



NEWSPAPERS AND INSTAGRAM: WHY AND HOW NEWSPAPERS



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SHOULD USE INS .AGRAM

Launched in 2010, Instagram has over 700 million monthly users and three times more engagement than its parent company, Facebook. Celebrities using the platform have tens of millions of followers; brands that are on it receive hundreds of thousands of likes. Despite seeing [424 percent year to year growth in engagement, the largest engagement increase of any platform, less than 40 percent of newspapers are on Instagram.](#)

So, what's stopping newspapers from hopping on the platform's bandwagon? Here are a couple things that could be holding them back:

First and foremost, *no live links = no traffic driven:*

Instagram only allows active links in the user's profile bio. This means links don't work in captions, comments, etc. and therefore won't be effective in those locations. For an organization whose main products are news stories, this type of content isn't received as well on the platform. News organizations primarily want visits to their original websites.

On the actual platform, *it's next to impossible to monetize:*

On Instagram, users can't embed advertisements *before* their content is viewed like on YouTube. They also can't embed advertisements *near* where their content is viewed like on Facebook. Really, they just can't embed advertisements. Users who make money from Instagram content are those using brand deals. This is when the account holder (primarily social media influencers) uses their account to promote a specific brand or product. However, this is done outside of Instagram and is a deal between the brand and the user. Monetization of content is done without Instagram's involvement, and any money made is separate from the platform.

So, what's the point of newspapers using Instagram? Despite the previously mentioned off-putting factors, some newspapers have taken to Instagram and here's why:

has the [lowest number of daily newspaper readership](#). [Eighty percent](#) of Instagram users are also from outside of the United States, which provides the opportunity to reach international audiences. With the demographics of Instagram users and features (namely the explore page and the post-sharing messaging capability) that allow quick and easy content sharing within the platform, one post can spread or be stumbled upon and the organization that posted the original content will spread with it.

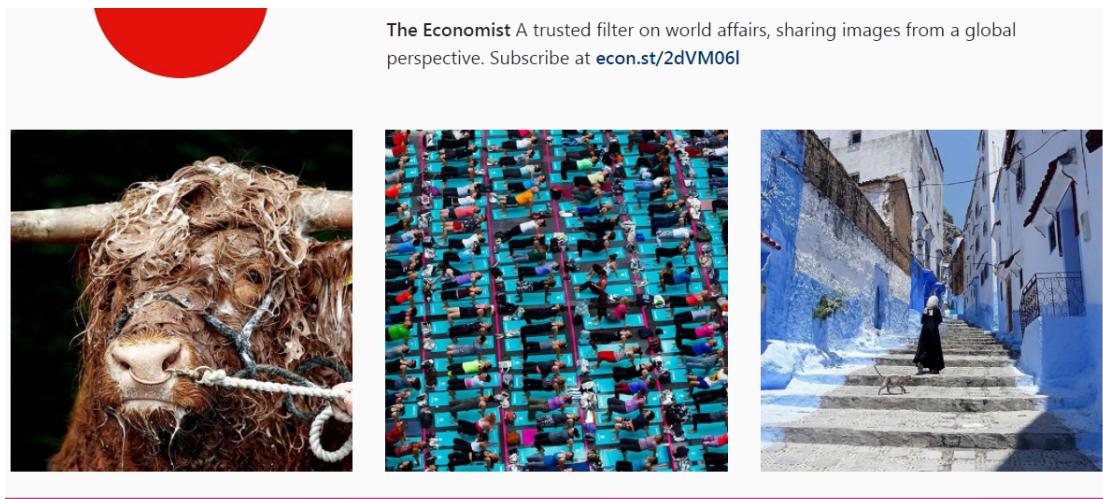
Brand awareness:

By being active on Instagram, an organization can easily keep its brand at the forefront of followers' minds. Out of the adults that use the Internet, around [30 percent use](#) Instagram. [Almost one-third](#) of the [700 million](#) on Instagram are on the platform at least once a day. This provides a lot of opportunities for brands to create awareness.

Expanding the brand:

Most newspapers already have an established brand prior to using Instagram. The platform provides the opportunity to showcase a slightly different aspect of their brand. Due to the uniqueness of the content-sharing capability on Instagram, a traditional approach to content may not work. It's worth trying to expand the type of content delivered by your specific brand. This opens some doors for well-established organizations.

A great example of a publication achieving all these goals on Instagram is [The Economist](#). They have over one million followers on the platform and receive thousands of engagements (likes and comments) per post. From quotes to short news stories, this publication is using Instagram to draw in more brand awareness, reach new audiences, expand their brand and more – while subtly placing their subscription link in their bio.



Sign up to see photos and videos from your friends.

[Sign up](#)

Once it's acknowledged that the pros to using Instagram outweigh the cons, there are ways to effectively utilize this social media platform as a visual representation of an organization.

Here are some ways to follow in the footsteps of publishers that are doing it right:

Most importantly, stay true to the brand:

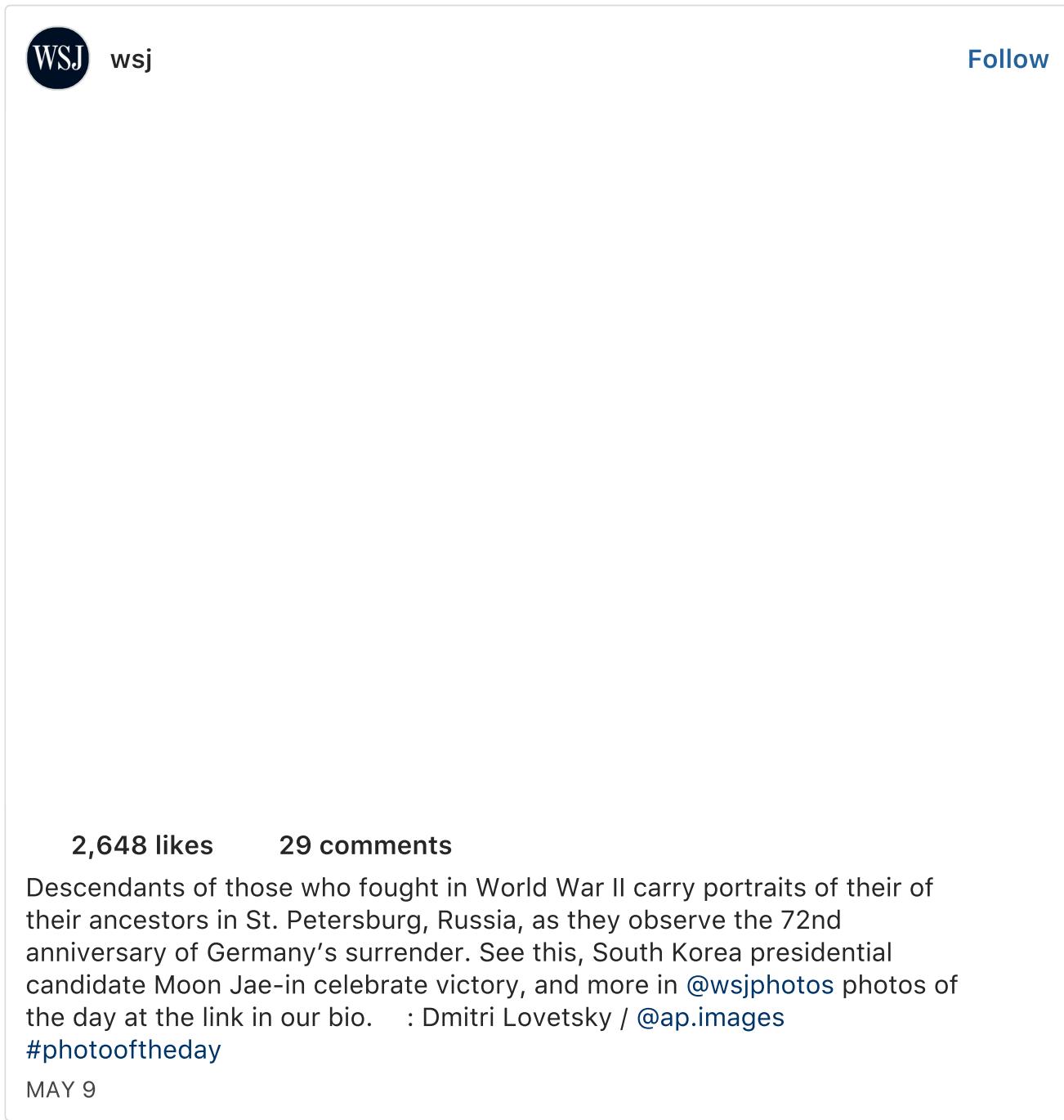
It's true that Instagram provides the opportunity to try out some new aspects of the organization, but it's important not to completely reinvent the brand on Instagram. Social media in general often gives off an informal tone, which can cause the temptation to follow suit. If the organization isn't playful normally, they shouldn't try to come off that way over social media. Take a note from a leading brand on Instagram, [National Geographic](#). They replicate their brand through their posts, keeping an educational tone. It doesn't hold them back – they have 78.3 million users and receive thousands of likes on each post.

745.3k likes 2,712 comments

Photo by [@salvarezphoto](#) (Stephen Alvarez) Soon, this cave will likely only exist photos and memory. A rapidly changing climate is likely to wipe out all glaciers in The lower 48 United States. The science on climate change is not in question. The climate is changing and human use of fossil fuels is the cause. [#Paris](#) [#ClimateSummit](#)

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Instagram, there isn't a ton of room for leading up to the content or posting meaningless content. Also, remember that Instagram is a photography platform, so a strong visual should be the strong point of each post on Instagram, just like it is for *The Wall Street Journal*:



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2,648 likes 29 comments

Descendants of those who fought in World War II carry portraits of their of their ancestors in St. Petersburg, Russia, as they observe the 72nd anniversary of Germany's surrender. See this, South Korea presidential candidate Moon Jae-in celebrate victory, and more in [@wsjphotos](#) photos of the day at the link in our bio. : Dmitri Lovetsky / [@ap.images](#)
#photooftheday

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Tease up future content:

Poynter [suggests](#) taking a lesson from [CNN's Instagram](#), where they "tease for long-form reporting." When their reporters are on site, they will post photos to Instagram of the reporters in action, with captions hinting at longer, more in-depth



cnn

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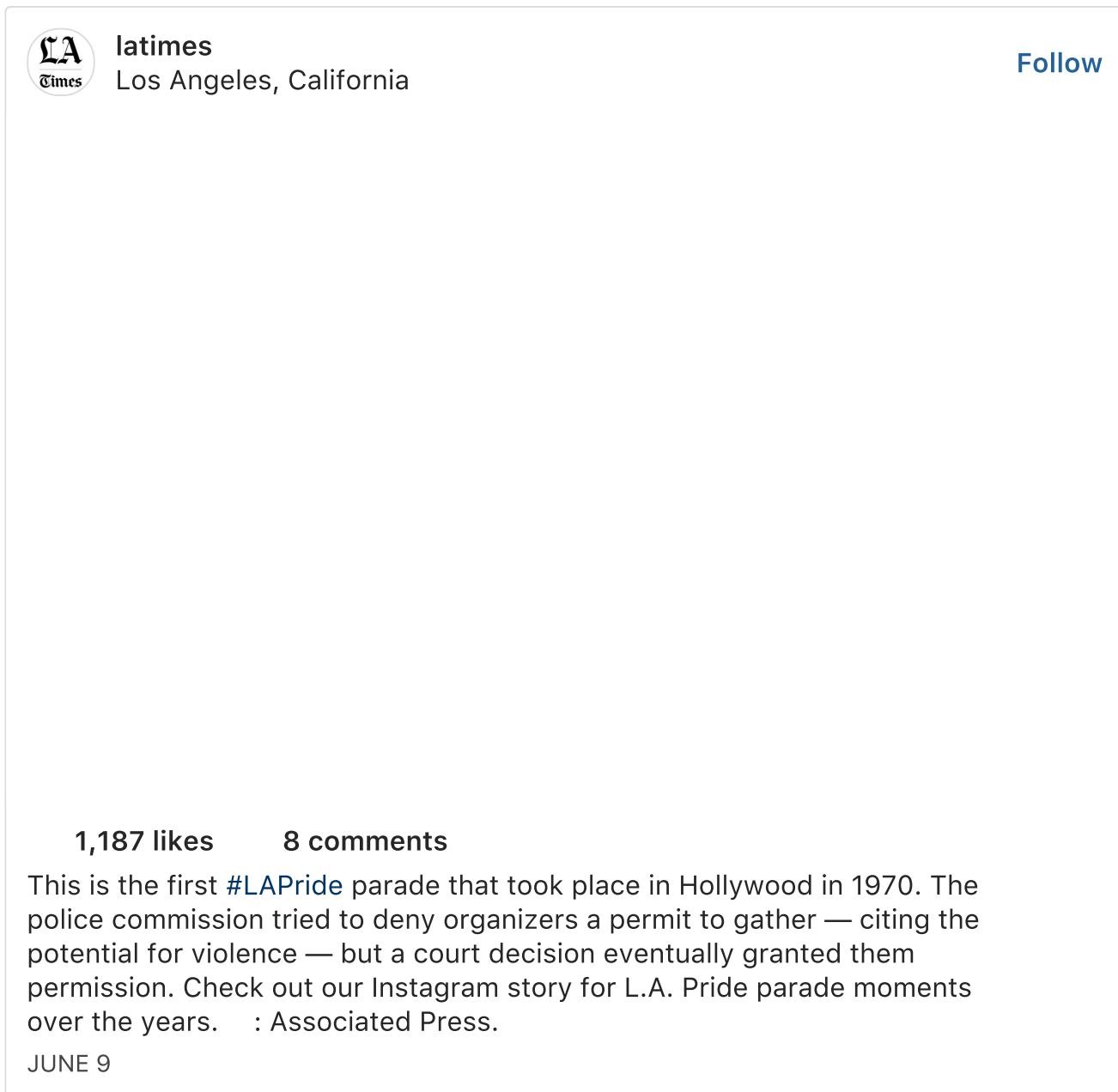
9,750 likes 375 comments

CNN's Fred Pleitgen has just arrived in Iran - and immigration officials rather liked his CNN shirt! Iran's voters will go to the polls this week in presidential elections that could change the country's relationship with the international community. Follow [@fpleitgencnn](#) and visit CNN.com for the latest updates.

[@fpleitgencnn](#) #Iran

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Keeping the content meaningful and engaging is important, as is having a place to showcase this meaningful and engaging content, even if it doesn't necessarily belong on a primary website. If there are some amazing shots that don't really work with the story posted on the website, Instagram might just be the place. For example, *The Los Angeles Times* posted articles about the LA Pride events but they included this photo on Instagram instead of with any of the articles online:



latimes
Los Angeles, California

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1,187 likes 8 comments

This is the first **#LAPride** parade that took place in Hollywood in 1970. The police commission tried to deny organizers a permit to gather — citing the potential for violence — but a court decision eventually granted them permission. Check out our Instagram story for L.A. Pride parade moments over the years. : Associated Press.

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Use it for what you want to:

of what type of content needs to be on Instagram, so you don't have to align your content with that of which you see in your news feed. Take a note from *azcentral* who posts content on Instagram ranging from serious news updates to relatable memes:



Remember:

single like. That's because you were still figuring it out. Practice makes perfect.

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