Instagram Artifact Analysis

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Abstract

This paper contains an artifact analysis of the free mobile app Instagram, with Facebook as a point of comparison. The historical background of both social media tools is covered briefly from their origins to their current states. The user demographics of the tools are described using the latest information available. The applications of the tools are compared with each other, covering the affordances and constraints of each tools. The types of networks are compared, along with the description of semantics of “friends” or “followers”. Visual artifacts such as logo, colour, interface and cover banner are also analysed.

# History

**Facebook** was launched on February 4, 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg who was studying in Harvard University at the time. Harvard’s paper­format Freshman Yearbook was known as Freshman Facebook.

Facebook began as a network that attracted younger people, with many of their original users leaving the now defunct MySpace to join. With time and popularity the Facebook demographic expanded to include a large volume of older users.

**Instagram**, a free mobile app developed by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, was launched on October 6, 2010. Instagram has been owned by Facebook since April 2012.

Instagram is one of the fastest growing social networks in history. The mobile photo­sharing app, which launched in October of 2010, now boasts 200 million monthly active users, 60 million photos posted each day, and 1.6 billion likes per day.1

1 <http://get.simplymeasured.com/rs/simplymeasured/images/InstagramStudy2014Q3.pdf>

# General comparison

## User demography

Facebook has 1,44 billion active users and Instagram ­ owned by Facebook ­ has 400 million

2. According to a recent survey by Piper Jaffray3 Instagram is the most popular social network among American teenagers (age 13­19) with Twitter and Snapchat following before Facebook. Another recent study of similar age group (13­17) by Pew4 places Facebook on the first place and Instagram on the second.

Facebook is more popular with middle­aged adults than other social networks. In the U.S., the average monthly active user of Facebook was 40 years old in 2014.5 Facebook is popular among those in rural, suburban and urban areas, and those at every income level and education background. There is also not much of a difference in usage among different ethnic backgrounds. Facebook has the most engaged users; 70% log on daily, including 43% who do so several times a day.

While the number of online American adults using Instagram doubled from 2012 to 2015, the photo­ and video­sharing network has become completely entrenched in the lifestyles of younger Internet users. The migration of youth from Facebook to photo­sharing social networking sites such as Instagram explains why 53% of its 200 million active users are between the ages of 18 and 29, most of whom are on the platform daily.6

## Applications of use

Facebook is foremost a place to host your information, your photos, your resume, your activities and locations, and your thoughts and musings. Facebook is all about identity, placing emphasis on text first, image second. In comparison, everything revolves around images in Instagram. Although the users can add caption or comments with posts, the image is the message in Instagram.

Instagram is also heavily depending on the use of hashtags as means of descriptive labeling and building micro­communities around particular topics. A study by social science

2 <http://blog.instagram.com/post/129662501137/150922>­400million

3

<http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2015/10/16/survey>­finds­teens­prefer­instagram­snapchat­among­social­netw orks/

4 <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact>­tank/2014/02/03/6­new­facts­about­facebook/

5

<http://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/100215/twitter>­vs­facebook­vs­instagram­who­target­audie nce.asp

6

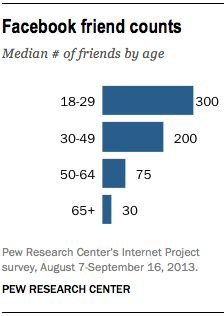
<http://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/100215/twitter>­vs­facebook­vs­instagram­who­target­audie nce.asp

researchers David Laniado and Peter Mika7 confirms that a hashtag serves both as a tag of content and a symbol of community membership, which extends its use from being merely a device for labeling.

While Facebook was originally created for desktop and laptop computers, Instagram is first and foremost a smartphone application. You can’t access all of Instagram’s features without the mobile app, whereas Facebook’s interface is more functional when used with a tablet or a laptop.

Networks, friends and followers

The fundamental difference between Facebook and Instagram networks is the concept of friends and followers. Facebook networks are by default networks of “friends” whereas the

Instagram networks consist of “followers”.

In Facebook real names are common whereas in Instagram there are both usernames and real names. There can be followers in Facebook too, for example artist fan pages can have millions of followers (Rihanna has 81,5 million followers) but the individual profiles can only have a maximum of 5000 friends before the profile must be turned into a “page” which can be then followed by anyone. The number of friends depends on the age group (see image) with the count decreasing with age.

According to a study by OpticalCortex8 the median number of followers in Instagram is 194.

### Semantic analysis

What is the difference of a “friend” and a “follower”? Being friend with somebody implies that you are intimately connected with somebody. Friends know each other’s faults and weaknesses. They know the favorite dishes of each other, and whether they like horror films or not. Facebook is all about sharing these life’s countless trivialities with your network. You don’t necessarily have to be friends with somebody before sending them a friend request, but the explicit intention of Facebook friend request is to get closer to somebody, whether you already know them intimately or not.

Although the majority of content shared in Instagram is somehow related to the private lives of the users, communicating with images tends to be less revealing than writing your thoughts down in “status updates”, as they are called in Facebook language. The difference

7 Making Sense of Twitter (2010).

8 <http://opticalcortex.com/instagram>­statistics/

arises from the mediated nature of digital photography, which intrinsically creates a certain detachment between the image and the situation where it was taken. A clarifying quote from Ansel Adams states that “you don’t take a photograph, you make it”. This difference in user intimacy is restated in the way Instagram is referring to your network as “followers”, and other user whom you are “following”. Describing somebody as your ‘follower’ creates an authoritarian distance to the subject, which is clearly implying different kind of relationship than one based on being ‘friends’. What this means in Instagram user practices is that it might encourage users to take a more artistic approach to social network photography, and curate their own Instagram photo feed more carefully than they might do in Facebook.

Another semantics related difference between Facebook and Instagram is the way how users are expected to host their profiles with their real names instead of usernames. This is another factor differentiating Instagram from Facebook in terms of perceived intimacy and user privacy expectations. While Facebook is encouraging its users to openness and unfiltered self expression, it is also reminding them of their personal responsibility that comes with publishing content under your own legal name. In Instagram, the level of ambiguity is considerably higher because the majority of users are hosting their profiles with usernames. However, many Instagram users have chosen a username that is more or less directly referring their real names (e.g. annlivyounger standing for Ann Liv Young).

# Facebook visual artefacts

## Logo

Facebook Logo designed by Joe Kral from Los Angeles. Facebook logo has two types. One is Letter Mark and other is Word Mark. Letter Mark type logo is usually used in two colour schemes, one is blue on white and other one is inverted colours, whereas Word Mark type is with white on blue background.



On the other hand, Instagram logo also has two types, one is Symbol/icon and other one is Word Mark. Instagram logo is designed by San Francisco based design studio called Mackey Saturday.



Most of the social media tools have Letter mark and Work mark based logos, for example, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Pinterest, Foursquare, Youtube, Vimeo, etc.

## Colour

According to Mark Zuckerberg, “I made it (Facebook) blue because I’m colour­blind” (Cuban Council).

### Colour Palette

Facebook has monochromatic colour scheme.

 **Facebook Blue** Hex: #3b5998, RGB: 59, 89, 152

 **Medium Blue** Hex: #6d84b4, RGB: 109, 132, 180

 **Lighter Blue** Hex: #afbdd4 RGB: 175, 189, 212

 **Lightest Blue** Hex: #d8dfea RGB: 216, 223, 234

 **White** Hex: #ffffff RGB: 255, 255, 255

Unlike Facebook, Instagram Symbol based logo has many colours, only Word Mark type logo has one colour. The Instagram Icon is a camera comprises shades of red, yellow, green, blue, light brown and dark brown. The Instagram Logo is a single shade of blue.

 Hex: #fb3958 RGB: 251, 57, 88

 Hex: #ffc838 RGB: 255, 200, 56

 Hex: #6dc993 RGB: 109, 201, 147

 Hex: #458eff RGB: 69, 142, 255

 Hex: #ded1c1 RGB: 222, 209, 193

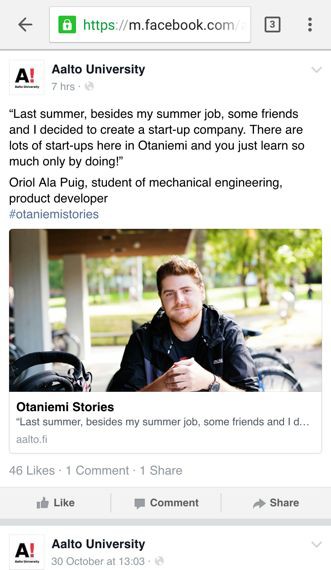
 Hex: #9b6954 RGB: 155, 105, 84

 Hex: #125688 RGB: 18, 86, 136

Blue colour is a very common colour among social media visual identities but the properties vary. Blue is considered as a calm colour and it gives a clean look to your design and you can focus on the content without being distracted. Some of the most famous social networks apart from Facebook using blue in their logos, identity design and websites are LinkedIn, Twitter, Tumblr, Vimeo, etc.

## Interface and content

Facebook is a place to host your information, photos, activities, work history, locations and your thoughts. It has become your identity. Facebook emphasis on textual content first and image or video second, whereas on the Instagram, your photo/video comes first and then the textual content. Below is the example of Aalto University’s photo, same post on Facebook and Instagram.



The Instagram interface is simpler compared to Facebook. There are changes in Facebook interface every now and then, that makes user annoying often, whereas Instagram’s interface hasn’t changed much and simple to use as its primary purpose to post photos.

## Cover Banner

There is a lot of information going on if you visit some page or somebody’s profile on Facebook, whereas if you see Instagram or Twitter, there is relatively less content compared to Facebook. Profile photo feature is primitive for social media tools but the 2nd most common thing in all these three social networks is a cover photo.