

All About... Messenger



Messenger is a free instant messaging app owned by Meta. It launched in 2011 to replace Facebook Chat as a separate, complimentary app that lets users phone and video call other users, as well as add short videos, voice messages, and GIFs to instant messages.

Did you know Messenger...



Is the 3rd most popular app worldwide.



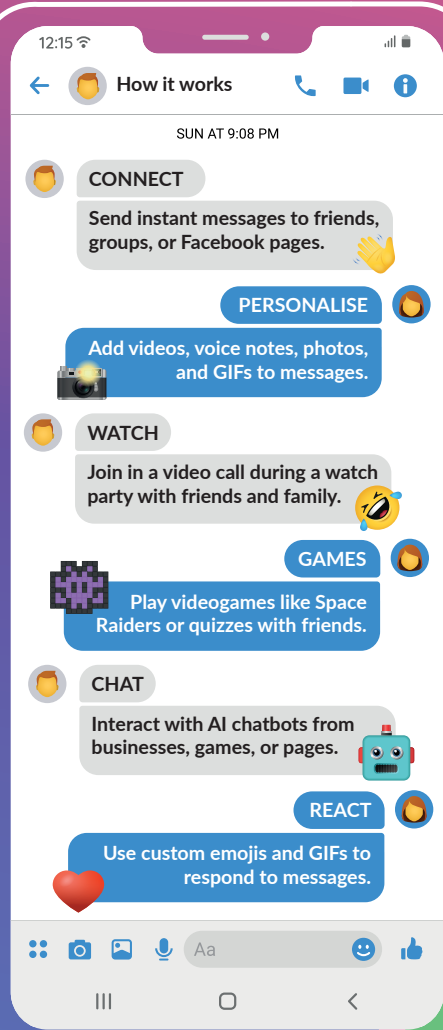
Is the second most used messenger app in the UK.



Has over 1 billion messages sent on it every month.



Sees more than 18 billion gifs shared every single day.



Not for just anyone!

Users must have a Facebook account in order to use Messenger. Facebook requires users to be 13 or older to have an account.



End-to-end Encryption

In 2023, Meta announced they were rolling out encryption on Facebook and Messenger. This means messages can only be read by the sender and recipient. Not even Meta can view the messages, unless they are directly reported to the platform.



Although users on Messenger could previously opt in to this, it will now be the default setting, making it more difficult to detect potentially harmful materials and communications.



RISKS

Disappearing Messages

Users can send 'secret conversations' (messages timed to disappear) to others. They may be used to send bullying or sexual messages, and could cause distress or anxiety.

Message Requests

Users who are not friends on Facebook can still message other Messenger users through the 'Message Requests' folder. This could open up opportunities for scams, bullying and contact from strangers.

Live Location

Users are able to share their live location with friends in Messenger via Google or Apple Maps, which could be used to pressure a young person into sharing where they are.

Inappropriate Behaviour

Users may be encouraged by others to engage in uncharacteristic or inappropriate behaviour via video or text chat. This could result in losing control of intimate images, messages or videos.



TOP TIPS

Use Safety Settings

Encourage your young person to use security options, such as two-factor authentication and the ability to choose who can message them.

Turn off Message Requests

Ensure only Facebook friends can keep in contact by switching off the message requests section, which is 'on' by default.

Don't receive requests

Keep Personal Details Private

Explain why it's important not to share personal details like addresses and phone numbers with others over Messenger.

Talk to Your Young Person

Engage in discussion with those in your care about their online life and remind them that you are always there to support them.

