

Uninstalls: The Data Behind Deleted Apps

By: Deepti Chafekar and Joel Zand

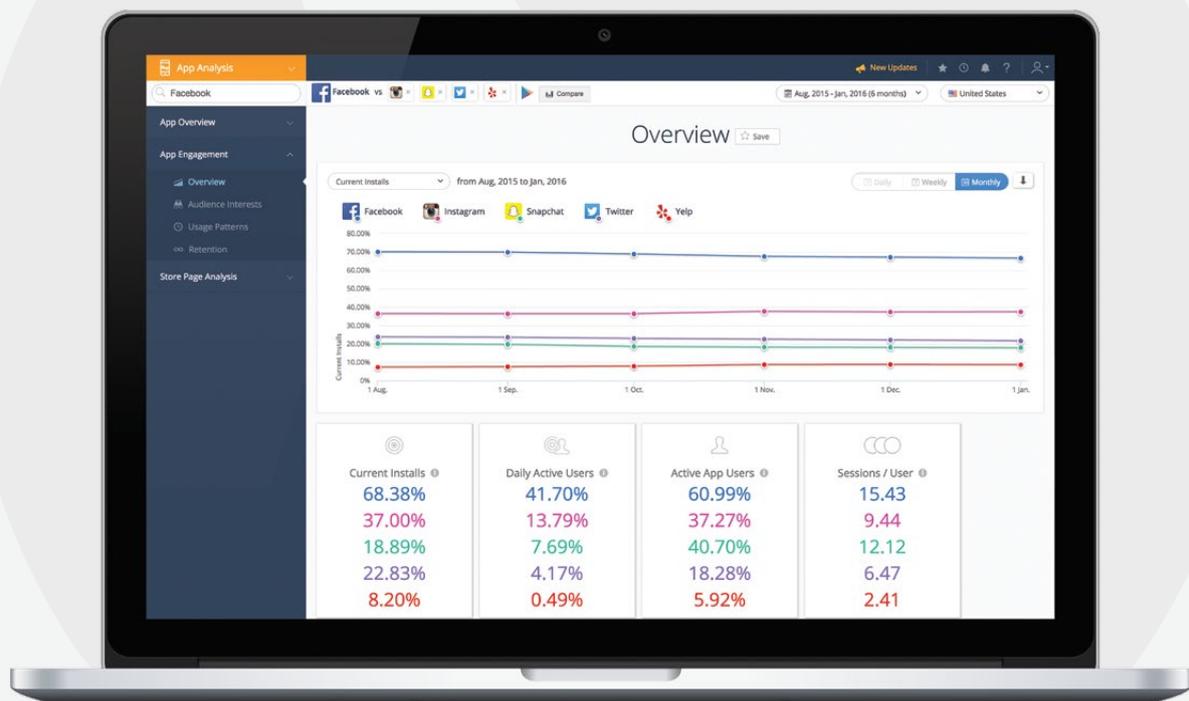


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Overview

The biggest challenge facing app developers is their ability to keep users engaged. Most apps have a short lifespan of just a few months, and the initial window to catch a user's attention is just a few days. Once an app is uninstalled, a developer's access to the user is severed.

Developers invest a lot of time, energy, and resources to acquire app users, but they cannot ignore customer retention and usage. That is why access to data on uninstalled apps needs to be part of every developer's acquisition process, not only their retention strategy.

App engagement, retention, and uninstall data allows developers to discover at what points in the user journey people tend to most use or delete an app. These lessons can be deployed by developers and their marketing teams as part of their user acquisition and retention journeys.

This report shares actionable insights gained from a global study of regular and gaming apps across the app ecosystem.

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Methodology

SimilarWeb analyzed data from over 4 million global users. Average statistics for both non-gaming and gaming apps were calculated by aggregating the top 5,000 apps and games by Daily Active Users (DAU). Per category average statistics were analyzed by aggregating the top 100 apps/games in each category based on DAUs.

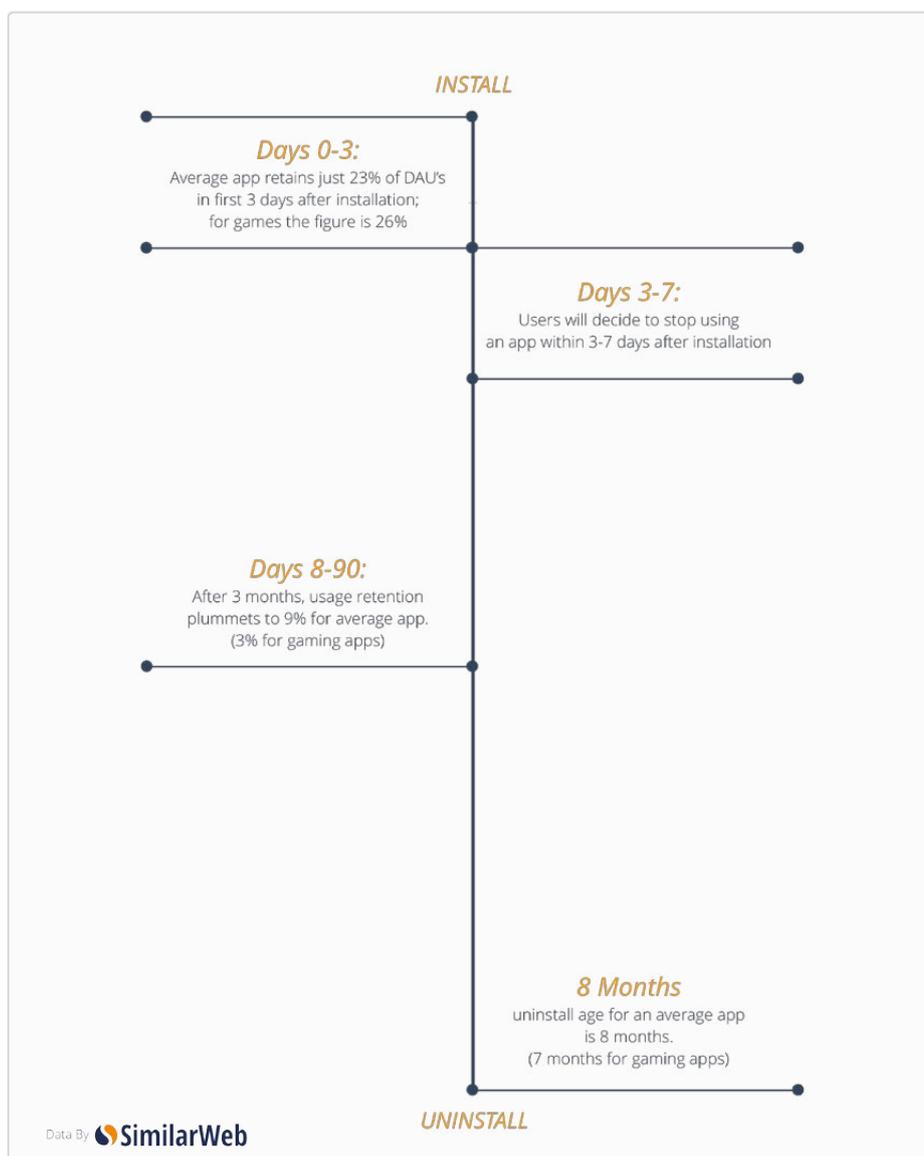
Google apps (e.g. Gmail, YouTube, Maps, Hangouts, Google Play) and other commonly pre-installed apps were excluded since this study exclusively considers Android users. Only Apps with over 10,000 installs and which had been on the market for at least 24 months were studied. Appropriate normalizations were applied to account for any panel churn and other biases that might occur as a result of a broad and diverse user base.

A note on privacy: all data that we collected is anonymous, without any personal identifiable information (PII). This is the first time ubiquitous mobile application usage was analyzed on such a large scale.

Courting Period: The Initial Installation

After a user installs an app, it gets used a lot during the first three days. However, an average app retains only 23% of its DAUs within the first three days of installation. For an average game, DAU retention is slightly higher, at 26% for the first three days.

The first three to seven days after an app's installation are critical, since this time period sets the tone for future engagement. Apps with high three-day usage retention rates tend to drive high engagement in the future.



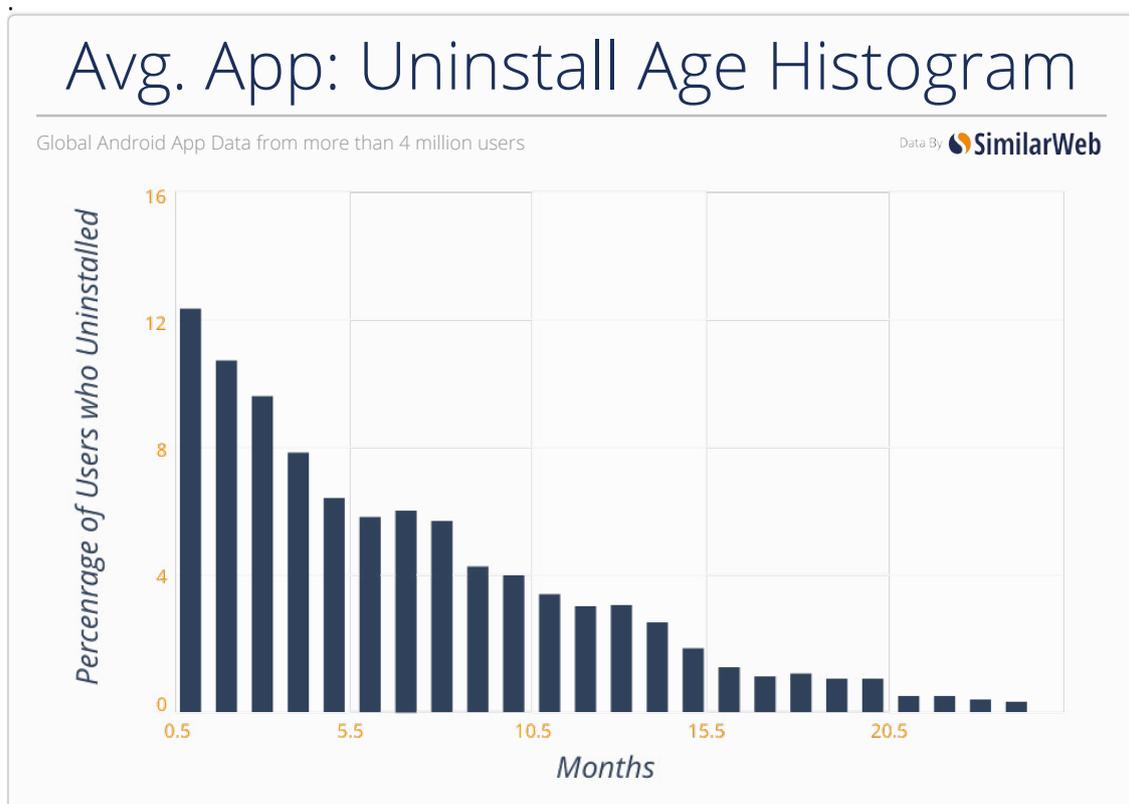
Uninstalls and the Parting of Ways:

“I’m Just Not That Into Your App”

App Store Optimization (ASO) is important for developers, sales, and marketing teams to get their app in the hands of users. According to SimilarWeb’s Ankit Jain, “for the average app, search actually makes up the vast majority of installs.”

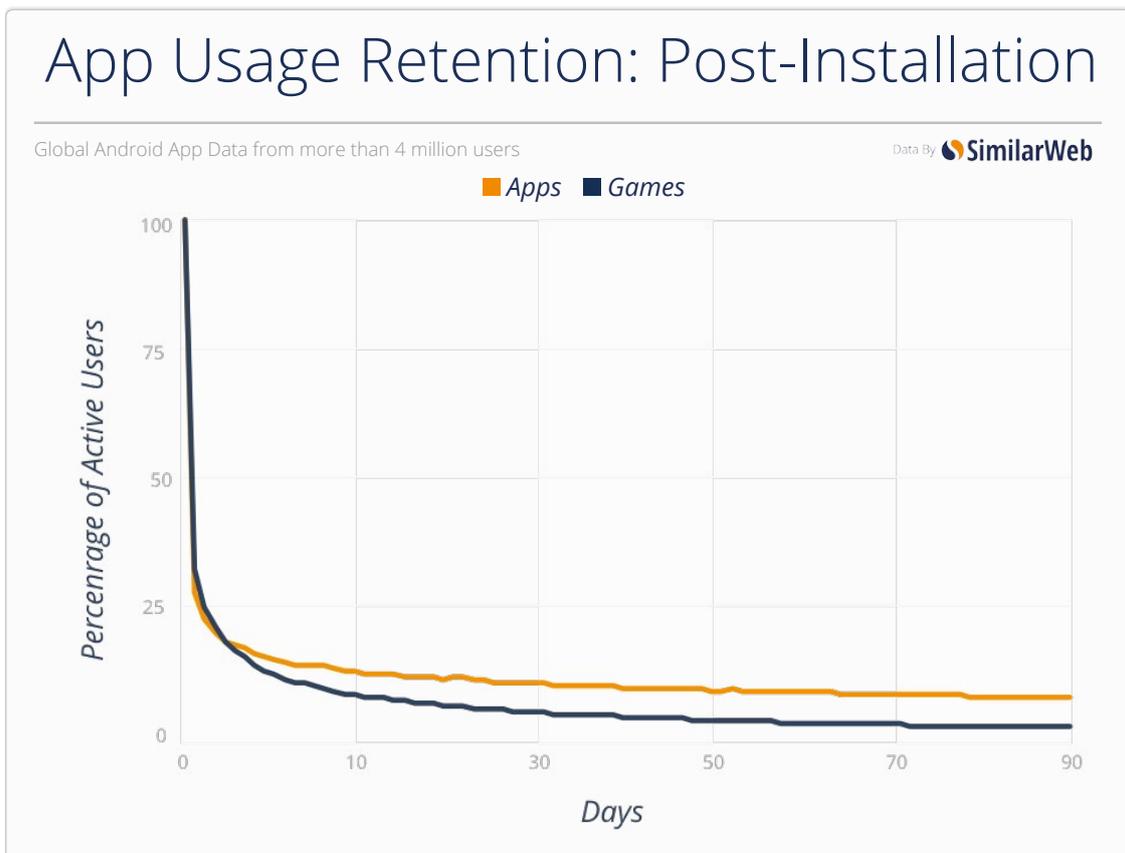
Uninstalls, however, hurt ASO within the app store itself since each deleted app costs more money in the long run. This is because uninstalls affect not only acquisition revenue, but also future revenue caused by the drop in optimization.

The time before an average app is uninstalled is approximately 8 months, and for gaming apps it is about 7 months.



Staying Committed: *Post-Installation Activity*

Users go on a lot of 'first dates' with apps, but they often decide which ones they want to stop using within the first 3-7 days. For the majority of apps, usage begins to plummet during this initial stage.



For popular apps, the majority of users retained for 7 days stick around much longer.

The key to going on second and third dates with an app – and developing a real relationship with it is getting users to fall in love with the app during that initial 3-7 day period.

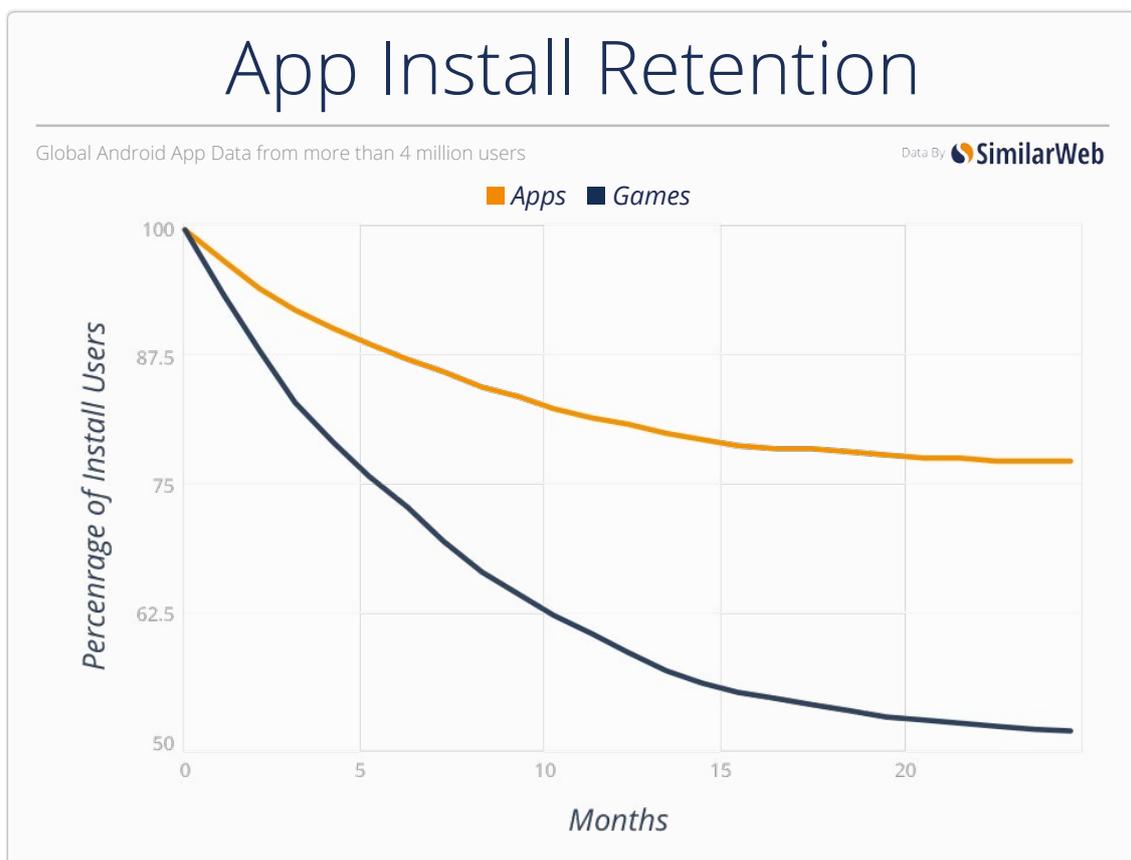
Keeping The App Relationship and Engagement Alive

Despite an app's drop in daily active users after the first three to seven days, install retention still remains high. This implies that users still keep the app installed on their devices, even though they use it less frequently.

$$\text{Install Retention} = \frac{\text{Avg. Number of Users who Installed App A*d Days}}{\text{Total Number of App A Users in Study}}$$

A drop in an app's install retention is gradual, and not as sharp as the drop in usage retention. For the average app, a decline in a user's commitment to it is seen by a drop in install retention. This generally starts after five (5) months into a user's relationship with the app. Games see a sharper drop in install retention than non-gaming apps.

- 90% - Average share of users who keep an app installed for the first three months.
- 83% - Average share of users who keep a gaming app installed during the first 3 months.



App Usage Retention

There is a big divide in the usage and install characteristics of an app. After installing an app, people generally hesitate to delete it. Do they continue to use the app a lot, or just a little? No matter what the app category, usage tends to drop dramatically over time. What does that mean for the app relationship?

The data suggests that people quickly lose interest in most apps. An average app's usage retention drops to just 9% after 3 months, even if it still remains installed on 90% of devices. That usage retention rate drops even lower to just 3% for an average game, showing how challenging the app gaming market remains.

There can be many different reasons that people stay with an app, even if they seldom use it. Plummeting usage retention rates are an indication, however, that users either just might not be that into your app, or only have an occasional need for it.

Usage and Installs: A Look at App Categories

Despite high install retention rates, uninstalls still occur. What are the usage and install retentions of different app and gaming categories?

App Categories with High Install and High Usage Retention Rates

Three app categories – *News & Magazine, Productivity, and Communication* – have high installation and high usage retention rates 3 months after an app is first installed.

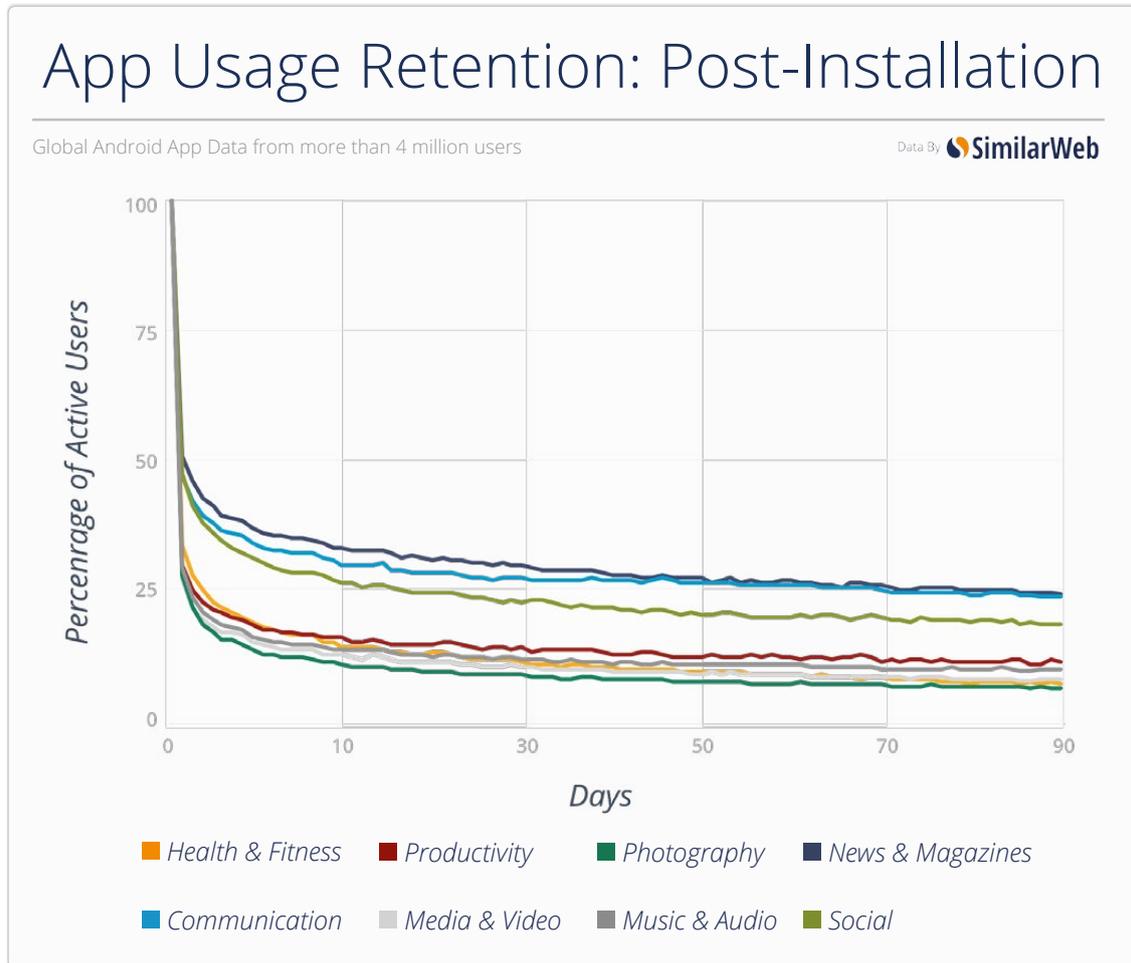
App Category Install Rates

Global Android App Data from more than 4 million users

Data By  SimilarWeb

Time Since First Installed	Health & Fitness	Media & Video	News & Magazines	Communication	Photography	Social	Productivity	Music & Audio
1 month	96.53%	96.18%	98.42%	96.55%	95.65%	94.29%	96.57%	95.46%
3 months	89.18%	90.05%	95.29%	91.38%	88.74%	86.30%	91.83%	88.45%
6 months	80.70%	83.66%	91.33%	86.07%	81.46%	78.80%	87.19%	81.67%
8 months	75.21%	79.51%	88.36%	82.68%	77.27%	74.32%	84.31%	77.68%
12 months	71.13%	76.18%	85.96%	79.84%	74.08%	70.87%	81.98%	74.55%
18 months	62.46%	69.16%	79.91%	73.99%	66.65%	63.49%	76.61%	69.03%
24 months	61.01%	67.64%	78.19%	72.85%	64.81%	62.11%	75.15%	67.91%

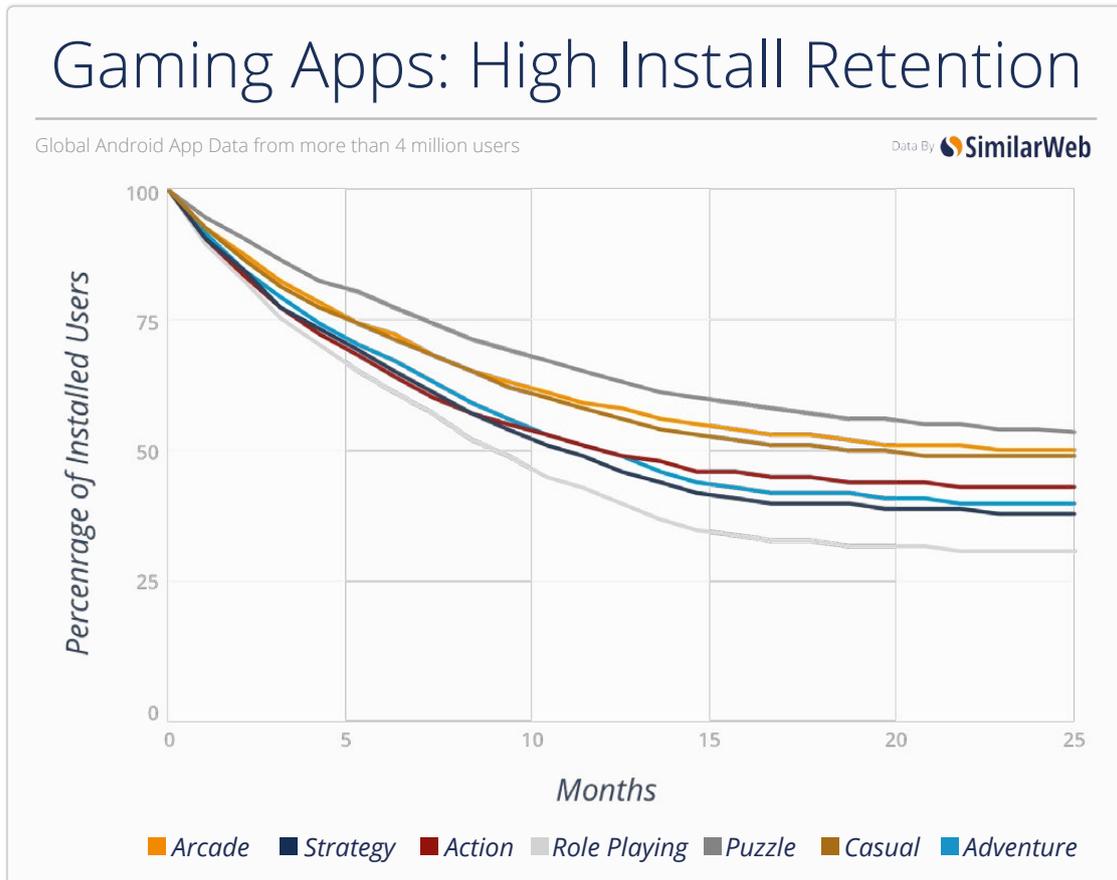
While average usage retention rates drop dramatically during the initial 3 days after an app's first installation, three categories have higher rates than others. Not surprisingly these categories include News & Magazines, Communication, and Social apps.



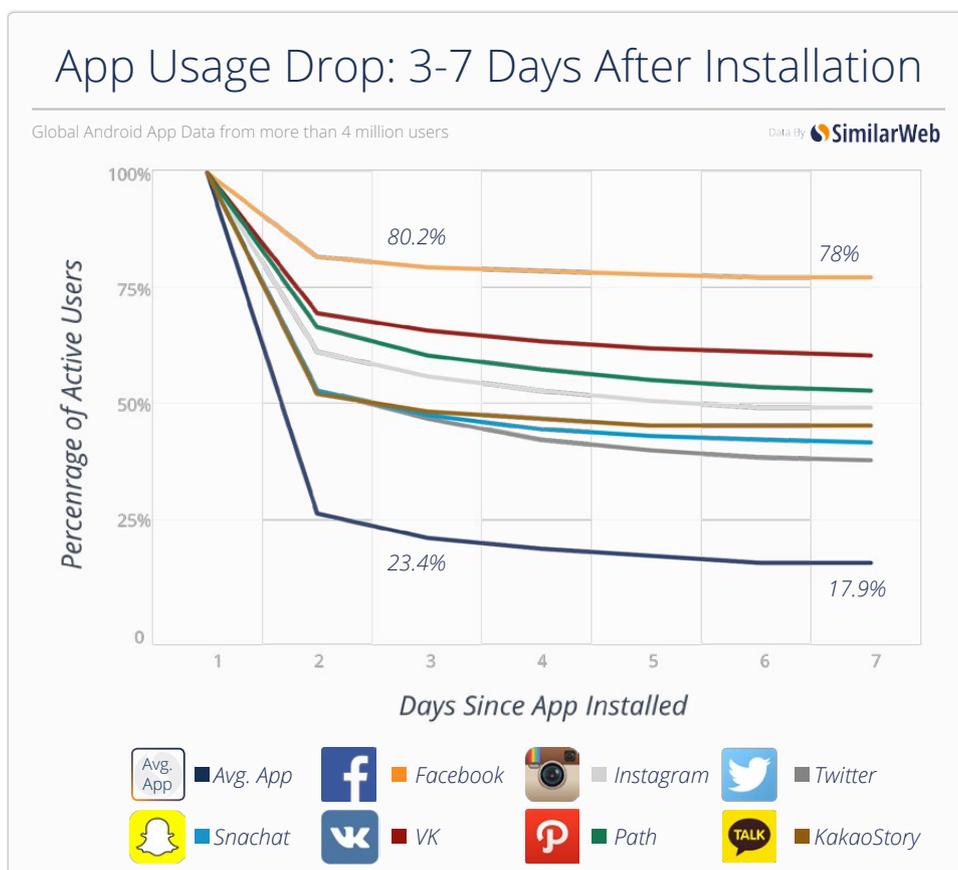
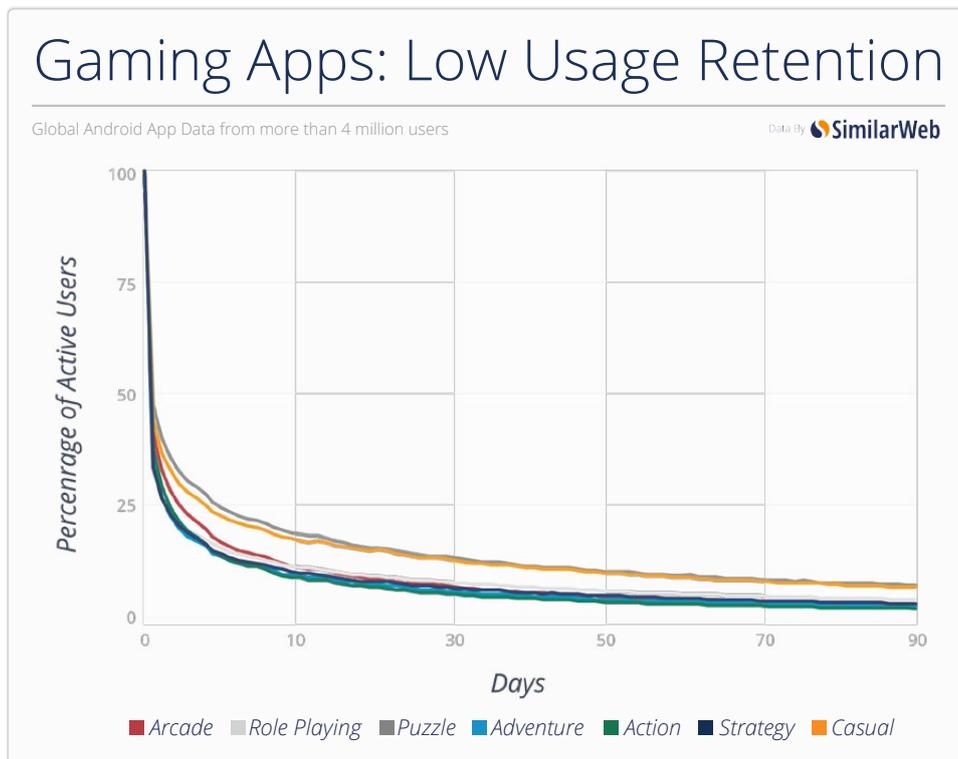
Gaming Apps: High Install and Low Usage Retention

For an average gaming app, there is a relatively high 83% install retention rate after three months, especially for puzzles and casual games.

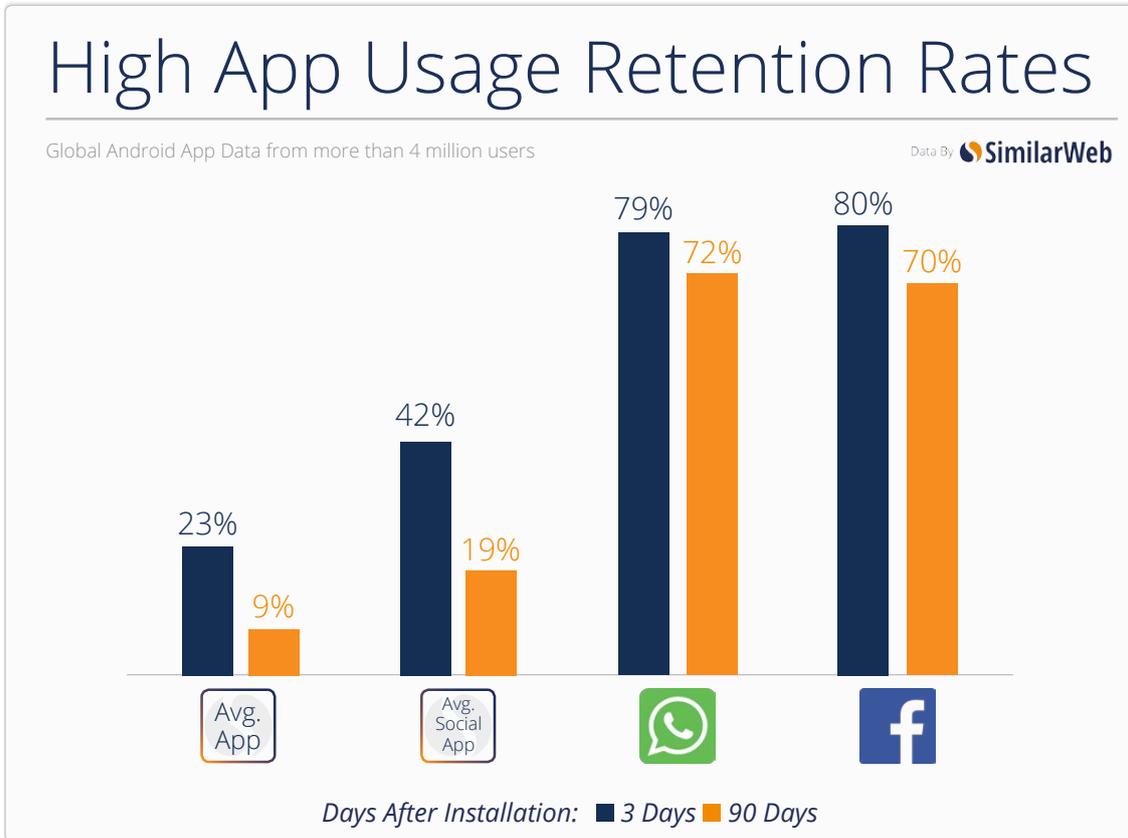
Some game categories do better than others at keeping users from deleting apps from their mobile devices.



Conversely, gamers are quick to lose their interest in newly installed gaming apps. On average, just 3% of people with a game app use it each day three months after it was first installed.



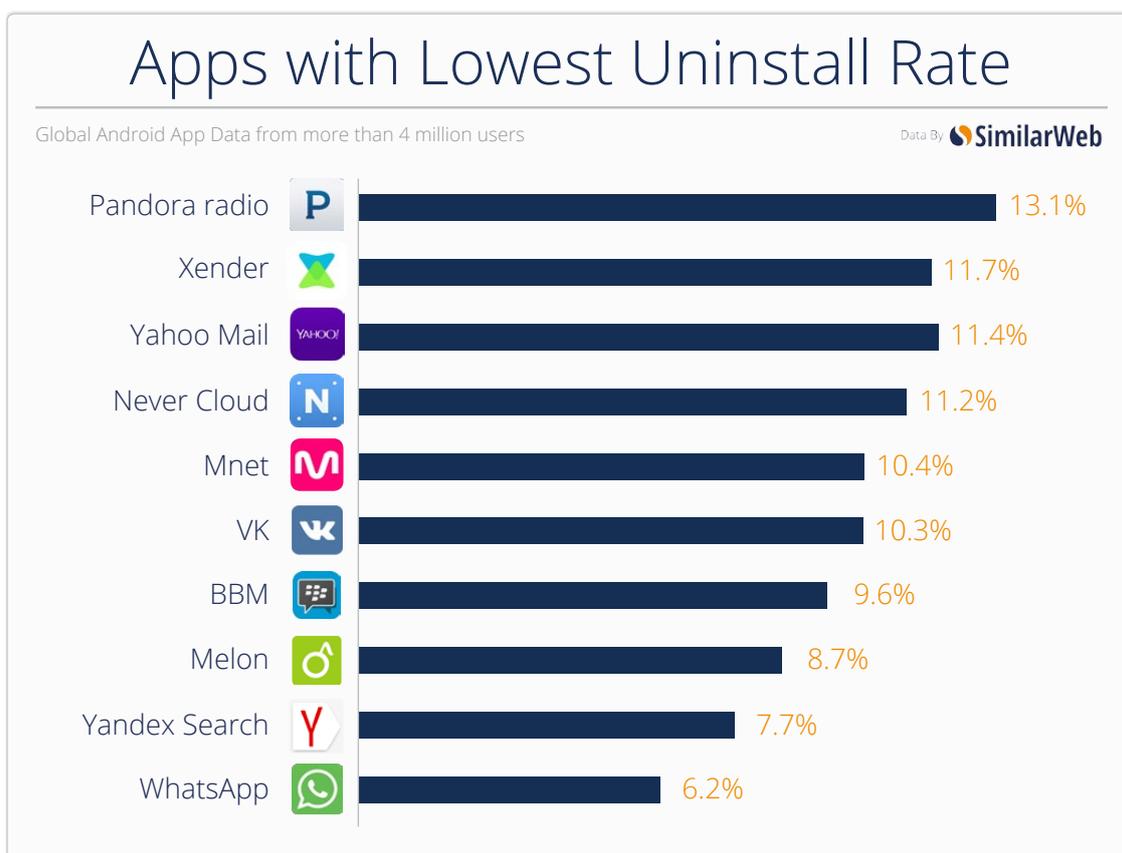
Extremely successful apps like Facebook and WhatsApp have very high three-day usage retentions of 80% and 79% respectively. Even after 90 days retention rates for these two apps remain incredibly high at 70% and 72% respectively.



Top and Bottom Apps By Uninstall Percentage

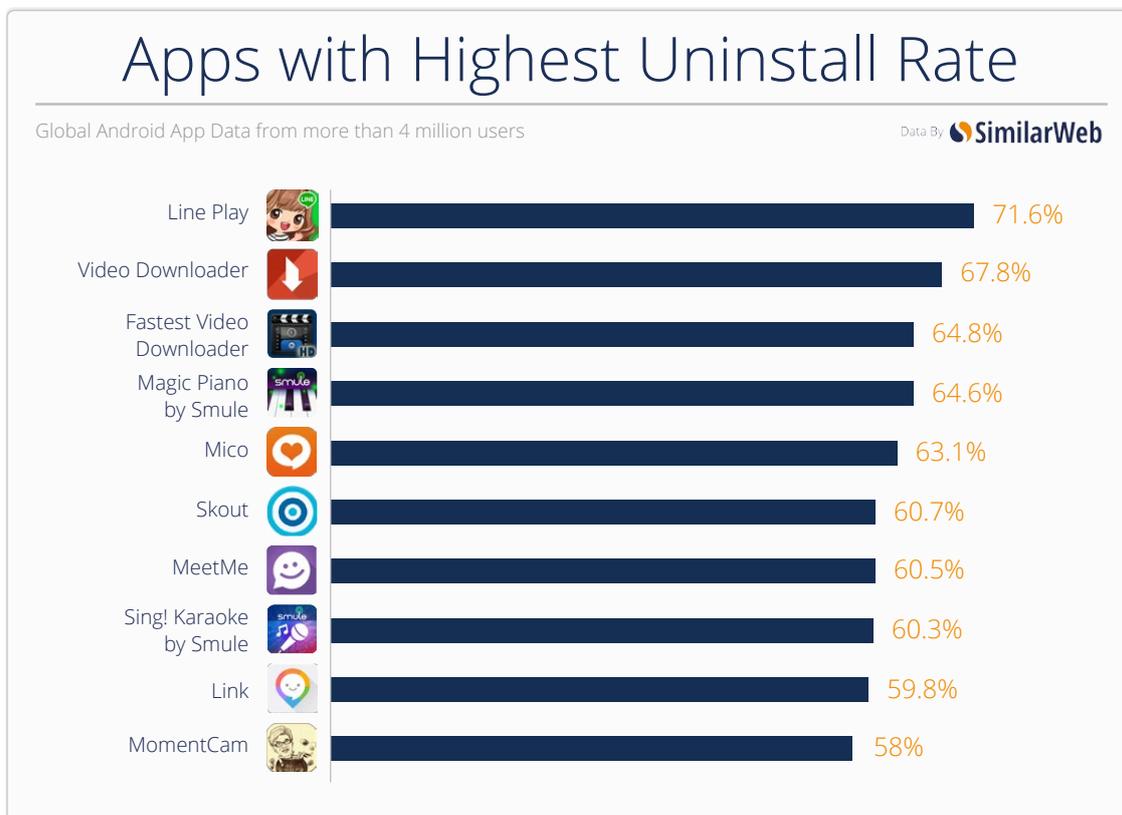
Apps with Low Uninstall Rates

Which Android apps were the least deleted? Leading the pack is WhatsApp, the Facebook-owned communication app. Two Russian apps, Yandex Search and VK, made the top 10 list. Three South Korean apps – Melon, Mnet, and Naver Cloud – also had excellent uninstall rates. Yahoo Mail, Pandora, and the Xender file transfer app also did well.



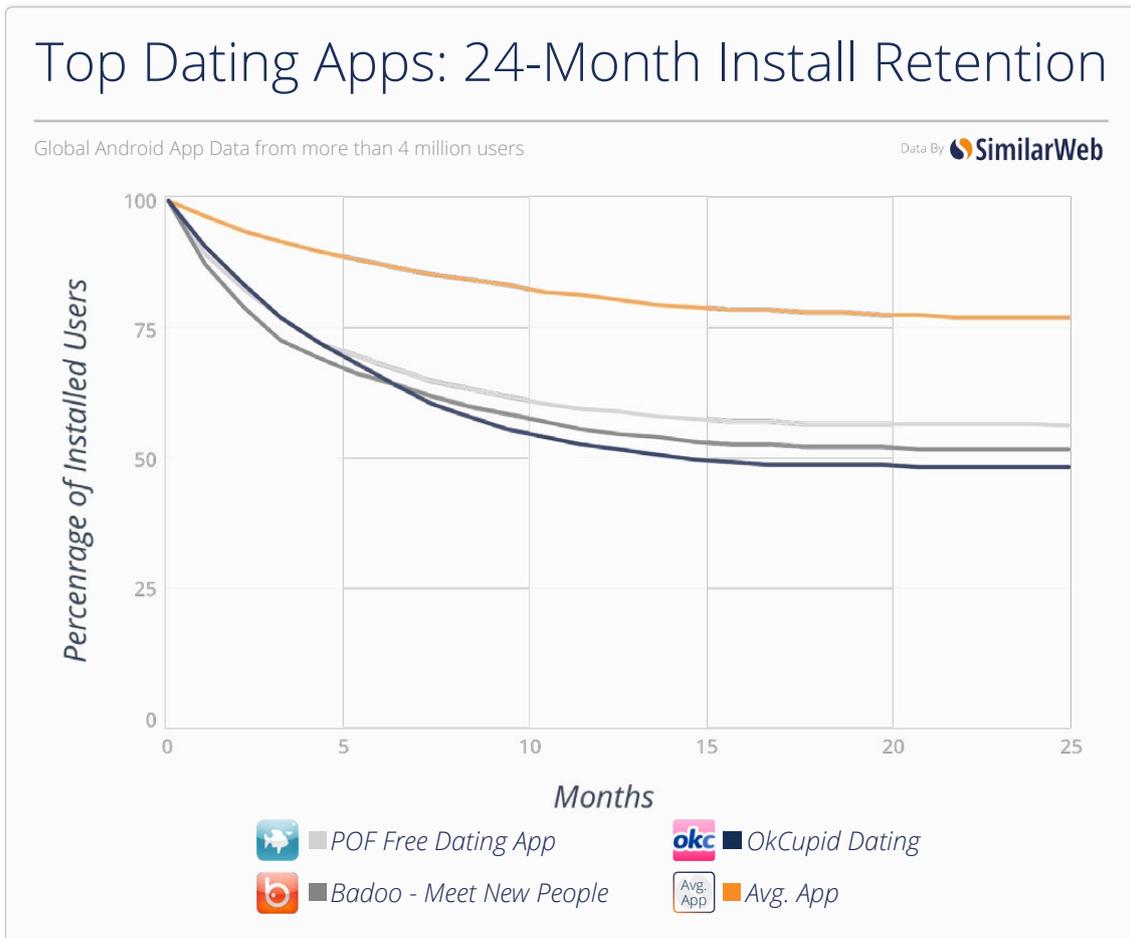
Apps with the Highest Uninstall Rates

Data showed that, globally, Android avatar app Line Play had the highest uninstall rate, followed by two video download apps. Two Smule music apps, Magic Piano and Sing! Karaoke had high Android uninstall rates.



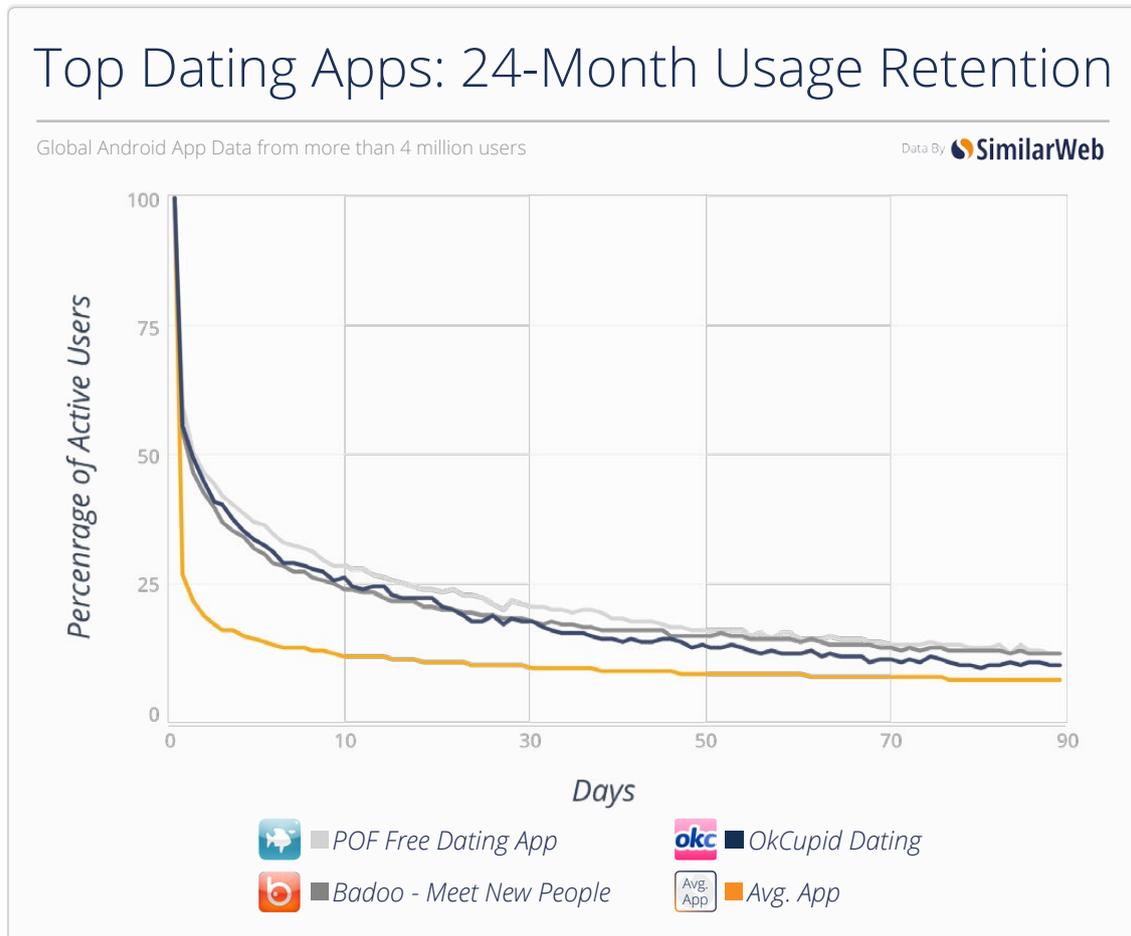
Dating Apps: High Usage and Low Install Retention Rates

As a category, social apps tend to have high usage retention, but surprisingly low install retention rates. Dating apps in particular fit this profile. Just like romantic relationships, people who use dating apps tend to spend a fair amount of time looking for a good match. While that is reflected in the apps' 24-month install retention rates, dating apps have much lower install retention rates than the average for other social apps.



As a subset of the social app category, dating apps actually lower the average install retention of all social apps.

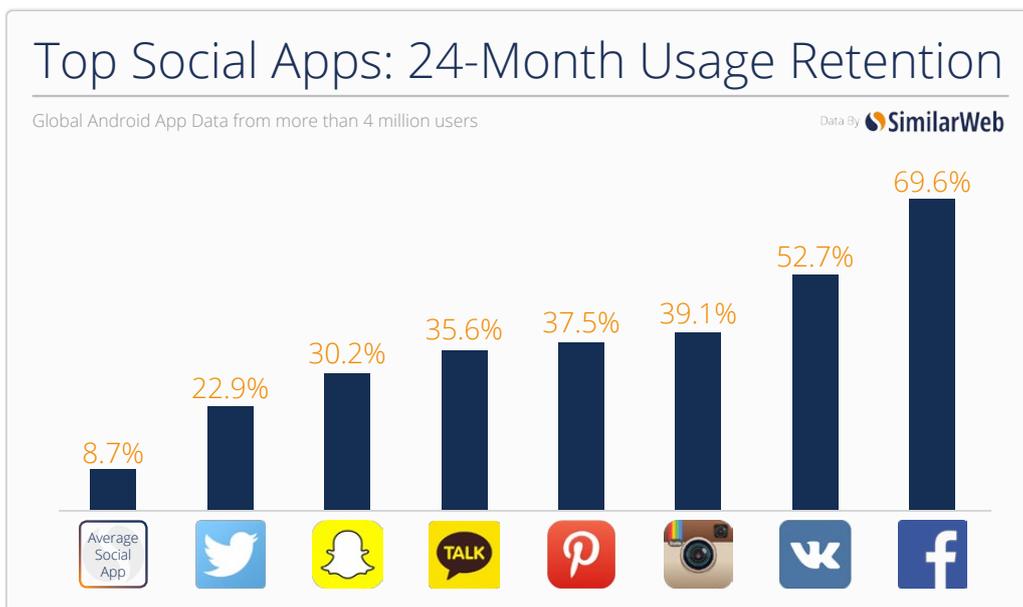
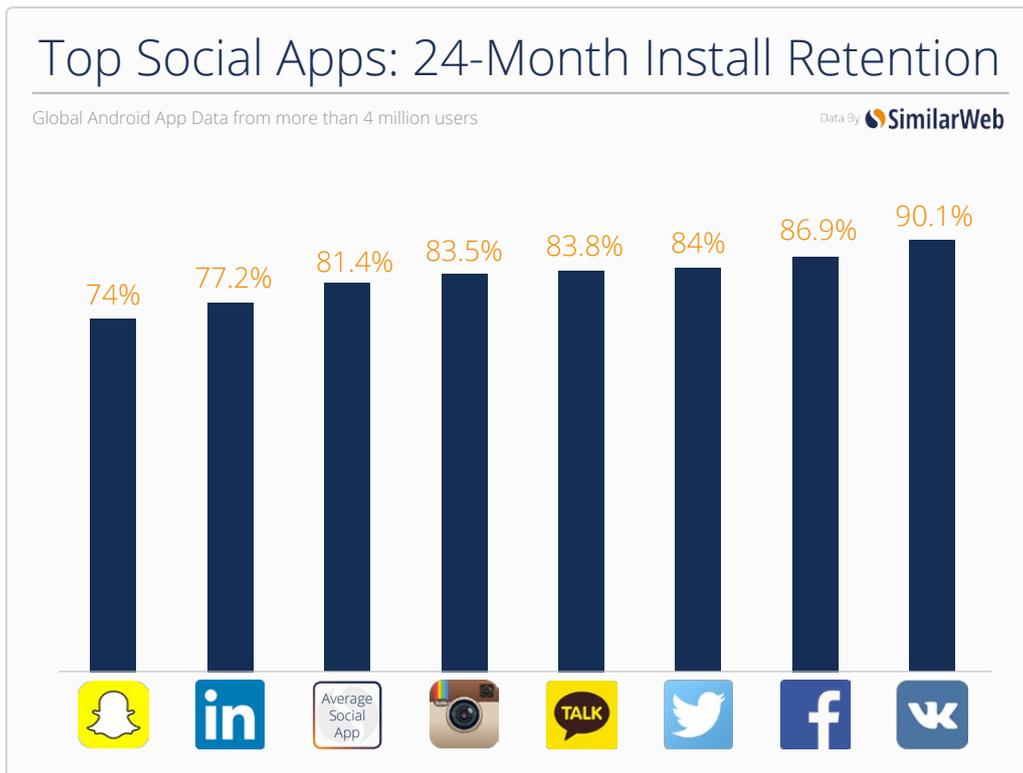
Dating apps in the social category have much higher usage retention rates than the average social app. This suggests that when people start using dating apps, they are hopeful, curious, and optimistic about finding a good match. Once they enter a real relationship, they are more likely to either uninstall or stop using the app.



Top Social Apps: High Installation and High Usage Rates

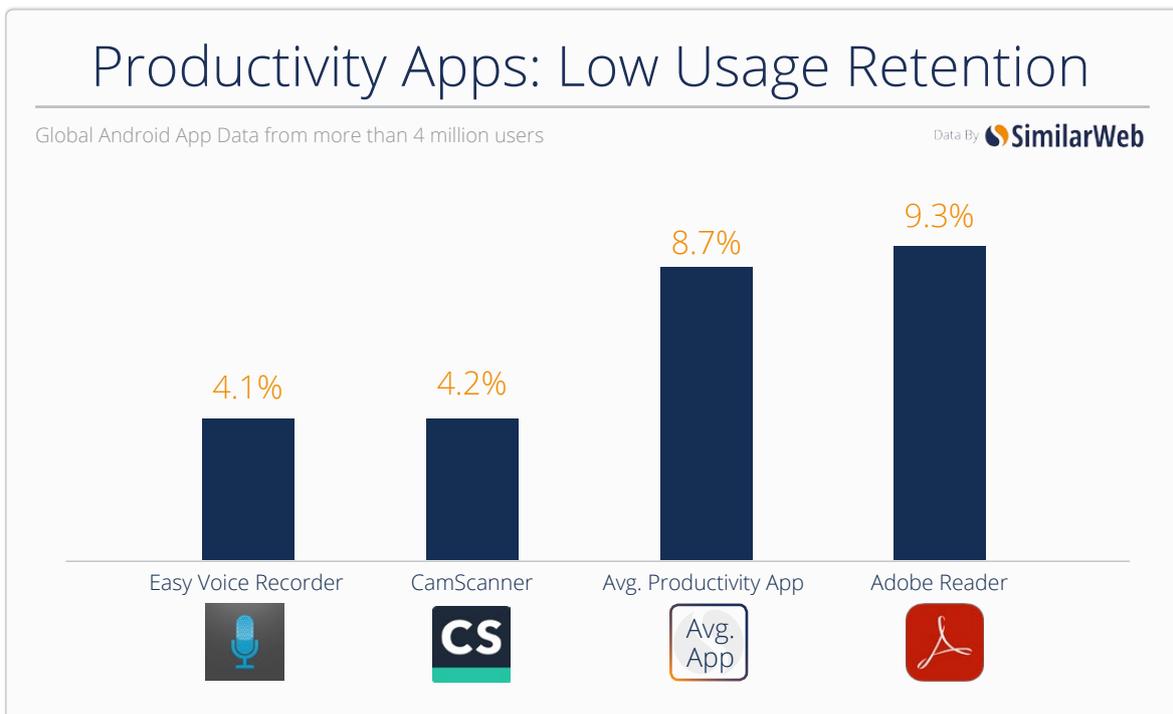
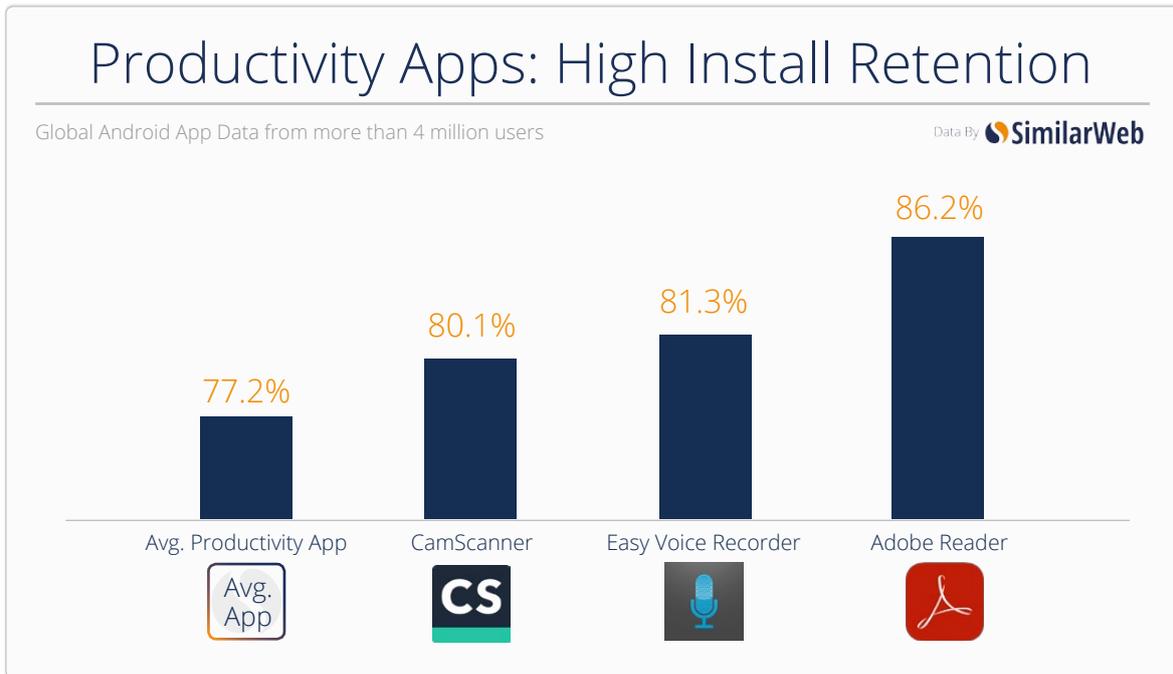
The data revealed the top Android social apps worldwide that people still have on their mobile devices after 24 months. The most retained app is Russia's VK ahead of Facebook, while professional social networking app LinkedIn made the global install retention list.

Contrary to their category's trend, these successful social apps have a combination of high install and high usage retention rates.



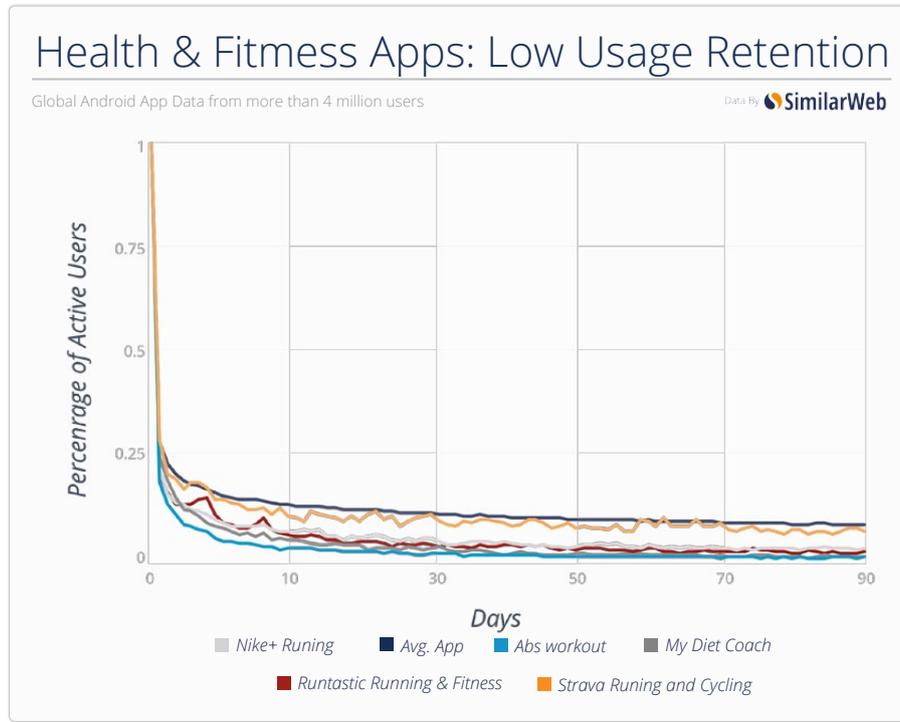
Productivity Apps: High Installation and Low Usage Retention Rates

Productivity apps entice users into enhancing their performance or effectiveness personally or professionally, but the overall category failed to achieve long term usage among users, despite remaining on devices. Apps like Adobe's Acrobat Reader for Android saw high installation rates but low active daily usage retention rates.

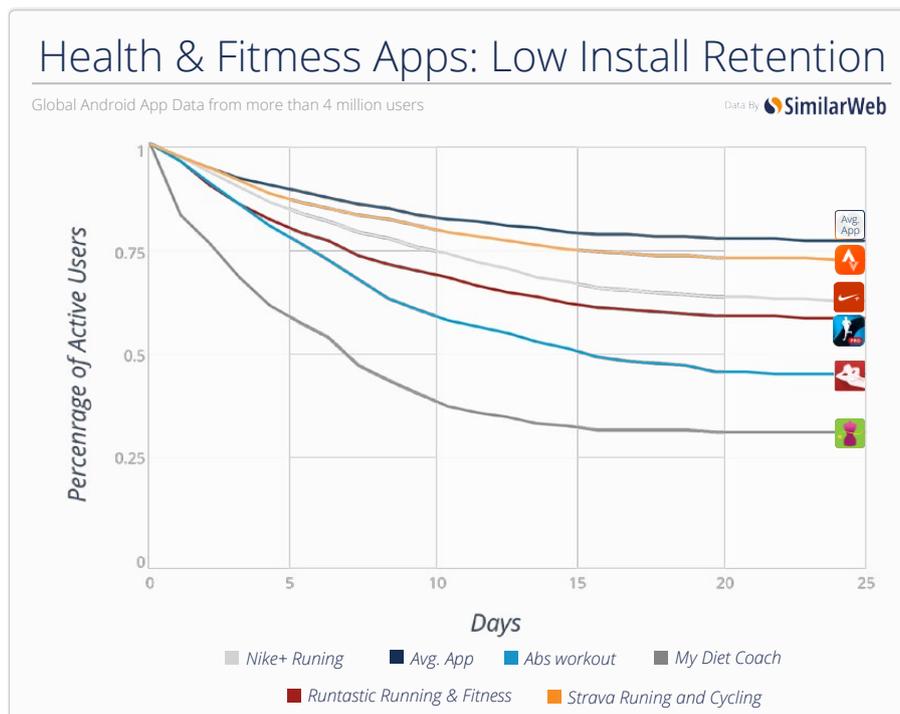


Health & Fitness Apps: Low Installation and Low Usage Retention Rates

The category with the lowest app install and usage retention rates was Health & Fitness. Nike+ Running, Strava Running, and others apps had install retention rates that were less than the average app category.



Usage retention rates for Health & Fitness apps plummeted to less than a quarter of one-percent after less than 10 days. These rates, again, were lower than the already low rates for average apps.



Takeaways

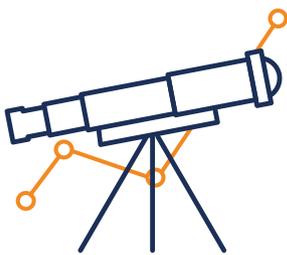
- A user tends to keep an app installed on their device for a long period of time, even if she doesn't use it frequently.
- App uninstall rates are more gradual than app usage rates.
- The experience a user has with an app during the first 3-7 days is a strong indication of whether they will continue to use the app or not.
- It is harder to retain installations and achieve regular use of gaming apps compared to non-gaming apps.
- News & Magazine, Communication, and Productivity are the three app categories with the highest retention rates.
- Health & Fitness apps tend to have the worst install and usage retention rates.
- Puzzle, Arcade, and Casual apps have the highest uninstall rates in the gaming app category.
- While gaming app usage retention rates are quite low, puzzle and arcade games have the best rates in the category.

Get Actionable App Insights

SimilarWeb's app insights enable app developers, businesses, and investors to:

- Discover strengths and weaknesses of their competitors' apps
- Reveal their online app marketing strategies
- Decide which app metrics can be improved, and
- Deploy digital marketing strategies to effectively engage new and existing users.

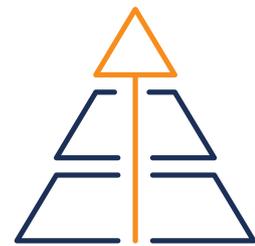
To learn more about how we can help you improve your app installation, usage, and uninstall rates, call SimilarWeb at 800-540-1086, or *contact us online*.



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2. We partner with Internet Service Providers around the world and integrate their data into our system. Working with ISPs enables us to sit on the pipes that shift internet data around the world and analyse this data, providing us with a deeper understanding of online trends.
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