

TRUMP'S TRUTH SOCIAL APP SET FOR RELEASE MONDAY IN APPLE APP STORE, PER EXECUTIVE

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: IT, Internet and Communications

FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump returns to the White House in Washington, U.S., March 24, 2019. | Photo Credit: Reuters

[Donald Trump's new social media venture, Truth Social](#), appears set to [launch in Apple's App Store on Monday](#), according to posts from an executive on a test version viewed by Reuters, potentially marking the return of the former president to social media on the U.S. Presidents Day holiday.

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In a series of posts late on Friday, a verified account for the network's chief product officer, listed as Billy B., answered questions on the app from people invited to use it during its test phase. One user asked him when the app, which has been available this week for beta testers, would be released to the public, according to screenshots viewed by Reuters.

"We're currently set for release in the Apple App store for Monday Feb. 21," the executive responded.

The launch would restore Trump's presence on social media more than a year after [he was banned from Twitter Inc, Facebook](#) and Alphabet Inc's YouTube following [the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol](#) by his supporters, after he was accused of posting messages inciting violence.

On Feb. 15 Trump's eldest son Donald Jr. posted on Twitter a screenshot of his father's verified @realDonaldTrump Truth Social account with one post, or "truth," that he uploaded on Feb. 14: "Get Ready! Your favourite President will see you soon!"

Led by former Republican U.S. Representative Devin Nunes, [Trump Media & Technology Group \(TMTG\)](#), the venture behind TruthSocial, will join a growing portfolio of technology companies that are positioning themselves as champions of free speech and hope to draw users who feel their views are suppressed on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. So far none of the companies, which include Twitter competitors Gettr and Parler and video site Rumble, have come close to matching the popularity of their mainstream counterparts.

"This week we will begin to roll out on the Apple App Store. That's going to be awesome, because we're going to get so many more people that are going to be on the platform," Nunes said in a Sunday appearance on Fox News' 'Sunday Morning Futures with Maria Bartiromo'.

"Our goal is, I think we're going to hit it, I think by the by the end of March we're going to be fully operational at least within the United States," he added.

In addition to the post disclosing Monday's launch date, the screenshots seen by Reuters show the app is now at version 1.0, suggesting it has reached a level ready for public release. As late as Wednesday, it was at version 0.9, according to two people with access to that version.

A representative for TMTG did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

[Apple's App Store listing indicates that Truth Social is expected to be released on Feb. 21](#), a date that a source familiar with the venture confirmed in January. But in recent weeks Nunes had said publicly that the app would launch by the end of March.

On Friday, Nunes was on the app urging users to follow more accounts, share photos and videos and participate in conversations, in an apparent attempt to drum up activity, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

Among Nunes' posts, he welcomed a new user who appeared to be a Catholic priest and encouraged him to invite more priests to join, according to the person with knowledge of the matter.

The chief product officer's other responses during Friday's question-and-answer session suggested the startup's features would resemble those of Twitter.

Asked whether users would be able to edit their "truths," the executive replied "not yet." The ability to edit posts after publication is something Twitter users have long sought.

The next significant feature released on the platform will be direct messages, or DMs, between users, the executive wrote.

The company is also considering allowing users to sign up to receive notifications when others post content, the executive said. He signalled that the ability to block other users would be an important component.

"There will always be block functionality in the app," he wrote.

Truth Social will issue a policy on verified accounts "in the coming weeks," the executive added.

Even as details of the app begin trickling out, TMTG remains mostly shrouded in secrecy and is regarded with scepticism by some in tech and media circles. It is unclear, for example, how the company is funding its current growth.

TMTG is planning to list in New York through a merger with blank-check firm Digital World Acquisition Corp (DWAC), and stands to receive \$293 million in cash that DWAC holds in a trust, assuming no DWAC shareholder redeems their shares, TMTG said in an Oct. 21 press release.

Additionally, [in December TMTG raised \\$1 billion committed financing from private investors](#); that money also will not be available until the DWAC deal closes.

Digital World's activities have come under scrutiny from the Securities and Exchange Commission and the U.S. Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, according to a regulatory filing, and the deal is likely months away from closing.

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