



The Analytics Series

Instagram Insights

October 2020



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Analytical tools can seem scary at first glance. Some of us can have an aversion to numbers and percentages displayed on these platforms and their jargon doesn't always make sense. But it is worth taking the plunge. Because when you delve in you will find lots of information that will help you develop your relationship with your audiences.

Audience demographics is the information that most organisations in Northern Ireland know how to get their hands on and use on a regular basis to guide their activities. And there is no doubt that knowing the age and gender of your audiences is useful, particularly if you are trying to build personas. But what it won't give you is the insights you need to develop a strong relationship.

Think about your own personal relationships. When you know someone, it is not their age or where they live, but also about what they like and dislike, how they live their lives and how they spend their spare time. These elements are the key to your success. If you show your audience that you know them and have included them within your programme, marketing content, ticketing strategy, they will feel seen and heard. Feeling seen and heard often equals reciprocity, appreciation and loyalty. Isn't that what we all want?

We created the Analytics Series to help you find out these little details about your audience, with the tools you already have. We're all lucky that the platforms we use all come up with free, built-in analytics and insights. We then only need to make some time to look at them and know how to read them. Like with exercise or arts, it takes time to perfect your craft and for it to become a habit. But it's all incredibly worth it!

In this third toolkit, we're looking at Instagram insights, what they are, which ones are useful to track and the latest Instagram algorithm. We hope it will help!

You can download other toolkits from the Analytics Series: [Google Analytics](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

What are Instagram Insights?

Creating an Instagram account can be done in two shakes of a lamb's tail, but to access its analytics you'll have to **switch to a business account**. Chances are that you already have one but if you don't, you can make the change for free via your profile.

Although Instagram is a member of Mark Zuckerberg's family of apps, its insights are not as detailed as Facebook's but they can still be very useful. Although like Facebook, the insights are not always accurate, they can tell you what is working (or not working), the best time to post and help you better understand your audience.

Instagram insights are split into three labels:



The **Content** tab gives you an overview of all your posts, stories and ads, and how they are performing.



The **Activity** tab shows how many accounts you reached, your number of impressions and how often people have interacted with your content over the last week.



The **Audience** tab is a summary of your audience demographics including their location, age and gender.

What should you track and why?

Overall page performance



It's good to check how your page is doing once in a while (we recommend once a month) and record **how many followers you've gained or lost** and **how often you've shared content** with your audience over a specific time period. The Audience tab will show you what days your followers count increased or decreased. You may have shared a post that appealed to new audiences on a certain day: track it down and try to understand why.

Your content performance



To find out how your posts and stories are performing, go into the **Content tab** in your insights section and click on **'See all'**. There's two of them – one for posts and one for stories. You can then select what post type, time period and interaction you'd like to report on. The range of interactions available breaks down your audience's engagement with your content into specific actions: calls, comments, emails, engagement, follows, get directions, impressions, likes, profile visits, reach, saved, shares, texts and website clicks. You don't necessarily have to track them all but you should decide which ones are the most relevant to your organisation.



Use relevant **hashtags** consistently in posts and in stories but also follow these hashtags and engage with other profiles who use them (go to search and click on the 'tags' tab). You can track hashtags in your insights' content tab and they often prove to be useful to bring in new audiences interested in your content. Hashtags increase your reach and impressions without any cost.



If you're using Instagram to drive traffic to your website, **website clicks** is the metric to pay the most attention. You are probably already familiar with the 'link in bio' slogan and it's always good to remind your audience the link is there in every post. However, sometimes you may have a lot of news to share, leading to different pages on your website, with space for only one link in your Instagram bio. Free platforms like [Linktree](#) allow you to host as many links as you wish in one landing page. It also has its own analytics: views and clicks.



Your **Activity tab** only shows the last seven days of data for reach, impressions and interactions. It is however a good indicator of what content your audiences enjoyed the most. Did you notice the actions taken on your account were at their highest last Monday? Check what your posts were on that day to include more similar content in the future.



If you use **IGTV**, you'll want to know how your videos are performing. The insights for IGTV include interactions – views, likes, comments, saves and shares – and audience retention or **how long people watched your IGTV content**. This **average watch time** is your most important metric for IGTV. The higher it is, the better.

Your Instagram audience



The **Audience tab** is great to know when people followed and unfollowed your account and find out basic demographic information about them, but it can also show you **when your audience is online**. Knowing what day and what time your audience is the most active means you can schedule your posts accordingly. Take into consideration that it is not always 100% accurate and you'll always have to adjust. Try things out and see what works best!

What about the infamous Instagram algorithm?

The Instagram algorithm is constantly changing, which means your posts can go unnoticed even if you did everything right. It is challenging but if you make a point to remember the following facts, you'll know where to focus your effort:



You want your audience to **comment** on your posts as often as possible as it impacts feed ranking. The length of their comments is not that important. Make sure **you reply to all comments** just like in a real-life conversation.



The format of your content does not matter. Photos, videos or carousels are all equal in the eyes of the algorithm. **Engagement matters**. You can always experiment with more video content and see how it impacts your levels of engagement.



Your posting **frequency** has to be **consistent** so your audience is more likely to see and engage with your content. If you don't have time or the capacity, create a posting schedule in advance.

Finally, ads and sponsored posts on Instagram are linked to Facebook and the same rules apply on both platforms. If you want to know more, [download our Facebook Insights Toolkit](#).