglen](#) and the [Software Freedom Law Center](#).

 **Stage:** Around 21,000 users; founded in 2010 by four NYU students


 **About:** A federated social network with independent "pods" (servers) communicating through a custom federation protocol. Diaspora is focused on privacy and decentralized control, offering a "macroblogging" experience. On custom protocol called 'relayable'


 **Business Model:** FSSN


## Friendica

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** Created by [Mike Macgirvin](#) (also made Hubzilla); maintained by contributors like [Hypolite Petovan](#) and [Michael Vogel](#)


 **Stage:** Small community (~5,000 users); one of the earliest federated platforms


 **About:** A deeply interoperable social platform that connects with Diaspora, Mastodon, Pleroma, GNU Social, and more using multiple protocols (DFRN, OStatus, ActivityPub, and ActivityStreams). Users can self-host or join existing nodes. Known for its chronological timeline and long-form posts—but criticized for being overwhelming and technically confusing due to its many integrations.


 **Business Model:** Community-run; no formal monetization—developed and maintained by volunteers.

## Hubzilla

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** Created by [Mike Macgirvin](#); Association led by President [Scott Stolz](#)


 **Stage:** ~4,000 accounts, ~1,000 active users; launched in 2012, became an official association in 2023

 **About:** A highly versatile federated platform combining social networking, file storage, wiki hosting, and event management—like Facebook, Google Drive, WordPress, and Notion all in one. Built on its own Zot protocol, it supports nomadic identities, letting users migrate between servers without losing data. Connects (with limitations) to Mastodon, Pleroma, Diaspora, and more.


 **Business Model:** Nonprofit model with funding from NLnet's NGI Zero grants.


## Flipboard

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2011, 145M+ monthly active users


 **Founders:** [Mike McCue](#) (founder of Surf.Social)

 **About:** A news and social media aggregator that presents content in a magazine-style format. Users curate personalized digital magazines, follow topics, and explore curated stories. Recently integrated with the Fediverse using ActivityPub.


 **Business Model:** Raised initial funding, ad-supported

## Surf social

 [Website](#)

 **Stage:** Invite-only beta (apply for access)

 **Founder:** [Mike McCue](#)


 **About:** Surf is a decentralized social web browser that aggregates feeds from platforms like ActivityPub (Mastodon, Pixelfed), Bluesky, and RSS. Users can create custom feeds and moderate their experience.

 **Business Model:** Bootstrapping


## *Decentralized Platforms*


### Bluesky

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Stage:** 20 million users, launched 2019


 **Founder:** [Jack Dorsey](#), CEO: [Jay Graber](#)

 **About:** Decentralized Twitter alternative built on the AT Protocol, allowing users to share short posts, images, and videos with more control over content and algorithms. Offers custom feeds, federation, and open-source interoperability.


 **Business Model:** \$8M seed funding in 2023, expanding to premium tier and developer services.

### Flashes

 [App Store](#)

 **Stage:** 30,000 downloads in first 24 hours, released on February 24, 2025


 **Founder:** CEO: [Jay Graber](#), Lead developer: [Sebastian Vogelsang](#)


 **About:** A Bluesky-based Instagram alternative with no ads or algorithm. Users can post up to four photos or a one-minute video, focusing on simple, organic content sharing.


## **Skylight Social**

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Victoria White](#) & [Reed Harmeyer](#)

 **Stage:** Launched recently; 110,000 users in first 48 hours; backed by Mark Cuban and Graham & Walker; built on Bluesky's 30M+ user network


 **About:** A TikTok-style short-form video app designed for the decentralized web, leveraging Bluesky's social graph


 **Business Model:** Early-stage; venture-backed, monetization model TBD


## **Pools**

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Stage:** Early


 **Founder:** [Protegra](#) Software Development owned by [Wadood Ibrahim](#), Tyler Ibrahim

 **About:** A privacy-focused, decentralized platform designed for meaningful sharing with close connections, free from ads, spam, and the performance pressures of traditional social media. Pools allow users to create personalized networks for genuine, intentional interactions.


 **Business Model:** They fund it through creating software for other businesses


## **Sparkable**

 [Website](#) | [Platform](#)

 **Stage:** Recently launched platform


 **Founder:** [Vardon Hamdiu](#)

 **About:** Sparkable amplifies posts not based on popularity, but on cross-divide engagement. Its "bridging-based ranking" system highlights content that fosters dialogue between opposing viewpoints, aiming to reduce polarization.


 **Business Model:** Volunteer-run, originally foundation-supported.


## **Mewe Network**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Stage:** Established, 20M+ users worldwide

 **Founders:** [Jeffrey Edell](#), [Jonathan Wolfe](#)

 **About:** A privacy-first social network with no ads, no targeting, and no news feed manipulation.. In 2022, moved to blockchain using the Decentralized Social Networking Protocol (DSNP) by Project Liberty.


 **Business Model:** Premium subscription models, Project Liberty


## **Seam**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Stage:** Seed stage, VC-backed


 **Founder:** [Nick Confrey](#)


 **About:** A social network for building and selling open-source mini-apps, catering to creators and gamers. It offers a Web3-inspired platform for collaboration, with a marketplace where users earn Seam Points to customize profiles.


 **Business Model:** Raised \$2.5M. Monetizes via user-created content, allowing users to earn and spend points instead of relying on ads or data.


 **Nostr**

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** Developed by pseudonymous dev [fiatjaf](#), with support from Jack Dorsey


 **Stage:** ~100,000 users

 **About:** A decentralized, censorship-resistant social media protocol popular with the Bitcoin community. Built on a unique cryptographic protocol that uses public/private keys and relay servers instead of traditional accounts.


 **Business Model:** Grants and Donation from people like Jack Dorsey.


 **Scuttlebutt**

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** [Dominic Tarr](#) (a self-described JavaScript cyberhobo living on a boat in New Zealand)


 **Stage:** Experimental, very small user base


 **About:** A decentralized, peer-to-peer “gossip” protocol for secure, serverless social networking. Offline-first, resilient, and privacy-focused—but highly technical and not user-friendly.


 **Business Model:** Community-driven, supported by volunteers and open-source grants.

 **Spoutible**

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Christopher Bouzy](#) (founder of Twitter Analytics service BotSentinel)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2023, 200,000 users


 **About:** A social media platform designed as a safer, harassment-free alternative to Twitter, focusing on better content moderation. Spoutible aims to reduce harmful behaviors like targeted harassment, racism, and misinformation. Cross posting to mastodon and bluesky available.

 **Business Model:** personal savings and crowdfunding

 **Countersocial**

 [Website](#) |  [App Link](#)

 **Founder:** ‘The Jester’ (possibly Jay Bauer)

 **Stage:** Active, with a focus on zero tolerance for trolls and misinformation


💡 **About:** A social media platform aiming to create a troll-free, bot-free environment with a strong stance against disinformation and harassment. CounterSocial restricts access from certain countries (Russia, China, Iran, Syria, North Korea) and users utilizing VPN, TOR, or proxy addresses.

💰 **Business Model:** Subscription model for advanced features, with additional user donations.

## Tribel

 [Website](#) |  [App Link](#)

 **Founders:** [Omar](#) and Rafael Rivero


 **Stage:** 600,000 users

💡 **About:** A social networking app designed to provide a more positive and personalized social media experience, reportedly catering to a more left-leaning user base. It is seen as the opposite of platforms like Parler and Truth Social, but may also create a filter bubble for its users despite its goal of a better network.

💰 **Business Model:** N/a

## Trust cafe

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** [Jimmy Wales](#) (founder of Wikipedia), [Fin Apps](#), Simon Little

 **Stage:** Currently in beta, originally WT Social with 400,000 users in 2019


💡 **About:** Created to combat misinformation in the social media space, Trust Cafe is a community-led and community-moderated platform. It combines features of Twitter, Reddit, and Stack Overflow, with a "trust level" reputation system that enhances user capabilities.

💰 **Business Model:** Funded by members.

## *Blockchain*

### Orb social

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Stage:** Raised \$2.3M, active platform

 **Founders:** [Nilesh Rathore](#), [Kimmo Sirén](#)

💡 **About:** A Web3 social app built on Lens Protocol, designed for creators, artists, and crypto enthusiasts to connect, curate, and collect. Features interest-based clubs, on-chain interactions, and a decentralized, user-friendly experience.

💰 **Business Model:** Likely tied to on-chain transactions and Web3 monetization.

### Minds


 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** [Bill Ottman](#), [John Ottman](#)

- 📌 **Stage:** 2.5 million users, 300,000 active users
- 💡 **About:** A Web3 social platform running on the Ethereum blockchain, Minds utilizes tokens and blockchain features to incentivize user participation.
- 💰 **Business Model:** Raised significant funding, operates on a token-based system with premium features.

## Steemit

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** [Dan Larimer](#), Ned Scott but now operates under [Justin Sun](#)'s control.

📌 **Stage:** Launched in 2016, acquired by [Tron](#) in 2020

💡 **About:** A blockchain-based social media platform that rewards users with cryptocurrency for creating and curating content. Users unhappy after acquisition.

💰 **Business Model:** Rewards users with cryptocurrency for posts, articles, and comments.

## *Healthier Social Media Platforms*

### Daylyy

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

📌 **Stage:** Launched 2022, 47K users.

 **Founder:** [austin anderson](#)

💡 **About:** BeReal alternative for authentic, unfiltered sharing. Private chats, no likes.

💰 **Business Model:** Ads, BUT businesses must join the daily photo trend.

### Weare8

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

📌 **Stage:** Launched 2022, 1.4M users (UK)

 **Founder:** [Zoe Kalar](#)

💡 **About:** Social platform where users get paid to watch ads, with a portion donated to charity. No anonymity or toxic algorithms.

💰 **Business Model:** Ad-based revenue.

### Foto

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

📌 **Stage:** Launched February 21, 2025, 56K+ users (16K beta testers)

 **Founders:** [Michael Howard](#), [Sahil Limbe](#), [Adam Simms](#)

💡 **About:** Minimalist photo-sharing app for photographers and artists. No likes, follower counts, or ads. Video-free and no cropping.

💰 **Business Model:** Freemium, ambassador program. Bootstrapped.



## Vero

[Website](#) | [App Store](#)

**Stage:** Launched 2015, 6M users

**Founder:** [Ayman Hariri](#) (CEO)

**About:** Ad-free, subscription-based social platform focused on authenticity and privacy. Features a chronological feed and granular sharing controls.

**Business Model:** Subscription-based (one-time fee).



## Cosmos

[Website](#) | [App Store](#)

**Stage:** Launched 2023, 100K+ users.

**Founder:** [Andy McCune](#)

**About:** AI-powered Pinterest alternative for designers, artists, and architects. No likes, no comments, ad-free. STUNNING UI.

**Business Model:** freemium



## Minutiae

[Website](#) | [App Store](#)

**Stage:** Launched in 2016

**Founders:** [Martin Adolfsson](#), [Daniel j wilson](#)

**About:** Anti-social media art project where every day users simultaneously receive a notification to take a picture for 1440 days straight. No profiles, likes, or comments.

**Business Model:** Funded by art grants.



## Hive Social

[Website](#) | [App Store](#)

**Stage:** 1.5 million users as of November 2022

**Founder:** Raluca Pop

**About:** A community-focused social app with a chronological feed, MySpace-like profile customization, and a mix of Twitter & Instagram features. Focused on self-expression, with no ads and minimal algorithms.

**Business Model:** Funding details unclear, likely raised money.




## Applaudable

[Website](#) | [App Store](#)

**Stage:** Launched in 2016, currently testing in Spanish schools with 5000+ investors


**Founders:** [Andrew Christodoulides](#), [Ilan Berker](#)

**About:** An authentic social media platform focused on positivity and meaningful experiences. Instead of likes, users give "applauds". Currently invite-only and designed with the approval of psychologists.


 **Business Model:** Not publicly disclosed.


## Joinable

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Stage:** In beta testing, join waitlist


 **Founders:** [Teg Grenager](#), [Martin Hak](#)

 **About:** A social network designed to help friends engage in real-life activities. It aims to build trusted communities, offering use cases for personal connections or private groups. No ads, no data sharing.

 **Business Model:** For-profit, but not yet monetizing.


## Mozi

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Stage:** Launched at SXSW 2025


 **Founder:** [Ev Williams](#) (Co-founder of Twitter)

 **About:** Mozi is a private social network designed to help users coordinate real-life meetups. It alerts you when friends are in town or when you overlap at events, making it easier to see people in person.


 **Business Model:** Not specified.


## Retro

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Stage:** #1 in Taiwan, launched 2023, raised \$9M in funding


 **Founders:** [Ryan Olson](#) & [Nathan Sharp](#)

 **About:** A weekly photo journal focused on fostering real connections and mindfulness without hijacking your time. Retro strengthens friendships by sharing moments with people who matter.


 **Business Model:** Freemium/subscription model for premium features.

## Hipstamtic

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Stage:** Peaked at 4M users in 2010, recently relaunched as a social network.


 **Founders:** [Lucas Allen Buick](#), [Ryan Dorshorst](#)

 **About:** Vintage-style photo-sharing app with a chronological feed, no ads, no algorithms, and a 99-follow limit (9 for “close friends”). No videos or reels—just authentic photography. Reminds people of old Instagram.


 **Business Model:** Paid filters


## Minus

 [Website](#)

 **Stage:** Founded in 2021


 **Founder:** [Ben Grosser](#)

 **About:** A finite social network where users are given just 100 lifetime posts. Features a reverse chronological feed, no ads, no data sales, no likes, no follows, and vague timestamps to reduce metrics-driven engagement.


 **Business Model:** Commissioned for a art exhibition called [Software for less](#)


## Supernova

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Stage:** Active platform

 **Founder:** [Dominic Omeara](#)

 **About:** A social network and ethical alternative to Instagram, where ad revenue is donated to charities chosen by users. Features 24/7 human moderation to maintain a positive and inclusive environment.


 **Business Model:** Ad-supported, but revenue is directed to charities


## *Innovative Ideas*

### Shelf

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Stage:** Launched September 2024

 **Founder:** [Jad Esber](#)

 **About:** Shelf is a platform for tracking and discovering music, movies, and books. It integrates with services like Spotify, Netflix, and Goodreads to update profiles and encourages social discovery through shared interests.


 **Business Model:** Raised \$7M, focusing on ethical practices and data-conscious features.


### Slowly

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Stage:** 9M downloads, named Best App in 2019, 5M users


 **Founder:** [Kevin Wong Ho-Yin](#)

 **About:** Slowly lets you meet pen pals and write letters at a slower pace, fostering genuine, meaningful connections through thoughtful communication, recreating the classic pen pal experience.

 **Business Model:** Freemium model, stamp store, and ads.

### Lapse

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2021, 1.2M users in October 2023, but on a decline

 **Founders:** [Dan](#) and [Ben](#) Silvertown

💡 **About:** A photo-sharing app that simulates disposable cameras. Photos are captured, hidden, and "developed" hours later, promoting private sharing among close friends rather than public broadcasting.

💰 **Business Model:** Raised \$30M in Series A, no ads or data selling, considering paid features.

## \*\* Ar.ena

🌐 [Website](#) | 📱 [App](#)

📍 **Stage:** 16,788 paying subscribers, around for 13 years

👤 **Founders:** [Charles Broskoski](#), [Daniel Pianetti](#), [Chris Barley](#), and [Chris Sherron](#)

💡 **About:** A creative platform for saving and organizing content, described as "playlists for ideas" or an "Internet memory palace," enabling users to assemble new worlds from old scraps.

💰 **Business Model:** Paid subscriptions in order to access platform.

## 🗺️ Corner

🌐 [Website](#) | 📱 [App](#)

📍 **Stage:** Launched in 2022, in 400+ cities

👤 **Founders:** [Eliza Wu](#), [Jake Xia](#)

💡 **About:** A social mapping app that lets users curate personalized maps of their favorite places, share lists and recommendations with friends, and focus on memorable experiences rather than traditional reviews.

💰 **Business Model:** Partnering with restaurants/places

## <sup>itted</sup> Fitted

🌐 [Website](#) | 📱 [App Store](#)

👤 **Founders:** [Phoenix Do II](#), [Emma Vermylen](#), [Anthony Crinieri](#)

📍 **Stage:** Launched in June 2023; 1,500+ organic downloads, 4.9 rating with 107 reviews

💡 **About:** A mobile app designed for Gen-Z to discover, share, and buy outfits. Fitted connects users with friends for social shopping, allowing them to share their "Outfit of the Day" (OOTD) and shop directly from brands.

💰 **Business Model:** Bootstrapped; future monetization through partnerships with brands and merchants

## 🥧 Pie

🌐 [Website](#) | 📱 [App](#)

📍 **Stage:** Founded in 2020, 130K monthly active users (SF & Chicago only)

👤 **Founder:** [Andy Dunn](#)


💡 **About:** Pie connects people through local group activities, using AI to match users based on shared interests and personality traits to foster real-life friendships and combat social isolation.


 **Business Model:** Raised \$11.5M.


## TimeLeft

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founder:** [Maxime Barbier](#)


 **Stage:** Live in 320+ cities across 65 countries, with 25,000+ people

 **About:** A social dining experience where users book a seat to meet five strangers over dinner, matched by a personality algorithm.


 **Business Model:** Generates revenue through ticket sales, partnerships, and potential merchandise sales.

## Rodeo

 [Website](#)

 **Stage:** Fundraising complete, app releasing soon

 **Founders:** [Sam Levy](#), [Tim MacGougan](#), [Doug Beaver](#) (former Hinge and FB ppl)


 **About:** Rodeo reimagines calendars to help friends plan IRL hangouts by syncing schedules, aiming to enhance real-life connections. It solves the problem of planning social interactions in a digital world, making it easier for friends to get together.


 **Business Model:** Affiliate fees for bookings, ads, and subscription to Rodeo Plus.


## Perfectly Imperfect

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Tyler Bainbridge](#), [Alex Cushing](#)

 **Stage:** 10,000 users, 50,000 newsletter subscribers


 **About:** A "social network for taste," where users share and ask for recommendations, customize profiles, and create lists. It focuses on personal recommendations instead of algorithms, reminiscent of Myspace and Tumblr.


 **Business Model:** Freemium model. Founder invested leftover Meta earnings into the platform.

## Volv

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Shannon Almeida](#), [Priyanka Vazirani](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2020, 5M monthly impressions, 60M stories read.

 **About:** Social news app that condenses news into bite-sized, unbiased stories that take only 9 seconds to read, catering to the new generation looking for quick, bias-free updates.


 **Business Model:** Backed by SnapChat


## Confinity

## [Website](#)

 **Stage:** Launched 20 days ago

 **Founders:** [Ryan Ward](#), [Neeraj Vir](#)

 **About:** A platform focused on preserving personal stories and legacies, connecting generations. Inspired by the founder's experience with loss, Confinity aims to create a digital archive for personal and historical memories, celebrating human achievement and cultural preservation.


 **Business Model:** Gaining traction with recent funding rounds.





## **Noplace**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founder:** [Tiffany Zhong](#)

 **Stage:** Launched mid-2024, #1 on the App Store over the summer

 **About:** A Gen Z-focused social app that channels early 2000s networks like Myspace, emphasizing customization, authenticity, and connections based on shared interests. It uses AI for suggestions and curation, offering summaries of missed content instead of an edited feed.


 **Business Model:** No monetization or ads yet, but likely in the future





## **Rooms**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Jason Toff](#), [Bruno Oliveira](#), Nick Kruge

 **Stage:** Launched in 2023, 40,000 users

 **About:** A platform that allows users to design 3D spaces (rooms) filled with furniture, décor, pets, and avatars. Rooms can be transformed into mini-games, combining elements of social media and gaming for an interactive and creative experience.


 **Business Model:** Venture-backed, \$10M in funding



## **Swell**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Sudha KV](#), [Arish Ali](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2020

 **About:** Audio platform for creating short podcasts ("Swellcasts") and audio group chats, aiming to democratize content creation without ads.


 **Business Model:** Premium tools for creators



## **Tapereal**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founder:** [Ali Shah](#)

 **Stage:** Founded in Canada in 2018

💡 **About:** A video platform focused on authentic content, where creators can upload, engage with their audience, and monetize by selling access to individual videos. No algorithms or ads. Creators set their own prices and keep all earnings.

💰 **Business Model:** Currently raising funds through Equivesto.

## Goodwall

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Omar Bawa](#), [Taha Bawa](#)

 **Stage:** 2 million users in 150+ countries


💡 **About:** A skills-based social media and community app designed for young people to level up their skills, connect with others, and access opportunities like jobs and scholarships.

💰 **Business Model:** Not publicly available, but has raised over \$16 million in funding.

## Yope

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Bahram Ismailau](#), [Paul Rudkouski](#)

 **Stage:** 800,000 daily active users, 2.2 million monthly active users

💡 **About:** A photo-sharing app that emphasizes privacy, allowing users to create friends-only profiles and secret albums visible only to invited members.

💰 **Business Model:** Venture capital funding right now, \$5 million in seed funding

## Zeemee

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Vanessa Roth Didyk](#), [Adam Metcalf](#)

 **Stage:** Over 1 million users across 2,400+ U.S. colleges and universities, raised \$17.8 million, 27 employees


💡 **About:** A social media app tailored for students, helping them connect with peers, find roommates, and learn about campus life through video and text interactions.

💰 **Business Model:** Partners with colleges and brands, with plans to offer career services and alumni networking.

## Swarm

 [Website](#) |  [App Link](#)

 **Founders:** [Dennis Crowley](#)

 **Stage:** Introduced in 2014, peaked at 60 million users, now seems to be replacing Foursquare

💡 **About:** A social networking app that lets users check in at various locations, share their whereabouts with friends, and track their visit history.


💰 **Business Model:** Foursquare had been successful with heavy funding, but they sell data.

## **Imgurr**

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Alan Schaaf](#) (until 2022)

 **Stage:** Founded in 2009, acquired by Media Lab AI in 2021, had 300 million users at its peak


 **About:** A free, anonymous image hosting website where users can upload, share, and browse images, primarily for use on Reddit and other platforms. Known as "the best example yet of how a new generation of Internet users prefers to express itself."


 **Business Model:** Ad-supported


## **Zapshot**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founder:** [Taikou Yamada](#), **VP:** [Justin Andrew Liao](#)

 **Stage:** Released in 2022, tested at UCLA campus in 2023 by PH7 Ltd

 **About:** Zapshot is a social media app designed for voice communication, offering real-time voice messaging, open chat rooms, and the ability to share moments using both front and rear cameras. The app includes "ZapVoice," an AI-generated voice feature that mimics the user's own voice for text messages.


 **Business Model:** No funding rounds yet, unclear business model

## **Clubhouse**

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Paul Davison](#), [Rohan Seth](#)

 **Stage:** 10 million active users during the pandemic, has decreased since then

 **About:** Clubhouse is a social media app that allows users to join audio chat rooms to engage in conversations. It's been described as a blend of a podcast, conference call, and Houseparty.


 **Business Model:** Tipping, ticketed events, and subscriptions

## **Tenten**

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Jule Comar](#), [Antoine Bache](#)

 **Stage:** Over 20 million users

 **About:** TenTen is a social media service that turns your phone into a walkie-talkie, allowing users to send live audio messages to friends even when their phones are locked. Vert Popular in French Schools

 **Business Model:** Not available yet

## **Airchat**

 Website: N/A |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Brian Norgard](#), [Naval Ravikant](#)

- 📌 **Stage:** Relaunched in 2024 with 45,000 downloads, though its current status is unclear
- 💡 **About:** Air Chat is a voice-driven social media app where users speak into the app instead of typing posts. Followers hear the voice alongside an AI-generated transcript while scrolling through their feed.
- 💰 **Business Model:** Investments from Sam Altman and other Silicon Valley figures

### Ping

[Website](#) | [App Link](#)

- 📌 **Stage:** Launched in 2020, very early stages, limited visuals
- 💡 **About:** A social media app designed to connect people who pass each other in public spaces. It allows users to "ping" others within a half-block radius to connect and get information about them, including potential business or personal connections. The app aims to prevent missed opportunities but raises concerns about privacy and safety.

### Agora Citizen Network

[Website](#)

**Founders:** [Yuting Jiang](#), [Nicolas Gimenez](#), George Charnley

📌 **Stage:** MVP in beta

💡 **About:** A citizen network built for civic dialogue—where people debate ideas and turn differences into progress, not conflict. Open source

💰 **Business Model:** EU-funded via Horizon Europe's NGI TRUSTCHAIN & SARGASSO programs

## *Inclusive Social Platforms*

### Spoony

[Website](#) | [App](#)

**Founders:** [Nicholas Carlton](#), [Kenneth Liang](#)

📌 **Stage:** 22,000 users, raised \$1M

💡 **About:** A social app designed as a safe space for neurodivergent, chronically ill, and disabled people to connect, using "spoons" to signal openness to conversation.

💰 **Business Model:** Not specified

### Lex

[Website](#) | [App](#)

**Founders:** [Jennifer Rhiannon Lewis](#) but acquired by Developer "9 count inc" [Alex Hofmann](#) and [Joe Viola](#)

📌 **Stage:** 1M+ users, raised a ton of money

💡 **About:** A social media platform for LGBTQ+ individuals, originally a dating app, now focused on social networking. Features include queer trivia groups, meetups, and casual


hangouts. Acquired by 9 Count Inc., sparking backlash over its shift and concerns about data privacy.


💰 **Business Model:** Premium features, advertising for queer-owned businesses

### **Diem**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Emma Bates](#), [Divia Singh](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2024, 40% growth, more than 40k users


 **About:** A social search engine designed for women and non-binary people to ask questions and get AI and community-driven answers in a supportive, bias-free space. Aims to fight data bias and create a more inclusive search experience.


💰 **Business Model:** Planning a monetization feature, raised 3.7 mil

### **Sunroom**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Lucy Mort](#), [Michelle Battersby](#)

 **Stage:** Over 20,000 creators, raised \$10M


 **About:** A subscription-based platform for women and non-binary creators to connect with their audiences and monetize content. It combines aspects of OnlyFans with Instagram-style interactions, aiming to offer a safer, more ethical alternative.


💰 **Business Model:** Venture-backed, takes a cut of creator earnings.

### **Communia**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Olivia DeRamus](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2020, 100,000 downloads


 **About:** a globally-facing social network that uses trusted wellness tools and safety innovations to transform social media into the missing wellness tool for women


💰 **Business Model:** raising money from Venture capital

### **Collective**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Callum Smith](#)

 **Stage:** 75,000 + users


 **About:** social network for lgbtq+ people to make friends and go on dates

💰 **Business Model:** n/a

### **Peanut app**

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** [Michelle Kennedy](#)

 **Stage:** Founded in 2017, over 5 million users


💡 **About:** Peanut is a social network designed to help women find friendship and support throughout various stages of motherhood. It offers a community for sharing information and advice on fertility, pregnancy, motherhood, and menopause.

💰 **Business Model:** Raised \$23 million; freemium model with micro-payments

## *For Kids*

### **Zigazoo**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founder:** [Zak Ringelstein](#)

 **Stage:** Millions of users, approved by Common Sense


💡 **About:** A kid-friendly social media platform focused on providing a safe, positive environment for short-form video creation and sharing. Human moderation, verified users, no text messaging, and a "positive-only" algorithm.

💰 **Business Model:** Raised \$17M, monetizes through virtual goods (Zigabucks) and ads.

### **Coverstar**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Ryan So](#), [Peter Moser](#)

 **Stage:** Raised \$2M in latest funding round

💡 **About:** A TikTok-style app for kids and tweens featuring short video challenges, music, and creativity in a fully moderated environment with no private messaging.


💰 **Business Model:** Freemium subscription, in-app purchases.

## *Niche Platforms*

### **Strava**

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Michael Horvath](#), [Mark Gainey](#)

 **Stage:** Over 100 million users


💡 **About:** Strava is a fitness tracking app tailored for athletes, focusing on running, cycling, and various activities. It allows users to log their activities, share progress, and connect with a fitness community. The app lets users control activity sharing and who can view their data. However, Strava has been controversial for tracking the precise locations of users, which has led to concerns about safety.


💰 **Business Model:** Collects and sells data (maps); includes ads and a premium subscription model


### **Letterboxd**

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Matthew Buchanan](#), [Karl von Randow](#)


 **Stage:** 17 million users, started in 2011


 **About:** Letterboxd is a social network for movie enthusiasts to track, rate, and review films. It allows users to share their movie-watching experiences, discover new films, and engage with a community of fellow film lovers.


 **Business Model:** Venture capital; ads and a premium subscription model


## Goodreads

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Otis Chandler](#)

 **Stage:** Over 150 million users

 **About:** A social platform for book lovers to track their reading, share reviews, and connect with others through personalized recommendations.


 **Business Model:** Revenue from ads, data collection, and affiliate links. Owned by Amazon.


## Beli

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Judy Thelen](#), [Eliot Frost](#)

 **Stage:** ~600K–1.2M users


 **About:** A social app for discovering, rating, and sharing restaurants based on personal and friends' experiences. Very popular among young people.


 **Business Model:** Restaurant advertising and personalized data-driven recommendations.


## Co-Star

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** [Banu Guler](#)

 **Stage:** 30M users


 **About:** Astrology app using AI + NASA data to create personalized birth chart readings and compare with friends. Recently launched a [GPT-3](#) powered horoscope chatbot. Popular among women ages 18-30


 **Business Model:** Freemium + raised \$21M


## Bow Shock

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** [Alexander Pinkin](#)

 **Stage:** 2,000 users, pre-seed

 **About:** Social app for skateboarders to share videos, connect, and shop skate gear.


 **Business Model:** Early-stage (pre-seed)


## Glass

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Tom Watson](#), [Stefan Borsje](#), [Joao Dordio](#)

 **Stage:** Launched August 2021


 **About:** Ad-free, algorithm-free photo-sharing platform built for photographers to connect and share their work.


 **Business Model:** Subscription only — \$5/month or \$30/year, no ads or investors


 **Oku**

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** [Yavor Punchev](#), Joe Alcorn, Aziz Firat

 **Stage:** Founded in 2022

 **About:** A modern, minimalist, ethical alternative to Goodreads — track, rate, and share books with friends. Allows you to import from Goodreads. Doesn't take data.


 **Business Model:** Member-supported with paid features; no ads, profit comes from user satisfaction.


 **Fable**

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Padmasree Warrior](#)

 **Stage:** Launched April 2021, 1.5 million users


 **About:** A social reading app where users can join book clubs, track reading, and engage with stories through interactive features.


 **Business Model:** Raised \$20M in Series A (Tiger Global, Redpoint, etc.); likely monetizes through premium features and curated content experiences.


 **Tome**

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** [Nick Confrey](#) (also founded Seam)

 **Stage:** Founded in 2024, hit #1 book app in the App Store last month


 **About:** A fantasy book lover's hub to share memes, fan art, and recommendations—all community-driven.


 **Business Model:** Venture-backed; monetizes through a marketplace of user-generated content, not ads.


 **Wattpad**

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Allen Lau](#), [Ivan Yuen](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2006, now has over 90 million users worldwide


 **About:** A global storytelling platform where users can read and write original stories, spanning genres like romance, sci-fi, fanfiction, and more.


 **Business Model:** Freemium with ads, in-app purchases, and premium memberships; also monetizes via Wattpad Books and TV/film adaptations.


## Criticker

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** Juergen Horn, [Mike Powell](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2005


 **About:** A film and TV recommendation site that uses its "Taste Compatibility Index" to predict how much you'll like a movie based on ratings from like-minded users.


 **Business Model:** Free to use with optional paid tiers for perks like filtering tools, detailed stats, and no ads.

## Stack Overflow

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** [Joel Spolsky](#), Jeff Atwood, CEO: [Prashanth Chandrasekar](#)


 **Stage:** Launched in 2008, one of the largest communities for developers.


 **About:** A Q&A site for programming and software development.


 **Business Model:** Revenue from job listings, ads, and Stack Overflow for Teams.

## Serializd

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** Humad Syed (developer)

 **Stage:** 10k+ daily active users

 **About:** A platform for tracking and managing TV shows across channels, platforms, and streaming services.


 **Business Model:** N/A


## Rate.house

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** N/A

 **Stage:** N/A

 **About:** A comprehensive media database allowing users to rate, catalog, and discuss music, movies, TV, literature, games, and podcasts in one place.


 **Business Model:** Supported by users, no ads. Freemium-esque model.


## Backloggd

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Developers Medium Account](#)

 **Stage:** 350K registered users


 **About:** A platform for gamers to track and rate their personal video game collection, discover new games, and build a backlog.


 **Business Model:** User-supported, no ads. Developer recently received enough funding to work on it full time.


## Kitsu

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Josh Fabian](#) (no longer runs it)


 **Stage:** 600,000+ users, 736.5k visits


 **About:** A social platform for sharing anime and manga experiences, getting recommendations, and seeing what friends are watching or reading.


 **Business Model:** raised 600k at one point. Now it just exists.


## The Pattern

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** [Lisa Donovan](#)

 **Stage:** 3.5 million users


 **About:** Astrology-based app offering personalized insights and fostering connections based on users' birth charts.


 **Business Model:** In-app purchases, including subscriptions like "Go Deeper+" for additional content and features, and potentially through in-app advertising.


## Outside Inc

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** [Robin Thurston](#)

 **Stage:** 100 million users (allegedly); 1 million Outside+ members; launched social platform in 2024

 **About:** Combines activity tracking, curated content, and social networking, enabling users to connect with friends, brands, and outdoor enthusiasts. Syncs data from devices like Garmin and apps like Trailforks and Gaia GPS.


 **Business Model:** Ad-supported; raised significant funds; shares data with advertisers (some user data may be shared with marketing partners for digital advertising purposes).

## Ravelry

 [Website](#)

 **Founders:** [Cassidy](#) and Jessica Forbes


 **Stage:** Launched in 2007, now 9 million users


 **About:** A platform for knitters, crocheters, spinners, and weavers, offering tools to track projects, manage yarn stashes, and access a vast pattern database.


 **Business Model:** Ad-supported, facilitates pattern sales, and sells merchandise.


## Dribbble

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Dan Cederholm](#)(no longer there) & [Rich Thornett](#) (no longer there),  
Current CEO: [Constantine Anastasakis](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2010, now over 1 million users


 **About:** A platform for creative professionals to showcase their work, find inspiration, and connect with other designers and clients.


 **Business Model:** Premium memberships, job boards, and talent search services; acquired by Adobe in 2019.


## Wellbee Social

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** Karina Budhrani

 **Stage:** Launched in 2024


 **About:** A social marketplace for holistic wellness lovers, offering blogs, community discussions, networking, and events centered on natural and ancient healing practices.


 **Business Model:** Not publicly detailed; currently community-focused with future plans for app expansion.


## Petzbe

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** [Andrea Nerep](#)

 **Stage:** 800,000 users

 **About:** A social media platform designed exclusively for pets, allowing animals to have their own profiles and interact in a safe, pet-centered online environment.


 **Business Model:** Monetized through in-app features, premium subscriptions, and crowdfunding initiatives.


## Superfan

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** [Will Matz](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2022; currently has 300,000+ users and is part of an accelerator program


 **About:** A social music app that tracks your weekly listening habits and shares them with friends. Users can join different groups to see what others are listening to—creating a fun, communal music experience.

 **Business Model:** Freemium (likely); core features are free, with potential premium upgrades.

## CARA

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** [Jingna Zhang](#)


 **Stage:** Launched recently; 1M+ users

💡 **About:** A social and portfolio platform for artists, built to protect against AI-generated content. CARA offers networking tools, portfolio features, and community engagement—designed to support authentic creative work and job discovery.

💰 **Business Model:** Self-funded and donation-based; intentionally avoids venture capital.

## ArtStation

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** Leonard Teo and Kevin Strike


 **Stage:** Founded in 2014; acquired by Epic Games in 2021 (both founders later departed)


💡 **About:** A robust platform for artists to showcase portfolios, find creative work, and connect with peers across industries like gaming, film, and illustration. Facing criticism because they are using artist work to train AI models.

💰 **Business Model:** Monetizes through base and hosting fees, as well as affiliate commissions.

## Permies

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Paul Wheaton](#) (software engineer and longtime forum builder)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2005; maintained by ~100 volunteers


💡 **About:** A vibrant online forum and community for people passionate about permaculture, homesteading, sustainable living, and rural life.

💰 **Business Model:** Privately funded by the founder; runs in the red. Supported by community contributions—users can buy “PIE,” sell on the digital market, advertise, or donate to help sustain the platform.

## Days at Dunrovin

 [Website](#)

 **Owners:** [SuzAnne](#) and Sterling Miller

 **Stage:** Over 700 global members, subscription-based

💡 **About:** A unique guest ranch experience hosted by wildlife biologist Sterling and biometrician SuzAnne Miller. Subscribers enjoy live streams and updates about the ranch, wildlife, and activities in the area.

💰 **Business Model:** Subscription-based at \$8 per month

## Bloom Network

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Magenta Light](#)

 **Stage:** Live with 35 hubs in 14 countries


💡 **About:** A cyber-physical social network and peer-to-peer incubator empowering local climate action through real-world relationships and decentralized collaboration.


💰 **Business Model:** Community-owned cooperative funded by grants and revenue shared with grassroots initiatives

## *Still in Concept Stage*

### **New Public**

 [Website](#) |  [Beta Link](#)

 **Founder:** [Eli Pariser](#)

 **Stage:** Research-based organization with a recently launched beta testing phase


💡 **About:** New Public is focused on creating better, healthier digital public spaces. They aim to help local communities across the U.S. develop thriving digital spaces and work on prototypes for public service media organizations to enhance digital conversation.

💰 **Business Model/Funding:** Funded by many different [foundations](#).

### **Be to Belong**

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Courtney Heatherington](#)

 **Stage:** Currently in the idea phase, piloted on Berkeley campus; still in development with a pitch deck and investor discussions ongoing

💡 **About:** Be to Belong is designed to be a healthy social media platform that helps college students find a sense of belonging. It aims to connect students in smaller groups to discuss personal growth, well-being, and topics that foster community.

💰 **Business Model/Funding:** Currently seeking investors to bring the app to life

### **ReNews Media**

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Bennet Harvey](#)

 **Stage:** App developed but not yet public

💡 **About:** ReNews Media lets users own and control their identity and news feed, free from algorithmic manipulation. It shows signals on political and corporate influence, helping users make informed decisions.

💰 **Business Model/Funding:** Donations and crowdfunding


## *Innovative Dating Apps*

### **InPress**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Adam Harder](#) (CEO), [Alex Long](#) (CTO)

 **Stage:** Launched in DC (2024), expanding in NYC

 **About:** A social matching app using AI to connect users based on subconscious interests revealed through interaction with curated, factual journalism. Aims to foster informed connections for friendships or relationships.


 **Business Model:** Not disclosed

## **Left Field**

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Samantha Martin](#), [Kate Sieler](#), [Sean Miller](#)

 **Stage:** Currently accepting applications

 **About:** A location-based dating app that connects users with high-compatibility matches nearby, promoting face-to-face interactions at local spots.


 **Business Model:** Unknown

## **Cerca**

 [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Myles Slayton](#), [Carter Rocket-Munk](#), [Thatcher Shultz](#)

 **Stage:** Launched, app-based

 **About:** A dating app that connects users through mutual connections, requiring over 100 first or second-hand mutuals to join. Syncs contacts to find matches within your social circle.

 **Business Model:** Freemium (limited swipes)

## *Bigger Tech*


### **Lemon8**

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** Created by former TikTok employees; fully owned by ByteDance

 **Stage:** Launched in 2020; 12.8 million users

 **About:** A lifestyle content platform blending Pinterest and Instagram, focused on aesthetic inspiration across fashion, beauty, travel, food, and wellness.

 **Business Model:** Owned by ByteDance; monetized through ads and likely data-driven personalization.

### **Whee**

 [Website](#) |  [App Link](#)

 **Founders:** Developed by TikTok

 **Stage:** Launched as a private photo-sharing app

💡 **About:** A private photo-sharing app emphasizing authenticity and spontaneity, allowing users to share real-life moments with close friends, similar to BeReal but with the addition of filters.

💰 **Business Model:** Likely ad-based



## BeReal

🌐 [Website](#) | 📱 [App Store](#)

👤 **Founders:** [Alexis Barreyat](#)

📍 **Stage:** Launched in 2020, peaked at 73.2M users (Aug 2022), ~23M active now; acquired by Voodoo in 2024

💡 **About:** A Gen Z–popular social app that prompts users once daily to share a simultaneous front/back camera photo within 2 minutes—aiming for raw, unfiltered moments.

💰 **Business Model:** Venture-backed; no in-app ads



## Tumblr

🌐 [Website](#) | 📱 [App Store](#)

👤 **Founders:** David Karp (no longer involved); currently owned by [Automattic](#), led by CEO [Matt Mullenweg](#)

📍 **Stage:** Founded in 2007; acquired by Yahoo (then Verizon); then Automattic in 2019

💡 **About:** A customizable microblogging platform for creating blogs, following others, and engaging with diverse content across fandoms, art, and social topics. Automattic aims to make Tumblr open-source and [integrate it into the fediverse](#), though the move has sparked [controversy](#) and legal pushback from WordPress and WP Engine.

💰 **Business Model:** Advertising



## Pinterest

🌐 [Website](#) | 📱 [App Store](#)

👤 **Founders:** [Ben Silbermann](#), [Evan Sharp](#), [Paul Sciarr](#)

📍 **Stage:** 553M monthly users; publicly traded

💡 **About:** Pinterest helps users discover and organize ideas via images and videos across categories like recipes, fashion, and home decor. It recently partnered with Amazon for shoppable content.

💰 **Business Model:** Targeted ads, with a growing focus on e-commerce.



## VSCO

🌐 [Website](#) | 📱 [App Store](#)

👤 **Founders:** [Joel Flory](#), [Greg Lutze](#), CEO - [Eric Wittman](#)

📍 **Stage:** 200M users

💡 **About:** VSCO is a platform for photographers and content creators to edit photos and videos using preset filters and advanced tools, focusing on creativity and visual storytelling.

💰 **Business Model:** Freemium model.

## Snapchat

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founder:** [Evan Spiegel](#)

 **Stage:** Publicly traded, 414M daily active users, IPO in 2017


💡 **About:** Snapchat is a social media app that lets users share photos and videos with friends and family, offering various interactive features like AR lenses and geofilters.

💰 **Business Model:** Revenue from advertising (Snap Ads, Sponsored Lenses, Geofilters) and sales of Spectacles, AR glasses.

## Slingshot

 [Website](#) |  [App Store](#)

 **Founders:** [Tommy Searle](#), [Sakun A.](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2021, acquired by Snapchat in 2023

💡 **About:** An app for quickly capturing and sharing images by dragging and releasing on the screen, with shared images appearing as temporary "bubbles."

💰 **Business Model:** Not specified (acquired by Snapchat).

## Discord

 [Website](#) |  [App Link](#)

 **Founders:** [Jason Citron](#), [Stanislav Vishnevskiy](#)

 **Stage:** 150 million monthly users, launched in 2015

💡 **About:** A communication and social networking app primarily used for voice, video, and text messaging, originally designed for gamers. Discord enables users to connect with others in various communities, sharing content and discussions.

💰 **Business Model:** Premium subscription model, with the addition of "Video Quests" in 2024, offering rewards for engaging with video ads as a potential revenue stream for future IPO plans.

## Xiaohongshu / Rednote

 [Website](#) |  [App Link](#)

 **Founders:** [Miranda Qu](#), Charlwin Mao

 **Stage:** 300 million monthly users and growing, users soared in Jan 2025 after Tik Tok Scandal

💡 **About:** Initially launched as a platform for Chinese shoppers to share product reviews, Xiaohongshu has transformed into a popular social media and e-commerce

platform. Users share content on fashion, beauty, travel, and lifestyle, creating a vibrant, community-driven environment.

💰 **Business Model:** Targeted advertising

## Nextdoor

 [Website](#) |  [App Link](#)

 **Founders:** [Nirav Tolia](#), [Sarah Leary](#), [Prakash Janakiraman](#), [David Wiesen](#)

 **Stage:** 88 million users

 **About:** A hyperlocal social networking service focused on connecting neighbors, offering a localized Facebook-like feed for community interaction and updates.

💰 **Business Model:** Targeted advertising using user data

## Misc.

### Holy Spear

 [Website](#)

 **About:** A private Christian community for spiritual warriors, described as "hunter-gatherers being led by the Holy Spirit for our Lord Jesus Christ."


💰 **Business model:** \$1 a month membership

### My Praize

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Joshua Holmes](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2005, over 1 million members

 **About:** A private, ad-free social network combining features from platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, focusing on Christian values.


💰 **Business Model:** Free membership, with an emphasis on privacy and data protection.

### Not the Bee

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founders:** [Dan Dillon](#) & [Seth Dillon](#)

 **Stage:** Launched in 2022, LLC established in 2016 (related to The Babylon Bee)

 **About:** A satirical news platform that shares absurd, often real headlines, blending humor with current events. It features news, opinion pieces, memes, and social networking where users can post and interact with others. Not great [press](#).

💰 **Business Model:** Ad revenue, with a focus on humor-based content and community interaction.

### Sqabblr

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** [Jayclees](#)

💡 **About:** A platform blending the best parts of Twitter and Reddit, focusing on free expression without the baggage. However, it gained controversy for being associated with extreme free speech but faced criticism for becoming a "toxic" environment.

## Gab Social

 [Website](#)

 **Founder:** Andrew Torba


 **Stage:** Launched in 2016, 100,000 active users, 5 million registered users

💡 **About:** A decentralized, free-speech-focused platform that aims to be an alternative to social networks with stricter moderation. Known for its lenient content policies, it has attracted far-right groups, including white supremacists and conspiracy theorists. Gab operates its own AI model, payment processor, and self-hosted infrastructure. It has been de-platformed from app stores due to content moderation issues.

💰 **Business Model:** Gab Pro (premium subscription)

## Truth Social

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)


 **Founder:** Trump Media and Tech Group (TMTG), CEO Devin Nunes (current chair of the Intelligence Advisory Board for the US). Helped by Andy Litinsky


 **Stage:** Launched in 2022

💡 **About:** A social media platform aimed at providing a censorship-free experience, allowing users to express opinions without fear of deplatforming. Based on Mastodon.

## Parler

 [Website](#) |  [App](#)

 **Founder:** Initially created by John Matze and Jared Thomson; later acquired by Kanye West in 2023.

 **Stage:** Launched in 2018, banned in 2021, returned in 2021, re-acquired in 2023, and now back online.

💡 **About:** A free speech platform with minimal content moderation, originally launched in 2018. It was banned in 2021 after the Capitol riot, later returned and has undergone multiple acquisitions. Known for its political and controversial user base.