

Capstone 2 - Instagram Research Debrief

Goals

- Understand creator sentiments, needs, pain points, and motivations.
- Understand and observe the hashtagging process for different types of creators ranging from casual to professionals.

General Findings

In general, all of the participants want IG to have some type of suggestion/recommendation tool that can assist them in thinking of relevant and/or trendy hashtags. Some wanted to be able to select hashtags from different popularity/competition levels (ie: popular, mid-popular, nice) and others wanted IG to scan their post's content and generate the hashtags for them.

- Everyone liked that hashtagging allowed users to find them and increased their visibility. They liked that they could interact with other users/creators through hashtagging.
- Even casual creators did some prior research before posting, such as looking at their favorite creators' most used hashtags.
- No one enjoyed hashtagging, they all said that they thought it was necessary for reach and growth.
- Everyone used their notes app to copy and paste hashtag groups to expedite the hashtagging process, no participant manually typed in all 30 hashtags individually.
- I noticed that the small business owners I interviewed tended to use at least one third-party hashtag generator websites/apps.
- The sentiments around hashtagging ranged from annoyed and frustrated to neutral with an average "Easy" score of **3.3 - neither hard nor easy**.
- Everyone agreed that hashtagging is very important with the average score of **4.2 - Very Important** (5 was explained as "Extremely Important").
- The creators I interviewed stated that they take 2-3 minutes to finish hashtagging a post after doing some research. However, my observations revealed that they take 5-8 minutes.

Needs

- 10/10 participants needed to do some prior research before hashtagging.
- 8/10 participants stated that they need to spend time to come up with their own hashtags.
- 7/10 participants need to look at their favorite creators and take notes on what hashtags they use.
- 6/10 participants needed IG to autocorrect their spelling mistakes.
- 4/10 participants (who were all small business owners) stated that they need IG to recommend niche (and trendy) hashtags. They also stated that saving any time hashtagging would be beneficial.
- 3/10 participants needed IG to tell them when they hit their hashtag limit on reels since IG notified them when they post pictures.

Frustrations

- 10/10 participants were frustrated that IG doesn't help them in coming up with effective/trendy hashtags. They all commented that it's a trial and error process.
- 9/10 participants were (slightly) annoyed that they always have to scroll through their notes app and locate their appropriate hashtag group to then copy and paste it into the post and then manually change some hashtags for more relevant posting.
- 7/10 participants were frustrated that hashtagging seemingly used to generate more organic growth and traffic into their accounts. They all commented that it, "doesn't feel effective anymore" or that they're unsure if they're choosing the "right hashtag".
- 6/10 participants felt that IG doesn't help small creators grow.
- 6/10 participants were annoyed that they have no idea what hashtags their followers follow.
- 5/10 participants thought hashtags were ugly and distracted their followers/viewers from the actual content/description. They wish there was a way to hide them somewhere.
- 3/10 participants were bothered that the popular hashtags were "too oversaturated".
- 2/10 participants were annoyed that they have no idea if they were shadowbanned if they accidentally used banned hashtags.

Motivations

- 10/10 participants wanted to grow their IG account.
- 7/10 participants were motivated by building a community around their body of work and finding like-minded creators.
- 6/10 participants followed hashtags to draw inspiration from others to improve their art/business.
- 4/10 participants eventually want their businesses to become their main source of income and rely on IG as their main social media channel to grow their business. **Note:** *this was without me prompting the interviewee to speak about their future plans with IG, they made these comments after the interview ended or spoke about it when asked if hashtagging was important to them.*
- 3/10 participants either relied on their business for their personal and/or family income.
- 2/10 participants liked categorizing their posts via hashtagging.