

Instagram eyes longer Reels, challenging YouTube's dominance with long-form videos

Article

The news: Instagram is reportedly testing longer videos in a move that could expand its revenue options and help it address a major weakness against key rivals TikTok and YouTube.

- Developer **Alessandro Paluzzi** indicates Instagram is considering extending Reels to 10 minutes, a significant increase from the current 90-second limit. Instagram parent **Meta** is reportedly testing this change internally.

Why minutes matter: The shift not only aligns with lengths TikTok has allowed since last year but also encroaches on YouTube's territory.

The sweet spot for YouTube videos lies between 6 and 8 minutes, according to Brafton; Piktochart puts the ideal length at 5 to 15 minutes. It's clear Instagram is going after YouTube, gunning to cut into its long-form market share.

- Verified YouTube accounts can upload videos up to 12 hours or 128 GB (unverified ones are capped at 15 minutes)
- Longer Reels could allow creators to post different types of content, like full beauty routines and educational segments. Creators currently split content due to the 3-minute cap; a 10-minute limit resolves this fragmentation.
- Longer videos allow more space for advertising slots.

Covering the bases: Social media platforms are **increasingly converging** in terms of their features and offerings to ensure they can meet varying user preferences.

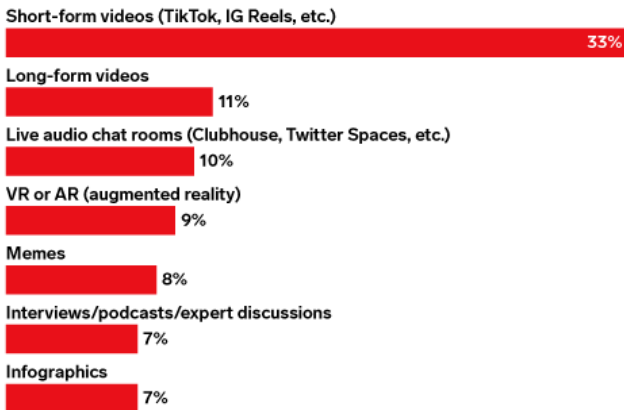
- Interestingly, as Instagram and TikTok explore longer content, YouTube is delving into shorter videos, [introducing Samples](#), a feature reminiscent of TikTok's discovery mechanism, and expanding its [emphasis on Shorts](#).
- Instagram's move is interesting given how short-form is attracting greater ad spend growth. Magna Global expects long-form video ad spending to [drop 5.3% this year](#) and grow just 0.2% in 2024; for short-form video, 2023's growth is expected to be 4.3%, with another 9.7% next year—admittedly from a lower starting point.
- Contrary to mainstream narratives, not everyone wants three-second videos 24-7: December 2022 data [from Magnite](#) reveals that a majority of US consumers (55%), predominantly watch videos spanning a few minutes, while short clips lasting 60 seconds or less attract 29% of viewers (we see similar trends [in Western Europe](#)).
- Instagram now has a track record of making moves that [boost Reels' user engagement](#), with a 24% rise in usage time and a doubling of Reels resharing over a six-month period, and believes it can achieve something similar with this move.

Our take: With TikTok already allowing 10-minute content, Instagram's potential change is a strategic play. YouTube should generate **\$7.36 billion in US ad revenues** this year. Instagram can now better compete for some of that allocation.

- Social media platforms are **increasingly converging** in terms of their features and offerings. A “one-size-fits-all” approach raises user experience questions: Should platforms offer dedicated apps for short and long content or integrate all types?
- With platforms constantly evolving, it's clear that adaptability and understanding user preferences are key to retaining and growing user bases.

Which Format do Social Media Marketers Worldwide Plan to Invest the Most in for 2023?

% of respondents, Jan 2023



Note: top 7 responses
Source: HubSpot and Brandwatch Consumer Research, "Global Social Media Trends Report," Feb 15, 2023

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