Meta and Vodafone optimise video to boost network efficiency

Reuters – Instagram-owner Meta (META.O), opens new tab has worked with Vodafone (VOD.L) to free up capacity on 11 of its European mobile networks by optimising the delivery of short-form video without noticeably compromising the viewing experience.

Demand for video on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube is driving relentless growth in data usage on mobile networks.

Global traffic grew 25% in the 12 months to the first quarter of 2024, according to Ericsson's 2024 Mobility Report, and video accounted for 73% of all mobile traffic by the end of 2023.

Telecom operators including Vodafone have complained that they have to shoulder the cost of upgrading networks while the Big Tech companies that benefit get a free ride.

An EU push to make Big Tech contribute to 5G investment stalled last year, and there is no chance it will be revived before the end of the year, if it is at all.

Vodafone said partnering with platforms like Meta was a "pragmatic way" to address the debate around fair share.

"Meta's willingness to optimise the delivery of video for its applications leads the way for a more efficient use of existing network resources," said Alberto Ripepi, Vodafone's chief network officer.

"Vodafone and Meta have implemented these optimisations across Vodafone's European markets and intend to continue collaborating to foster additional efficiencies."

Vodafone said the optimisation resulted in a low double-digit reduction in Meta's data traffic on its British network during a trial in April, freeing up capacity in busy locations like shopping centres and transport hubs.

Meta's vice president of network engineering Gaya Nagarajan said the company was committed to working with innovative partners like Vodafone, device manufacturers, equipment vendors and the wider digital ecosystem to push the boundaries

of video optimisation.
Spain’s Telefonica said last week it was also working with Meta on optimising video traffic delivery on its networks.
Reuters