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New Media & Communication

Instagram

Instagram is a social media app that just about everyone either uses frequently, or has heard about at some point or another. I've been using Instagram consistently since my junior year of high school, so it's been about 6 years. I am incredibly interested in the art of photography and visually appealing photos, and that's something that Instagram has an abundance of. Instagram is a social media outlet that I have remained true to throughout the years partially due to the consistency of the app itself. You can always somewhat anticipate what you're going to see once you get on, and despite the fact that the content is always changing, it still maintains a comfortable consistency to it. I follow people who post things that are going to be interesting to me personally, and the ability to pick and choose exactly what you want to see is part of the reason this app has managed to keep my devotion.

Instagram is an app that essentially encourages and rewards its users for posting visually appealing content. The more likable a photo you post is, the more likes you will bring in. If you're always posting things that aren't visually appealing, odds are, you won't have a very popular page. Some exceptions to this might be with celebrity accounts though, as people follow them primarily to see what's going on in their lives. The quantity of likes that someone might bring in on their post depends on a few different factors. If someone has their account set to private, their audience is limited to just the people who they have accepted to follow them. As

mentioned by Alice Marwick and Dana Boyd in their study titled “Networked privacy: How teenagers negotiate context in social media”, people interpret privacy a lot differently on social media than they do in real life. My personal Instagram account is set to public, but I am a relatively private person. I don’t post anything incredibly personal that’s going to reveal too much about myself, but I do have it set to where anyone in the world can see my profile. Since Instagram users tend to gravitate towards prettier and nicer pictures, I try to post things that satisfy that quality – most people do. People usually post things to show other people, and they get a weird sense of joy and approval when a picture brings in a large number of likes.

On Instagram, users have the ability to carefully select how they want to be depicted to their followers. I try to curate my presence in a few different ways. Firstly, I only post content that reflects who I am as a person and that reflects parts of me that I want to show people. I don’t post things about my life that I don’t want people to see, obviously. Also, I only post pictures of things and events that might seem more interesting than my everyday life. If you were to look at my Instagram without knowing me personally, you might think that my life is more exciting than it actually is, when in reality you’re only seeing what I want you to see. Lastly, I always make sure to never post too many photos at once. Most people don’t like being spammed on any social media platform, and Instagram is no different. On occasion, I’ll “double-post” if I have a particularly exciting and photo-worthy day, but that’s very rare. Maintaining a good presence on the platform without

overwhelming my followers is tricky sometimes, but it's what makes using the app more interesting.

Despite the fact that I've been on Instagram for so long, I've never really considered actually leaving the app. I've deleted it for a week or two before during finals or something to keep myself from getting distracted while studying, but it's never been permanent. Twitter on the other hand, is a social media platform in which I've deleted and reactivated my account time after time. It doesn't hold my attention the way Instagram does. I greatly appreciate Instagram's entire interface and the way it operates, and as long as it relatively remains the same, I can imagine my use will remain consistent.