

# The Rise of Decentralised and Alternative Social Media Platforms

## A New Paradigm for Businesses

Teneo Insights / April 2025



**The social media landscape continues to evolve, driven by shifts in user behaviour, platform updates and perceived platform politicisation on traditional platforms, impacting the way users and businesses connect.**

In response to rising concerns about privacy, content moderation and the need for more “control,” there has been an upward trend for users and businesses to build a presence on decentralised platforms like Mastodon and BlueSky, and alternatives like Lemon8, where data control and community-driven engagement takes precedence.

The 2024 elections reshaped global politics, particularly in the U.S. and EU, triggering renewed scrutiny of tech regulation and data governance.

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According to Teneo's annual CEO and Investor Outlook Survey, Vision 2025, CEOs and investors acknowledge that changes in data and privacy rules and policies toward China could have a negative impact on their business in 2025.<sup>1</sup> These shifting political dynamics are particularly pronounced in the tech sector, where regulatory uncertainty is already impacting platform strategies and corporate decision-making.

Developments such as Meta's removal of third-party fact-checking and the ongoing debate over TikTok's future in the U.S. have accelerated interest in alternative digital spaces. This shift is already visible: Mastodon's user base grew from 3.5 million in 2022 to 9 million in 2024,<sup>2</sup> while RedNote's U.S. audience surged from 300,000 to 3 million<sup>3</sup> within a week of the temporary TikTok ban earlier this year.

These migrations reflect a broader movement toward decentralised, user-driven platforms where control, privacy and community take precedence over algorithmic reach.

Decentralised social media platforms, built on Web3 principles, reduce centralised control by using open-source technology and distributed networks. This enables community-driven governance and empowers users to shape the platform collectively. While this offers users greater autonomy and privacy, it also presents challenges in content moderation and usability.

For businesses, engagement strategies must adapt—success now depends on authenticity, agility and innovation in navigating these fragmented digital spaces. As social media decentralises, organisations must rethink how they connect with key audiences. The brands that embrace this transformation will not only stay ahead but help shape the future of digital engagement.

## Who Will This Impact?

The decentralisation of social media platforms will redefine how organisations, creators and users interact.

### Organisations

The shift from algorithms and hyper-targeted ads to authenticity, trust and community engagement is essential. With reduced access to user data, privacy-first strategies like creator collaborations and contextual advertising will grow in importance.

### Influencers and general users

Influencers will gain more control over monetisation but must navigate fragmented audiences across multiple platforms. General users will have greater data control but will also face challenges in decentralised spaces with fewer moderation safeguards.

### Developers, regulators and the broader industry

Decentralisation opens doors for security and content management innovation while requiring regulators to balance privacy with accountability. Community-driven moderation will be key in shaping safe and inclusive digital spaces.

While these shifts create exciting opportunities, organisations should be strategic about where they invest. Just as businesses initially took a cautious approach to TikTok, they should monitor audience migration before fully committing to new platforms.

1. Teneo Vision 2025 | CEO and Investor Outlook Survey

2. <https://www.newsweek.com/how-top-twitter-rivals-fared-since-elon-musk-exodus-1984404>

3. <https://uk.pcmag.com/mobile-apps/156336/rednotes-us-users-jump-from-300k-to-3-million-as-tiktok-ban-looms>

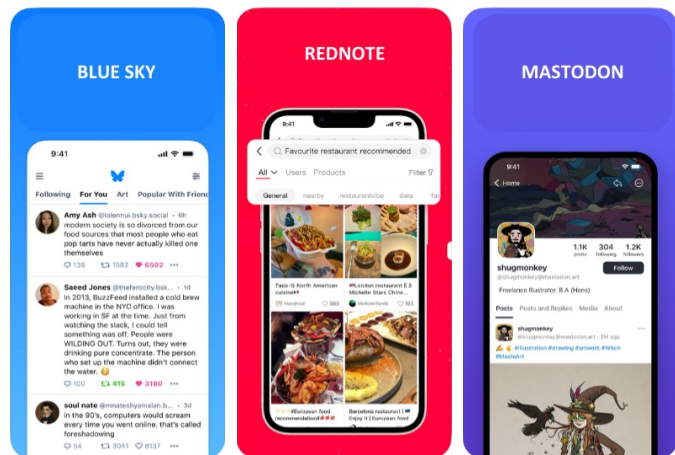
## Emerging Platforms

Lemon8, ByteDance's lifestyle-focused app, emphasises polished, aesthetic content but lacks structured monetisation, limiting its appeal to creators. RedNote, a fast-growing social shopping app, has seen a surge in U.S. downloads but may face scrutiny over data security.

Likee and Clapper provide short-form video alternatives, with Likee's music-driven format resembling TikTok, while Clapper's U.S. ownership could make it a viable alternative for avid TikTokers if a ban is reinstated.

Meanwhile, decentralised platforms like Mastodon and PeerTube are gaining traction in the privacy-conscious “fediverse”—a global social network of interconnected servers—alongside Bluesky, which offers customisable feeds similar to the functionality on X and user-led moderation. However, decentralisation presents challenges—from complex navigation to inconsistent moderation and reliance on independent servers for stability.

It remains unclear which of these platforms are a flash in the pan and which will gain mainstream adoption. For now, businesses should stay informed and experiment cautiously rather than committing fully, ensuring they invest in platforms where their audiences are—and will be most likely to engage.



## Conclusion

The shift to decentralised and alternative platforms is more than just a reaction to industry changes—it's a broader transformation in online culture. As concerns over privacy, content control and platform stability grow, users are experimenting with spaces that prioritise authenticity, creative freedom and user control over algorithm-driven content.

For organisations, this shift brings both challenges and opportunities. Managing fragmented audiences and reduced access to analytics will require adaptability, but those who focus on privacy, community and trust can build stronger connections.

Success in this new landscape will require agility, creativity and a fresh approach to digital strategy. By embracing decentralisation and alternative platforms, and by gaining a deeper understanding of audience migration patterns, organisations can stay ahead of the curve and effectively navigate the future of social media.

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