

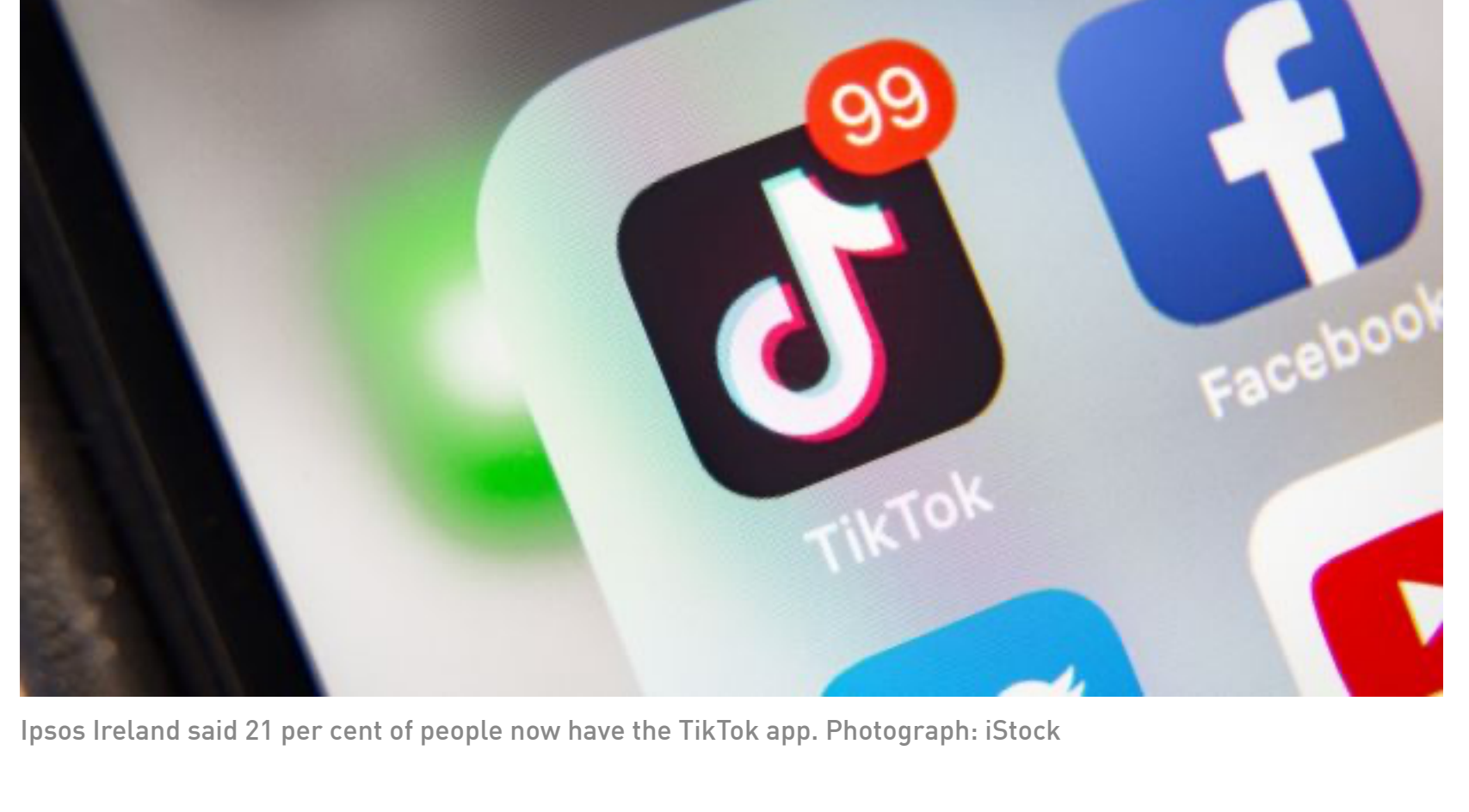


Facebook usage drops in Ireland as TikTok’s popularity surges

Irish people more likely to say social media plays positive than negative role, Ipsos finds

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Laura Slattery



Ipsos Ireland said 21 per cent of people now have the TikTok app. Photograph: iStock

Facebook has long been dubbed the “unfashionable” social media app more likely to be used by people’s parents than their peers. Now research by Ipsos Ireland shows both usage of Mark Zuckerberg’s creation and ownership of Facebook accounts has declined among Irish consumers over the past 18 months, while at the same time rival TikTok has seen its popularity soar.

Facebook, part of the newly rebranded tech giant Meta, is still the biggest social networking app in the Irish market, with 63 per cent of Irish people having an account, putting it well ahead of the next biggest, Meta-owned Instagram.

But this is down from 69 per cent in a July 2020 survey, while daily usage of Facebook among account holders has dropped seven percentage points to 55 per cent over this period.

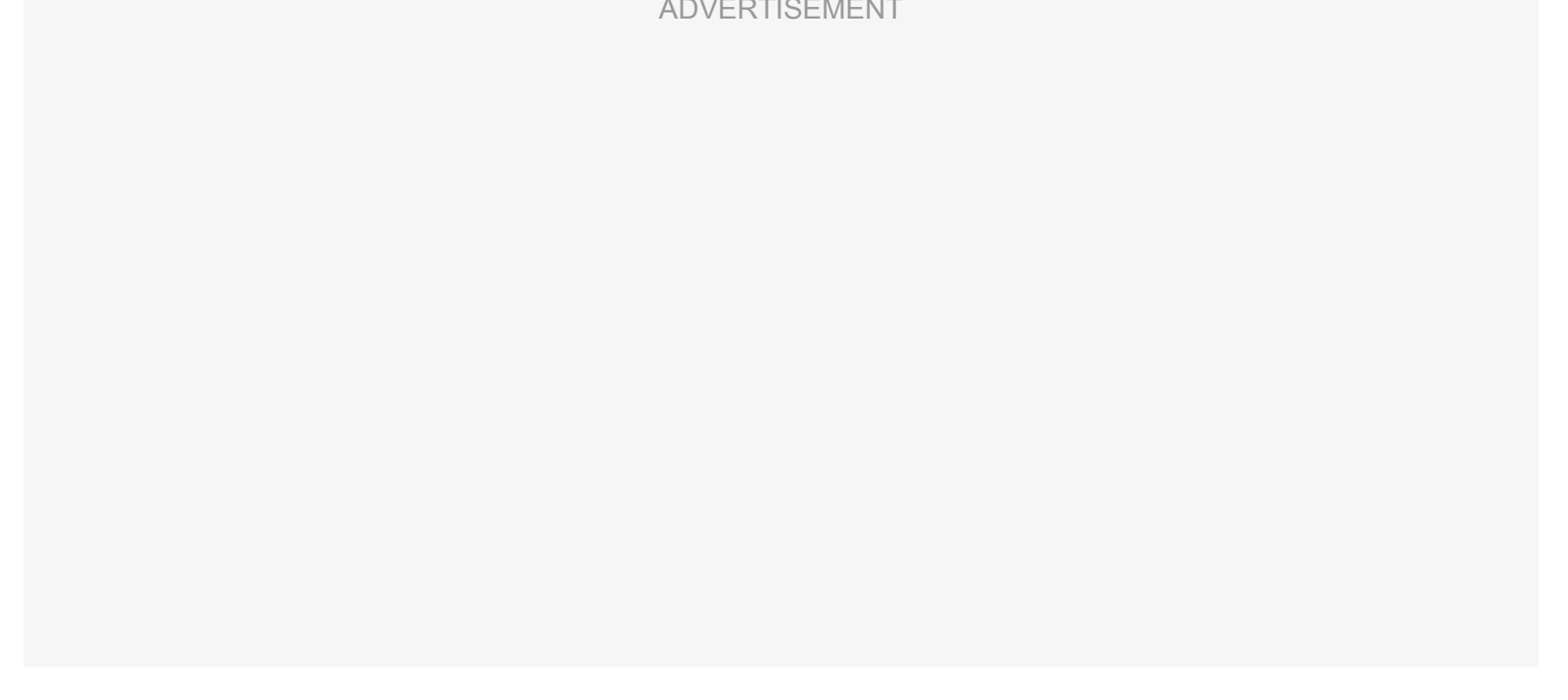
The latest social media tracker by Ipsos, based on 712 respondents to its January 2022 Omnipoll, reveals that 21 per cent of Irish people have a TikTok account, up six percentage points. Among this group, 58 per cent use it daily, up 15 points, reflecting how the ByteDance-owned short video app has become a more embedded part of its users’ social media habits.

Some 48 per cent have an Instagram account, Ipsos said, with this showing no change since July 2020. The app – originally an image-based platform that has since incorporated features inspired by Snapchat and TikTok – has the highest rate of daily usage among its accountholders, with 63 per cent using it daily, up one point.

‘Brand v brand’

“Social media is now a mature market and it has become brand versus brand,” said Damian Loscher, managing director of Ipsos Ireland.

With television and radio consumption both holding up “really well” over the past decade in the Irish market, social media companies will increasingly be running up against the finite limits of their users’ time and fighting each other for consumer attention.



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“A new social media platform is not going to expand without taking space from somebody,” Mr Loscher said.

The relative longevity of Facebook and Instagram could still protect Meta, however, as other challengers may struggle to match their reach before they too are pressured by the next social craze.

Ipsos suggests TikTok account ownership is most likely to plateau somewhere in the 30-39 per cent range. “It will be increasingly difficult for the TikToks of this world, at the fast fashion end of the spectrum to break this ceiling,” Mr Loscher added.

Elsewhere, LinkedIn accounts are held by 31 per cent of Irish people, down from 35 per cent. Although just 22 per cent use the Microsoft-owned professional networking platform daily, this is up five points since July 2020, likely reflecting the more active period of late for the recruitment market.

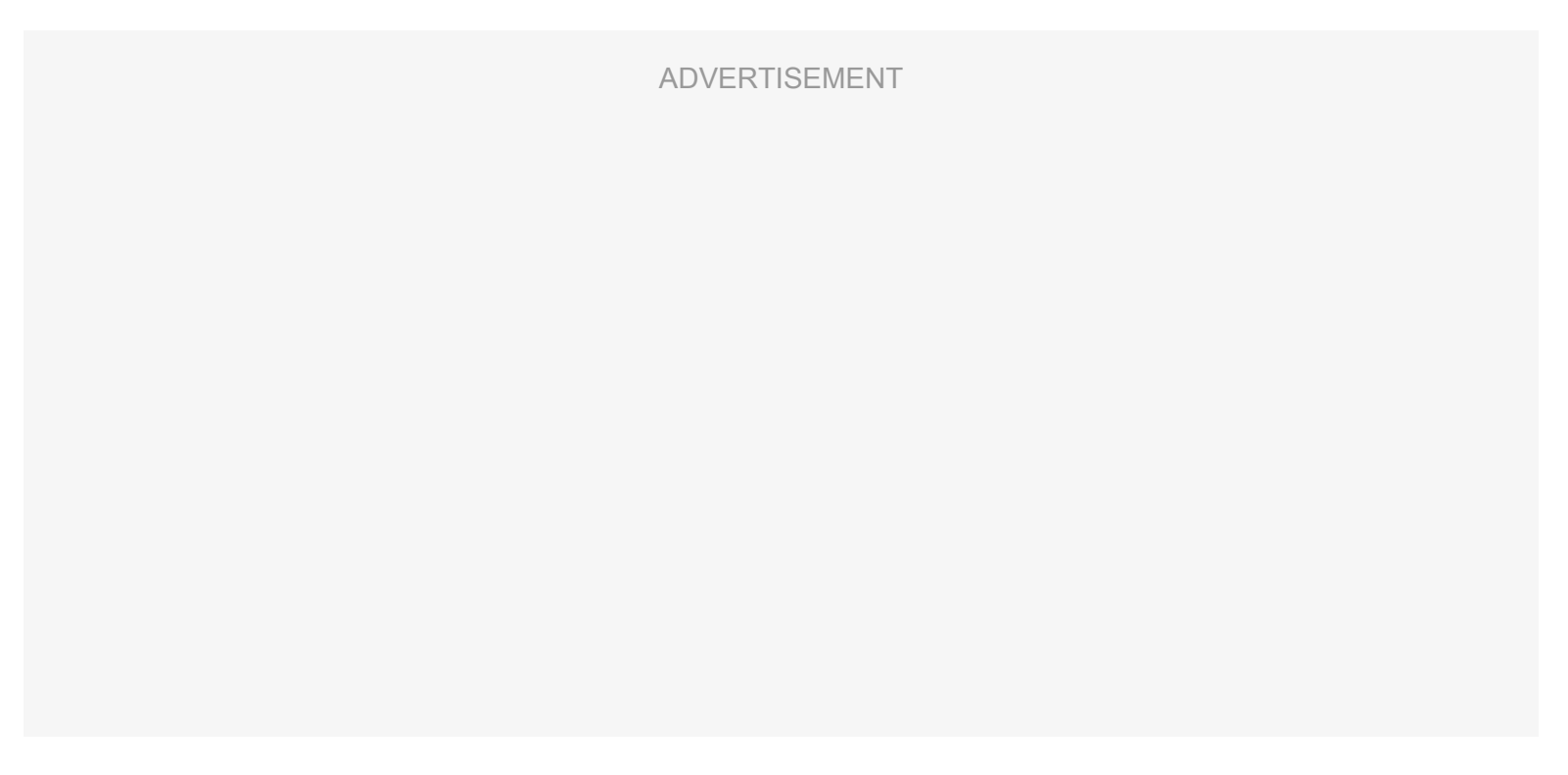
A quarter of Irish people have a Twitter account, down nine points over the past 18 months, and 42 per cent of accountholders use the app daily, down four points.

Among social messaging apps, Meta-owned WhatsApp is by far the most common, with 81 per cent having it on their phones and 79 per cent using it daily, similar to the percentages observed 18 months ago.

Facebook Messenger, however, has declined seven percentage points to 58 per cent, with just 34 per cent of these users engaging with it daily, also down seven points. Some 29 per cent of Irish people have a Snapchat account, down four points, with 58 per cent of them using it daily, down one point.

Worldwide retreat

Ipsos Ireland’s findings mirror a pattern seen globally, with Facebook’s first ever worldwide decline in daily active users in the fourth quarter of 2021 sending its share price plunging when it reported its financial earnings earlier this month.



While platforms including those owned by Meta have been criticised for not doing enough to remove harmful and hateful content, some 50 per cent of Irish people say social media plays a “neutral” role in their lives, while more people say it has a positive than negative role: 30 per cent compared to 11 per cent. The other 9 per cent had no opinion.

People aged 25-34 were the only age group more likely to have a negative feeling than a positive one, with 19 per cent saying social media had a negative role in their lives and only 15 per cent saying it had a positive one.

The 45-54 year-old-age group was most likely to be upbeat about social media, with 42 per cent saying it had a positive role in their lives and just 7 per cent saying it had a negative one.

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