

Instagram Is on Pace to Overtake Twitter as a News Source

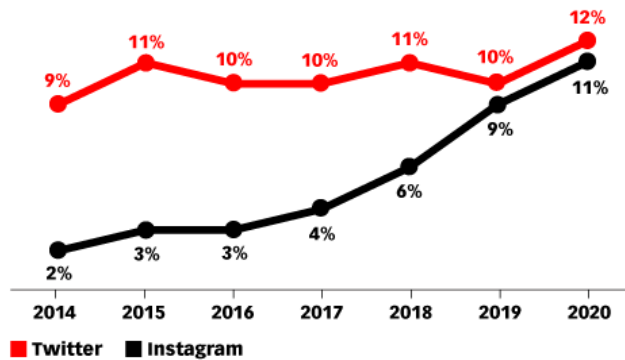
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A similar percentage of users now turn to Instagram for news as they do Twitter, **according** to new data from the Reuters Digital News Report. Some 11% of respondents across 12 countries said they used the image sharing app for news — almost doubling what it was in 2018 — compared to the 12% who said they turn to Twitter for news. If Instagram becomes a destination for news, advertisers may need to be more careful with brand safety issues on the platform.

Internet Users Worldwide* Who Use Twitter vs. Instagram to Access News, 2014-2020

% of respondents



■ Twitter ■ Instagram

Note: ages 18+; in the past week; *average across the countries of Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Spain, United Kingdom and United States
Source: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford, "Digital News Report 2020" conducted by YouGov, June 15, 2020

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Younger users in particular are much more likely to turn to Instagram for news. In the US specifically, 12% of adults overall **used** Instagram for coronavirus-related news in April, but more than double (26%) of those aged 18-24 used it for that purpose. While text is still the most popular mode of digital news consumption, younger audiences are more likely than older generations to **prefer** visual storytelling formats for their news, which Instagram is well suited for. With so many young people leaving platforms like Facebook, publishers may welcome the opportunity to reach more young people via Instagram.

If turning to Instagram for news becomes a more permanent habit, advertisers will need to pay more attention to brand safety. Instagram has been a more lifestyle-oriented portal, which has made it relatively safe for brands looking to advertise on a platform with less political baggage than sites like Facebook and Twitter — but with news beginning to pervade the platform, that may change.

For example, many influencers **received** backlash for continuing with marketing campaigns amid nationwide protests — with so many using the platform to post somber memorials and updates about protests, business-as-usual sponsored posts seemed particularly tone-deaf. If Instagram's user base begins to engage with more potentially sensitive or controversial news content, it's possible that the platform could

invite more heated and unwanted engagement. In that case, the platform itself may need to step in to ensure brand safety, the same way Twitter had to **purge** accounts and make changes to its metrics in order to reduce ads' appearances next to hateful content.