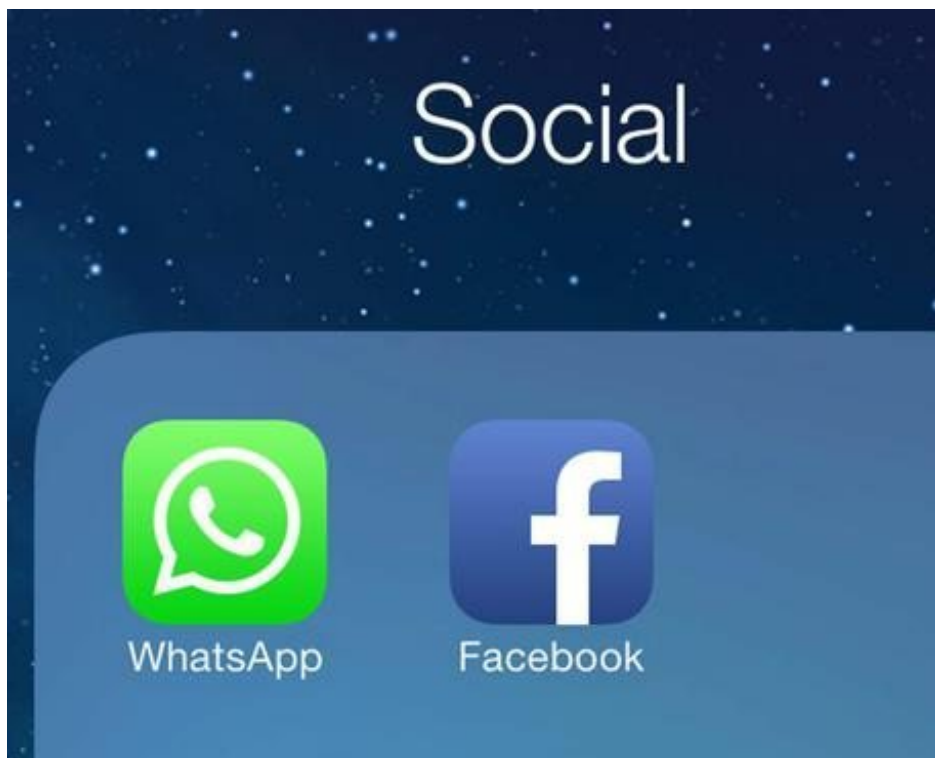


## Facebook takes the next step to monetize WhatsApp

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Facebook Inc is gearing up to make money from WhatsApp, the messaging service used by more than a billion people every day, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday.



WhatsApp will be testing new features to make it easier for people to communicate with businesses they want to reach on WhatsApp, the messaging service said on a blog post.

“We’re building and testing new tools via a free WhatsApp Business app for small companies and an enterprise solution for bigger companies operating at a large scale with a global base of customers, like airlines, e-commerce sites, and banks,” according to the blog post.

WhatsApp has already started a pilot program that would feature a green badge next to a business contact, indicating that the business was verified by the messaging service.

"We do intend on charging businesses in the future," Chief Operating Officer Matt Idema told the Journal in an interview.

Reuters had reported in March that a potential revenue source for WhatsApp was to charge businesses that want to contact customers, citing company documents.

Started in 2009, WhatsApp was acquired by Facebook for an eye-popping \$22 billion in 2014. While WhatsApp had little revenue at the time of the deal, the purchase price was slightly more than the market value of Sony Corp.

Facebook has not focused on WhatsApp so far. The social network had started showing ads inside its Messenger app in July to further monetize the chat service.

Idema declined to describe the paid features or say when they would make their debut, according to the report. "We don't have the details of monetization figured out," he told the Journal.