

# Know your Worth on Social Media

Media Literacy  
presentation



By Vivian Lee, ICTC



Hello, my name is Viv!

I am an e-learning delivery team lead at ICTC and digital citizenship curriculum designer.

That means that I make content to help students become experts on how to use the internet, including safety, cyber forensics, and social media algorithm manipulation.





Today, we are going to do an activity that will show you just how valuable you and your attention is to the companies that own your social media accounts.

We will first learn about the different types of ads on social media and how much is made every time you look at/click on an ad.

Today's demo will start with Instagram, but this method can be applied to many other platforms, such as TikTok, SnapChat, Facebook, and Twitter.



# What to expect:

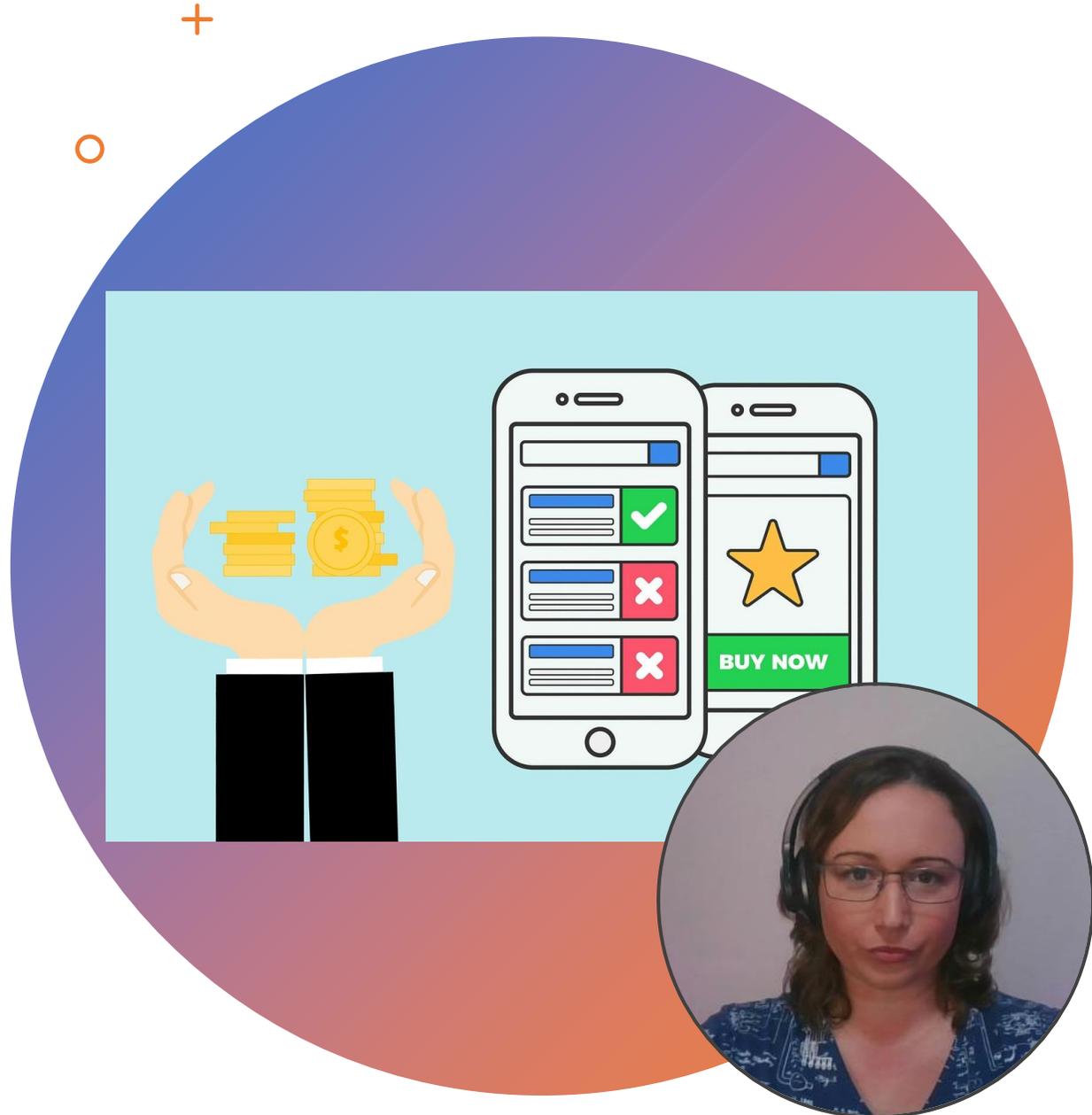


By the end of this activity, you will be able to apply a critical eye to the ways your social media interacts with you.

You will also walk away with a much stronger understanding of your personal value to social media companies, and how to be a more conscious user of platforms like Instagram.

You probably have heard the expression “if the product is free, then you are the product.” Social media platforms like Instagram are designed to keep your eyes glued to the screen, keeping you scrolling for as much time as possible.

Instagram is addictive *by design*- that means you are giving them money, just by being there... and even more money if you click on anything (yes, anything).





\$11.60/year

If you were to just scroll through Instagram without clicking on anything (and that includes simply liking your friends' posts), Instagram makes about \$11.60 per year off of every user. That's just under a dollar a month that you're giving them (96 cents to be exact).

Add on any clicks you make on sponsored content, and that number goes up. So, did you buy something by clicking on an Instagram ad? Well, that number just went up even higher.

- +
  - So, what can you do about it? Most people, especially teenagers, are pretty numb to the constant bombardment of ads on their socials. Your brain probably tunes out and automatically scrolls past most of them, right?
- 

Well today, we are going to turn on your conscious understanding of targeted and sponsored ads, and give you access to the full picture of how Instagram makes money off of your attention.





# Activity

Let's start with what kinds of ads exist on Instagram.

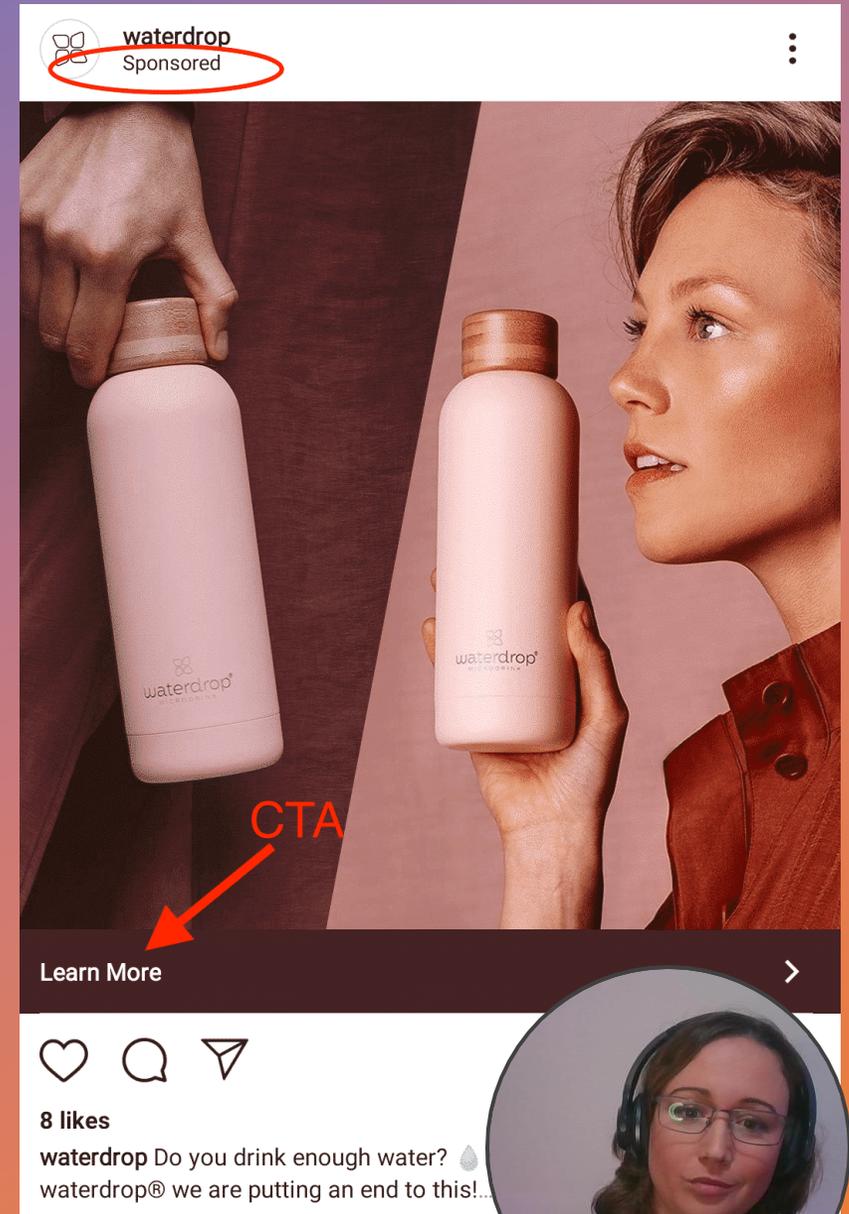
Some are super easy to spot, while others are intentionally more sneaky.

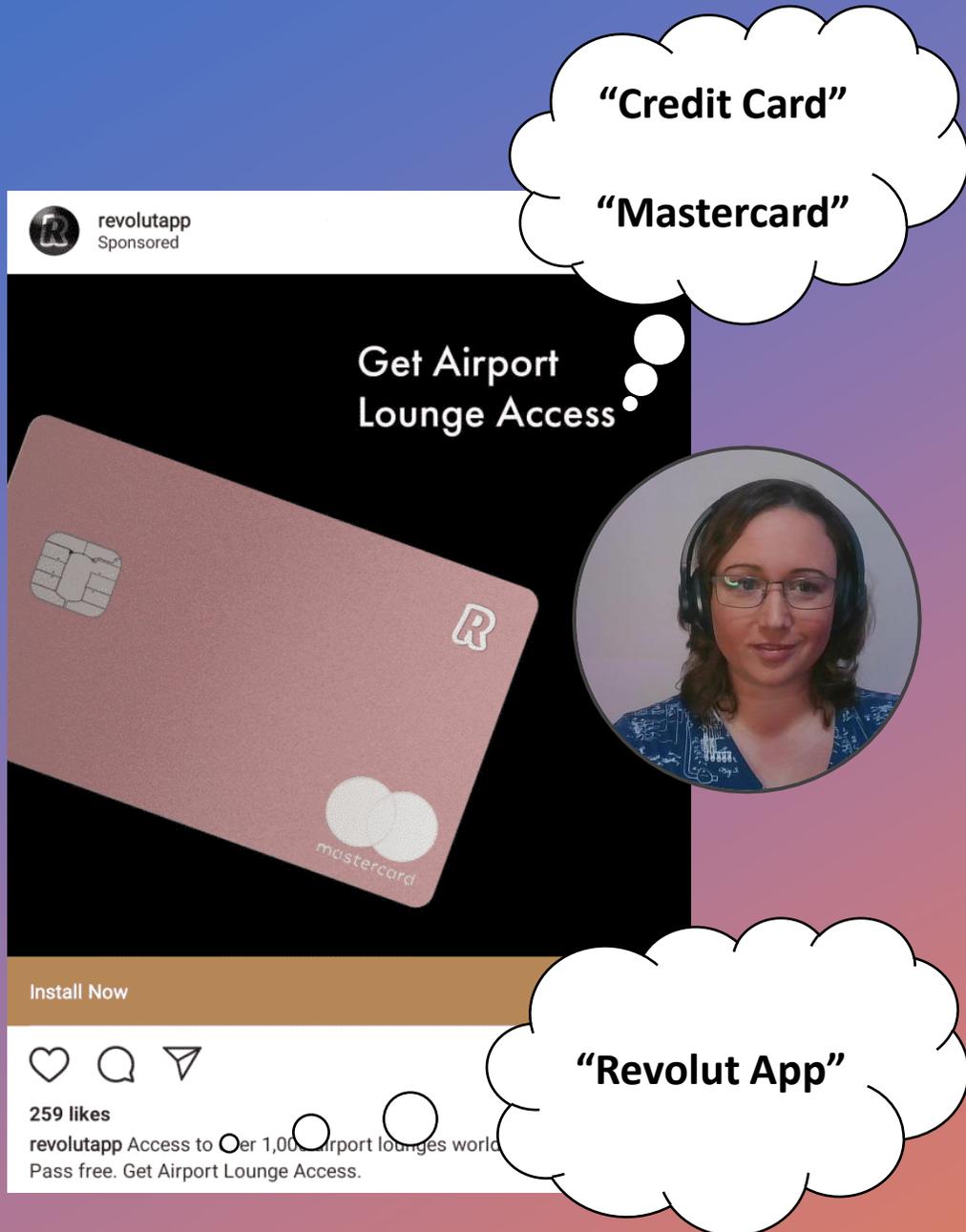


Sponsored Ads can show up in your feed or stories, and can be spotted easily.

They can look just like regular posts, but you'll see the word 'sponsored' at the top left corner. They can also include a 'Call To Action' button, that is usually tagged as 'Learn More' or 'Open Link' on the bottom left.

About 30% of the targeted ads you see on Instagram will be sponsored ads.





revolutapp Sponsored

Get Airport Lounge Access

Install Now

259 likes

revolutapp Access to Over 1,000 Airport lounges worldwide. Pass free. Get Airport Lounge Access.

“Credit Card”  
“Mastercard”

“Revolut App”

“Revolut App”

Let's look at some examples of sponsored ads and test your ability to ID them.

When you see the ad flash on the screen, say the first word (or two) that pops into your head, and the name of the brand if you can.

I will do the first two with you, and then you say the rest aloud to yourself.

Sponsored  
Ad



KENZO kenzoparfums  
Sponsored

A sponsored advertisement for Kenzo perfume. The background is a large, vibrant red flower. In the center, there is a white square containing a close-up of an orange-red flower against a light blue sky. The text "KENZO" is written in large white letters, and "SPRING DAY" is written in smaller white letters below it. At the bottom of the ad, there is a dark red bar with the text "Learn More" and a white right-pointing arrow.

Learn More >

Sponsored  
Ad



An Instagram sponsored advertisement for 'treatwell\_uk'. The main image shows a woman's face on the left and her hands with red and pink manicured nails on the right. The text 'treatwell' is in the top right, and 'And I need it tomorr' is overlaid in the center. Below the main image is a carousel of three smaller images: a room with a pink bed, a person getting a manicure, and the exterior of a 'Eniko Nails' store. A 'Learn More' button is at the bottom left of the carousel. The Instagram interface is visible at the bottom with icons for home, search, post, heart, and profile. The top left shows the profile 'treatwell\_uk' with a rainbow logo and 'Sponsored' text.

Sponsored  
Ad

 **Casper**  
Sponsored  
ID: 652261355447875 ...

"Best dog bed overall for man's best friend." - Tom's Guide



TOMSGUIDE.COM  
The Most Brilliant Dog Bed  
The Casper Dog Bed [Learn More](#)





 **Staples**  
Sponsored

We're here to help. Get free delivery on all your orders, no minimum required.

**Free delivery,  
no minimum!**



STAPLESADVANTAGE.COM  
Get workday solutions.

[Shop Now](#)





 **I.D. Sarrieri**  
Sponsored  
ID: 4033024606724393

Breathable, soft-to-skin silk & cotton masks for getting around town with comfortable & effortless chic.



[WWW.SARRIERI.COM](http://WWW.SARRIERI.COM)  
Discover The Silk I.D. Sarrieri Masks  
Offering our support with facial coverings, the Maria Mask is available in a cotton 3-layered facial covering or a silk ...

Shop Now





 **Walmart**  
Sponsored  
ID: 4070440732966264

The deals are here! Save 20% on hum toothbrushes & refills at Walmart.  
#DealsForDays #gethumming @humbycolgate



WALMART.COM  
Walmart

Shop Now





 **JustFab**  
Sponsored  
ID: 378022333470051

★ GIVEAWAY ★ In honor of JustFab's 10th Anniversary, we're giving you the chance to win TEN pairs of our most coveted styles.

How To Enter:

- Must be following @justfabonline
- Like this post
- Tag a friend in the comments with #giveaway. (The more friends you tag, the higher your chances to win.) ...



10 YEARS OF JUSTFAB  
Giveaway

INSTAGRAM.COM  
JustFab

Visit Insta...



Sponsored  
Ad

 **L'OCCITANE en Provence**  
Sponsored  
ID: 332504831797292

Find a special gift for everyone on your list! Explore all our gifts at every price point.



**L'OCCITANE EN PROVENCE**

**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND**

KIT SOS | SOS KIT

**Petit Remède**

**SOS KIT**

LOCCITANE.COM  
Online exclusive

[Shop Now](#)





 **Fossil**  
Sponsored  
ID: 1519809931543614

Season's Savings: 40% off all bags & wallets ar  
Use code: SLEIGH. Hurry, one week only.



These Won't Last Long [Shop Now](#)





masterclass  
Sponsored

1:16

It's easy to cook on TV.

Learn More

597,180 views

masterclass Buy one annual membership, share one free. Learn cooking, writing, music, and more. Offer terms apply.



+

•

○

## Now what?



Instagram will track your interaction with sponsored ads by 'impressions' or 'clicks.'



An impression is literally just your eyeballs hitting the ad. Doesn't matter how fast you scroll past it- that's still an impression.

Instagram is also tracking how long your eyes linger on the ad to the microsecond.

If you hover over a sponsored ad, your algorithm will assume you're interested and probably show it to you again at least once or twice.

- + ● Next kind of ad is called an 'Organic Ad.' Do you follow any brands or major labels online?
- 

All of that content is an organic ad. This content is designed to get you interested in the brand or their current promoted product.

Let's look at some examples of organic ads.



- +
  - Just like we did with the Sponsored Ads, when you see the ad flash across the screen, say the first word (or two) that pops into your head, and the name of the brand if you can.



# Organic Ad

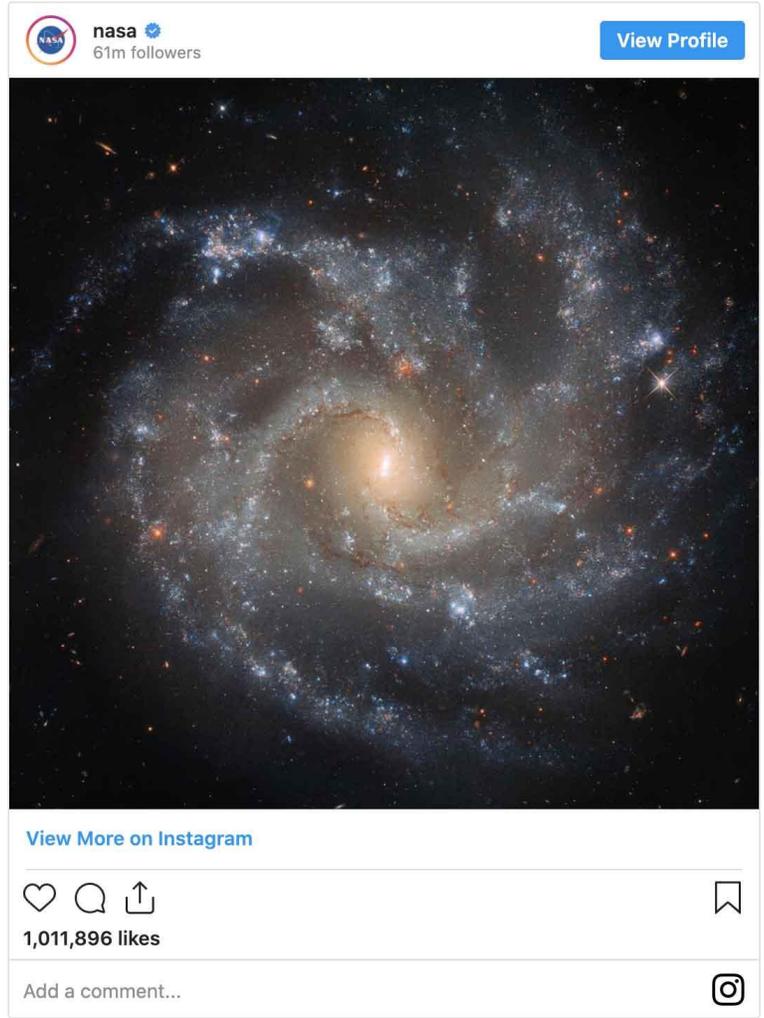




Organic Ad



Organic Ad



Organic Ad



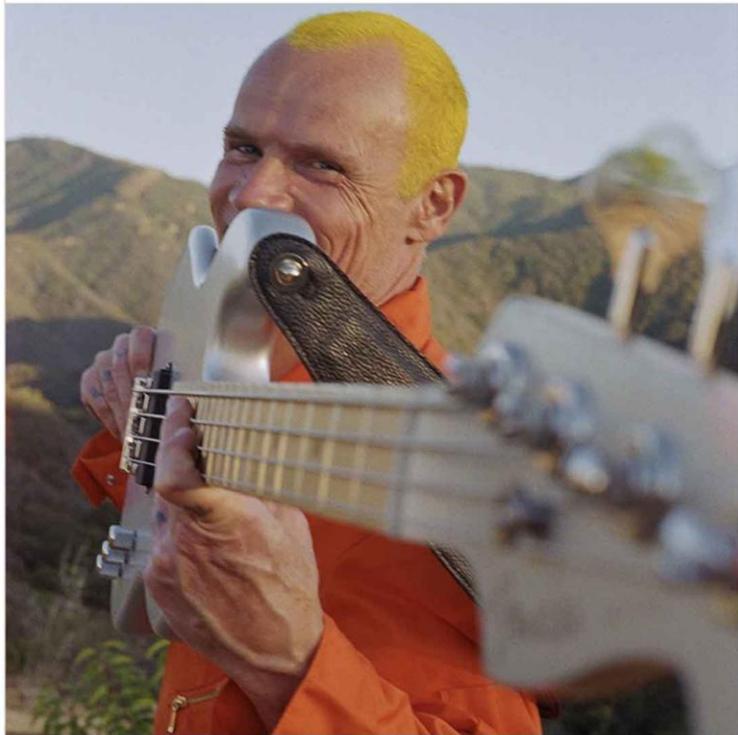
Organic Ad



Organic Ad



 **fender**   
3.2m followers [View Profile](#)



[View More on Instagram](#)

     
120,590 likes

Add a comment... 



Organic Ad



**pixar** 7.8M followers [View Profile](#)

[View More on Instagram](#)

114,374 likes

Add a comment...

Organic Ad



 **adidasoriginals**   
35.4m followers [View Profile](#)



[View More on Instagram](#)

118,020 likes

Add a comment... 



Organic Ad



mcdonalds 3.9m followers [View Profile](#)

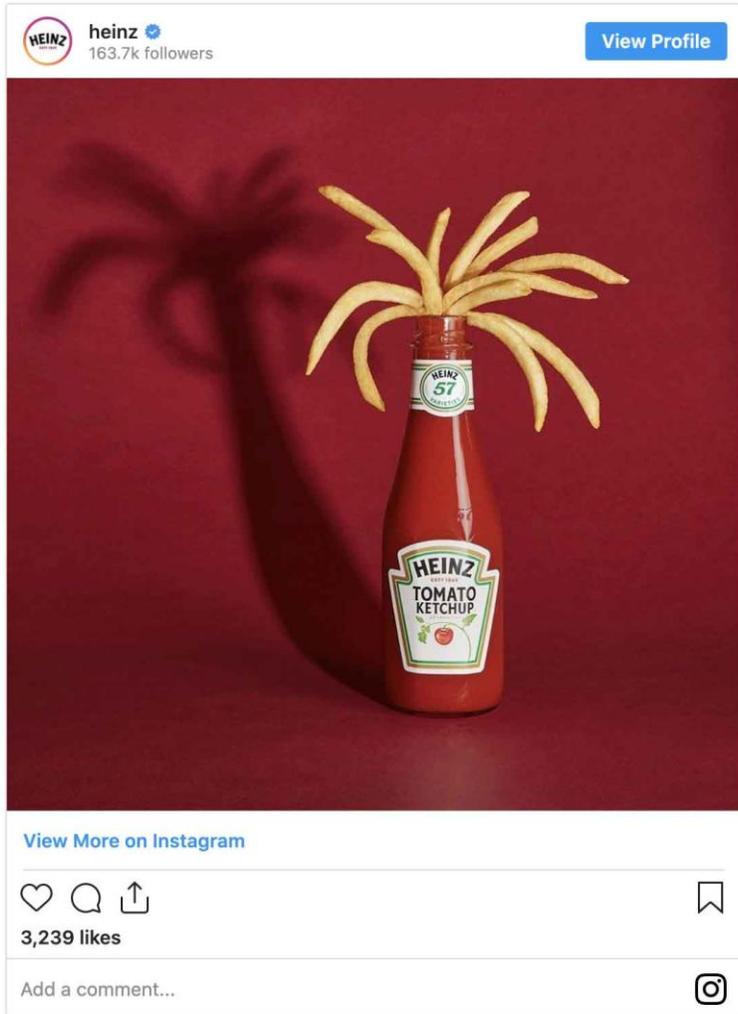
[View More on Instagram](#)

55,601 likes

Add a comment...



Organic Ad



heinz 163.7k followers [View Profile](#)

[View More on Instagram](#)

3,239 likes

Add a comment...



- + ● The third kind of ad we will review is the sneakiest to track and by far the most controversial form of marketing. The Influencer Ad, or ‘imbedded ad.’
- 

This is when a company tries to sell their product by having it used, demonstrated, or just in the background of a personal Instagram account.

Most accounts featuring imbedded advertising are famous people with thousands or tens of thousands of followers, but many brands are now using large groups of ‘micro influencers’ with smaller follower counts to further their reach to targeted demographics like teenagers.

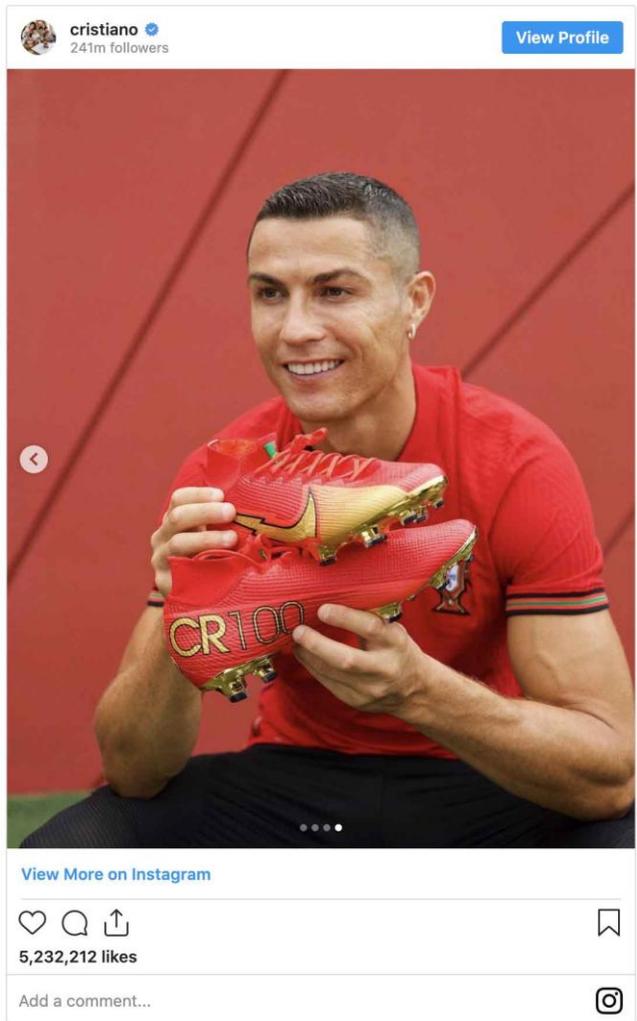




Just like we did with the other two kinds of ads, when you see the content flash on the screen, say the first word (or two) that pops into your head, and the name of the brand if you can.

This one might be harder to do, so pay close attention!

Influencer  
Ad



Influencer  
Ad

saratoufali • Sponsored



1/5

Shop Now >

1 like

saratoufali Buy \$100, Get \$20

Paid partnership with eatnorthitalia



Influencer  
Ad

 kristenlive • Follow



**8,986 likes**

kristenlive Tis the season to give your loved ones some cute comfortable socks. That's why @thosepopsocks is offering BUY 1 GET 1 FREE all throughout the month of December. Use code 'Give' at checkout 🎁

[View all 60 comments](#)

4 days ago



Influencer  
Ad



Influencer  
Ad



Influencer  
Ad



Influencer  
Ad



Influencer  
Ad



the\_robin5ons • Follow

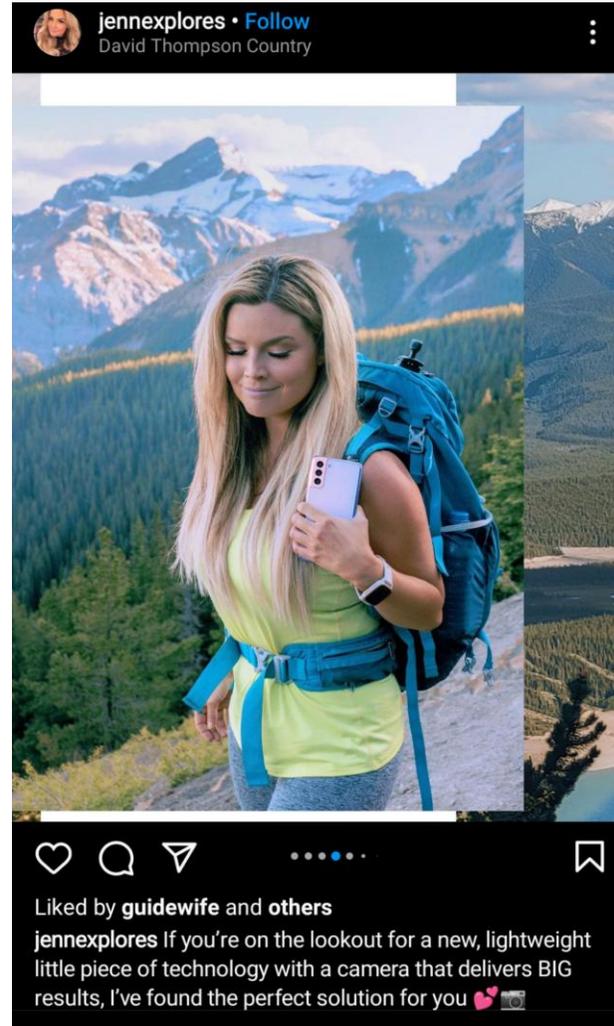
Liked by **andredondrejace** and **others**

**the\_robin5ons** #AD: Summer break is here for the kids and you know what that means! Their "school stomachs" are gone and they'll be in and out of the pantry looking for something to snack on.

While shopping @walmart, I came across one of my classic childhood favorites @post\_cereals, but in a snackable package. I wish they had these when I was growing up!



Influencer  
Ad



Influencer  
Ad



Did you find the influencer ads more difficult to spot? That is absolutely on purpose! Remember the note about impressions from the first demo?

The longer you look at an ad, the more revenue is made by Instagram. You are more likely to linger over an influencer post, even like, share, or repost the content. If you were in charge of making money at Instagram, wouldn't you try to keep your users looking at your content for as long as possible?

Instagram's job is to make as much money off of your attention as possible. And they don't even pay you for your hard work!

+

o





- + • Now, I want you to take your new social media literacy skills and apply it to your own Instagram account. This is
- o • can done by yourself or with a friend. One person can be the timekeeper and the ad counter. The other person is going to scroll through Instagram. (You can always just use a timer on your phone if you're by yourself).

Set a timer for one (1) minute. You should have enough time for about 5 seconds per post- just like the practice we did before.

Every time you see an ad (sponsored, organic, or influencer), say "AD." Every time you see user-created content (like your friends' posts), say "NOT."

If you are by yourself for this activity, I recommend using a piece of paper and pencil, creating a tally chart of "AD" and "NOT" for yourself.



Alright! Now take a look at your numbers.

How many ads did you see? How many user-created posts did you see? What about the ratio of ADs to 'NOT ADs'?

If you got a 50/50 split or majority advertisements, that is actually totally normal!

Most people will see more ads than unique content from their friends and family.



That ratio seems a little crazy now, doesn't it?

To put it in perspective, that would be the same as having to watch 15 minutes of ads on YouTube for every 15 minutes of show that you want to watch. And the show is broken into 1 minute segments, squished between ads.

You would probably get so frustrated by the constant interruptions to your show that you might just give up and close it! But why don't we have that same reaction when it's social media? Why are we okay with this?

+

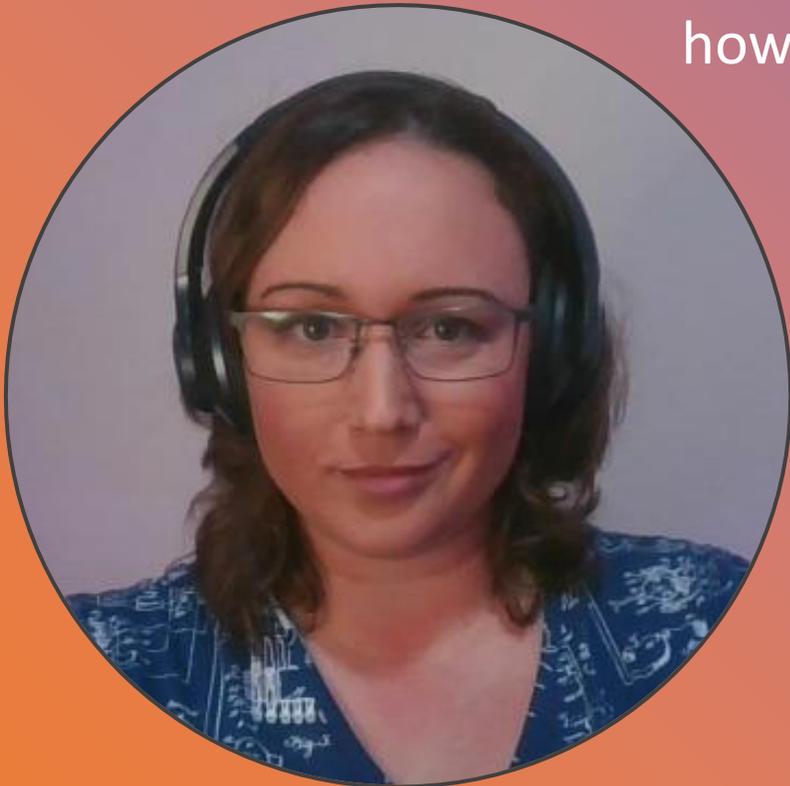
o





I'd like you to do this activity one more time. This time, we are going to combine the task of counting "Ads" and "Not Ads" with the one-word description from the start.

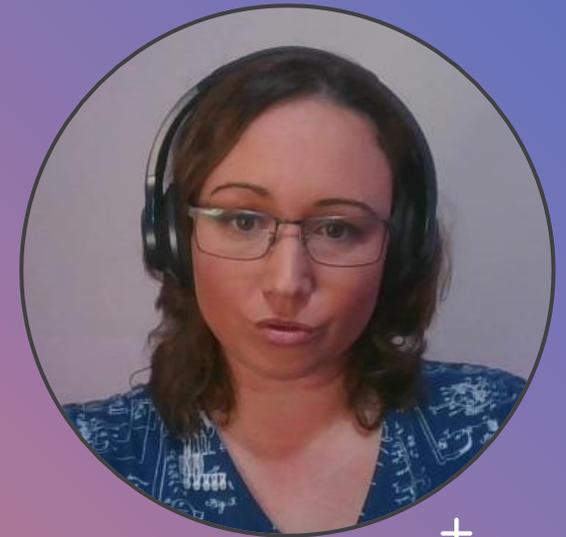
This is going to give us the bigger picture of not only how many ads you are exposed to, but also the kind of products that Instagram is targeting you with.



- +
  - - For this activity, instead of using a one (1) minute timer, I'm going to ask you to count to 20 posts.

For each post you are going to mark a piece of paper with “AD” or “NOT AD”, and if it’s an ad, write down the name of the product or one word to describe it.

AD/NOT AD	DESCRIPTION
1 AD	SNEAKERS
2 NOT AD	-
3 AD	MCDONALDS





Let's take a look at your results! First, how many ads did you see out of 20 posts? Was it more than the first time? Less? Next, look at the name of the products or descriptions you wrote down. Are any of them duplicates? Similar? Try and look for a pattern in the words.



This collection of words may seem like not much, but it is actually a window in the algorithms behind social media platforms like Instagram. If you were to repeat this exercise once or twice more, I guarantee that more of a pattern would emerge, forming a clearer image of your personal digital data footprint.

# How does this work?

This set of words is based on a very complex system of targeted tracking tools that pick up tiny data points about you every second of every day.

Your location, your movement, your proximity to other people, your shopping choices, your photos, your texts- literally everything you do on or near a digital device feeds your data profile.

And these are all stored by Instagram's parent company Meta in a large digital file about you. Each person has 52,000 data points, according to Meta.

This info is then organized by which kind of products and content you are most likely to want to see.



# So, what did we learn today?



- ✓ Social media platforms like Instagram are not free- you pay about a dollar a month to use it, with your time and attention.
- ✓ Social media is mostly advertising. Love it as much as you want, but just be fully aware of what you're choosing to love.
- ✓ Apply a critical eye to what you see. Don't be a passive user. Keep track of what content is being pushed at you. Notice duplicates. Notice patterns.
- ✓ Don't like what you see? Change it. Take control of your feed and be intentional with your focus. Unlike and unfollow problematic content and boost the good.



Please keep an eye out for other future ICTC content opportunities, including the:

Canadian Youth Cyber Education Initiative, CYBERTITAN!

CyberTitan prepares middle and secondary school students with learning opportunities through hands-on simulated environments that develop the critical, digital skills necessary to pursue post-secondary education STEM programs; to learn skills essential to work in many fields, and to identify roles students can play help to secure our systems





Thank you for your time today! I hope you learned something about your worth on social media!

