

BREAKING BUSINESS

What To Know About Bluesky—The Buzzy Social Media App Siphoning Users From Elon Musk’s X

By **Conor Murray**, Forbes Staff. Murray is a Forbes news reporter...

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TOPLINE

Bluesky, a text-based social media platform that is functionally similar to (and even shares the same co-founder as) X, formerly known as Twitter, is spiking in usership as X users flee the Elon Musk-owned platform after former President Donald Trump won the election and recruited Musk to lead a government efficiency department.



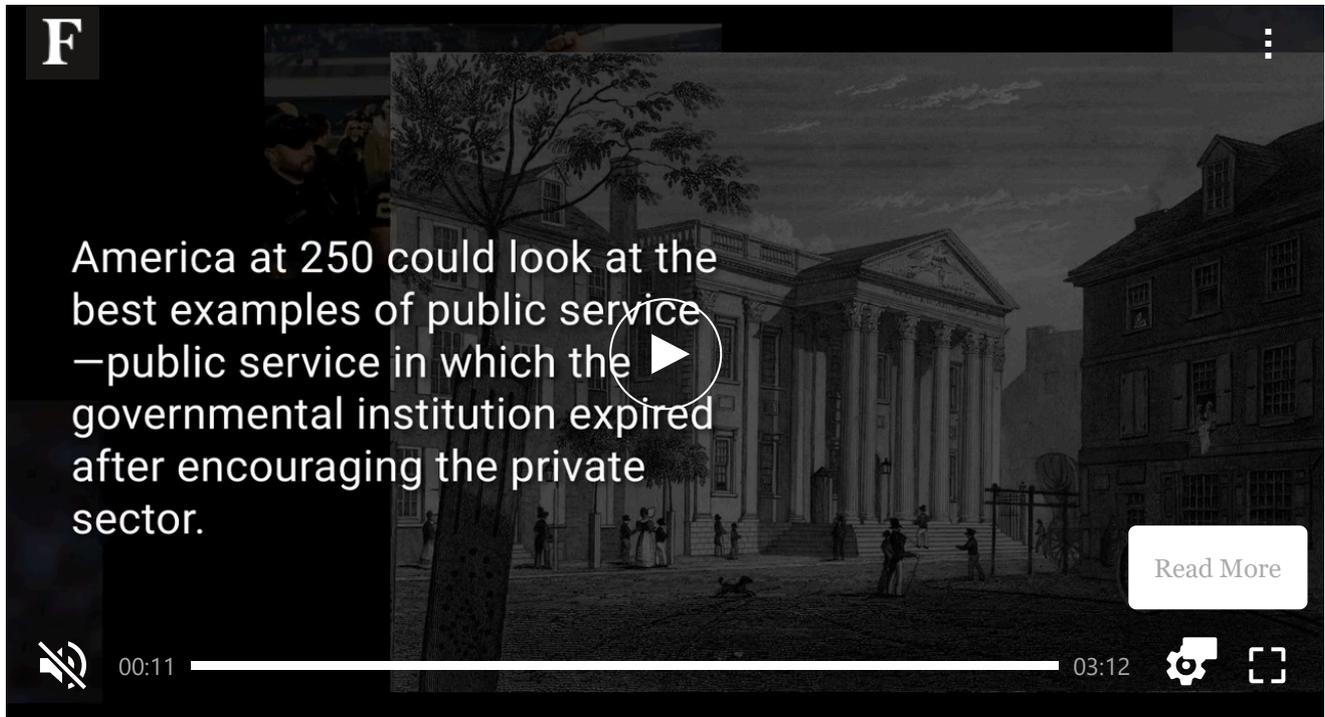
Bluesky surged in membership this week. (Photo Illustration by Mario Tama/Getty Images)
GETTY IMAGES

KEY FACTS

- Bluesky was conceived of as a research project to “decentralize” Twitter by its then-CEO and co-founder Jack Dorsey in 2019, eventually launching as its own

company in 2021 and opening to the public in a beta stage in 2023.

- Bluesky now operates as a “**decentralized**” social media platform, which means users can create their own servers on which they can store data and set their own rules, instead of using servers owned by the company.
- Many of the functions on Bluesky are similar to those on X, including the ability to make text-based posts with a 256-character limit (known as “skeets”) that can also include images and videos, re-post and like other posts and reply to other users.
- Users can follow other individuals to curate their own timeline and send users direct messages, much like on X.
- Bluesky users can also block one another, an attractive feature for users who have criticized Musk’s changes to the X **block feature**, which now makes an X user’s post visible to all others, including those they have blocked.
- Bluesky has a moderation team to enforce **community guidelines**—which forbid promoting “hate or extremist conduct,” a **common criticism** of X under Musk—and lets users use a collaborative moderation tool called **Ozone** to moderate communities on the platform.



NEWS PEG

Bluesky has added more than 1.5 million new users over the past week, company spokesperson Emily Liu told Forbes. The influx of Bluesky signups has coincided with Trump’s victory, as Musk, an increasingly vocal right-wing figure, has emerged as a key Trump ally. Trump announced Musk would co-lead the new [Department of Government Efficiency](#) alongside [Vivek Ramaswamy](#).

HOW DOES BLUESKY’S USERSHIP COMPARE TO X?

Though Bluesky usership is spiking, it still lags far behind X. Liu told Forbes Bluesky has about 14.5 million total users, while [X said](#) in March about 250 million people use the social platform every day.

WHAT NOTABLE USERS HAVE MIGRATED TO BLUESKY?

The Guardian news organization announced its dozens of X accounts, across which it has about 27 million followers, would cease operation. “We think that the benefits of being on X are now outweighed by the negatives,” the organization said in a [column](#), stating the platform promotes “far-right conspiracy theories and racism.” Celebrities with large followings this week, including journalist Don Lemon and actress Jamie Lee Curtis, [announced](#) they would leave X. Other [celebrities](#) left after Musk took over the platform in 2022, including Elton John, Whoopi Goldberg, Gigi Hadid and Shonda Rhimes.

SURPRISING FACT

Dorsey has distanced himself from Bluesky, confirming in May that he had left the company's board, months after he deleted his personal Bluesky account. Dorsey instead [praised X](#) as “freedom technology,” seemingly urging users to stay on the platform. “We sincerely thank Jack for his help funding and initiating the Bluesky project. Today, Bluesky is thriving as an open source social network running on atproto, the decentralized protocol we have built,” the official Bluesky account posted. Dorsey's comments were a shift from last year, when he [openly criticized Musk](#), stating he hadn't “acted right” and the platform went “south” after he took over.

CRUCIAL QUOTE

“Our online experience doesn't have to depend on billionaires unilaterally making decisions over what we see. On an open social network like Bluesky, you can shape your experience for yourself,” [Bluesky says](#) on its website—a possible dig at Musk's ownership of X.

KEY BACKGROUND

Bluesky's usership first spiked last year when the app opened a beta version to select users who obtained an invitation code. Many of the users who migrated to the platform had been frustrated with Musk's [various changes](#) to X, including his renaming and rebranding of the platform, controversial overhaul of the verification process and his loosening of moderation guidelines—which critics say has allowed misinformation and hate speech to proliferate.

FORBES VALUATION

We estimate Musk's net worth [at \\$300.9 billion](#), making him the wealthiest person in the world. Dorsey ranks No. 669 on the [Real-Time Billionaires List](#), with an estimated [\\$5 billion net worth](#). [Ramaswamy](#) just cracks the ranks of the world's billionaires, having an estimated net worth of around \$1 billion.

FURTHER READING

[Prominent X Accounts—including The Guardian And Don Lemon—Are Leaving Elon Musk's Site. Here's Why.](#) (Forbes)

Jack Dorsey quits Bluesky board and urges users to stay on Elon Musk’s X (The Guardian)

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