

3.4.16: Instagram

Learning Objectives

Describe the primary use of Instagram

Instagram entered the collective consciousness in 2010, bringing with it the application of filters to smartphone photographs. As smartphone use has grown, Instagram has seen its membership skyrocket and its company success take off, ultimately leading to their purchase by Facebook in 2012. That's right, the third most popular social media platform for business use is owned by the number one platform.

Instagram allows people to take their ordinary smartphone photos and turn them into nostalgic or other-worldly looking high quality images.

Domino's Pizza

Even something as simple as a [Domino's Pizza can look extraordinary on Instagram!](#) As you look at the company's profile, you can pick out a few "best practices" for Instagram posting:

1. Try to post only once a day
2. Use relevant hashtags to make your posts easy to find
3. Invite people to comment in your captions

While businesses certainly use Instagram, the top users of Instagram tend to be individuals interested in creating a personal brand. The notion of a "personal brand" is a relatively new idea, augmented and now fully embedded into mass marketing by tools like Instagram. Here are the users of Instagram with the most followers according to Social Blade. Note the relationship here between celebrity and overall marketing.

The link between celebrity and advertising has been around a long time—just check out the ad in Figure 1 from 1915. Today's version of this is a Kardashian or The Rock hashtagging a product or posting a picture of themselves with a product. While consumers are well aware of celebrity endorsements, these product recommendations can seem more genuine coming from someone's Instagram account than if the celebrity is featured on a brand's own Instagram account.



Figure 1. A 1915 Newspaper Coca-Cola ad from the *Morning Oregonian*. Even over a century ago, celebrity endorsements were used to sell products.

✓ Selena Gomez

Selena Gomez's account has over 130 million followers. In the following article, note the [controversy surrounding her taking a picture of herself drinking a Coke](#).

If you decide to use Instagram, the following video details its basic functions. Note the integration with Facebook given Facebook's ownership of Instagram.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/bcsfm/?p=460

When assessing the usefulness of Instagram, you should keep the pros and cons listed in Table 1 in mind:

Table 1. Pros and Cons of Instagram as a Social Media Platform

Pros	Cons
Ability to create multiple topic-based accounts	Image-based content can limit the type of message communicated
Excellent and easy integration with Facebook	Tends to attract a younger user base

Table 1. Pros and Cons of Instagram as a Social Media Platform

Pros	Cons
Great design	Changing algorithms can change how often you should post

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