WhatsApp trends for 2020

So, you already know WhatsApp is the most popular messaging app globally, but do you know what updates are coming in 2020?

Before we dive in, let's just clarify a few quick distinctions. There's regular WhatsApp, which is what 38 million South Africans have on their phones. Then there's WhatsApp Business, designed for small to medium-sized businesses to interact with their customer base. The big cheese for medium to large businesses is WhatsApp Enterprise (aka WhatsApp API), which enables AI-powered messaging at massive scale. For more on these distinctions, check out our previous article.

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Let's take a look at the most critical updates happening in each of these WhatsApp categories.

Regular WhatsApp

WhatsApp has been making a flurry of changes and updates recently, some of which are already being rolled out. But you can't try them until you know about them, so here are the top four coolest updates coming in 2020:

1. This message will self-destruct

Users will soon be able to select from a drop-down menu how long messages will last before they are deleted. This feature may not sound ground-breaking because, well... it isn't! It's a feature that already exists on other platforms like Snapchat and Telegram. But it is a big deal when WhatsApp makes an update like this because as we know, WhatsApp is the most widely used messaging app on earth.

Initially this feature will only be available for group chats, enabled by the group administrators. You'll be able to set the

Delete Message feature for a particular time period, much like how you can currently mute a group for a selected time interval. The intervals to choose from will be: 1 hour, 1 day, 1 week, 1 month and 1 year. This means that if the 1 hour option is selected, the messages in the chat will be deleted after an hour.

How's this different than the current delete message option? The most critical difference is that the Delete Message function will make any trace of the message disappear, as if it never existed.

2. Fingerprint lock mode

The Facebook-owned app is busy rolling out an update that allows you to lock your WhatsApp with your fingerprint, helping prevent prying eyes from invading your privacy.
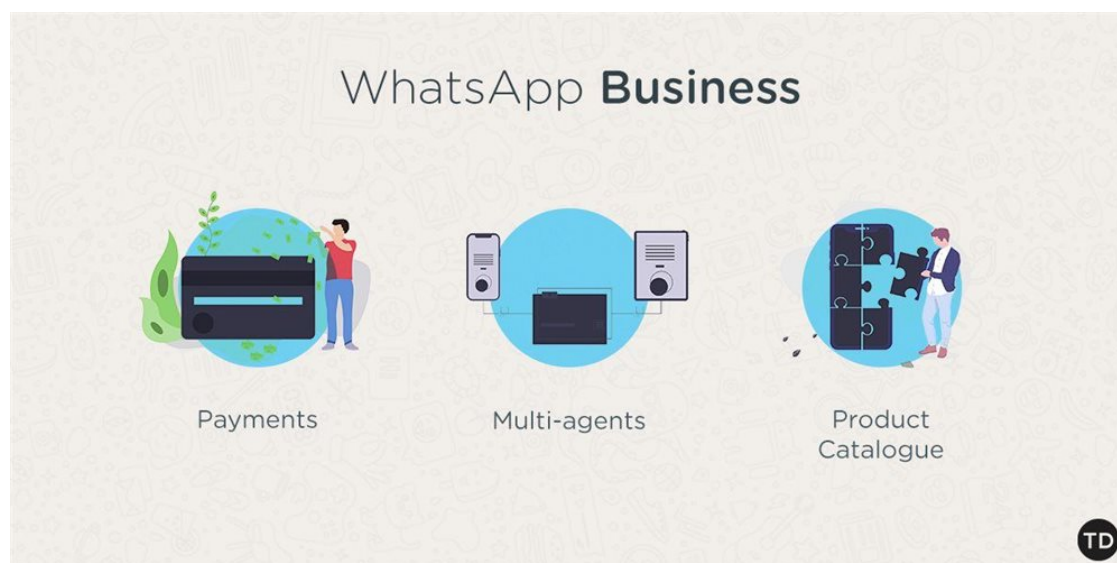
3. Dark mode

Fans of the app are waiting with bated breath for the release of dark mode in 2020, which has been a trend across platforms in 2019. Consumers are hungry for dark mode versions of their favourite apps, since they are energy-saving and easier on your eyes at night, and also because many people find night modes cooler aesthetically.

4. Boomerangs

iOS users can now take boomerang-style videos within WhatsApp, just like on Instagram. Expect the roll-out of this fun feature across all operating systems in 2020. This suggests that the three Facebook owned mega-apps – Facebook, WhatsApp and Instragram – will start sharing features more frequently.

WhatsApp Business

1. Payments

It's early days for the platform introducing person-to-person payments, as they've only started testing WhatsApp Pay in India recently. This will be the real game-changer of 2020 that should fuel massive growth in WhatsApp as a platform for businesses. The plan is that if users add a payment method on one of the Facebook-owned platforms (including Messenger), it will sync with the other apps too, so they don't need to re-submit their information.
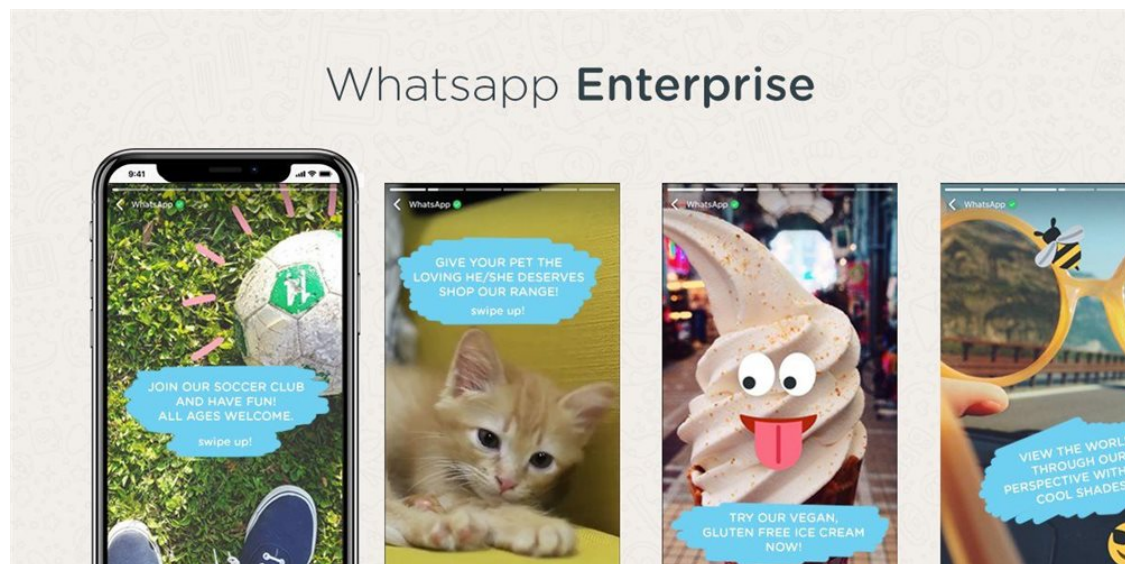
2. Product catalogue

This feature has already been rolled out in most regions for WhatsApp Business users, and in 2020 we expect to see consumers become familiar with using these nifty catalogues. This allows small to medium-sized businesses to showcase

their products on the app, whether they have a website or not.

3. Multi-agents

One of the drawbacks of the current WhatsApp Business platform is that it only allows an account to be used on one device at the same time. In 2020 this confirmed update will enable businesses to more easily operate across devices. This will give users the ability to use WhatsApp on their laptops even if their phone has no connection.

WhatsApp Enterprise

Just like the ads that appear in Instagram Stories, WhatsApp will introduce ads in status stories in 2020. Viewers will be able to click on the ads to see the full-screen version, and then swipe up to the advertiser's website. Facebook has indicated that the ads will be managed via its native advertising system.

In 2020 we'll be seeing more and more brands start harnessing the power of WhatsApp, as the platform opens itself up to business in very specific ways. You'll want to get a first-mover advantage by building up your WhatsApp database on the platform your customers already trust and love.

To get ahead of the pack, contact WhatsApp Enterprise market leader Techsys Digital - the agency that specialises in crafting bespoke WhatsApp lines. Find out now how Techsys uses WhatsApp to help businesses meet their objectives - whether that's improving customer service, serving loyal fans instant rewards, validating a purchase as part of a competition, or distributing rich media... plus so much more! Discover Techsys full offering here and try our demos to experience the incredible functionality of the platform that's waiting to be unlocked for your brand.

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