



THE SOPHISTICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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Studies on the use of the social networks carried out by We Are Social and Hootsuite have shown a continuous rise in the number of users of social networks and other digital platforms all over the world. The COVID-19 pandemic led to significant growth in the penetration rate of the social networks, and greater sophistication resulting from new features and functionalities. In this backdrop, companies have been perfecting how they use social networks and digital platforms, with many managing them by integrating them into their communication and

marketing plans. Hence, the marketing and distribution of products, services and experiences increasingly makes use of the social networks and other digital platforms, which all contributes to making social media an integral part of a marketing strategy.

The social networks that have the most potential for development are TikTok and Instagram. However, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp have also become more sophisticated.

TikTok, the social network for short videos, which is extremely popular worldwide,

especially among the young, is testing a similar tool to the Twitch subscriber model, where users pay to access private content. This Chinese social network is still testing a tipping tool, whereby its users can donate money to content creators. Another test being carried out amongst a restricted group of users involves the inclusion of a new functionality: the “repost” button. Two further strategic features of the social network for brands – TikTok Ads and live events – are being fine-tuned. They provide two excellent opportunities for brands to increase their visibility through fun, spontaneous and creative content.

Instagram, a mainly visual social network but one which is seeing a growing number of messages in video form, is exploring two new feeds that can complement the current one. First, the chronological feed with no recommendations and with more transparent functioning rules. Second, a favourites feed, which allows users to create a list with their preferences. Another functionality that may undergo development in this social network is the possibility to synchronise videos and images with

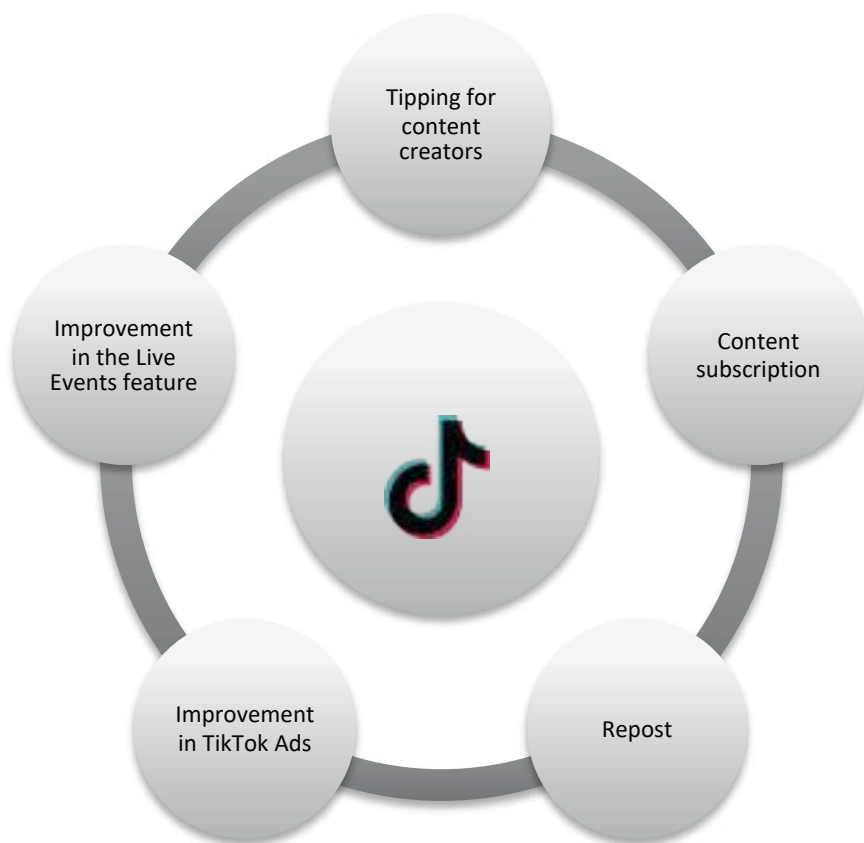


Figure 1. TikTok Trends

music, like TikTok does. As such, users will be able to select music on Instagram to edit fun, spontaneous and creative content, just like on TikTok.

Instagram has announced the creation of a Parental Control tool to allow parents to define time limits for using the social network. Moreover, the new tool aims to generate graphs showing the time youngsters spend on Instagram. This functionality also has the goal of allowing users to report suspicious profiles, for greater protection and well-being.

Digital specialist Marco Gouveia highlighted on his Instagram profile that the social network will allow “secret” likes to be given to Stories, editing of carousels without deleting them, a full-screen Reels/Stories feed, moving away from the static, and also allow responses to comments on posts through Reels. But additionally the new features that the specialist has been announcing entail Instagram creating paid subscriptions to access exclusive content from content creators, and an account status that details the situation of the accounts, such as if any content has been removed from it and

why. This resource will allow the users of the social network to permanently know what is happening with their account. After the social network blackout in 2021, Instagram is testing a new resource in USA that will alert users when the service is experiencing technical difficulties. Also noteworthy is the permission to publish the date and time of the next Lives in the profile of the content creators, which Instagram is preparing to make available, and the option to add a reminder. Finally, a higher number of possible answers in the opinion polls of Stories to

increase engagement will probably be another upgrade in the sophistication of this social network.

As Instagram becomes more sophisticated, it is increasingly providing essential features resembling those provided by TikTok. Hence, video content, namely momentary short and vertical video in Reels and Stories, will tend to occupy the same importance as the images traditionally posted on Instagram. The increased sophistication of the social networks is not exclusive to TikTok and Instagram, but it is these two that have proven

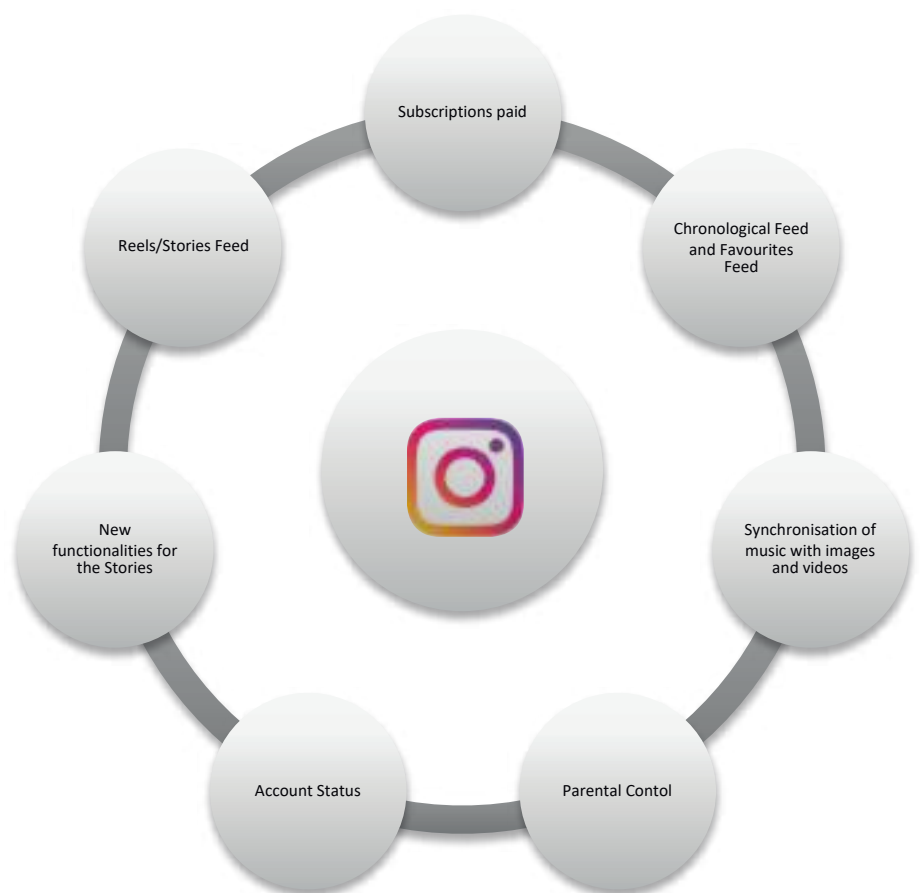


Figure 2. Instagram Trends



most innovative. The social media platforms in general, and the social networks in particular, are constantly changing.

As regards the sophistication of the social media platforms and especially the social networks, other trends can also be identified, such as:

Advanced social commerce applications;

New augmented reality technologies for the social networks and social commerce;

More frequent audio content, including on Facebook;

Development of virtual communities and metaverse worlds;

Increased sophistication of

social media intelligence platforms.

Keeping track of the latest developments in the digital platforms is increasingly important to define the strategy and tactics for the digital marketing of brands. In the background of the strategic management of social networks, it is essential to know about the advanced development of the monitoring tools and social media intelligence and reporting, which provide essential support to measure the business dynamics, the competition, trends, opportunities, and most importantly, the consumers' perceptions and feelings. Monitoring and social media intelligence platforms

help increase competitive intelligence which is more and more decisive to make sure brands keep ahead of their competitors.

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