



What is?... Instagram By Matthew Carroll

Instagram is a mobile online image and video sharing social media platform. Users can take images using their mobile device, add digital filters and enhancements, and then share it within Instagram and also via other popular online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr.

Images (and videos up to 15 seconds long) are all shot in a square shape rather than a typical portrait/landscape aspect.

Instagram shares many similarities with other social platforms including Twitter and Facebook. Like Twitter each user has a @username. Hashtags (#) are also heavily used to aggregate posts of a similar nature. For example, #gardening.

The site also allows you to “like” and “comment” on posts, just like Facebook. To like simply hit the like button or double-tap the relevant image.

Instagram was acquired by Facebook in 2012 for approximately \$1 billion dollars, which facilitates excellent integration between the two platforms.

Why use Instagram?

Instagram has the following benefits:

- While there are less people overall on Instagram than Facebook, the platform is growing far more rapidly than its parent company (In 2013, Instagram grew by 23 per cent, compared with Facebook, which only grew by 3 per cent).

- The filters and enhancements provided on Instagram make your images look much better. The image edit options available on Instagram far exceed those found within Facebook and other online sharing platforms.
- You can share your posts directly to Facebook from the app. This automatically duplicates the content, one in your Instagram library and one in your Facebook library.
- The square image works well within Facebook timelines with no cropping (losing the top or bottom of your picture).

How to start

Download the Instagram app free from iTunes, Google Play or Windows Phone Store.

Open the app and either register for an account using Facebook or your email address (existing users can log in from this page). You will then be asked to create a username. This will become your @username and be the way that people find and talk directly to you online, much like on Twitter.

Once logged in you can find friends already on the platform or look for people with similar interests by searching hashtags (for example, #gardening) to get you started.

To add an image simply select the centre camera icon at the bottom of the screen and take a shot. You can also upload from your existing images by selecting the photos icon on

the lower left hand side.

To make a video up to 15 seconds in length swipe the bottom menu to the left and press and hold the record button. You can make one straight video, or one made out of several smaller clips.

Integrating with other social platforms

Instagram allows you to share your images directly to Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Foursquare and Flickr. When used in conjunction with Facebook and Tumblr it actually duplicates your imagery on both sites, whereas with Twitter it posts a link back to Instagram.

To set this up navigate to your profile page (bottom right-hand side silhouette icon) and select the gear/cog in the top right-hand corner.

Under “settings”, select “linked accounts”. From there you will see the available sharing options (Facebook/Twitter/Tumblr/Flickr/) where you can log in to enable sharing.

To share to your Facebook “Page” rather than personal account click Facebook and select the relevant page from the list.

Now, when about to post an image you can also select a relevant other platform in which to share your image by selecting it prior to posting.

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