



A Snapshot of the #TwitterMigration

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Executive Summary



"There is a mass exodus underway from Twitter and Facebook.... Zuckerberg got worried about losing users and decided we were all going to live as legless low-polygon cartoons in a metaverse that no one wanted... Twitter got bought out by a low-attention-span, overconfident billionaire...Once things got just a little worse, advertisers and users started to quit, and the long-delayed [MySpacing](#) of Facebook and [Beboizing](#) of Twitter began."

- [Cory Doctorow](#),
Nov 15, 2022

What has been widely known as the current [#TwitterMigration](#) has been occurring in certain ways for some time - but this developing exodus has dramatically intensified in the weeks after Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter.



In this report, we track, with the most quantifiable data we can, the contours,



scope, and direction of the migration as it is at its beginning.. [Some users are fully leaving](#) the platform, and many are not going that far yet, but creating new, alternative accounts, hedging their bets in case Twitter descends further into chaos, goes out of business, or crashes and doesn't return.

In this analysis, we explain our most recent results on these early

waves of users opening and promoting other accounts on other platforms. We show you the first patterns that we see on each alternative platform.

Although it is early in this process, and the trends we see now may change, this is a live picture of the initial migratory patterns as of today.

Some top findings:

- Twitter itself has seen [a jolt of users deactivating accounts at a dramatic and new rate.](#)
- [Mastodon](#) moved up to 7.8+ million accounts created (growing 2.2 million new users since the Musk takeover) and up to today's **2.6 million monthly active monthly users** (growing by more than 2 million new users in the last weeks). They are now steadily growing by approximately **1.5 million new users per month.**
- Our scans showed that since the Musk takeover, Mastodon account names have been **added to the Twitter bios of 90K+ users** and directly

mentioned by **197K+ users** in the last 30 days. This is by far the most of any of the emerging social platforms.

- **[Tumblr](#) saw a 29% increase in users promoting these alternative social accounts during this time.** Discord saw a **17% increase** and was second only to Instagram in the number of users, including their account in their Twitter bio.
- The new service, **[Post](#)** claims to have **[350K+ members in a line awaiting access](#) and [67K who have created accounts](#)**. Due to the app's name being an extremely heavily used word, we used the URL [Post.news](#) to search for additions to users' bios. We found fewer users had added Post to their bios as an alternative to Twitter. This may be an artifact of **the limited number of users onboarded thus far** compared to those still on the waiting list.

But the social activity generally shows intense interest in Post - especially in journalism- and deserves special attention going forward.

- New social platforms [Hive](#), [CoHost](#), [Tribel](#), and [CounterSocial](#) are still all in their infancy. Each has seen some substantial quick surges or declines in app downloads and [significant outages](#). Overall though, we have seen fewer social mentions for each of them.. We haven't seen any of them reach large-scale adoption indicators from the Twitter activity we've tracked.
- Data from two different mobile app store data suppliers **reveal dramatic increases in new downloads for both the Mastodon and Tumblr mobile applications** but only a minor increase in Twitter app downloads.

Lastly:

- **We see the overall speed of this #TwitterMigration as consistent, with no indications of slowing**, even as people experiment with various other platforms as possible offramps from Twitter.

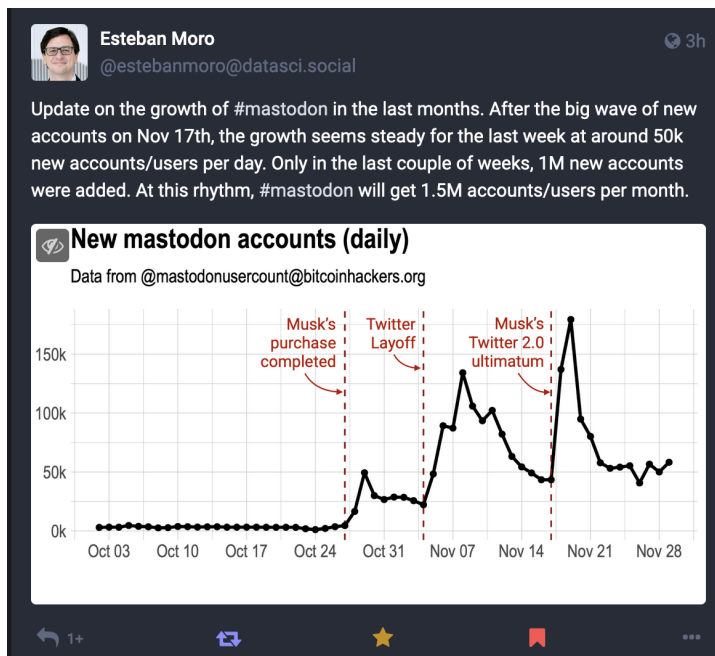
Background on the #TwitterMigration

In some ways, the #TwitterMigration - which has been unmissable in the last eight weeks - has been occurring for years in the form of “quiet quitting” of Twitter power users. Twitter executives have been well aware of this. [Internal Twitter documents surfaced](#) that showed that “the number of ‘heavy tweeters,’ which Twitter defines as someone who uses the platform six or seven days a week and tweets at least three times a week, **has been in**

‘absolute decline’ since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to an internal report viewed by Reuters...”

Importantly, “Heavy tweeters’ are reportedly **responsible for 90% of tweets and half of the company’s revenue, despite making up less than 10% of all monthly users.**”

This “absolute decline” pattern with Twitter users accelerated with Elon Musk successfully acquiring Twitter and at numerous dramatic points in his first weeks as CEO.



This is clearly seen when one looks at the spike in new users creating accounts on competing social platforms, such as this from the open-source social network Mastodon.

We also have some specific numbers of new users from a few other social platforms: **The Post social network has added 65K new users** but also has a waiting list of over 350K+ users in line to join. Those seem to be added in thousands per day.

Other alternative social platforms, such as **Tumblr, have described “a huge wave of new users”** since the Musk takeover and that [“iOS downloads of the Tumblr app were up 62 percent the week after Musk took control of Twitter.”](#)

Before we look at our original research on the #TwitterMigration beyond these statements, we wanted to briefly introduce each of these players that may be unfamiliar to many.

Listing the New Players on the #TwitterMigration

Here is a brief description of some of the platforms most seen as potential “Twitter alternatives,” all of which we analyze in this report, some emerging after years of development, some brand new.

- **Mastodon** - launched about six years ago, this is a decentralized and open social network led by a non-profit. It has many of the same features as Twitter but uses a decentralized system of moderators and has no ads, no algorithms, and almost no data collection of users. With much promise, this also has some issues, primarily that of a complex onboarding of new users.
- **Post**
The Post is a public beta of a Twitter-like service, funded by VCs and led by Noam Berdin, the former CEO of Waze.com. It (for now) is a web-only social media platform. It bills itself as “premium news content without subscriptions or ads.” It will have a “micro-transactions” based system to pay writers for their work on a “pay per article” model.

Post has been praised as a simple login and user experience and is very actively courting journalists. [Some have been wary of its investors and partners, such as Marc Andreesson's VC firm](#), which also contributed \$400 million dollars to enable Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter.

Also of concern is its initial user agreement that appeared to forbid language critical of individuals for their "net worth," the beta platform's lack of moderation features (so far), and its use of OpenWeb for article comments, [an advertising-based comments system that has had questionable associations and policies in the past](#).

- **Tumblr**

Originally launched in 2007, and at one time sold for \$1.1 Billion to Yahoo!, this web and mobile application-based blogging and social network was near death when purchased by Automattic, the firm that owns WordPress. [It has since had somewhat of a revival](#), especially with users under 25 years old, who now make up 61 percent of its user base. It is well moderated, unlike Twitter Blue's offering, users can [pay to have 100% of its ads removed](#). [It has committed to adding support and interoperability with the Mastodon network](#), but this is not in place yet.

- **Hive**

Hive is a mobile-only social app by a small developer of about three staff, and was launched in 2019, and previously targeted a GenZ audience primarily. Since the Musk takeover, Hive downloads have seen a spike of 2 million app downloads to date. We do not have data on monthly average users. However, the app has little in the way of content moderation, and many online users have [expressed deep concern over the application's privacy policies](#) and potential [security issues](#) and vulnerabilities. These server security issues were problematic enough to [force Hive to recently shut down its service](#) that as of this writing is still offline.

- **Tribel**

This is a web and mobile app-based social network owned by Omar Rivero and Rafael Rivero, who also own OccupyDemocrats.org. Tribel is also very small, with a team of only 5 staffers, and it [has seen complaints of insufficient resources to moderate content and unclear moderation policies.](#)

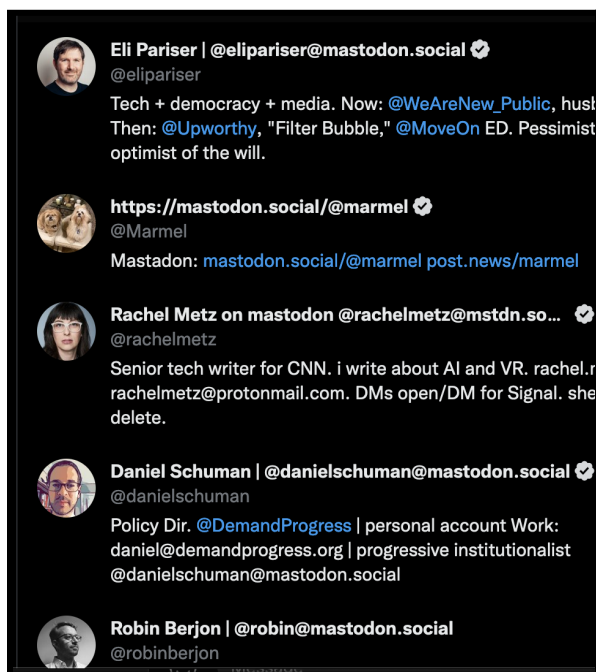
- **CounterSocial**

CounterSocial [was launched in 2017 by a pseudonymous hacktivist known as “The Jester,”](#) who took credit for hacking several websites, including jihadist websites. CounterSocial launched as part of the Mastodon network, but then in 2019, it broke away from the Mastodon network, created its own “forked” version of the Mastodon server software, and now do not interoperate with the larger set of Mastodon servers in any way. CounterSocial also has a nationwide block for any users from Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, and Syria, which is criticized as overly broad, but they justify it as a means to reduce troll activity.

Other start-ups will likely emerge shortly, but these are the main Twitter alternatives being noticed or considered by the existing Twitter user base. And those are the platforms our original research focuses on.

Findings from Twitter Users: Twitter Bios As Key Metric

One of the best metrics we have is watching **real-world actions inside Twitter itself**. One key sign of the #TwitterMigration is found inside their Twitter user's bios. For some time now, it has been common for Twitter users to post their alternative social media accounts in their Twitter bios, as seen in the image here:



Many legacy social sites, such as Instagram, Facebook, and others, are featured in users' Twitter profiles, although the great majority have been there for some time rather than being fresh additions.

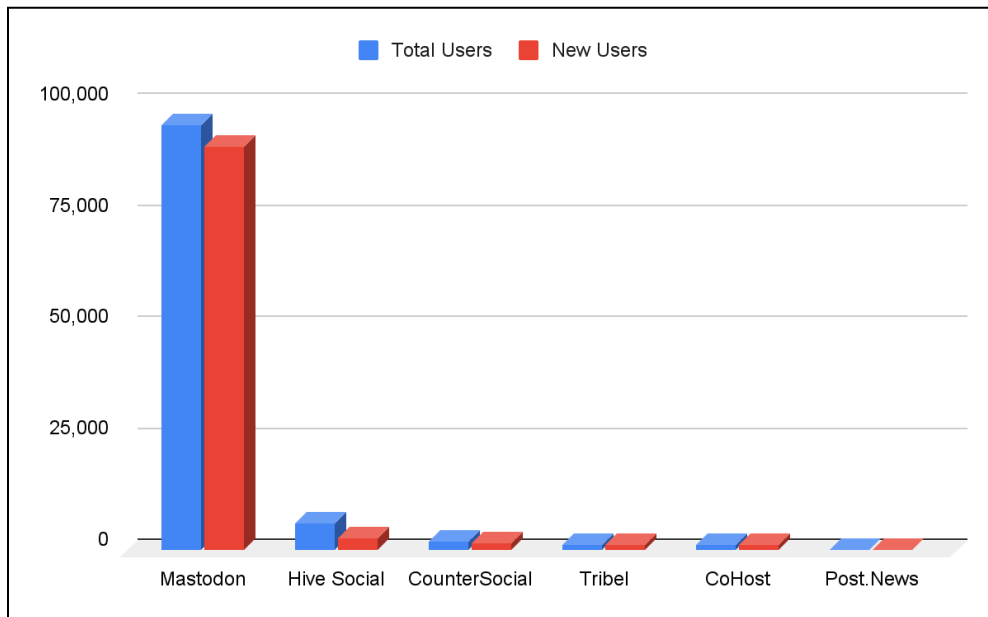
However, we've seen some significant developments in the past several months in terms of new, developing platforms getting included in Twitter's profiles. This seems to be a new phenomenon.

Twitter Users Adding Emerging Social Platforms to their Bios

*From Twitter Bios of Users actively posting in Twitter 10/24 - 11/22

	Total Users	New Users	Change %	Verified Users
Mastodon	95,400	90,523	1856%	4%
Hive	6,250	2,637	73%	2.80%
CounterSocial	1,950	1,683	629%	1.50%
Tribel	1,290	1,175	1022%	0.40%
CoHost	1,160	1,127	3412%	1%
Post	143	140	4667%	10.30%

Visualized, this looks like the following: again showing existing and new users with emerging social media platform handles in their Twitter bios.



Existing platforms were featured in significantly more Twitter users' bios than start-up platforms, but they saw **comparatively small percentage increases over the last month.** Telegram, Tumblr, and Substack saw double-digit

percentage increases, but those were nowhere near the growth percentages of Mastodon and Hive.

	Total Users	New Users	Change %	Verified Users
Discord	245,000	35,598	17%	0.80%
Instagram	1,030,000	20,196	2%	6.80%
Facebook	221,000	14,458	7%	15.60%
Telegram	68,900	12,884	23%	10.70%
Tumblr	41,200	9,262	29%	0.20%
TikTok	187,000	3,667	2%	3.70%
Snapchat	106,000	3,087	3%	2.20%
Substack	7,200	1,298	22%	13.30%
Medium	5,640	418	8%	1.30%

Analysis From Twitter Users Tweets

Next we tracked what users on Twitter post publicly that they are creating alternative accounts on other social networks.



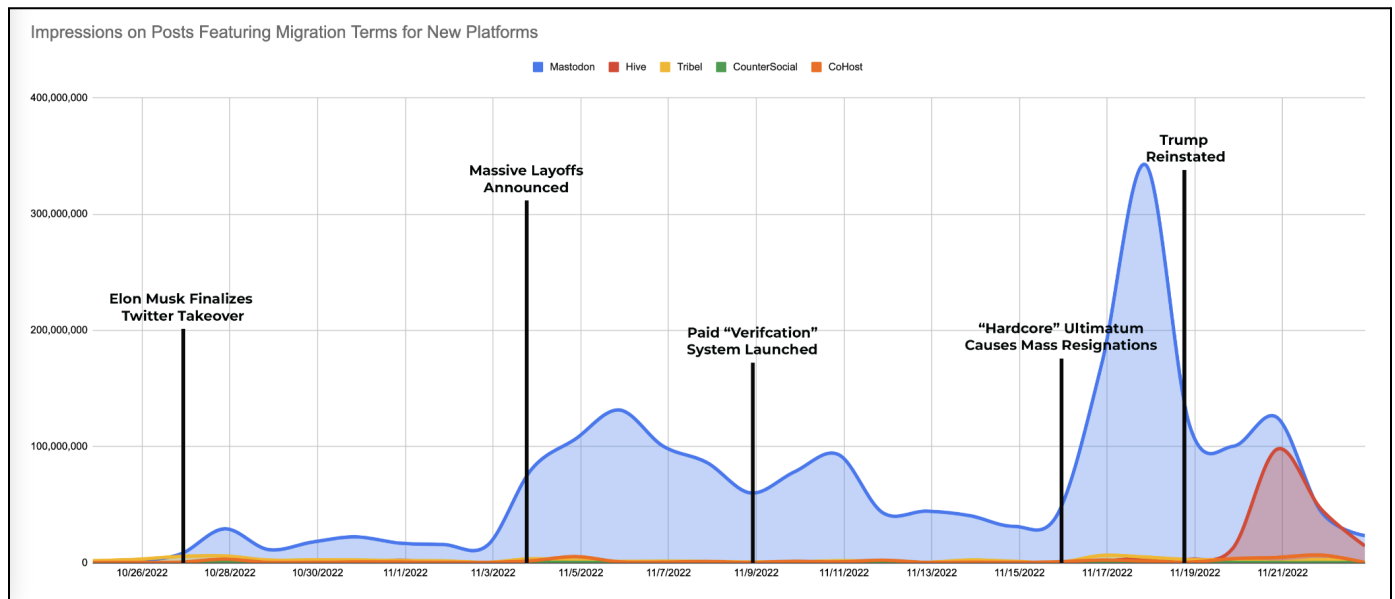
We did a full Twitter scan for users who posted publicly that they are creating alternative accounts on other social networks of any kind. We look for users

claiming to either be completely migrating to a new platform or creating/reactivating new accounts on other social platforms. We tracked all phrases like “find me on Mastodon,” “I’m now on Hive,” “Find me on Tribel,” etc. We scanned those over time, so we could see the ebbs and flows of each, noting these key dates:

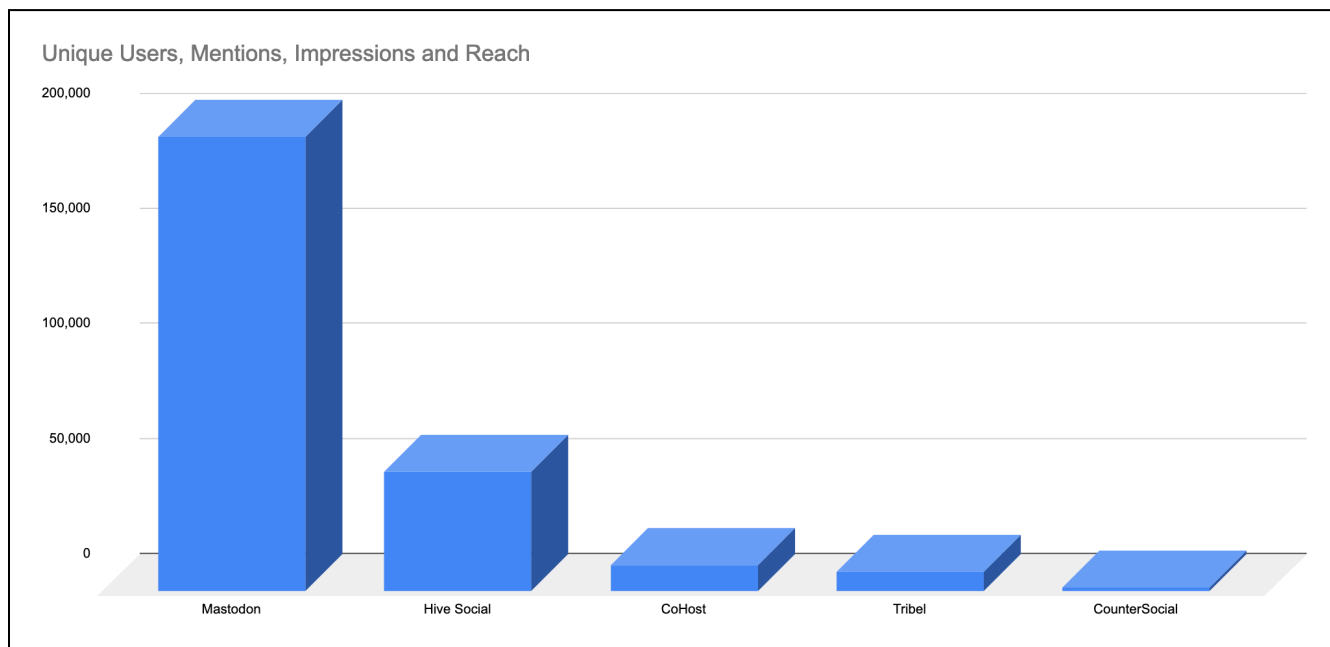
- 10/26 -Elon Musk changes Twitter Bio to “Chief Twit”
- 10/27 - Elon Musk finalizes takeover deal
- 10/30 - Announces plans for revamped “verification” system
- 11/4 - Massive Twitter layoffs announced.
- 11/9 - Launched new pay for “verification” checkmark system
- 11/11 - Checkmark system paused due to rampant impersonation chaos
- 11/12 - 80% of contract workers fired without notice
- 11/16 - Musk issues “hardcore” ultimatum to employees
- 11/17 - Mass exodus of remaining Twitter employees due to ultimatum
- 11/19 - Trump’s account reinstated

This is the flow of Twitter users stating their new accounts for each platform over this time, referring to emerging social networks:

■ Mastodon
 ■ Hive
 ■ Tribel
 ■ CounterSocial
 ■ CoHost



This is a visualization of the total number of Twitter users over the last two months who directly mention creating or reactivating new social accounts on emerging social networks.



For “legacy” social media platforms: We saw many mentions of these platform accounts and lots of turbulence in the data, but no dramatic spikes in sync with the Elon Musk purchase over the two months of our scans for social media posts about Tik Tok, Discord, Substack, Medium, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Telegram.

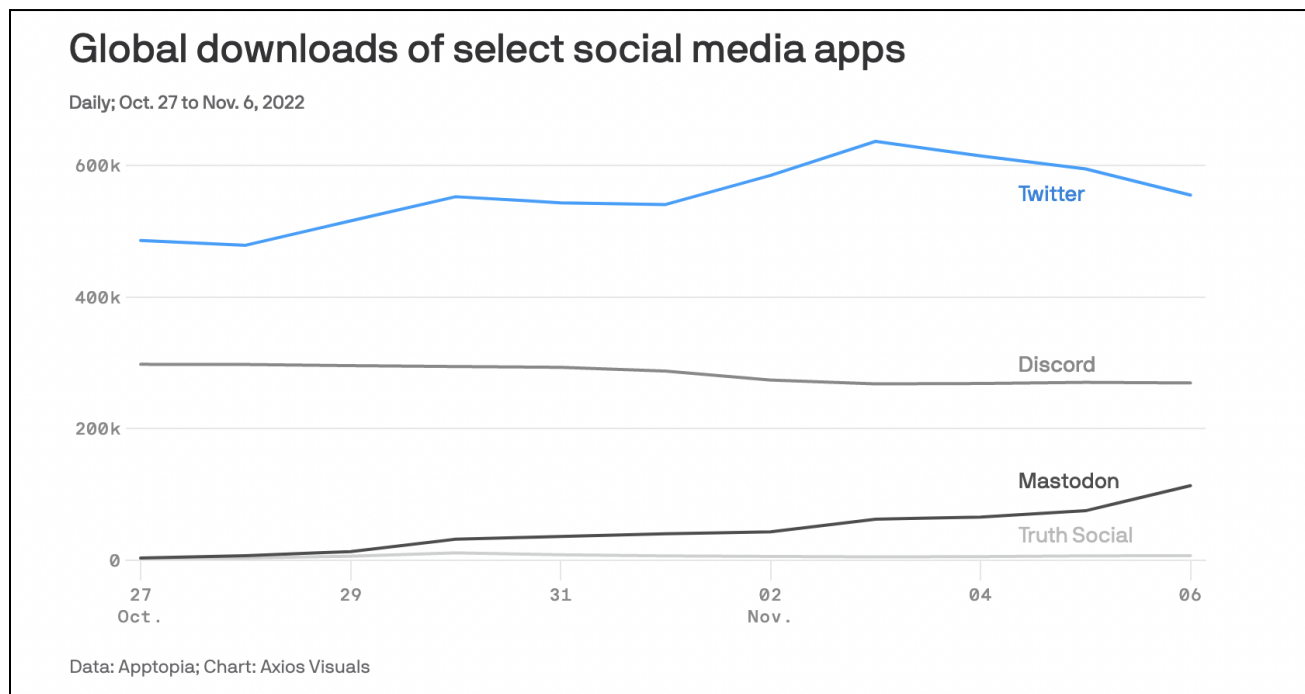
Findings from App Downloads

Lastly, to see what trends are occurring in the #TwitterMigration, we look at App download data.

Axios tech reporters [looked at app downloads](#) using Apptopia’s data right after the Musk takeover of Twitter, and they saw this. “Daily downloads of

Mastodon... have exploded since Musk took over Twitter...Between Oct. 27 and Nov. 6, daily downloads of the app increased from **3,400 to 113,400.**”

This is that same data visualized:



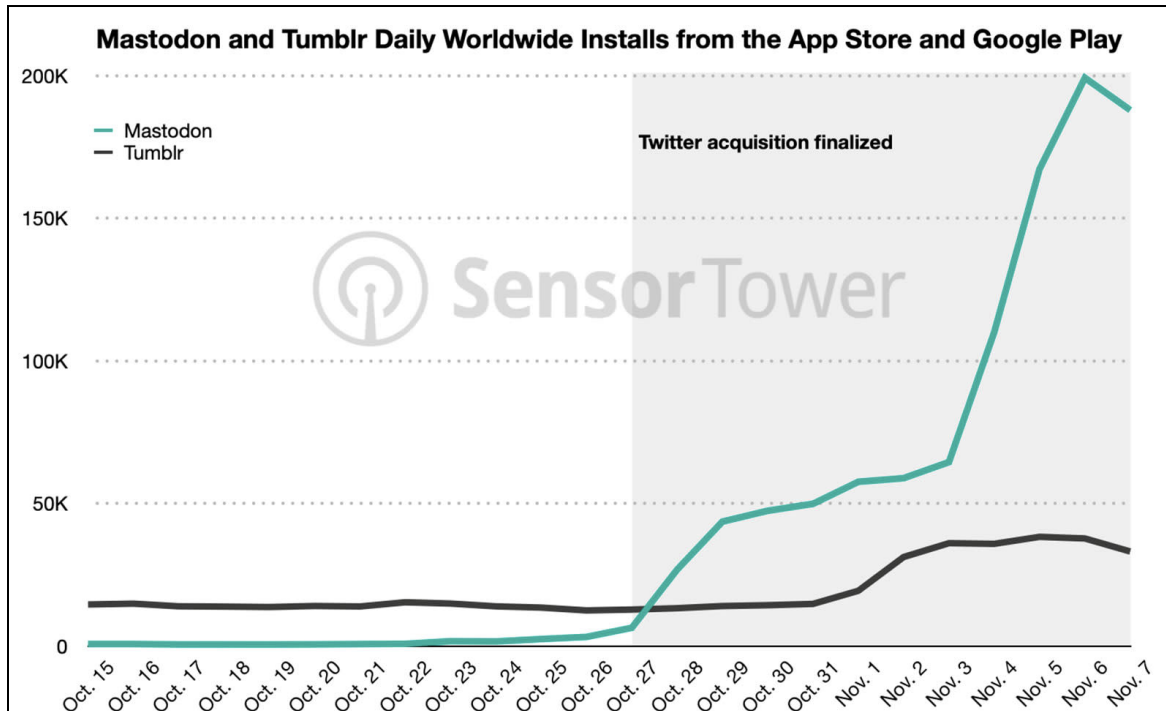
Another mobile Appstore data provider - SensorTower - saw the same trends.

[SensorTower](#) saw Twitter app downloads grow after the Musk purchase, but they were dwarfed by Mastodon’s growth rate:

“Globally, the [official Mastodon] app **grew 657 percent to 1 million in the 12 days following the handover** from 15,000 in the prior period. Third-party Mastodon apps such as [Metatext](#) and [Tootle](#) also saw a bump when comparing the two periods, climbing from less than 1,000 installs each to 19,000 and 7,000 worldwide downloads, respectively.”

They also saw Tumblr as another major application seeing a post-Elon Musk surge of new downloads:

Tumblr saw more growth in the U.S. than globally, where **the app saw adoption climb 96 percent to 92,000** from 47,000 when comparing the two periods. Worldwide installs, on the other hand, **surged 77 percent to 301,000 from 170,000.**”



Tumultuous Times for Twitter and Twitter Alternatives

This whiplash of change will likely continue at the current pace - we see no signs currently of the #TwitterMigration to platforms such as Mastodon or the Post or the others slowing down at this point. One thing that is a virtual certainty is that this space will remain turbulent in the days/weeks/months to come; we will continue to watch for trends with new and established players - or others yet to emerge - in the great #TwitterMigration.