

Reddit Buys Dubsmash to Take on TikTok and Racism



The acquisition is part of Reddit's overall effort to expand its brand and be more inclusive.

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Social media giant Reddit announced that it acquired Dubsmash, a short-form social video company. The move broadens Reddit's reach into the video space and makes them a competitor with other video platforms such as TikTok.

"Video is increasingly core to how people want to connect, and as we continue to grow our community, we're committed to providing the best possible tools users need to find, create, and interact with one another through video," said Reddit in a press release.

The acquisition of Dubsmash also helps Reddit's effort to

become more inclusive and racially sensitive. In the past, Reddit has come under fire for its racist subreddit groups and hate speech. Dubsmash is known for its large communities of Black and Latinx creators.

“Dubsmash elevates under-represented creators, while Reddit fosters a sense of community and belonging across thousands of different topics and passions. It’s clear that our missions closely align and that our community-focused platforms can coexist and grow as we learn from each other,” said Reddit CEO Steve Huffman.

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The Dubsmash way

Dubsmash started off as a popular lip-synching app in 2015 and eventually pivoted to be more of a social platform. Like TikTok, users choose a soundbite and record a video of themselves dubbing over the audio. But while TikTok’s megastars are primarily white, Dubsmash’s communities are, according to Huffman, “driven by young, diverse creators—about 25 percent of all Black teens in the U.S. are on Dubsmash, and females represent 70 percent of users.”

Inclusion is part of Reddit’s new mission. When Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian resigned from the company’s board earlier this year, he asked that a Black candidate fill his seat on the board. His wish was granted. Y Combinator CEO Michael Seibel took over his spot.

Ohanian, who is married to tennis icon Serena Williams, made the decision partly in response to Reddit’s reputation for racism. In 2015, the Southern Poverty Law Center said Reddit was home to “the most violently racist” content on the internet. When Reddit’s former interim CEO Ellen Pao tried to stop hate speech on the platform, she was subjected to

disgusting racist harassment campaigns.

By bringing Dubsmash into the community, Reddit hopes to curb intolerance and open its doors to creative and successful content creators of color, such as Jhacari Blunt and Essence Marie.

“Just as Reddit is a place for content you won’t see anywhere else on the Internet, Dubsmash provides a welcoming platform for creators and users who are under-represented in social media,” Reddit said in a statement.

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