

The History of Instagram

Name _____

Instagram was founded by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in October 2010. Systrom and Krieger initially wanted to create an application for mobile photography called Burbn, but upon developing their idea further, found that it was too similar to the existing search-result app called Foursquare. They tweaked their original idea until they came up with a photo-sharing app. The name “Instagram” is a combination of “instant camera” and “telegram.”

From the outset, Instagram proved extremely popular. Only two months after its launch, it achieved a million users and reached ten million users in its first year. The simple idea of sharing photos in a social media setting appealed to a wide variety of phone users. As time went on, Systrom and Krieger began making a series of technology-related improvements to the app—making it compatible with Android and Windows phones, for example—as well as improving the user experience. In January 2011, it added hashtags, offering users the ability to find posts and people related to common interests. As Instagram grew into one of the most popular apps in the world, tech titans took notice. In 2012, Facebook purchased Instagram for one billion dollars.

In November 2012, Instagram launched web versions of user profiles, giving desktop users the ability to access Instagram profiles. However, the website profile launch retained limited functionality and lacked a search bar; the feature was redesigned in 2015. Instagram also began allowing the upload of non-square photos to the app in August 2015, a notable shift from the look and feel of the app since its inception. Rather than cropping down larger photos to a neat square, users could upload any photo of any dimension to share with friends and followers.

In March 2016, Instagram changed the nature of its news feed, the place where users scroll through newly-posted photos from those they follow, from chronological to algorithmic. “Algorithmic” means that Instagram uses computer algorithms and artificial intelligence to make “decisions” on what its data predicts you’ll like best. While this decision was met with backlash at first, it was made in order to prevent users from missing important posts from friends and family that might have gone unnoticed with a standard chronological timeline approach. Later in 2016, the app underwent major aesthetic changes; the app itself revamped to a black-and-white theme, while the app icon changed to a whimsical rainbow-colored design.

Today, Instagram boasts 800 million users. Every day, 55 million photos are uploaded and 1.2 billion likes are recorded.

1. **Why did Instagram turn out differently than its founders expected?**
 - A. Because they wanted to build an app for mobile photography
 - B. Because at first it was too similar to another popular app
 - C. Because they wanted their app to work similarly to Four Square
 - D. Because they liked the name Instagram more than the name Burbn

2. **Which of the following is OMITTED in the first paragraph?**
 - A. How was the name “Instagram” created?
 - B. What tweaks did Systrom and Krieger make to their original idea to create Instagram?
 - C. What is the purpose of Instagram?
 - D. What happened in October of 2010?

3. **Which of the following best describes the PACE of Instagram’s growth?**
 - A. It was as popular in 2010 as it is now
 - B. After several years, it became very popular
 - C. It became very popular eventually
 - D. It became very popular very quickly

4. **Why are hashtags (#) useful on Instagram?**
 - A. They help you upload and post images
 - B. They help you improve posts and images
 - C. They help you find interesting posts and images
 - D. They help you organize your posts

5. **What word could replace “backlash” in the following sentence?**

While this decision was met with **backlash** at first, it was made in order to prevent users from missing important posts from friends and family that might have gone unnoticed with a standard chronological timeline approach.

- A. excitement
- B. resistance
- C. fear
- D. understanding

6. What is implied in the fourth paragraph?

- A. Everyone's news feed will have different posts and pictures, depending on who they follow
- B. Instagram will soon switch to an algorithmic news feed so people can see what is actually important to them
- C. Instagram recently switched to a chronological news feed so people can see what is actually important to them
- D. In 2016, Instagram changed its app icon to the familiar rainbow-colored design

7. In the last paragraph, why is "decisions" in quotation marks?

- A. Because the program doesn't actually make real decisions like a human
- B. Because the author wanted to emphasize the word "decisions"
- C. Because the word "decisions" is an important word
- D. Because artificial intelligence is now being used by many websites and apps to make predictions on what content users want to see