

Make Instagram Instagram Again

Charting Instagram's Pivots to Stay Competitive

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Introduction

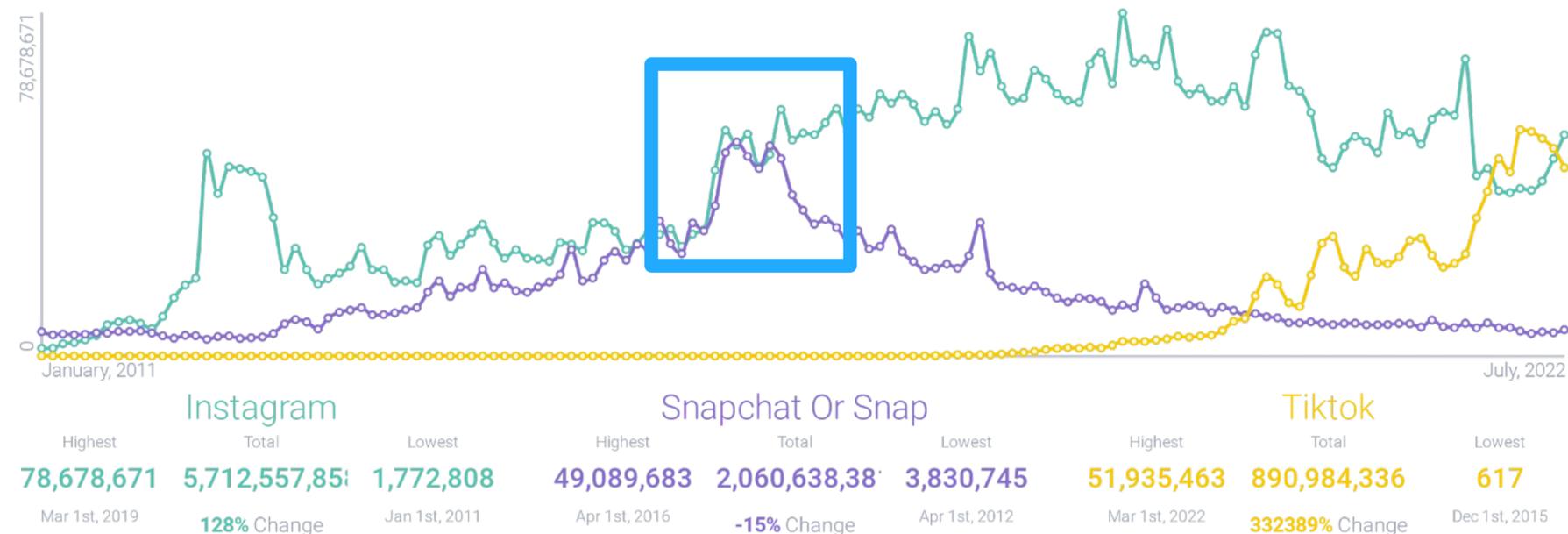
Meta's Instagram has grown its popularity over the last decade by copying and iterating on other apps' core features. Instagram first did this to Snapchat in 2016 by copying its "Story" feature. It did this successfully and captured the short-form, narrative image market for the next three years.

In July 2020, Instagram once again tried to feature-replicate, this time with the hugely successful video-forward TikTok. In this brief, we examine the results of this pivot, and suggest reasons why it failed.

Instagram Copies Snapchat Stories (2016)

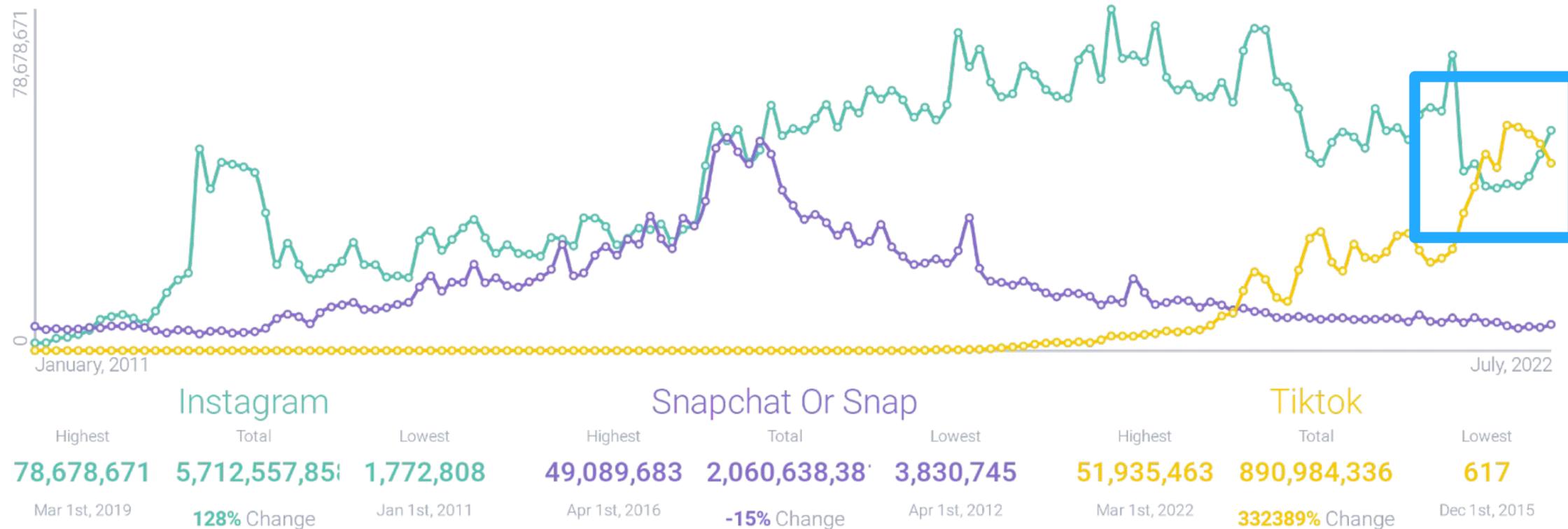
While Facebook acquired Instagram in 2012, Snapchat remained independent and enjoyed steady growth. Around 2016, Facebook engineers saw Snapchat's growing popularity as an existential threat to their business. As a result, they adopted a core feature - the Snapchat Story. Infegy Atlas data shows that Instagram copied this masterfully, as post-volume dropped for Snapchat, but continued to climb for Instagram.

2016: Instagram Copies Snapchat Stories



Instagram Pivots to Short Form Video (2022)

2022: Instagram tries to copy TikTok



Instagram faced a similar challenge in 2022 with TikTok, the short-form video app, siphoning off younger users with its addictive algorithm and short-term video content. Instagram tried to copy TikTok by placing full-screen video over Instagram's traditional image feed.

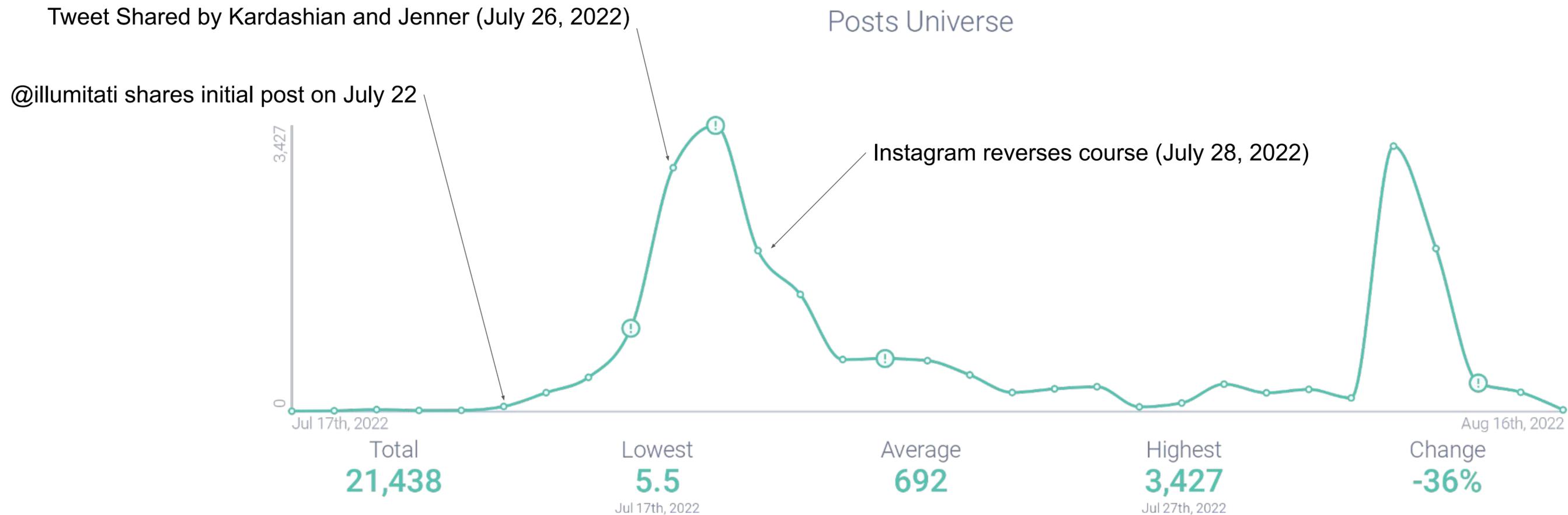
Users Complain



Users saw Instagram’s pivot and complained. Instagram user @illumitati started the complaints with a post proclaiming, “Make Instagram Instagram Again.” This post was retweeted by the Kardashian siblings and garnered millions of likes and shares.

Many of these complaints centered around Instagram creators having to revise their creative process and completely change how they generated content for Instagram.

Spike in Post Volume Showcases User Complaints



Infegy Atlas tells the story of the “Make Instagram Instagram Again” movement with post volume. @illumitati shared her post early on. The Kardashians picked it up a few days later near the peak of the post volume. Instagram reversed course quickly after that. The final hump shows post-controversy commentary.

Instagram Reverses Course

The New York Times

Instagram, facing criticism from Kylie Jenner and others, tries explaining itself.

Meta is meeting backlash for changes that make some of its platforms act more like TikTok.

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The beauty mogul Kylie Jenner shared an image on Monday that read: "Make Instagram Instagram again. (stop trying to be tiktok i just want to see cute photos of my friends.) Sincerely, everyone." Calla Kessler/The New York Times

[By Kalley Huang](#)

The New York Times

Instagram rolls back some product changes after user backlash.

Celebrities like Kylie Jenner and Kim Kardashian were among the upset users who said the updates made the app too much like TikTok.

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[By Kalley Huang and Mike Isaac](#)

July 28, 2022

Notably, Instagram reversed course just a few days after the backlash. This is significant because Meta has shown great reticence to listen to consumer backlash in the past. It remains to be seen whether Instagram can pivot to meet TikTok's surging demand without alienating its creators. That question remains unanswered.

Conclusion

Instagram's attempt to pivot to an immersive, full-screen video experience backfired spectacularly. This means Instagram's playbook of copying other platform's cornerstone features won't work like it did in 2016. This failed business strategy showcases serious concern around Instagram's ability to remain relevant amongst a more competitive marketplace. In 2022, social media users have more options where they can spend their time. In order to attract the crowds, Instagram will have to innovate, not just copy.

How Can You Use This Information?

Brand Management

Use Infegy Atlas to monitor your market's reception of new business pivots (i.e. Making Instagram More Like TikTok)

Consumer Behavior

Use Infegy Atlas to learn what your audience wants (i.e. images on Instagram) and use that to guide social media strategies and business decisions.

About Infegy

We're changing the way companies listen to consumers, and what they do about it.

- Robust social listening data and analysis
- Quickest view of consumers' thoughts and sentiments
- Unmatched client experience and support
- Agile approach to products and services



ENDEAVOR



qualtrics^{XM}



Our Dataset

- Social dataset spanning hundreds of billions of posts and growing fast.
- Data collection that best mirrors varied real-world populations.
- Unlimited data access provides flexibility to obtain the context that matters.
- In-house data storage allows for unmatched speed to insight.



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Learn how you can use Infegy Atlas to obtain insights like these. Contact us at sales@infegy.com to schedule a custom demo.