

Done with Facebook? Consider MeWe, Parler or old standbys like LinkedIn

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

MeWe is a social network that says it has no ads, spyware, targeting, political bias, or newsfeed manipulation. In other words, it bills itself as the "anti" Facebook.

Parler is a social media app with one point of view—conservative. It's a place for folks who don't like the spin at Facebook, or as it describes itself, "[free expression](#) without violence and a lack of censorship."

So maybe, like Coca-Cola, Unilver, Starbucks and other corporations, you've had it with Facebook and its policies about either not curbing hate speech, or if you're on the other side of the aisle, censoring free thought.

Where to go? We have some ideas for you.

LinkedIn

Yes, that network that for years was thought of solely as a place to look for work, or a network to sell. Nearly 700 million people belong to LinkedIn—a sliver of Facebook's 2 billion

plus—where the mission is far different from sharing recipes and travel photos, bragging about life achievements and watching funny cat videos. LinkedIn says it wants to "connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful."

But as Facebook has become more toxic, those industry pros have started using LinkedIn to promote the same sort of family and travel exploits, in addition to career and marketing inspiration.

"People get into conversations on LinkedIn, and once you engage with them, you direct message them, and the DM leads to a Zoom video call. That's happened so many times," says Peter Csathy, the chairman of CreatTV, a business development firm.

Thus the business relationship "becomes a lot more personal" thanks to the LinkedIn connection, Csathy adds.

Instagram

This is the default place for many people not feeling Facebook, but there's a snag: the photo social network is owned by Facebook. Since it's all photos and live video, it doesn't suffer from some of Facebook's worst aspects, says Csathy. "It's used in a different way, from those who have nefarious purposes." He add that teens won't go near Facebook, but they will go to Instagram, which boasts of over 1 billion members.

Parler

Look for friends on this app that's been promoted by President Donald Trump, and you'll see many familiar Republican names: former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, senators Rand Paul and Ted Cruz and Rep. Devin Nunes. There's also the right wing pundit Stefan Molyneux, who was booted off YouTube Monday, and congressional candidate

Laura Loomer, who has been banned from Facebook and Twitter.

The app, which has been called the "Twitter for conservatives," is on a roll thanks to the presence of the politicians, and has grown to 1.5 million members from 1 million in just a week, the company recently told CNBC. The firm told CNBC that while it welcomes conservative voices, it also would love to have liberal thought espoused as well, and is offering a \$20,000 bounty to a liberal pundit with a major following to join the network.

MeWe

The "anti" Facebook has seen its numbers rise rapidly, growing to 8 million members, and company CEO Mark Weinstein tells U.S. TODAY it will top 10 million by the end of the summer, and predicts it will hit 40 million by year's end. "We have all the features people love about social, great groups, private news feeds for close friends, and none of the B.S. There is no way for a marketer to target you." The network is free, but MeWe has a premium offering, offering emojis, live video and extra photo storage for \$4.99 monthly. "If we can get 3% to sign up for the premium offering, we're in great shape," he says.

Twitter

Twitter has all the things you can do on Facebook, like share vacation and baby photos, get into direct conversations with friends, meet new people and find old ones. But it's a different experience, in that posts appear like a ticker-tape. They fly by you, and the concept of social sharing becomes more cumbersome. There are some 330 million members of Twitter, including the notables (president Donald Trump and politicians of every stripe), every major news organization, city and state agencies, and your friends. Unlike Facebook, Twitter has been more proactive in labeling Trump's tweets for fact-checking and inciting violence, which is why he signed an executive order recently calling for social media to prevent online censorship.

Reddit

The site that calls itself the "front page of the

Internet," is a wonky bulletin board of sorts that has always attracted heated online debate. "It's not a safe and well lit part of the internet," notes blogger Josh Bernoff.

But Reddit is trying to clean up its act. This week Reddit banned a group of nearly 800,000 devoted to Trump, saying that members had bullied and harassed other members. Reddit, which has over 430 million members, just introduced new rules that will make it easier for the site to weed out members violating poli.

On Reddit, you probably won't share great travel photos or brag about a promotion. You will, however, get to discuss topics, from food and NASCAR racing to relationships and the latest Apple devices. Reddit experts say the key to navigating the network is to find the appropriate community, called a "sub-Reddit," where the vitriol is toned down.

Cake

One of the smaller social networks, but worth checking out, Cake promises "better conversations" on any topic, which tends to range from travel, photography and tech gear to music and streaming. Cake's co-founder Chris MacAskill aims to uplift social media discourse by offering a network with a twist:

"On most social networks you follow people," he says. "On Cake you follow topics that fascinate you." MacAskill says Cake users can hide posts in conversations that you feel detract from the discussion, ignore users whose posts and conversations you don't want to see and mute users to prevent them from posting in conversations you start.

"And we're working on even more powerful tools to help you have better conversations without needing to worry about trolls, mansplainers, and other nuisances."

Meanwhile, if you're upset about Facebook's policies, there's always leaving, or, as Bernoff says, learning how to tame the beast.

"If you carefully curate your list of friends and the groups you're in, you can create a gated community within Facebook," he says. "I've been critical of Facebook for years, yet I'm on there every day connecting with people. I also drive a car, and it puts pollution into the air, yet I'm not giving it up and switching to a bike."

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