Beat: Lifestyle

Mobile messaging app WhatsApp hits 500 million users

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USPA News - The popular mobile messaging service WhatsApp gained some 50 million new users in the two months since its acquisition by Facebook, pushing the total number of active users above half a billion, the app`s founder announced on Tuesday. Jan Koum, who founded WhatsApp in 2009, said in a blog post on Tuesday that 500 million people were now regular, active users.

"In the last few months, we`ve grown fastest in countries like Brazil, India, Mexico, and Russia, and our users are also sharing more than 700 million photos and 100 million videos every single day," he said. "We could go on, but for now, it`s more important that we get back to work - because here at WhatsApp, we`re just getting started," Koum wrote. He added in an interview with technology news website Re/code that the number includes 48 million active users in India, 45 million users in Brazil, and 14 million users in Turkey. In parts of Asia, however, WhatsApp is facing fierce competition from apps such as Line, which announced in November 2013 that it had more than 300 million users. Line currently has more active users than WhatsApp in Japan, Thailand and Taiwan, while KakaoTalk has more in South Korea and WeChat has more in China, Re/code reported. The milestone of half a billion active users, set on Monday, comes just over two months after Facebook announced it had reached a definitive agreement to acquire WhatsApp for a total of approximately $19 billion in cash and stock, making it the largest-ever purchase of a company backed by venture capital. WhatsApp said at the time it had more than 450 million active users each month, of whom some 70 percent was active daily.

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