

BEYOND THE NEWS FEED: WHY STORIES ARE BECOMING THE NEW FACE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the ubiquity of social media Feeds over the last decade, they are slowly being superseded by Stories— the mobile-first format initially popularized by Snapchat. Today, over 970 million accounts across Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat and Facebook Messenger consume or create these swipeable, vertical video montages every day. That’s an 842% lift since early 2016— and from Q2 2016 through Q3 2017 the format had a growth rate 15 times higher than Feeds on major social platforms. At the current trajectory, well over 1 billion social account will use Stories daily by the end of the year.

A key reason for the sea change: Feeds were designed in the era of desktop computing, but Stories were built— from inception— for camera-equipped smartphone culture. The meteoric rise of the format is driven in no small part by Facebook’s determination to usurp an innovation it deems unstoppable. It has adopted a ‘Clone Wars’ strategy, that despite its shamelessness, has proven highly effective. This has inspired other tech giants like Google and Netflix to rally around the format.

With over 300 million daily Stories users, including roughly 60% of its audience, Instagram has become the center of gravity for vertical video. We tracked 100 leading Instagram accounts across 14 industry verticals for two weeks, and found that 79% posted Stories— at an average of 2.3 Stories per week and 8 posts per Story (active companies averaged 2.9 Stories per week). Notably, the total content shared on Instagram Stories was nearly even with the Feed (in aggregate, the 100 accounts shared 4,112 pieces of content to the Feed and 3,712 to Stories).

Thanks to new partnerships and open platform announcements, 2018 will be a big year for businesses launching augmented reality experiences and customized GIF stickers for Stories. Companies are also beginning to experiment with longform Stories— and retention rates for this content are likely to outpace similar content consumed in the Feed.

Despite the popularity of Stories, it poses potential challenges to businesses that are currently staffed for expertise in Feeds. The social media manager’s job description will require an overhaul, or at least an expansion, to include skills like storytelling, videography, photography, graphic design, augmented reality, and a host of platform-specific tools. Without these competencies on hand, companies may under-resource efforts on Stories and fall behind competitors. But with the right planning, this challenge is easily surmountable.

INTRODUCTION

Buried between major announcements on Facebook’s January 2018 earnings call, Mark Zuckerberg made a bold prediction that went largely unreported by the media:

“We expect Stories are on track to overtake posts in Feed as the most common way that people share across all social apps. That’s because Stories is a better format for sharing multiple quick video clips throughout your day.”¹

Historically, Zuckerberg has shown an uncanny ability to spot and adopt trends long before they render his own platform obsolete. It’s easy to forget that News Feed, like Stories, was a trending product Facebook borrowed from competitors and bet on big. At launch in 2006, users revolted— a “Students Against Facebook News Feed” gained 100,000+ users in 24 hours, and others called for boycotts. Zuckerberg’s public response via blog: “Calm down. Breathe. We hear you.” Eventually the trends analysis bore out, and users embraced the format.^{2 3}

When Facebook purchased WhatsApp for \$22B in 2014, many wrote it off as sheer lunacy— but Zuckerberg was acting on data, not impulse.⁴ At the time, if you cared to look closely, the writing was on the walls: messaging apps were poised to overtake social networks in global popularity.

According to BI Intelligence, chat platforms finally surpassed social networks in early 2015, a full year after Facebook secured the crown jewel in the messaging kingdom.⁵ And today, Zuckerberg has repositioned Facebook as a messaging-first company with 1.5 billion monthly users on WhatsApp, 1.3 billion on Messenger, and a suite of messaging tools added to Instagram to entice its 800 million monthly users.⁶

With that challenge met, Stories emerged as the new priority— a Snapchat innovation that has become Facebook’s big bet for the future of social media.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

This research paper aims to provide the most detailed snapshot to-date of where the industry stands in its gradual shift from News Feed to Stories. It presents data that brings Zuckerberg's prediction into focus— and in the process may lead companies to re-evaluate their social media strategy, staffing, and resource allocation.

Feeds will remain important for years to come, but they are a product born of a different time when desktop was king, and the iPhone didn't even exist yet. In the intervening years, mobile video streaming and visual communication on chat apps (in the form of photos, video, stickers, GIFs, and stickers) became de rigueur among millennials. Stories fused together those features to create a video-first, broadcast medium that still feels one-to-one— a social media and messaging hybrid for the mobile era.

Here are the three key reasons Stories is proving to be an unstoppable force re-shaping social media:

1. The Rise of Online Video Culture

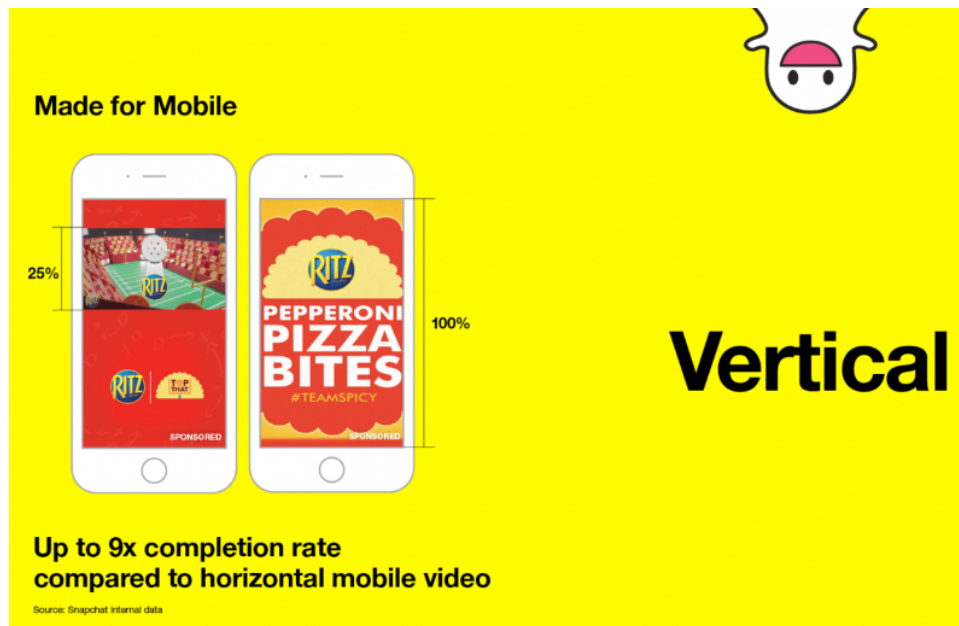
Internet video has undeniably captured the hearts and minds of younger generations. According to a Google-commissioned survey, 40% of teen YouTube subscribers believe their favorite YouTube creators understand them better than their own friends. And 70% say they relate to YouTube stars more than traditional celebrities.⁷

For older generations, Andy Warhol and The Truman Show acted as oracles of what fame and content would look like in the future. But neither could predict that millions of people would shoot and star in their own selfie reality shows, made on-the go with mobile phones. Stories democratize this undertaking, delivering simple tools that don't require professional videography or editing skills.

Ultimately, this also levels the playing field for businesses. Before the dawn of social media, most companies didn't have to act as independent publishers, photo studios, and video makers to connect with an audience throughout the week. The resources required today to content can be immense, and tools that expedite and streamline the process deliver tremendous value.

2. Vertical Video Is Right For Mobile

Several years ago, people could be ridiculed for shooting vertical video on mobile phones; but no longer. What was labeled “wrong” by horizontal video purists turned out to be “right” for simple reasons: people enjoy full screen video and their hands are most comfortable holding phones vertically. Snapchat started fighting that uphill battle with advertisers in 2015— positing that vertical leads to “up to 9x” the completion rate of horizontal video. Three years later, and after decades of film and TV companies shooting exclusively in horizontal, hundreds of millions of people now happily consume and create vertical clips every day.⁸



3. A Turn Towards Privacy (Even In The Face of Over-Sharing)

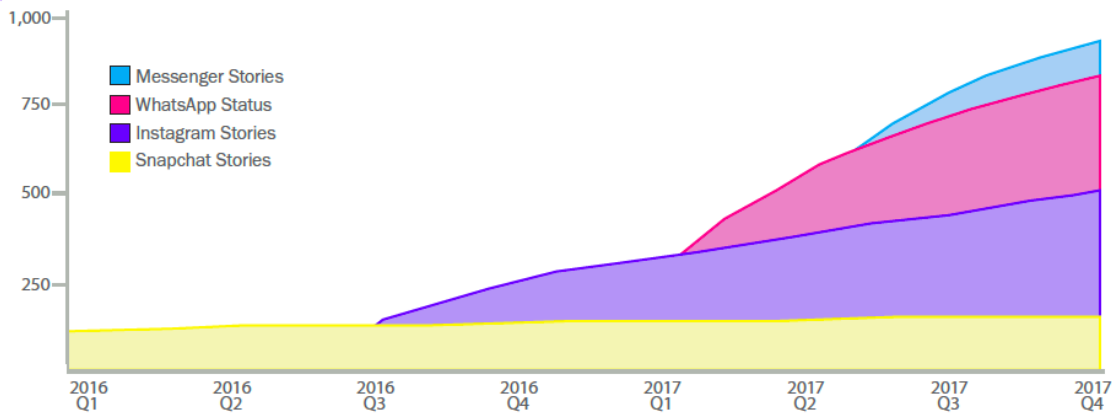
Even before the Cambridge Analytica scandal broke, the rise of disappearing messages and encryption on major chat apps like Telegram, WhatsApp, and Viber revealed a growing popular desire for social connection away from the prying eyes of data-collecting tech giants. Messaging platforms, which are now more popular globally than social networks, also offer a respite from the social pressures of the News Feed where likes and comments (or a lack there of) are visible for all to see.

Adopting some of that ethos, Stories deliver disappearing content and another often overlooked innovation: a rejection of vanity metrics altogether. Nobody sees viewership numbers or user responses other than the account owner. The format is also naturally less ripe for data-mining than News Feed because user behavior within video content is harder to extract or quantify.

THE STORIES LANDSCAPE TODAY

Since early 2016, Story creation and consumption has increased 842% – with over 970 million social accounts now using the feature daily across Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Messenger. Although Facebook has yet to release user numbers for Facebook Stories, Chief Product Officer Chris Cox projected at F8 this May that cumulative sharing to Stories would surpass sharing to Feeds in 2019. This is driven in part by industrywide adoption of the format by Facebook, Google & YouTube, Skype, and others.

STORIES DAILY USAGE 2016-2017

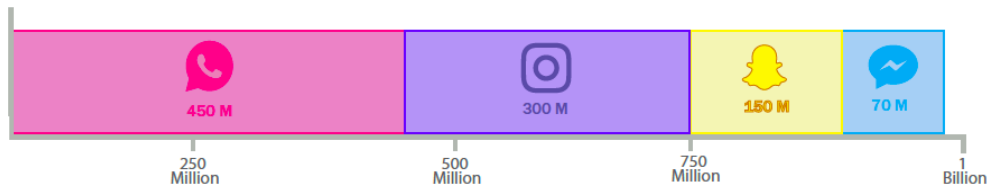


Sources: Facebook, The Daily Beast, April 2017
Numbers based on unique accounts creating or watching stories daily, in millions



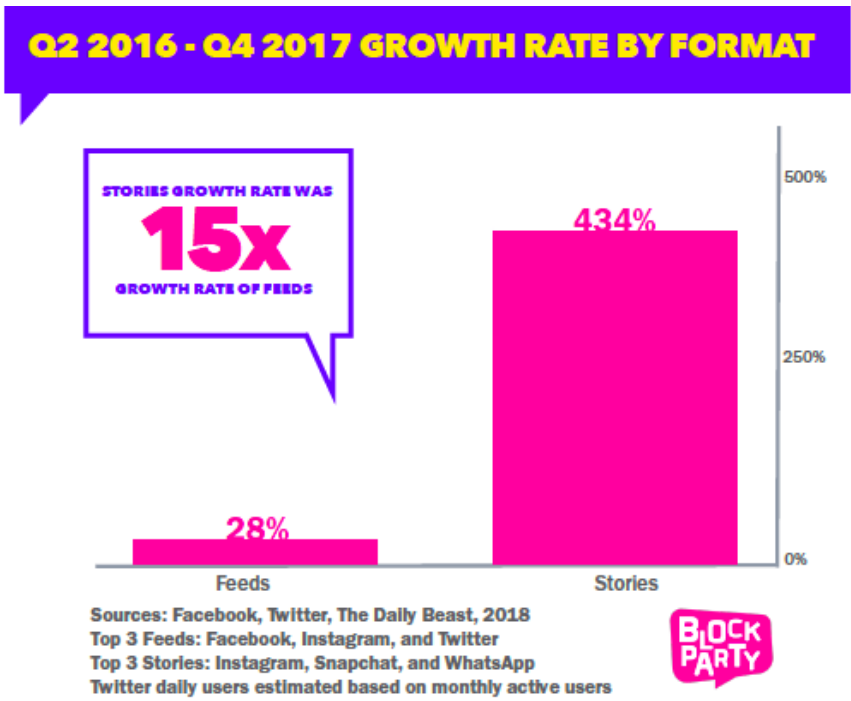
In 2017, Stories as a format also had a growth rate roughly 15x the rate of Feeds across leading social and messaging platforms from Q2 2016 through Q4 2017. This calculation is based on a comparison of the Top 3 Feed platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) and the Top 3 Stories products (Instagram, WhatsApp, and Snapchat). While Feeds generated a healthy 28% growth, that pales in comparison to the 434% growth for Stories in the same time period.

MAY 2018: APPROACHING 1B ACCOUNTS USING STORIES EVERY DAY



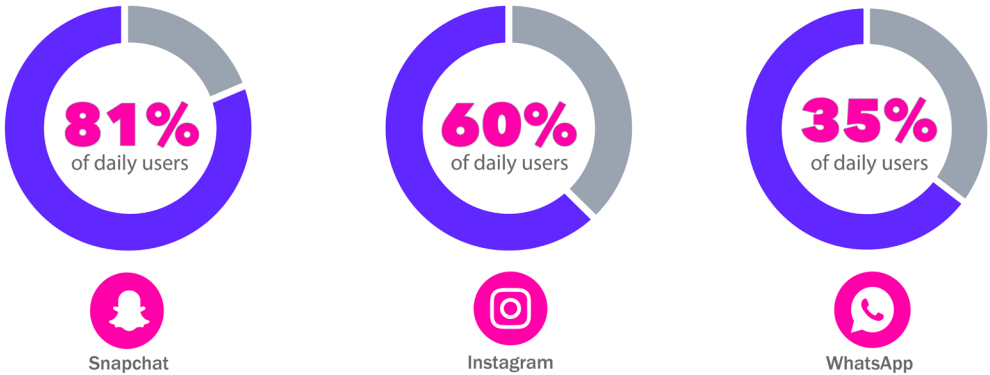
Sources: Facebook, The Daily Beast. Based on daily active accounts.





Looking at penetration by platform, Snapchat is the one app where Stories has reached maturity, with around 81% of daily users engaging with the feature.⁹ But Instagram has seen swift and steady adoption, with 60% of daily users on Stories and 300 million daily Stories users overall (more people than Snapchat’s entire 187 million daily user base). Similarly, Instagram reports that more than 50% of businesses now create Instagram Stories each month.¹⁰ While WhatsApp counts 450 million daily users on Stories (WhatsApp calls the product “Status”), we estimate that only 35% of its total daily audience engages with the product each day— indicating strong traction that hasn’t yet evolved to into a core behavior.^{11 12}

STORIES USAGE BY PLATFORM



Sources: Facebook , The Daily Beast



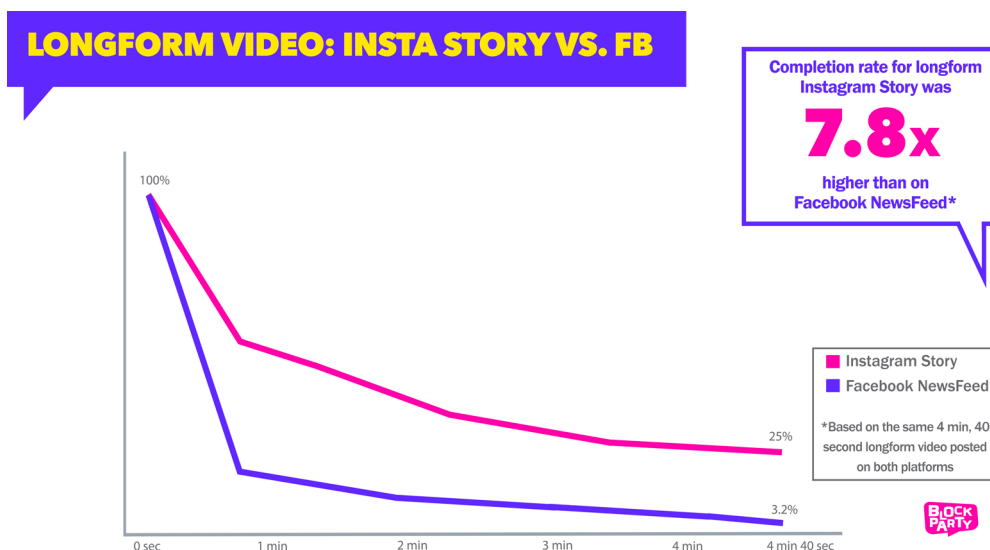
QUALITY OF VIDEO VIEWERSHIP:

Stories vs. Feeds

All video “views” are not created equal. For example, Facebook defines a “view” as anyone that watches an autoplay clip in News Feed for 3 seconds or more, while YouTube is generally believed to count “views” as 30-seconds or more. Unfortunately, the lack of metrics standardization creates an illusion that, as a whole, videos in News Feed are hugely successful. In reality, Facebook videos are watched for 16.7 seconds on average— a length that doesn’t even register as a “view” on YouTube.¹³

Ultimately, Facebook’s challenge is one of context. People scroll through the feed 41% faster on mobile than on desktop, and it may take a lot to convince them to slow down for larger chunks of content in between short hits of text and photos.¹⁴ By contrast, YouTube and Stories carousels serve as dedicated video destinations, catering to viewers with clear intent to watch. According to social analytics firm Delmondo, clips on Facebook’s “Watch” video site (launched last summer) generate an average of 23 seconds in viewership, a clear move in the right direction— and proof that siloing video content delivers higher engagement.¹⁵

Anecdotally, tests we’ve run indicate that Facebook videos recut for vertical and posted as Instagram Stories (as consecutive 15-second clips ordered chronologically), consistently deliver much higher retention on Instagram. This is even the case for longer-form videos several minutes in length, though Stories are typically known for short, snackable content. As an example, the graph below shows performance of the same five minute video from a major non-profit that ran on both platforms. Retention was nearly 8 times higher on Instagram:



(One caveat worth mentioning here: Stories viewers can fast forward through panels, so this is not a 100% apples-to-apples comparison. However, users also have the option to easily swipe to the next Story, so completion rates still accurately signify a level of engagement).

THE SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER'S DILEMMA

The transition from News Feed posts to Stories implies a job description overhaul that may catch social media managers (and their employers) off guard. In recent years, social leads have most often been tasked with copywriting, curation of existing photo and video assets, community management, and simple live video posts.

By contrast, great Story-making can require a mastery of storytelling, script writing, videography, photography, layout and design, motion graphics, augmented reality, on-camera interviews, and a suite of ever-evolving platform specific features.

None of this is to say that News Feeds will disappear, or that new skills won't be acquired by the social media managers currently at the helm. But the order of the day calls for an expansion of tradecraft to stay relevant and excel in the new frontier.

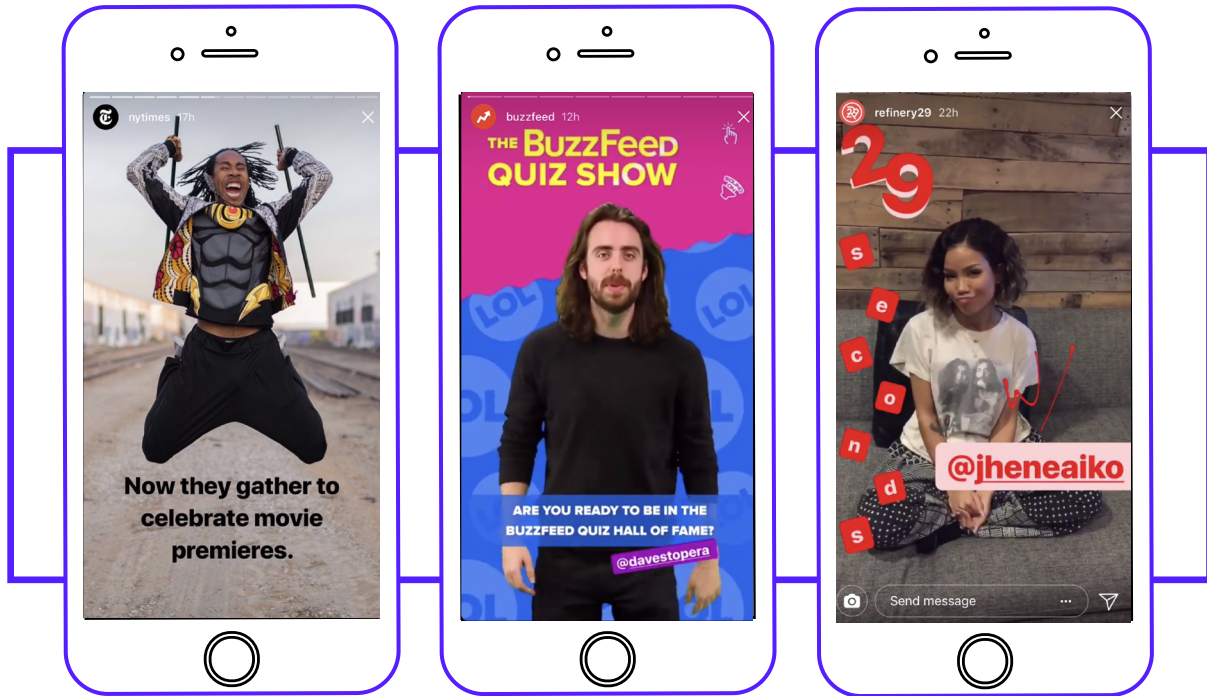
Here are four great ways to meet the challenge:

1. Increase Collaboration Between Teams

For companies that handle social media internally, the skills to excel with Stories are often spread out across various teams. Look for new ways that your social media, creative, video, photography, or graphic design resources can join forces to create great content.

2. Forge A Consistent Brand Identity

Viewers should be able to identify that your business is behind a Story at a glance. Look for opportunities to adapt core elements of your company branding to native tools at your disposal on Stories: commit to core colors schemes and text treatment, create trademark visual devices, design a set of custom GIFs, and document your branding strategy so that all team members can apply it consistently.



3. Study The Greats

The quickest path to greatness is studying and analyzing companies that do the best work on Stories. Many of the most prolific brands experiment with novel ways of engaging audiences and making their content interactive. A few accounts worth checking out for inspiration: Starbucks, Netflix, Planned Parenthood, BuzzFeed, The New York Times, NASA, and Refinery29.

4. Don't Underestimate The Value of Disappearing Content

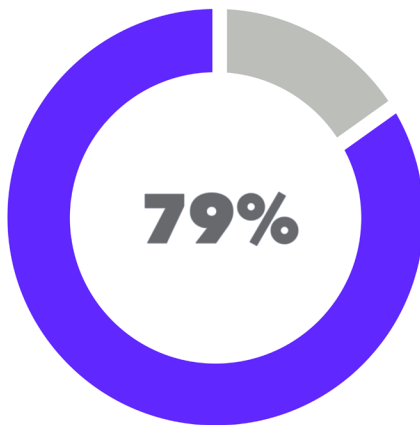
Media traditionalists sometimes find it hard to devote resources to content that doesn't live forever. But the reality is that audiences today want to consume disappearing video content, and the scarcity and spontaneity of the format are part of the appeal. Instagram also now offers Highlights, so you can pin your best Stories to your profile page indefinitely.

A CLOSER LOOK:

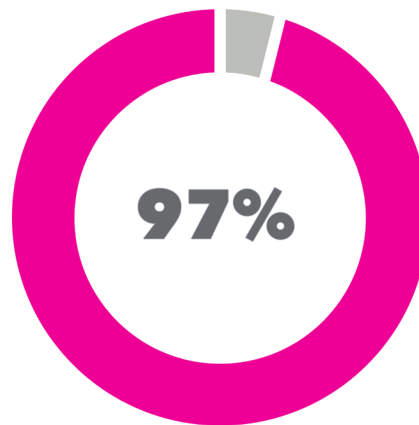
Instagram Stories, By The Numbers

As the most popular platform for Stories, Instagram merits deeper analysis as a bellwether of social media publishing behavior. To provide a snapshot of how Instagram's most successful accounts use Stories today, and how they allocate resources between Stories and the Feed, we tracked public Instagram posts from 100 companies over two full weeks. Each company is among the most followed accounts in the following categories: Auto, Beauty & Cosmetics, Celebrities, Clothing & Accessories, Entertainment, Food & Drink, Government, Museums, News & Publishers, Non-Profits, QSR / Fast Food, Sports, Technology, and Universities (see the full list of 100 in the appendix).

INSTAGRAM STORIES VS. FEED USAGE



Stories



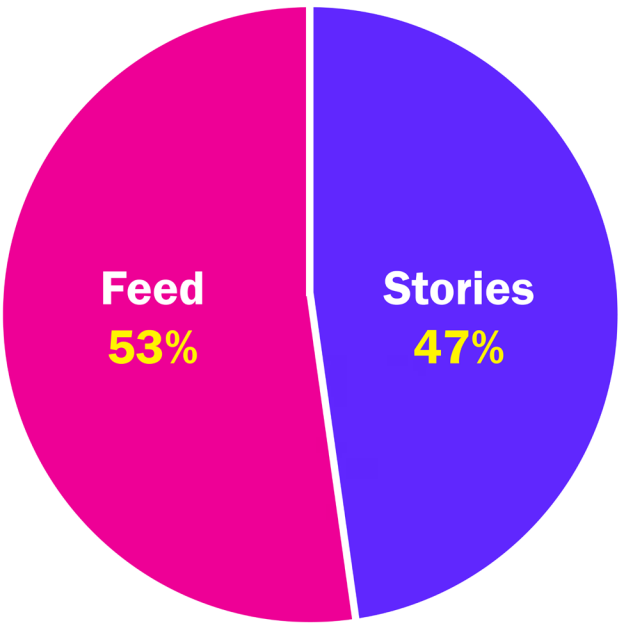
Feed

*Percentage of accounts using each format, based on 100 leading Instagram accounts, March 13-26, 2018.



During the tracking period 79% of companies posted Stories, and 97% of companies posted to the Feed. Only 7% of accounts published more Stories than Feed posts, but that list includes some of the world’s biggest brands and celebrities like Nike, Taco Bell, McDonald’s, and Kylie Jenner. And in aggregate, the 100 accounts uploaded 4,112 pieces of content to the Feed (this tally counts individual photos in multi-photo posts) and 3,712 total uploads to Stories (this tally includes individual panels / snaps uploaded). Viewed through this lens, 36% of the 100 accounts actually published more pieces of content to Stories than the Feed.

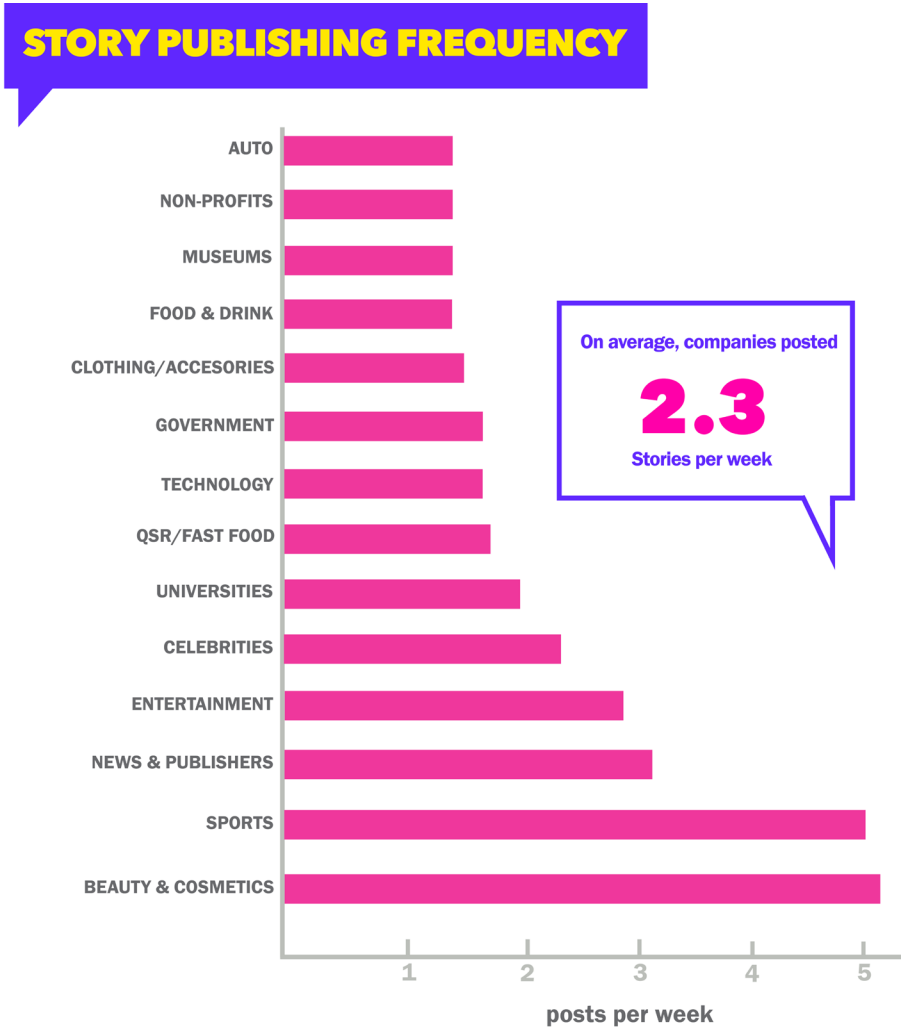
INSTAGRAM: AGGREGATE PIECES OF CONTENT



*Based on 7,824 pieces of content posted by 100 leading Instagram accounts, March 13-26, 2018, see appendix for full list. Feed tally counts individual photos in multi-photo posts, Stories tally counts individual posts within each Story



Among the 79% of companies active on Stories, the average frequency of creation was 2.9 Stories per week, with an average of 8 posts per Story (Burger King ran the longest Story during the tracking period:100 posts on Pi Day). For both frequency and length, industries displayed markedly different patterns of usage. The Sports teams and leagues we tracked, for example, produced at extremely high frequency (5 Stories weekly per account on average) and high volume (11.5 posts per Story on average). But sectors like Auto were comparatively quiet– averaging 1.4 Stories per week with 3.4 posts per Story.



*Based on 100 leading Instagram accounts, March 13-26, 2018.

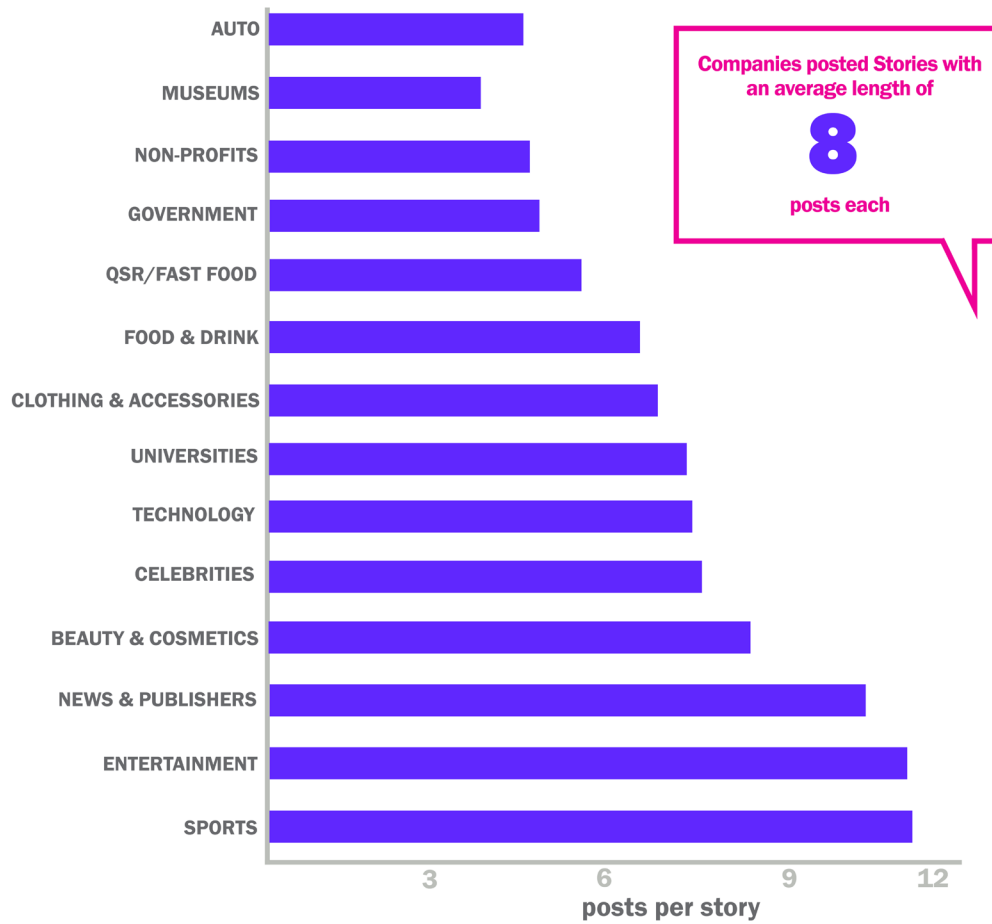


It's notable that certain Story structures and archetypes have emerged, especially in specific verticals. For example, sports teams often share extensive coverage of pre-game rituals and athlete warm-ups. Cosmetics companies regularly create extensive make-up tutorials highlighting various special guests. And traditional news publishers frequently use Stories as a canvas for in-depth photo journalism pieces.

Other formats like the interactive quiz tend to transcend industry. Leveraging Instagram's poll feature, a range of companies engage audiences by posing a series of multiple choice questions, each followed by an answer reveal.



NUMBER OF POSTS PER STORY



*Based on 100 leading Instagram accounts, March 13-26, 2018



5 STORIES TRENDS TO WATCH IN 2018

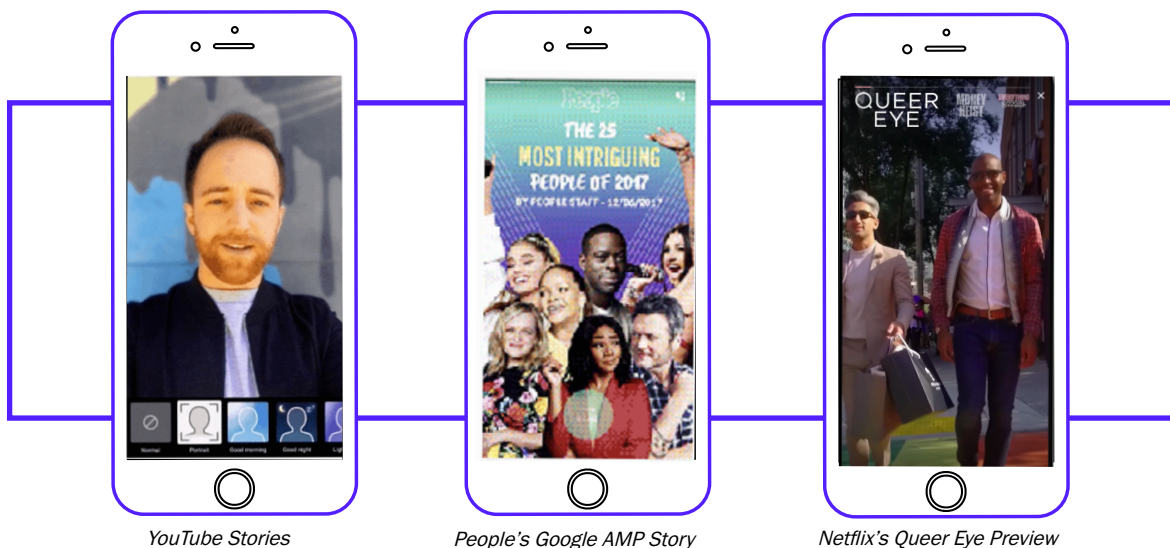
For brands and organizations committed to staying ahead of the curve, here are five Stories trends we expect to emerge over the next year.

1. Stories Everywhere

As is often the case with powerful innovations, the floodgates have opened for an industry-wide adoption of the format.

Last June, Skype introduced its “Highlights” Stories clone as part of an effort to introduce “the next generation of Skype.” Then in late November, YouTube launched a beta of “Reels,” which was soon renamed “Stories,” and features Google’s first proper format innovation— artificial intelligence technology that separates foreground and background images to simulate green screen. Netflix also revamped its mobile app home screen with circular icons users tap to access and swipe through 30 second previews— the first time the company has adopted vertical video on an owned property.

This February, Google’s AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages) project also announced an AMP Story product helping publishers build media-rich panels users swipe through. They can live on publisher websites, but also appear in Google mobile search results in a new section labeled “Visual Stories.” Initial launch partners included CNN, Mic, SB Nation, and The Washington Post— and all companies are creating custom content for the format. Google describes the program as “experimental,” and has as made it available to anyone to try for free.



Genius, a popular song lyrics and music news website, also partnered with YouTube to launch “Song Stories,” a vertical video montage with Pop Up Video style facts you can swipe through while listening to a song.

Companies like Food Network, after finding success on Snapchat, have imported the Stories format to their own apps. And Apester, a startup providing content publishing tools, launched a Stories product used by People, Virgin, and others to embed vertical video content into apps and mobile websites.

Netflix also reportedly plans to revamp its mobile app homepage with circular icons users tap to access 30 second previews, which they can swipe through to see others— the first time the company has adopted vertical video on an owned property.

Even Snapchat is taking Stories outside it’s app for the first time— launching its Snap Map on the web so users can search for and view Stories by location, and allowing some publisher partners to share Stories on their owned sites.

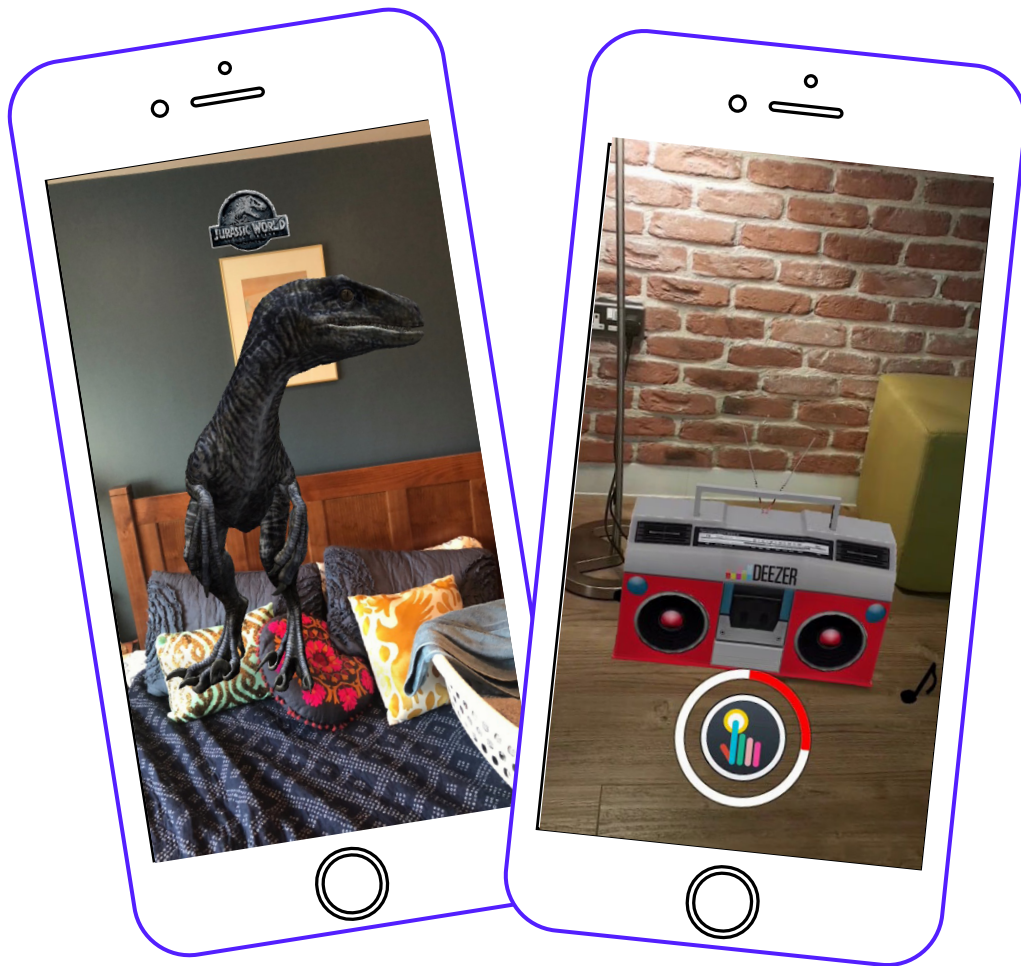
And Facebook is gradually unifying its Stories ecosystem, which encompasses Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger, and Facebook. In addition to cross-posting functionality from Instagram to Facebook, the company started testing Instagram-to-WhatsApp publishing for a subset of its users. It also began syncing viewership so that an app doesn’t highlight a Story you’ve already watched in another app.

2. The AR + GIF Invasion

Last year, Snapchat proved augmented reality can be a mainstream hit when implemented in the right way on an app with a massive audience. As far as social media goes, 2017 was the year of the dancing hot dog (a major win for Snap), but 2018 will be the year thousands of developers and brands race to build the next dancing hot dog.

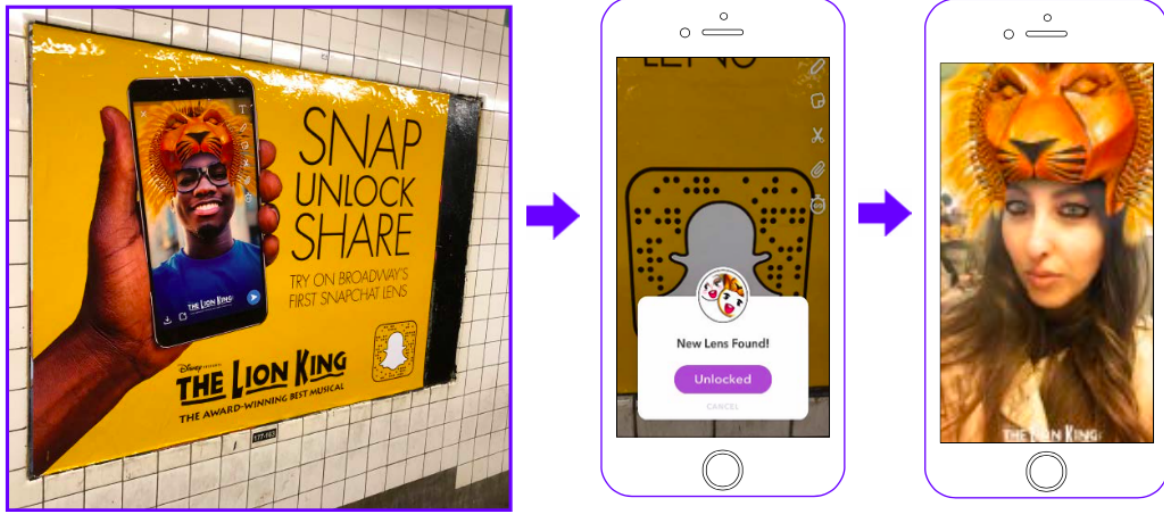
In late December, within days of each other, Facebook and Snap both launched open platforms inviting anyone to build and deploy AR experiences for their Stories cameras (FB extended this feature to Instagram Stories in May 2018). As one Snapchat engineer pointed out, for the first time any restaurant could now put Snapcodes on its menu, letting diners see an AR dish on the table to help pick their meal.

Jurassic World, an early adopter of Facebook’s AR Studio, now gives fans the chance to place its popular Velociraptor “Blue” into Stories. And Deezer, leveraging Snap’s Lens Studio, recently built an AR boombox and tapped a network of Snapchat influencers to enlist fans in creating music-themed videos with the asset. Deezer’s campaign generated over 1 million views in 24 hours, including 11,463 users that created snaps with the lens and 46,887 people the scanned a custom snapcode to access the lens.¹⁶



As a marketing platform, Snap's strong suit has always been innovative ad products that are more fun and immersive for users than anything else in the market. Its key insight was that a user's open camera is also a new distribution tool for ads. And furthermore, that people would happily make videos with branded content—effectively making their own ads for the brand.

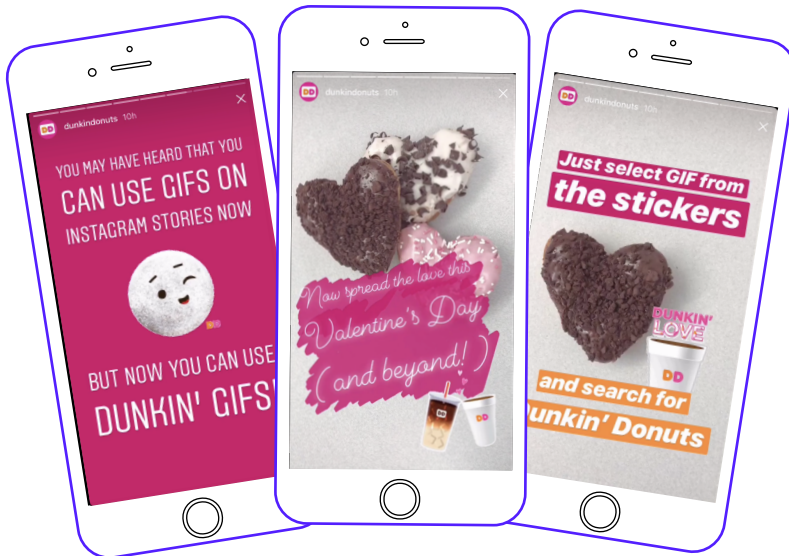
Disney's *The Lion King* deployed Snap AR Studio to turn subway advertisements into augmented reality kiosks. Proudly declaring it "Broadway's first Snapchat Lens," Disney flipped the script on the typical promo posters with obligatory social media logos in the corner. Instead, the Snap AR experience is the main event for its out-of-home campaign. Previously, *Lion King* signage invited people to "join the circle of life"—but for the first they're giving subway riders a way to accept the invite in the moment.



Giphy has also emerged as a premiere partner for animated “GIF Stickers” in Stories—offering an ace library of searchable content users can access natively on Instagram and Snapchat, and then place on videos and photos. The feature was an instant hit (as evidenced by a barrage of tweets at Instagram requesting GIF functionality if they didn’t have it yet).

Dunkin Donuts was among the first brands to create custom Giphy stickers fans can use within Stories. Its set of 10 Valentine’s Day stickers racked up millions of views in less than a month, with the highest performing sticker surpassing 6 million views. The company used its own Story to promote the campaign and encouraged fans to “spread the love.”

Chicago band Fall Out Boy (full disclosure: a client of ours) also released a set of GIF stickers that generated over 15 million views in the first 24 hours, and 30 million in the first week.

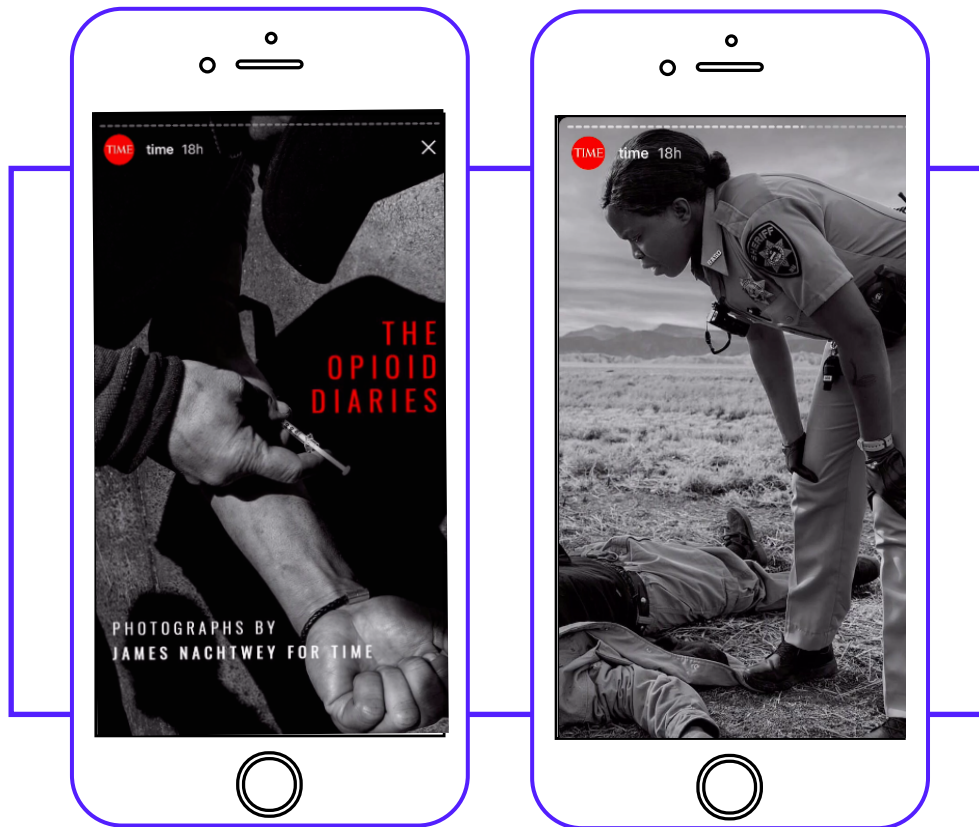


With such a low barrier to entry, it’s hard to imagine there won’t be an endless procession of branded Giphy stickers launched for the Stories ecosystem. This is especially true if companies can generate millions of organic views for content that’s relatively quick and inexpensive to produce and distribute.

3. Longform Stories

Stories have often tended towards short and breezy, designed for short attention span viewers that use the apps to leisurely connect with friends— but a growing number of Stories publishers are experimenting with longer pieces that highlight varied subject matter.

In support of its “The Opioid Diaries” February cover story, TIME Magazine ran a powerful four and a half minute Instagram Story that juxtaposed disturbing photos, audio clips, statistics, and quotes.



The New York Times also regularly posts Instagram pieces several minutes in length, approaching the medium as a new canvas for journalistic storytelling. These Stories often pair hi-definition photos with short bursts of copy, layered in one sentence at a time to build gripping narratives and character profiles.

This April, BuzzFeed also released Future History: 1968, a fast paced, vertical video docu-series that premiered in the Apple News app. Billed as “the first mobile documentary series,” each episode covers major political events in 1968— retold through the visual language of modern social media posts. For certain stretches of footage, the directors reference Instagram Stories for their layout.

4. An Increase in Production Value

Snapchat Discover's glossy magazine-style ethos was always more in-step with Instagram's curated aesthetic than Snapchat's own ephemeral spontaneity. So it's no surprise Instagram integrated two key Discover features in its Stories offering: the ability to upload pre-produced content, and to let users swipe to access additional information.

As a result, many companies with professional video and photo production resources have turned Instagram Stories into a hybrid of Snap's Stories and Discover. BuzzFeed, for example, now programs a hosted, recurring HQ Trivia-inspired Instagram show on that features green screen and leverages the app's polling feature.

This hybrid strategy is most often employed by publishers, but has slowly migrated to brands and organizations like GE, Netflix, and Chase. A number of popular third party apps like Adobe SparkPost and Hype Type have also emerged to templize and streamline creation of motion graphics for Stories.

5. Facebook Stories: A Sleeper Hit In The Making?

Anecdotally, users often talk about Facebook Stories like it's Zuckerberg's "trying to make Fetch happen" moment (a Mean Girls reference, for the uninitiated). The product was a total dud out of the gates, picking up none of the momentum it had on Instagram. But Zuckerberg and his team appear to be undeterred. They've determined that Stories are the future of social; now they just need to figure out how to make the medicine go down on their flagship platform.

To that end, they're taking the path of least resistance by making it irresistibly easy to syndicate Instagram Stories to Facebook with the push of a button. They've also started rolling out Stories to Facebook Pages right as Pages are reeling from algorithmic changes to New Feed that suppress organic reach.

These changes have already reversed the terrible optics of Facebook Stories' first few months as a ghost town perched above the mobile News Feed. From here on out, it's a slowburn long game—courting users until they accept and engage with a product they already love on other apps.

But it's early in the process. Of the 100 accounts we tracked on Instagram Stories, only 9% also posted to Facebook Stories, and all but one of those exclusively syndicated their Instagram Stories to Facebook. Brands we've spoken to also indicate that viewership numbers for Facebook Stories are significantly lower than Instagram Stories, even for accounts with more followers on Facebook. If the current game plan doesn't prevail, the next logical step in ratcheting up efforts would probably be for Facebook to promote Stories in the Feed itself.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of whether Snapchat survives the social media clone wars, it has a visionary's knack for winning the battle of ideas. Vertical video, once viewed as an anomaly, is becoming the new normal for mobile apps. And Stories have emerged as the vertical format that combines the best elements of social media, messaging, and video platforms.

In the years ahead, Stories are also well-positioned as the common interface for immersive and interactive video via augmented reality (and eventually virtual reality). This ecosystem is just starting to hit its stride with recent introductions of open AR platforms from Facebook and Snapchat.

While News Feed isn't going anywhere any time soon, momentum has started shifting in earnest towards Stories— so much so that Mark Zuckerberg openly predicts a sea change ahead. This has profound implications on how companies produce content, allocate resources, and the types of skills required to succeed with social media in the next decade. For those looking to future-proof their efforts, now is the right time to experiment, plan, and build an identifiable Stories brand voice and aesthetic that resonates with audiences.

THANKS

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us:

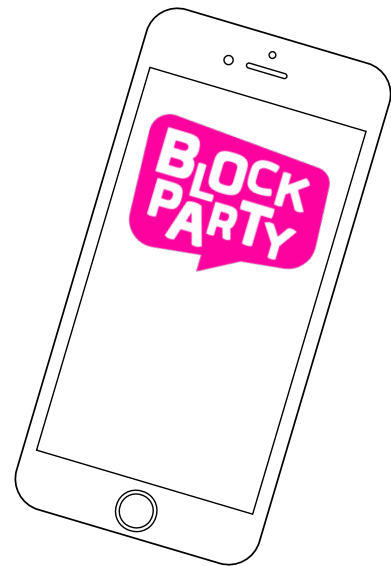
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ABOUT BLOCK PARTY

Block Party is a full-service social media agency recognized as a pioneer in chat marketing. We create content, build technology, write research reports, and advise on strategy for chat apps, voice assistants, and traditional social media platforms. Our Stories Studio division specializes in vertical video, offering creative services and production, workshops and training, augmented reality and stickers, and research and intelligence. Clients include American Museum of Natural History, Bloomberg Philanthropies, COTY, Katy Perry, International Committee For The Red Cross, Johns Hopkins University, Major Lazer, The New York Times, Metallica, Reebok, and Zedd.

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FULL LIST OF 100 INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS INCLUDED IN RESEARCH

Adidas	H&M	Pizza Hut
Anastasia Beverly Hills	Harvard University	Playstation
Apple	James Beard Foundation	Porsche
Ariana Grande	KFC	Real Madrid C.F.
Arsenal F.C.	Kim Kardashian	Red Bull
Art Basel	Kylie Cosmetics	Samsung
Audi	Kylie Jenner	Selena Gomez
BBC News	Lamborghini	Sephora
Benefit Cosmetics	Louis Vutton	Sony
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Louvre Museum	Stanford University
BMW	MAC Cosmetics	Star Wars
British Museum	Manchester United	Starbucks
Bugatti	Marvel	Taco Bell
Burger King	Maserati	Tate Modern
BuzzFeed	McDonald's	Taylor Swift
Cambridge University	Mercedes Benz	Texas A&M
Chanel	Metropolitan Museum of Art	Too Faced
CNN	MoMA	U.S. Navy
Coca-Cola	Monster Energy	U.S. Army
Cristiano Ronaldo	NASA	U.S. Department of the Interior
David Lynch Foundation	National Geographic	U.S. Marines
Disney	National Park Service	UNICEF
Doctors Without Borders	NBA	University of Michigan
Dunkin Donuts	Netflix	Urban Decay
E! News	New York Times	U.S. Air Force
Ellen Degeneres Show	NFL	Victoria's Secret
ESPN	Nike	Vogue
FC Barcelona	Nutella	The White House
Gatorade	NYX Professional Makeup	World Wildlife Fund
Golden State Warriors	The Obama Foundation	Xbox
Google	Oreo	Yale University
GoPro	University of Oxford	Yosemite National Park
Guggenheim Museum	Pepsi	Zara

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INFOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY

In order to fairly compare growth for various platforms (Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Messenger, and WhatsApp) and products (Feeds and Stories), we used the metric of daily active users at all times. For platforms that only report monthly active users or don't break out statistics out by product, we estimated daily active users based on historical reported ratios between daily and monthly users.

Snapchat

Snapchat has released quarterly total daily active user statistics over the last few years, and those formed the foundation for the statistics we present in this paper. Because Snap does not break out Stories usage specifically, we referenced Daily Beast's January 2018 article "This Is The Data Snapchat Doesn't Want You To See" – which includes a "leaked" internal Snapchat infographic of daily Stories usage. We applied the ratio of daily Stories users to total daily users to arrive at an estimate for previous quarters.

Twitter

Twitter releases quarterly monthly active users statistics, as well as more limited information on the ratio between daily and monthly active users from time to time. In November 2014, Twitter disclosed a 48% DAU/MAU ratio in its Top 20 markets, and in July 2015 it announced a 44% DAU/MAU ratio in its Top 20 markets. In July 2017, the company stated that "the DAU/MAU ratio... has not changed substantially in the last couple of years, and remains below 50%." Based on this information, we were able to estimate DAUs based on MAUs.

Instagram

Instagram (owned by Facebook) announces specific milestones for total daily active users, which we used to represent usage of Instagram's Feed:

June 2016 - 300M total daily active users

Sept 2017 - 500M total daily active users

The company also announces specific milestones for Stories daily active users. Those milestone announcements were:

August 2016 - Instagram launches Stories

October 2016 - 100M daily active users

April 2017 - 200M daily active users

June 2017 - 250M daily active users

November 2017 - daily active users

Facebook

Facebook releases quarterly statistics on total daily active users, which we used to represent usage of Facebook's News Feed.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp (owned by Facebook) releases quarterly statistics on total daily active users, which we used to represent usage of Instagram's Feed. The company also announces specific milestones for Stories (known as "Status") daily active users. Those milestone announcements were:

February 2017 - WhatsApp launches Status

May 2017 - hits 175M daily active users

August 2017 - hits 250M daily active users

November 2017 - 300M daily active users

May 2018 - 450M daily active users

Facebook Messenger

In September 2017, Facebook Messenger announced 70M daily active users.