

# Meta, Snap, and YouTube unveil short-video ad formats at NewFronts. But do they stand up to TikTok?

Article

The battle against TikTok took center stage at this week's NewFronts, as Meta, Snapchat, and YouTube unveiled new ad products tied to short-form video. While none of them can compete with TikTok's lock on the youth market or the enormous amount of time its users spend on the app, these new ad products are an attempt to bring Reels, Spotlight, and Shorts into greater parity with TikTok's ad formats.

But did they succeed? Here's what we think of what each company announced.

## 1. Meta

**AR ads in Reels and Facebook Stories.** Not a new format, merely an expansion. AR ads are already available in Instagram and Facebook feeds and Instagram Stories.

**Our view:** Instagram famously copied Snapchat's stories feature—and now Meta is copying its AR ads into Reels. Snapchat users are used to seeing AR on Snapchat, but on Instagram and Facebook, it will be a new experience. And while Meta did add a few performance enhancements to make Reels ads more interactive and to improve viewability, its pool of ad formats for Reels is shallow and lacks the creativity that TikTok offers.

## 2. Snapchat

**Ads in Spotlight.** A year after starting to test them, ads in Spotlight, Snapchat's TikTok copycat are rolling out globally.

**Our view:** Snapchat let a lot of potential momentum slip away while it tweaked Spotlight ads. Advertisers may be somewhat intrigued given their current obsession with short video overall, but Spotlight is still a departure from Snapchat's core user activity, messaging. And the news about ads in its **MyAI chatbot** and its creator partnerships was a lot more noteworthy.

## 3. YouTube

**Expanding Shorts into video reach campaigns.** When Paramount+ tested adding Shorts to its YouTube campaign for a recent film, it helped the streamer reach new audiences, and led to higher efficiencies and higher ad recall vs. just using in-stream ads.

**YouTube Select Run of Shorts.** It's a mouthful of a name, but this feature will let advertisers place ads near popular and relevant videos in the Shorts feed, similar to TikTok Pulse.

**First Position on Shorts.** This feature mimics TikTok's TopView format, showing viewers an ad when they first open Shorts.

**Our view:** YouTube's new formats and placements don't go beyond what TikTok already offers. For advertisers seeking broad reach, the First Position placement and the ability to extend into video reach campaigns adds to the list of objectives they can tap Shorts for, but as with the other platforms, these updates are incremental, rather than game-changing.

*For more on the evolution of Reels and Shorts, check out my new report "[Social Video Usage and Ad Engagement: How Reels and YouTube Shorts Stack Up Against TikTok's Explosive Growth](#)."*

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