



DIGITAL RECAP 2019

by hoinaru

GOLIN



DIGITAL RECAP 2019

by hoinaru





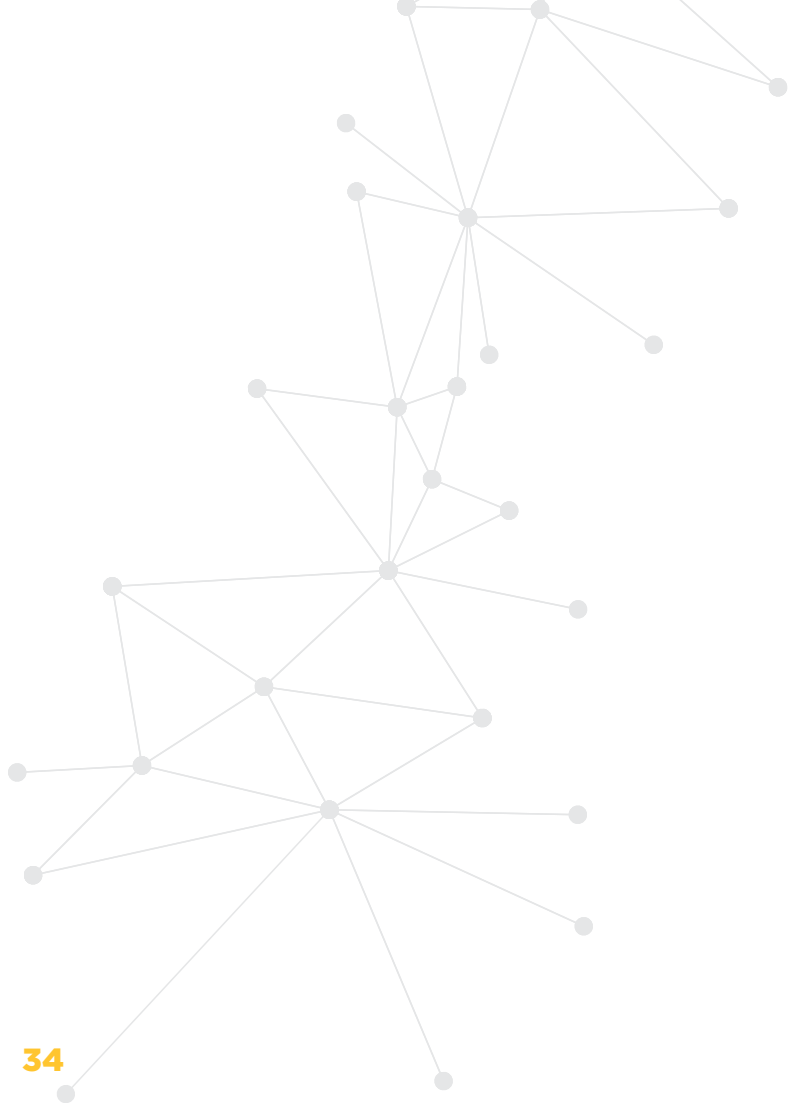
Graphic design: Alex Constantinescu

©2019 Alexandru Ciucă and Golin Romania for the Adobe Reader PDF version.
The volume, in this format, is available for download for personal use only.

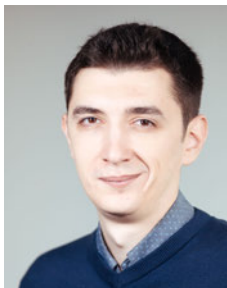
The free distribution of this book through other sites (with the exception of www.digitalrecap.ro), as well as any alteration or commercialization of this version without the prior, written consent of its authors are forbidden and are punishable according to the law regarding copyright infringement and the rights in force.

SUMMARY

Introduction	5
January	6
February	8
March	10
April	12
May	14
June	16
July	18
August	20
September	22
October	24
November	26
December	28
Key Topics in 2018	30
Romanian E-Commerce market in 2018	34
Digital Trends 2019	35
Influencer Marketing: Reporting a campaign	37
Influencer marketing and the fight between real or fake partnership	41
Your guide for promoting your business through social videos	45
IGTV: awaited success or just an abandoned scene?	53
New territories in brand communication: podcasts	56
Question everything. Especially in 2019	61



INTRODUCERE



It took many years, 8 editions and the constant feedback from readers to clearly outline the direction Digital Recap is taking.

If, in the beginning, we had only a bidirectional view, analyzing the past year and identifying next year's trends, in time we added new information, and Digital Recap 2019 includes some relevant figures for the Romanian market.

This is a new step towards what we want Digital Recap to become - an annual of the Romanian digital market, an archive of the most relevant topics, figures and trends as I identify them today together with the Golin team and several field industry specialists (and I take this opportunity to thank them for responding to our invitation).

I wish that, in 10 years from now, we were able to search in the Digital Recap editions as we would do with a history book of the Romanian and international digital environment. Be it either on the digitalrecap.ro website, or on a print version published, for now, in a limited edition.

Alex Ciucă

Blogger @ hoinaru.ro

Managing Partner, Superior Media

What's waiting for us in 2019 in the digital field and what we are taking from 2018 with? These are the main questions our Digital Recap, developed by Golin and Hoinaru, is trying to answer.

First, we look at this year's trends and how we can reflect and integrate them relevantly in communication. We explore new territories of brand communication, from podcasts to video content and we see what it's "new and hot in the old influencer marketing". Because, yes, we will continue to talk this year about influencers, but from new perspectives and, perhaps for the first time seriously, raising ethical issues, debates around fake news and fake content in influencer marketing and social media.

2019 is for us the year in which proprietary data and analysis are used to generate predictions and to support the development of communication strategies, to measure outcomes throughout the consumer's path. The strategic positioning that we adopted in the Golin network, focused on a progressive approach to public relations, helps us develop creative, relevant campaigns, using PR techniques and customer experience, extremely useful in building stronger relationships between brands and consumers, in order to present compelling stories and to improve the connection with influencers in key moments.



Irina Roncea

Managing Director, Golin

JANUARY

Mark Zuckerberg's 2018 resolution is to fix Facebook. Mark Zuckerberg's resolutions are pretty well-known in the tech world. Just as one year his resolution was to learn Mandarin and another year to create a smart house, in 2018 he wants to fix everything that is wrong with Facebook: fake news, fake accounts and depressed people because of the excessive social media consumption.

The resolution came against a backdrop of increased dissatisfaction from brands due to the decrease of the organic reach. Spoiler alert: he didn't manage to keep his resolution.



Virtual currencies continue to plunge. Nobody could imagine, in January 2018, the large decrease in the cryptocurrencies field. At that time, Telegram and Kodak planned to launch, each, a virtual currency, some Romanian websites were

secretly mining crypto-currencies and 50 Cent became a millionaire in US dollars also with the help of some Bitcoins he received for an album years ago.

WhatsApp launches a business dedicated app in certain countries. One of Facebook's strategies was to come up with a business-oriented solution for each of their products (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp). A year later, WhatsApp Business is not very popular, which is normal given that the need for such service doesn't exist.



GoPro is preparing to dismiss 200-300 employees of the drones division. At the end of 2017, GoPro was in a pretty difficult situation, with large losses and many unprofitable divisions. The discharges of January 2018 stabilized the company which announced closing the year in profit. Giving up the drones division turned up to be a good move.

OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Spotify prepares for stock exchange listing.

Google announces that the loading speed of a website becomes part of the algorithm for displaying results in the search engine pages.

Users are unhappy with Snapchat redesign.

Amazon launches Amazon Go - a store concept where no human is employed, only sensors and cameras, withdrawing automatically money from the account.

Turns out Lyft employees were spying on platform users, just as UBER employees were doing, as revealed in 2017.

InternetCorp creates a branded content division and gives up intrusive advertising formats

CNN shuts the Beme app, founded by Casey Neistat.

Telekom terminates the collaboration with the Romanian Postal Services for bill collection because of alleged debts of the Postal Services.

GMP PR launches an Employer Branding division led by Cătălina Șeitan.



FEBRUARY

Twitter records profits for the first time in 12 years. The announcement came as a big surprise, the company's numbers were not that good. The number of US users was falling in the beginning of 2018, the rest of the world recorded a small decrease and overall the network couldn't break over 330 million users. Besides, Twitter intended to delete the bots, leading to a decrease of tens of millions of users. That actually happened in summer of 2018, but not to the initially expected proportions.

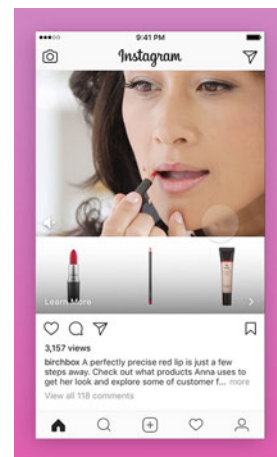
Google Chrome announced the intention to introduce an ad-blocker into the basic software. The announcement was regarded as a turning point for all online advertisement, but by the end of 2018 Google still hasn't included the ad-blocker in any of the Chrome updates. The international launch is programmed for July 2019.

Snapchat CEO announces they don't intend to revert to the old design. Even though 1 million people signed a petition against the new design. Some influencers (like Kylie Jenner) complained about the new design and Snap shares plunged \$1.3 billion. The media rushed to connect the star's tweets to the decrease, but the reasons are different, more likely related to the way Snap CEO had dealt with the issue of the new

design in the relationship with the users.

Facebook redefines organic reach. Facebook announced that the organic reach will be calculated differently. On this occasion we found out that, up to that moment, organic reach represented any post sent to the users' feed, whether the post reached their screen or not. Starting with February, organic reach is considered the number of users actually seeing the post on the computer or phone screen. The change led to a new decrease of organic reach, close to zero.

Instagram is testing collection ads where users can directly buy a product. They wanted it to be a first step towards introducing links and shop functions in Instagram. The companies have been long waiting for these options, but by the beginning of 2018 Facebook hasn't taken too many steps into that direction. Unfortunately, the functionality is not very spread in the beginning of 2019, either.



OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Google Assistant announces extension plans in 30 languages by the end of 2018.

Airbnb introduces a premium section called Airbnb Plus.

The Pole Society, the start-up co-founded by Matei Psatta, gets financing from Techstars Dubai.

Embedded tweets are subject to copyright rules, as per a US court decision.

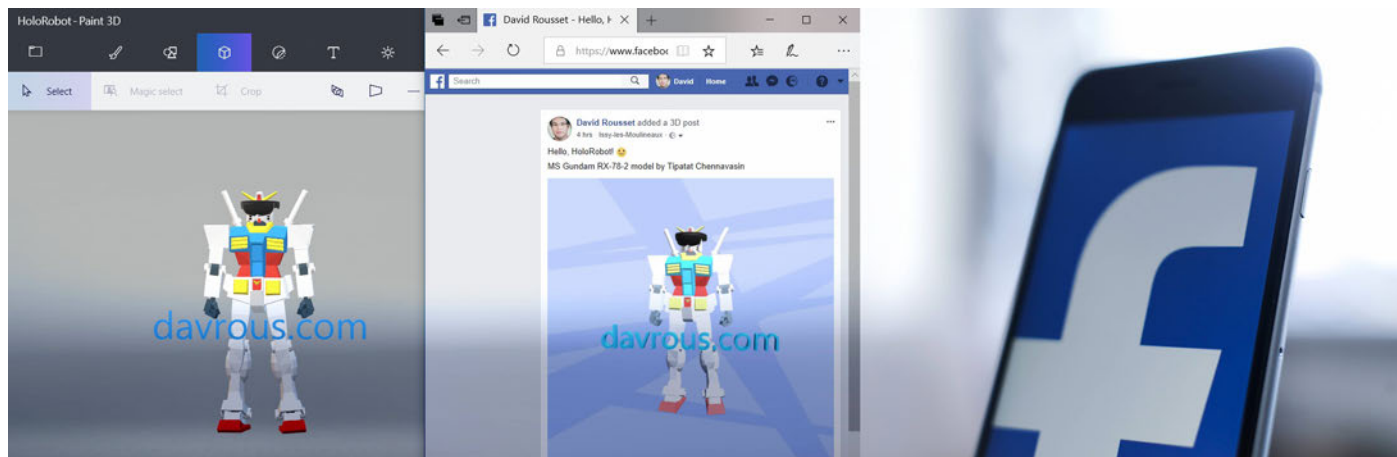
Facebook introduces 3D interactive content.

Facebook introduces the possibility to make lists and is testing a downvote button for comments.

Youtube removes commercials from questionable content accounts (including Paul Logan).

Twitter introduces a premium API so that brands can access the complete tweets archive from 2006 until present day.

Ringier launches the Știricurate platform - financed by Google.



MARCH

UiPath becomes the first Romanian unicorn (a company evaluated at over \$1 billion, that is) as it receives a financing of \$120 million. Since the announcement, UiPath started to recruit massively, and Daniel Dineş, the company's CEO, became the new Romanian IT superstar. UiPath continued its impressive growth over 2018 and got another round of financing in September, reaching an evaluation of \$3 billion.

Spotify is officially launched in Romania. After a few weeks teasing, one of the most popular music streaming services entered the Romanian market, creating more competition for the only local competitor - Zonga. There are no official numbers about the number of Spotify Romanian users.

Personal data of some Facebook users were used by Cambridge Analytica for the US elections. The scandal brought up the issue of the influence social networks can have in the important decisions people make. Facebook had subsequently admitted the data leak, and the "Cambridge Analytica Case" created a lot of problems for the social network led by Mark Zuckerberg.

Dropbox is listed on the stock exchange.

Probably one of the most expected tech listings of the year, the Dropbox IPO was talked about for years. The company has gathered, in



time, \$600 million worth of financing and, once they were listed, they expected to add another \$500 million. They added \$750 million. The Dropbox numbers are good, they had incomes of \$1.1 billion in 2017, up by almost \$300 million as compared to 2016 and almost double as compared to 2015. As opposed to other companies that are very well assessed just based on their potential, Dropbox could prove a stable business system which increased its value a lot.

The European Union announces the intention to force the social networks to delete illegal content (terrorist propaganda, child pornography etc.) in maximum one hours from the registration of the request. The measure was just one of a long line of requests coming from the EU for the IT giants.

OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Google bought Tenor, a GIFs platform.

Facebook is testing the Boost Post option in groups.

The national network ProFM breaks into 31 local stations so that every station could manage its own publicity.

Facebook is testing audio messages as statuses in newsfeed.

Snap discharges 100 employees in an attempt to cut costs.

Digg Reader, former extremely popular RSS reader, shuts down on the 26th of March.

PRO TV stops the transmission of local news stations, but newsrooms continue functioning for the central station.

Cristian Pantazi and Dan Tăpălagă leave Hotnews management.

Takeaway.com buys Oliviera.ro in a transaction of over €10 million.

Short links service Goo.gl shuts down.

UBER leaves 8 Asian markets and sells the business to competitor Grab.





APRIL

Facebook admits that the data of 87 million users ended up in the hands of Cambridge Analytica.

Although initial reports included several million accounts and data of just 270,000 accounts that have been used in the US presidential elections campaign, Facebook has subsequently admitted that the number of accounts is much bigger. In an attempt to fix privacy holes, Facebook has limited the access to Facebook and Instagram APIs for software developers.

Spotify is listed on the stock exchange and reaches close to \$30 billion.

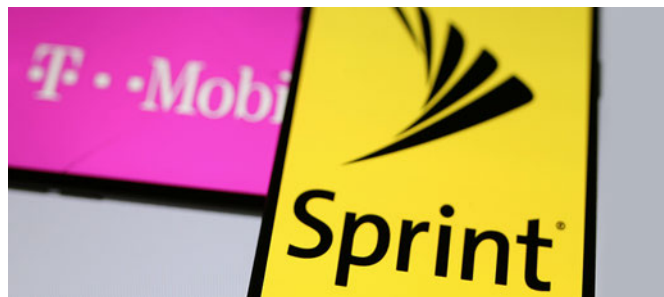
A long-awaited listing, that Spotify has prepared intensely, expanding in several countries, including Romania. The move has proven to be a success as shares reached a maximum of \$165.90.

Mark Zuckerberg is heard by a committee of US Senate.

After the outbreak of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, there was a huge pressure about Facebook and the way the social network uses personal data it collects from its users. Zuckerberg was called for hearing not only by the US Senate, but by European Parliament representatives, as well. The hearing in front of the US Senate lasted for over 5 hours and was viewed by millions of people all around the world.

Lagardere sells the Eastern Europe radio stations, including EuropaFM, Virgin Radio and Vibe FM to Czech Media Invest.

Price of the transaction is approximately €73 million as it includes several radio stations from Romania, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. Czech Media Invest is the most important media group from Czech Republic with several newspapers, magazines and online publications.



T-Mobile buys Sprint for \$26.5 billion.

The move comes a few months after a merger between the two companies had failed. T-Mobile US is reinforcing its third position among the top US telecom operators after Verizon Wireless and AT&T Mobile. With approximately 130 million subscribers (as compared to 153 million for both Verizon and AT&T), T-Mobile cannot be considered, for now, a challenger.

OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Waymo sends on the street autonomous driverless cars for tests.

PRO TV launches a new online platform for their entire content, for free, including live streams.

SmugMug buys Flickr from Verizon (through Oath).

Intel gives up Vaunt – the smart glasses project.

Telegram is forbidden in Russia.

Times New Roman is fined by CNDC (National Council for Combating Discrimination) for an article about Liviu Dragnea's girlfriend.

Snap launches a second version of Spectacles glasses.

UBER suspends its activity in Greece after the legislation amendment.

Malaysia is the first country to introduce an anti-fake news law with penalties of up to 6 years in prison.



MAY

WhatsApp's CEO leaves the company due to differences with Facebook on the level of privacy.

Facebook was already in a difficult position after all the issues related to privacy, so that Jan Koum's resignation represented a new image problem. The reasons of his leaving were not made public, but it was speculated that Facebook's need to have access to WhatsApp users' data and the desire to push WhatsApp for Business as much as possible were crucial.

Twitter had its users' passwords saved in a text file, no encryption.

The US company asked users to change their passwords after they discovered a problem related to passwords storage. More precisely, the access data were stored in a plain text file, no encryption. Data of 330 million users were endangered, but it is unknown if someone had access to those passwords. That was just one of the many cases where big companies had security issues.

Vodafone buys UPC România from Liberty Global.

The telecom giant bought the cable networks of Liberty Global from 4 countries for a total of \$23 billion. The transaction is meant to complete the services package that Vodafone can offer to Romanian clients. Vodafone had neither landline, nor tv cable services, while competitors

such as DIGI or Telekom were already offering a complete solution (landline and mobile telephone services, TV cable and internet).

Facebook announces a dating feature in their app.

Most likely that Tinder was the latest important app that Facebook hadn't tried to copy until May 2018. The first country for launching the dating feature was Colombia, where the service became available in September. Two other new countries were chosen for additional tests: Canada and Thailand. It is possible that the dating feature be expanded to international level in 2019.



Adobe buys Magento for \$1.68 billion.

With this acquisition, Adobe makes the link between the B2B area, where they have a range of developed products, and the B2C one. Magento is one of the world's most important e-commerce platforms with annual revenues of \$150 million, but with huge growth potential. Adobe will, most likely, want to turn Magento into a cloud-based company, more than software licenses, as it is now.

OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Samsung is forced to pay Apple \$539 million in a 2011 copyright lawsuit.

Walmart buys Indian giant Flipkart for \$16 billion.

Amazon opens an operations center in Bucharest.

The online Formula 1 streaming platform is launched.

Klout, the social media influence measurement platform, shuts down.

StumbleUpon shuts down.

Twitter changes the algorithm and hides the troll posts.

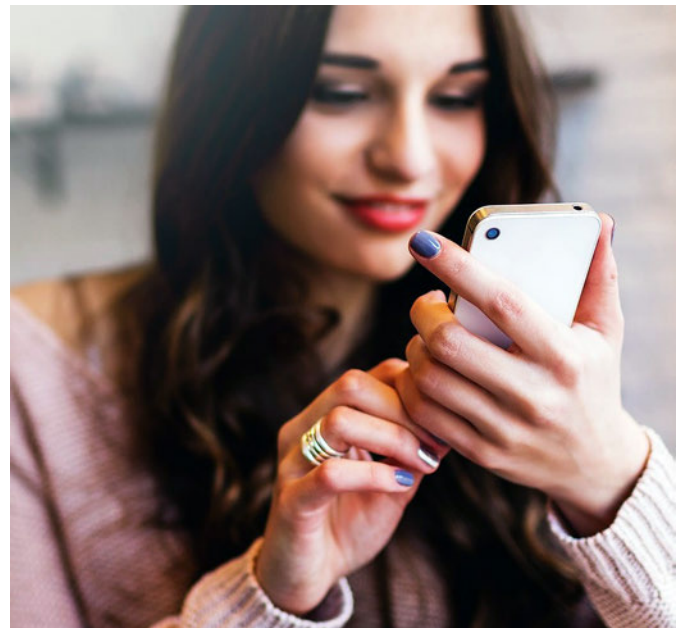
Snapchat announces a new type of glasses, Lens, which also reacts to sound.

Canon sells the last camera on film.

Taxify receives \$175 million in financing from Daimler.

Instagram introduces payment of products directly in the platform.

Instagram allows video chat.



JUNE

Yahoo announces that Y! Messenger is about to close on July 17th.

After 20 years and countless attempts to bring back the messaging app, Yahoo gave up Y! Messenger and urged the remaining users to switch to the Squirrel app developed by the US company. Oath, the company that owns Yahoo, also closed AIM in 2017, AOL's messaging application, once a powerful Y! Messenger competitor. At a symbolical level, it's the way online companies that dominated the 2000s hand the baton to Facebook.



Microsoft buys GitHub for \$7.5 billion in shares.

The past few years have seen Microsoft's continued expansion of its portfolio in the business area, beginning with Skype acquisition in 2011, continuing with LinkedIn in 2017 and with GitHub in

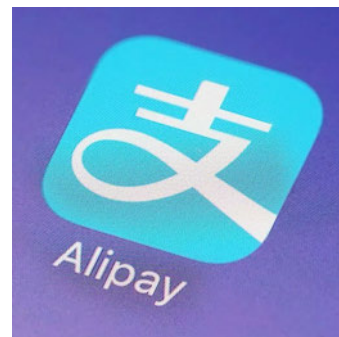
June 2018. GitHub is the largest collaboration program for programmers, where users from around the world offer free code snippets.

AT&T buys the Nexus ad platform for about \$1.6 billion.

While telecom competitors are trying to make acquisitions to challenge leaders, AT&T is diversifying its online portfolio with one of the largest digital ad networks. AppNexus was preparing to list at the stock exchange at the end of 2016, but eventually they did not take this step.

Alipay, China's largest payment processor, will enter 20 European markets by the end of the year.

The Chinese companies, led by Alibaba Group, are increasingly interested in the European market. For Alipay, entering a number of countries in Europe is just a first step which will probably be followed by AliExpress, as well.



OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Airbnb creates a \$10 million fund to cover bookings cancelled in Japan.

A press group from Bulgaria enters the Romanian market with Reporter Global magazine.

Facebook launches FB.gg - a competitor for Twitch.

Google launches a podcast app.

Facebook introduces Memories, a wider format for "On this day".

Digi, Telekom and Look TV win the contract for broadcasting Champions League games over the next 3 years.

Instagram launches IGTV - a platform that allows longer videos (to compete with YouTube).

Launch of Cronica.ro - a website containing 2 syntheses of 10 pieces of news selected daily by Orlando Nicoară.

Microsoft buys several gaming studios.

MedLife buys the SfatulMedicului.ro website.



JULY

Ringier buys Gazeta Sporturilor from the Intact Trust.

It is the second time that Ringier Romania gets to own Gazeta Sporturilor, after the newspaper had entered the portfolio of the Swiss trust in 1999 only to be later sold to Dan Voiculescu's trust. The transaction was also attended by Sportal Media Group Bulgaria, which owns the Bulgarian platform Sportal.bg. Meanwhile, Catalin Tolontan's investigation team has begun publishing increasingly on Libertatea.ro, which began a vast process of transformation.

Facebook pays £200 million to broadcast all Premier League matches in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

Streaming sporting competitions is one of the great stakes of these years, and Facebook has made some investments to compete with Twitter and Amazon. The broadcasting rights of the UK football competition represented a very high stakes, given the high interest of Thai and Vietnamese fans.

Google gets a record \$5 billion fine from the EU for Android-related malfunctions.

In recent years, EU has imposed stricter rules on IT giants, has changed legislation to include provisions targeting companies like Facebook or Google, and fined these companies every time they had the chance. In the case of Android, the EU

argued that the operating system had preinstalled default apps like Chrome and Google, a mandatory requirement from Google for all mobile phone manufacturers.



Amazon employees go on strike right on Prime Day.

Employees from Spain, Germany and Poland went on strike right at the time of the biggest discounts for the US retailer. The reason for the strike is related to the better working conditions employees had been requiring for a long time now. The July strike was followed by another, spreading to the UK and Italy in November, in the middle of the Black Friday campaign.

OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Opera (the company owning the browser with the same name) prepares to be listed.

Orange makes the first 5G tests in Romania near Cluj, in Florești.

Tripsta leaves the Romanian market and dismisses about 100 employees.

Amazon Prime wins a contract to broadcast Premier League matches in the UK.

Snapchat prepares a Camera Search feature in partnership with Amazon, Shazam and other companies.

ARBOmedia launches an influencers division.

Radio Free Europe returns to Romania after a 10-year absence.

ZTE pays a \$400 million guarantee and returns to the US.



AUGUST



Apple breaks over the \$1000 billion (1 trillion) threshold in evaluation. The race for an evaluation of over \$1000 billion has been the topic for many months, as it included Amazon, Microsoft, and Facebook. Apple's share price has gone up quite a lot, exceeding \$207 per share, which led to an evaluation of \$1,000 bn. After just a few weeks, Amazon would have also passed the 1,000 billion mark.

Google recorded the users' route even if Location History was disabled. Against the backdrop of personal data privacy discussions (started with Cambridge Analytica), Google admits that it kept data about the users' route even if they opted to disable Location History. Later, what Google did was to update the Privacy Policy on the website without altering how it collects data in any way.

Times New Roman sues Viorica Dăncilă, the prime minister of Romania, for damages caused to the country's image.

After Viorica Dăncilă, Gabriela Firea, Carmen Dan, Olguta Vasilescu and Irina Tănase filed a lawsuit against TNR, Calin Petrar, editor-in-chief of Times New Roman, announced that he would sue PM Viorica Dăncilă for the image damages caused to Romanians through repeated bouts in official meetings and speeches.



OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Huawei outclasses Apple and comes second in the number of phones sold in the first quarter of 2018.

Slack takes another \$400 million grant round.

Google Assistant introduces a feature that only tells you positive news.

Delivery Hero, the company that owns FoodPanda, buys hipMenu.

Toyota invests \$500 million in UBER.

The World Bank issues bonds placed through blockchain.

Twitter restricts API access to external apps.

Facebook Watch is expanding globally.



SEPTEMBER

The European Union forces Netflix and Amazon to increase the share of European content to 30%.

A new European directive stipulates that any video streaming platform should have European content of at least 30% of the total available library at EU level. Netflix was close to this percentage in September, while Amazon still has about 2 years to go before the directive enters into force. Each Member State has the right to amend its legislation and increase the percentage up to 40%.

Facebook removes 1.3 billion fake accounts out of a total of 2.2 billion.

Mark Zuckerberg's and Sheryl Sandberg's hearings before the US Senate have been a good opportunity to find out real figures and information about the social network. One of them, the fact that 1.3 billion accounts were false, out of a total of 2.2 billion. In addition, company COO Sheryl Sandberg has admitted that other false accounts are created daily, faster than the company can delete.

The European Union is voting on a law called the "Copyright Directive"

that can change the way we publish content (by filtering information by platforms) and how we consume content (Facebook and Google will be charged for the information they collect). The law was



extremely debated, IT giants trying to oppose it by all means. If adopted, the Copyright Directive will assume that each content creator will benefit from the revenue of these large information aggregators.

Instagram founders leave the company.

Just a few months after the WhatsApp founder left his company, both Instagram founders chose to terminate the collaboration. Although not much detail has been revealed in this case, there is talk of a lower autonomy for Instagram and, implicitly, a growing control of Facebook. At the same time, one of the co-founders of WhatsApp spoke about why he started the #DeleteFacebook movement and how he came into conflict with Mark Zuckerberg.

OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Jack Ma steps back from Alibaba management.

Skype allows call recording.

Amazon reaches an evaluation of over \$1,000 billion, being the second company, after Apple, to get over this threshold.

Google closes the Inbox app.

Bitdefender opens an office in Melbourne, after a year of 55% increase in Australia.

Profit.ro TV starts to broadcast and enters the programs schedule of UPC and Digi.

Amazon launches several kitchen appliances that integrated Alexa, including a microwave, a clock, a socket and several speakers.

Digi launches mobile and landline telephone services in Spain, being among the top 3 cable companies in Europe.

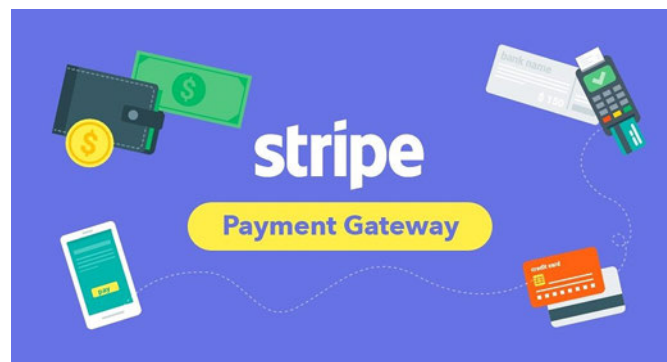
Adobe buys Marketo, the marketing automation company, for \$4.75 billion.

Twitter allows again the chronological display of tweets in the Timeline.

Amazon enters the Turkish market with a dedicated website on amazon.tr.

Facebook launches dating feature in Colombia to compete with Tinder.

Stripe gets another round of investment and reaches a \$20 billion evaluation.



OCTOBER

Google+ is scheduled to close after a network vulnerability has been discovered. Google's social network was a total failure, but Google kept it alive to collect data and keep active a number of related services. But in March 2018, Google discovered a security breach in the Google+ API that allowed external apps to access user data. As the Cambridge Analytica scandal was under way, Google chose to hide the information, which only came out in October. Since then, Google has scheduled to close the social network initially in August 2019, then in April 2019, after it was discovered that the security issues affected 52 million accounts.

Bitdefender buys the Dutch company RedSocks Security BV. The kind of transaction that rarely happens: a Romanian company is in a position of buying a Western European company.



Red Socks Security specializes in detecting traffic incidents with algorithms based on artificial intelligence.

Facebook wants to collect location data from Instagram to use user history for ad targeting. One of the reasons why WhatsApp CEO left the company was the way Facebook handled the issue of personal data of the platform users. It seems that the story was the same for Instagram, probably with the same result. In a context where people have become more and more careful with their personal data, Facebook continues to force limits to gather as much data as possible.

Google pays about \$9 billion to be the default search engine of Safari. Although Google has been the default search engine for a few years, the amounts for which this deal was made have never been public. In October 2018, reports from analysts have come up with an estimated \$9 billion for 2018 and \$12 billion for 2019.

OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Yahoo launches a chat app called Together.

Google announces Project Stream, a gamer-dedicated and cloud-based service.

Canopy takes over the Edge agency from 2Performant.

Instacart receives another \$600 million funding as the current assessment is \$7.6 billion.

Radionomy is preparing to re-launch the Winamp brand as a mobile app for podcasts and music streaming.

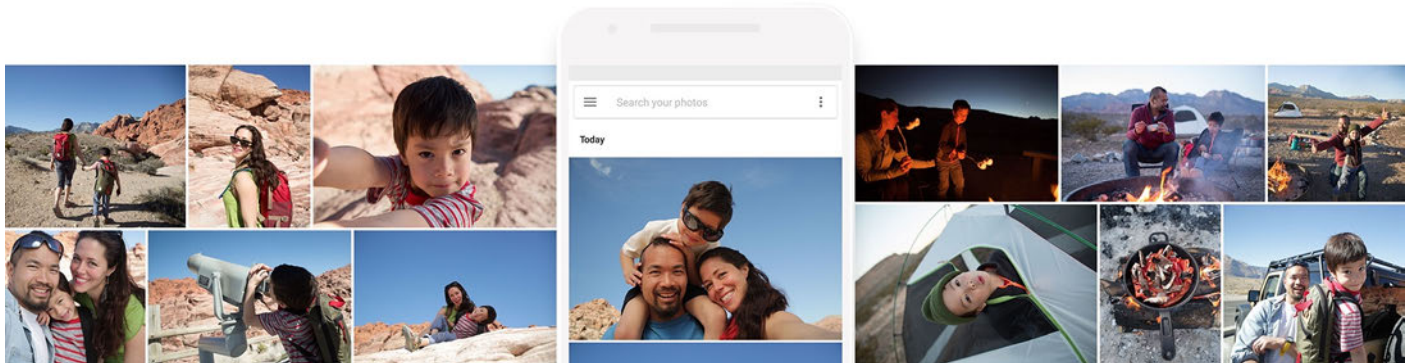
Facebook announces Portal - a video chat device between network users.

Spotify allows podcasts listing regardless of where they are hosted.

Kanal D takes over Radio Impuls.

UBER tests a personnel leasing service.

Google Photos launches photo album printing service.



NOVEMBER

20,000 Google employees from 50 cities took part in the protests against the company's leadership, which has covered up cases of sexual harassment. Not just Amazon had trouble with strikes, Google did also. After it was revealed, in October, that Google had terminated the contracts of 48 employees because of sexual harassment cases, tens of thousands of employees protested against the whitewashing of the incidents.

Russian hackers sold private messages of 81,000 Facebook accounts. The US company claims that the security breach comes from a browser extension. Another image problem for the company led by Mark Zuckerberg, as they chose the worst solution: they hired a company to discredit protesters and blame billionaire George Soros for the anti-Facebook movement.

IBM buys Red Hat for \$34 billion, one of the largest IT acquisitions in 2018. Red Hat is the developer of the Linux ecosystem, the world's most important open source software, therefore the acquisition made by IBM is not a surprise. IBM aims to become a leader in the hybrid cloud solutions market, while Red Hat would like the new Linux operating system to have a higher adoption rate.



Disney announces Disney+ launch. The video streaming platform is scheduled to launch at the end of 2019 and will compete with Netflix and HBO GO. This will mark the moment when Disney movies will be removed from Netflix in a move meant by the company founded in 1923 to raise additional revenue and weaken the leader's position.

Robert Tiderle (Papaya) is called in court by 13 MPs who were bothered by the ad against the referendum in October. The referendum on the definition of the traditional family strongly polarized the Romanian society. Following the invalidation of the referendum, a number of MPs who supported it lodged a complaint with the Police, related to the "Children of the Referendum" spot. The complaint proved to be unfounded, and Robert Tiderle and Papaya Advertising did not receive sanctions.

OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Samsung launches a folding phone that can be used as a tablet when it is "unfolded".

Amazon begins selling Apple products directly.

Flickr allows only 1000 photos for free accounts.

Digi launches TV Digi 4K, while in Japan 8K TV is launched.

Ogilvy Romania takes over Wunderman Romania, but the two agencies will work separately.

Youtube offers free access to classic movies like Rocky or Terminator in an ad system.

LinkedIn adds the stories function.

Youtube drops off the original shows.

Apple gets into the movie production business in partnership with the A24 studio.

Microsoft becomes the most valuable company in the world, related to stock indices, overtaking Apple.

Ringier closes the online publication noizz.ro.

It turns out that LinkedIn used 18 million emails that did not belong to their users for Facebook advertising.

A PR company sues an influencer who did not respect the number of posts in a Spectacles glasses contract.



■ DECEMBER

eMAG reaches an evaluation of over \$1 billion. The most important online retailer in Romania has had significant growth every year, and in 2018 managed to reach a \$ 1 billion worth of operations as the company is active in Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland.

A bug allowed multiple Facebook apps to access unpublished photos of 6.5 million users. A new security issue for Facebook, which occurred between September 13 and 25, 2018, led to a new security breach. Personal data privacy was one of the biggest challenges in 2018, and Facebook was in the midst of several talks on the subject.

Revolut obtains a banking license in Lithuania. The moment marks Revolut's entry into direct competition with banks across European Union. If until now Revolut could not offer a number of classic banking services, getting the license is about to irreversibly change the banking system. Banks will either adapt and strongly digitize, or they will lose more and more. The Revolut license is just the beginning of a new financial-banking era.

It turns out that Amazon and Facebook had a secret deal on the basis of which they exchanged data. A number of Facebook internal documents came to the possession of New York Times journalists who analyzed the social network's privacy issues. They found that Facebook gave access to data to companies like Microsoft, Spotify, or Amazon, even if they were not allowed to do so.

Instagram inadvertently inserts a horizontal feed that is very poorly received by users. Although most major updates are being tested on small markets, the update through which the Instagram feed became horizontal was available worldwide. The users' reaction was so vehement that Instagram hastened to make a quick apps update so as to get rid of criticism.

Huawei's CFO, Meng Wanzhou, is arrested in Canada. USA urged Canada to extradite him because he allegedly breached the embargo imposed on Iran. The problem was based on suspicions that the Chinese company would have sold technology to Iran and even spied on the governments of many countries through the equipment it sells.



OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan shuts down the last pagers service.

Quora is another service announcing loss of data in 2018, with 100 million users affected.

Lyft files documents for stock exchange listing.

Waymo launches driverless cars service.

Google closes the Allo messaging app.

Donorium - an app dedicated to blood donors - is launched.

Tumblr forbids pornographic content on the website.

Niantic, the company that developed the Pokemon GO game, receives a \$200 million funding, reaching a \$3.9 billion evaluation..

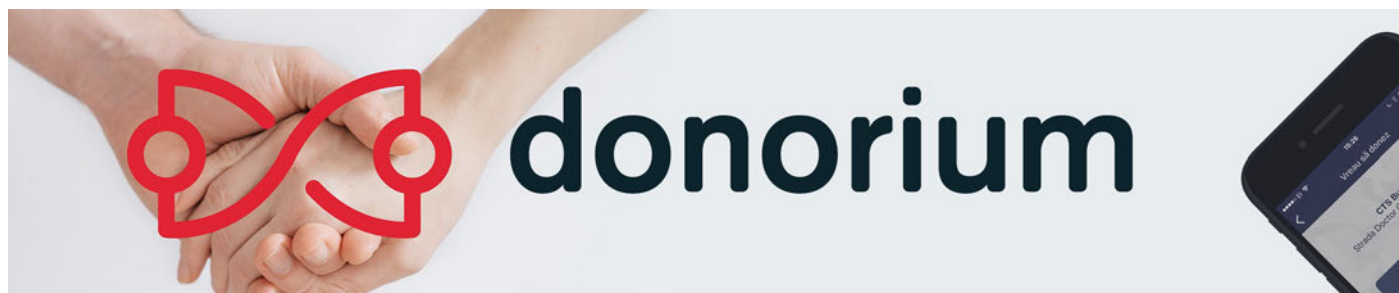
Instagram introduces voicemail.

GMP Advertising and Webstyler merged under the leadership of Bogdan Nițu.

Google launches a Marketplace in France to compete with Amazon.

New Marius Tucă Show programs online.

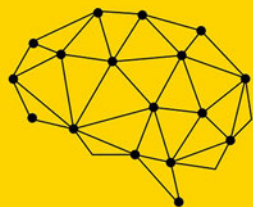
Google hastens the Google+ closing plan due to a new security bug affecting 52 million accounts.



KEY TOPICS IN 2018

Privacy issues everywhere

It is very likely that Mark Zuckerberg couldn't even imagine what was in stock for him in the beginning of 2018 when he set as a personal resolution to "fix" Facebook. If, until that moment, users and brands complained about things that now seem insignificant, such as organic reach, the number of Newsfeed ads and pumped numbers in the ad platform reports, 2018 came as a cold shower for the IT giant.



Cambridge
Analytica

Cambridge Analytica was just the tip of an iceberg full of security issues, privacy policies breaches, and hearings before the US Senate and European Union representatives.

Facebook was not the only one facing privacy issues, so did Google (issues revealed on the Maps Location History), Twitter (the passwords of the 330 million users saved in a plain unencrypted text file), Amazon (the hidden deal with Facebook for processing user related data) or Lyft (spying on its customers, same as their competitors, UBER).

2018 was the year when people around the world were better aware than ever that personal data is extremely important, and their privacy should be viewed with greater care by both companies and users.

Errors and security breaches

Google has been a champion in this category after deciding to close Google+ due to countless bugs discovered. Moreover, after they initially scheduled for August 2019 the closure of the social network that failed to challenge Facebook, Google decided to hurry when it discovered a series of new bugs.

Facebook also experienced some problems. First, the data of 81,000 users were accessed by a few Russian hackers who received them through a browser extension, then the unpublished photos of 6.5 million users were exposed by a bug of several applications connecting through Facebook.

EU vs. tech giants

It was the year when the GDPR came into force, and the European Union was not shy in fining big US companies.



Furthermore, all kinds of new regulations and laws, such as the "Copyright Directive", or the requirement for video streaming services to add at least 30% of European content were brought into discussion.

For 2019, we can expect new fines and a growing pressure from Google and Facebook trying to convince users that they are victims of this bureaucratic process.

Change of direction in web companies' sector

2018 was the year when many web services

launched the mid-1990s or early 2000s were closed. StumbleUpon, Y! Messenger and Digg Reader are the most salient examples.

With them, services such as Goo.gl or Klout disappeared in 2018, and the Google+ closure was announced. These applications and services had not been much in the forefront for a long time, but their switching into the Internet archives can also be seen as a change of direction, as companies like Facebook or Google have continued to launch new applications and new features (from dating to gaming).

Many strategic acquisitions

There were a few interesting acquisitions in 2018, whether we're talking about IBM buying Red Hat (the creator of the open source Linux system), or Adobe buying Magento and Marketo for several billions of dollars.

Google bought Tenor, probably to feel that they were still part of the social era. Microsoft followed more of a business direction and bought GitHub.

There were a few important transactions in telecom, as well. T-Mobile bought Sprint for \$ 26.5 billion, Vodafone bought UPC Romania from Liberty Global, AT&T bought the Nexus ad platform.

In the food delivery area, Takeaway.com bought Oliviera.ro, while Delivery Hero (the company owning FoodPanda) bought HipMenu.

Strikes of big companies' employees

Although there were two different causes, the employee strikes at Google and Amazon were quite large, as has not been the case in recent years.

If at Amazon there were tens of thousands of employees in the warehouses in Spain, Germany, Poland, UK and Italy, who were protesting for better working conditions, in Google's case the protests were related to the sexual harassment scandals that the company would have covered up for 2 years. 20,000 Google employees from 50 countries participated in this protest.

Streaming sports competitions

In 2018, the big companies also fought in contracts for the transmission of sport competitions. The winner of the most important contract seems to be Facebook, which is due to broadcast Premier League matches online to Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. The price? £200 million for 3 years.

Twitter, Amazon, and even Yahoo, are broadcasting or have already broadcasted various sports events, be it baseball, tennis or American football matches. The Premier League is an extremely important milestone, another step towards the moment we will have legal access (free or not, to be seen) to the most important sports competitions, directly on YouTube, Facebook or Twitter.

The race for \$1 trillion

Amazon, Alphabet (Google), Microsoft and Apple started, during 2018, the race for a market capitalization of \$1000 billion. Eventually Apple won, becoming the first company worth \$1 trillion. Shortly, Amazon touched this milestone as well. Alphabet is the one to soon enter the select circle of \$1 trillion companies.

The moment underlines the importance of technology companies in our age. If the first

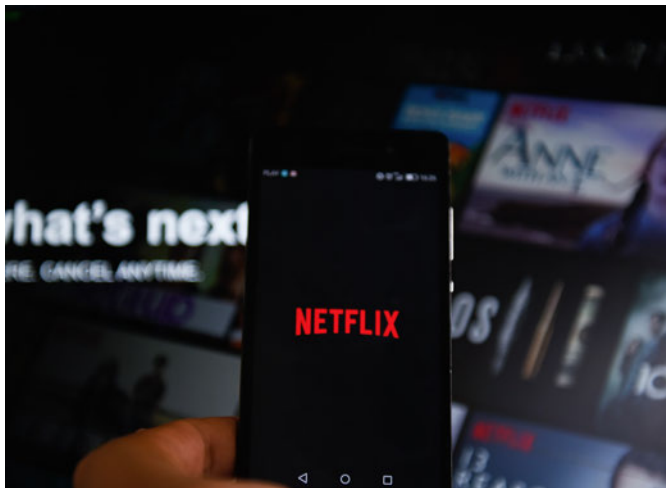


company to reach \$1 billion was US Steel in 1901, and the first company to reach \$10 billion was General Motors in 1950, the following milestones were reached by IT companies (IBM with \$100 billion in 1987 and Apple with \$1,000 billion in 2018).

The battle of video streaming services

While Netflix continued to consolidate its leadership position, and even went further into competition with the big Hollywood studios, Disney announced the first step, the launch of the Disney+ platform.

All Disney movies, and the Marvel series implicitly, will soon be off Netflix, and will pass on Disney+, the platform to be launched in 2019.



Neither did Amazon steam off the engines as they tried to expand as much as possible and to bring more content into Prime Video.

Surprisingly, the problems for Netflix could arise because of the EU, which required that at least 30% of video content be produced in Europe.



US-China trade war uses tech companies as proxy

At first glance, companies such as ZTE and Huawei had major problems in 2018, mainly due to allegations of espionage and violations of embargoes imposed on Iran by the US.

At a closer look, we can see that there is a trade war between the United States and China, conducted through these Chinese technology companies.

If ZTE solved the situation by paying a fine of \$400 million, for Huawei things are a little more complicated. CFO Meng Wanzhou, daughter of founder Ren Zhengfei, is still arrested in Canada, and may be extradited to the US.

ROMANIAN E-COMMERCE MARKET 2018

Find below several relevant figures related to the e-commerce market in Romania, published by GPeC in the E-Commerce Market Report 2018, that we list here in order to have them in the archives:

€3.5 billion - the value of the online shopping market in 2018

+30% was the increase as compared to 2017

80% of online shops traffic is generated by mobile devices, up 10% from 2017 and 30% from 2016

86% of internet users **connect online from their mobile phone** (according to INS)

83% of Romanians choose to pay **at delivery**

The average conversion rate, according to Omniconvert studies, is approximately **1%**, depending on the category

15,000 online retailers in Romania, a spectacular growth from approximately 7,000 shops in 2017

15% is the percentage of **online card payments** (according to NETOPIA Payments)

1793 de lei was the maximum amount paid by card in the Romanian online shops

More details can be found at www.gpec.ro/blog



GPeC

DIGITAL TRENDS 2019

1. The Year of Digital Connectivity

In 2019, for the first time in history, it is estimated that more than half of the world's population will be connected to the Internet, thus bringing the connected consumers to a number that goes well beyond 4 billion users.

Denmark is a global leader in the digital area, owning the fastest and most extensive internet networks.

China is expected to surpass many other markets in the top now, due to its massive development in mobile networks, development that is still on course.

Recommendations:

Keep investing in increasing online visibility, as more and more consumers will use the internet to interact with digital content, especially around purchasing products and services, not just for *entertainment* or *education*. About 35% of consumers use a computer to leave a review or compare products and prices.

2. Facebook is getting closer to a user cap

Although it is still the most widely used social network, in 2018 it also suffered a major reputation

crisis around political propaganda and major fake news hubs.

Generation X holds the majority on this platform, while Millennials and Generation Z are moving toward new Social Media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, or Tik Tok.

Recommendations:

Keep using Facebook to promote campaigns towards audiences aged +30, while considering that for younger audience campaigns it is recommended to increase visibility and develop specific campaigns in other new age social media platforms such as Instagram.

3. Chatbots are still trending

They were successfully used in 2018, especially on Facebook, to communicate with users on various themes, such as the transmission of recurring information like weather, offers, and even customer support conversations.

Recommendations:

Since chatbots can considerably reduce the use of human resources and implicitly customer service investment in 2019, you should think seriously about how to integrate into your communication

strategy, the development of chatbots that can respond to recurring user questions, especially if you own online platforms for purchasing products and services.

4. Voice interaction usage is growing

Thanks to voice interaction services such as Siri, Google or Alexa, voice interaction with devices is steadily increasing.

In total, 52% of the questioned users said they used or are still using a voice assistant, and 39% of them had used a voice assistant for their mobile phone.

In 2020, it is estimated that at least 50% of all searches will be made by voice command.

Recommendations:

To keep being visible in voice searches, in 2019 we will need to consider optimizing the content on websites for voice commands, and in doing so we should focus more on natural speech, and on building longer, 3-5 word-specific keywords to respond to the most frequently asked questions about the subject presented on the site. Mobile optimization plays an equally important role, as most searches are made on mobile devices.

5. Live Video Content

In 2019, when talking about video views and engagement, Facebook offers more and more features to attract users' attention when such

content is available (reminders, notifications, content bookmarks etc.).

Recommendations

The *live streaming* feature is extremely valuable when combined with *influencer marketing* tactics. Consider using this type of content in campaigns, especially in influencer campaigns. Providing users with the ability to interact live with an *influencer*, even if it happens only in the comments of a *live stream*, can attract both the increase in view counts and the increase in engagement.



INFLUENCER MARKETING

REPORTING A CAMPAIGN; FROM SETTING THE CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES TO ROI MEASUREMENT

The concept of *influencer marketing* has grown steeply over the past two years. If in 2016, you would have initiated a search on the matter with Google Trends, the number of results found would have been almost insignificant, as the subject was generating only 6% of the share of interest it generates now. At the same time, the level of campaigns' analysis was lower, and each agency or brand reported differently the measurement parameters, depending on how they approached their ROI and indicators.

Fortunately, as soon as this type of advertising grew, everything became more transparent. *Mainstream* social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, have begun implementing more detailed reporting solutions to provide marketers with as much information as possible about their campaigns; analysis platforms, such as SocialBakers or Zelist, have begun to offer tools for comparative analysis, while the influencers themselves started to offer information regarding the success of branded campaigns, costs and even conclusions & recommendations meant to help the agencies and the brands better evaluate their ROI.

Of course, there are still different types of reporting results, as the success of a campaign also depends on the goal set in the beginning. However, now we

have a clearer overview over the indicators we need to track to optimize and measure the success of a campaign that used an influencer marketing component, all in accordance with the business objectives set by the brand.

The first and most important goal of a brand is increasing sales. Further, depending on the steps that a brand must make to achieve it (i.e. changing a certain perception in the market, attracting a new type of consumer, or creating awareness on a product or service), we can divide this general objective into smaller, more specific objectives that will eventually lead to increasing sales.

As we go forth, we will go through the four main objectives we should pay attention to when implementing and reporting influencer campaigns so that we could better understand how the ROI can be associated with these results.

1. Brand Awareness

This is one of the most common objectives in the campaigns with *influencer marketing* components. For the campaigns with awareness enhance objective, the success is represented by the number of potential users exposed to the campaign, compared to the investment made. That's why in

such cases, we are always looking at the **Reach** and **Impressions** indicators. These indicators must be evaluated together to correctly measure a brand awareness campaign. The Reach represents the total number of users exposed to the campaign, while the Impressions, compared with the Reach, will help us understand how many times our content appeared in a user's feed. The optimum frequency at which a user should be exposed to the content so that the message will reach his top of mind, and not because it is disturbing him, is between 2 to 4 times.

By using *influencer marketing* in advertising campaigns, we can easily identify and target the core audiences of a brand, and also, we can make sure that the information communicated with the help of influencers is relevant for the targeted consumers, and at the same time, that the consumers reached are relevant for the brand.

2. Engagement

Following the idea that the content generated by a brand is considered to be *the King* when it comes to engagement, the influencer marketing component is slowly but certainly becoming *the Queen*. For campaigns that have an engagement objective as main, we can evaluate indicators that show the

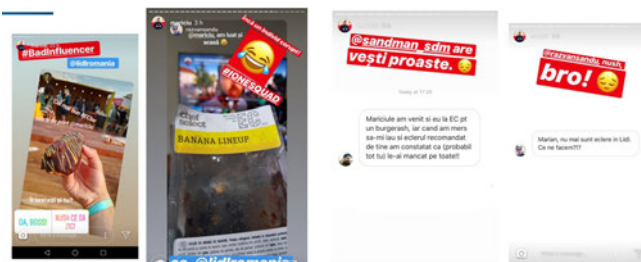


number of interactions and how users interacted with the content: Likes, Reactions, Comments, Shares, Video Views or Clicks on a certain link. In order to evaluate the success of a campaign, **we can evaluate the Cost Per Engagement (CPE)**, by taking into account the total number of interactions generated and compare it to the investment made.

The level of engagement in a campaign can also show us what consumers think about the brand; the lower the CPE indicator, the more consumers have found the communication of the brand relevant for them, thus increasing the chances of them becoming loyal consumers of the product promoted through influencers.

Engagement measurement becomes a key indicator in an influencer campaign, as it also takes into account the consumer's long-term interest towards the brand. If a consumer interacts frequently with the content of the campaign, it is clear that if he is not already a loyal customer, he certainly has the product in mind.

Lidl's Electric Kingdom
Lidl@EC – Mariciu | Viralizare Ecler



Influencer marketing Campaign - Lidl's Electric Kingdom

3. Direct Sales

Along with the increase of online shopping, more and more influencer marketing campaigns are related to *affiliate marketing, offering promo codes through influencers or isolated marketing* and they have as main objective the increase of sales. This type of objective offers a direct result and the ROI becomes easier to obtain as brands can easier evaluate how many sales an influencer campaign has brought and compare to the budget invested.

It is important to note that these practices also have some limitations in reporting. For example, in the case of affiliate marketing, a sale can occur within 90 days after the buyer has seen the product on the influencer channel. Since a cookie for affiliate links lasts normally between 15-30 days, if that buyer purchases the online product after the cookie expires or directly from the store, we will no longer be able to associate the sale with that affiliate, even if the influencer was the one who led to the sale materialization.

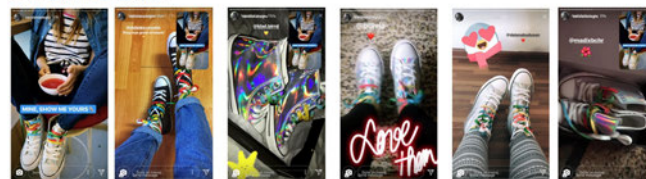
To reduce these limitations, offering limited time-frame promotional codes ensures 100% accurate reporting of generated sales, as in the case of isolated marketing, where a particular product is only communicated through influencers with no promoting through other traditional advertising methods. So sales results can be directly associated with the campaign ran through influencers.

The best way to evaluate site traffic and conversions is provided by Google Analytics, which allows one to track the results coming directly from

social platforms and influencer websites, by setting certain Goals & Events in the platform.

Feedback comunitate

Sânziana a generat un conținut interactiv, la care comunitatea ei a reacționat foarte bine. În cele 20 de instastories postate, Sânziana a realizat un "Box Unveiling", a adăugat poze de mood și poze cu ținutele create cu articole #LETSDENIM și a lansat o provocare către următorii săi, în urma căreia 5 dintre aceștia i-au trimis poze cu tenișii lor din colecția #LETSDENIM.



Influencer marketing Campaign - Lidl Launch - Esmara #LETSDENIM

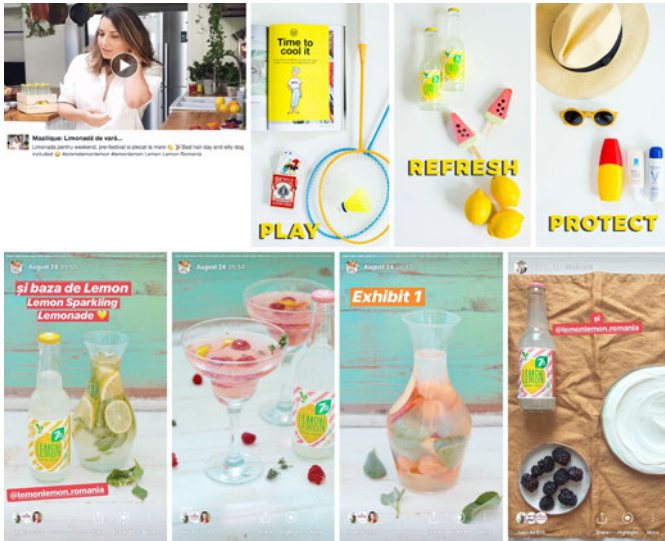
4. Generated content

Another goal that a brand can set in a campaign is to generate original content, localized in an area or specific to certain audiences. Not only it can be easier to obtain and less expensive than with the traditional methods of making photo sessions or recurring video session, but it also adds value to the communication, as it is endorsed by the influencer that created the content.

This benefit transforms the content creation through influencers into a strong tactic to obtain a visible *return on investment*, both when it comes to reducing investment on in-house content generation, and on the awareness and selling potential generated by the association with those influencers.

In addition to the level of awareness and engagement generated, the more qualitative and

versatile the influencers' content is, and the more it offers the opportunity to be used in as many media platforms as possible (social platforms, paid media, etc.), the more we can consider that the campaign's objective has been reached.



Influencer marketing Campaign - Lemon Lemon Urban Picnic

In conclusion, before starting a campaign, it is important to take the time to understand and set the goals that match the marketing objectives of the brand and the business objectives of the company. Then, we will be able to determine much easier which platforms and tactics we need to tackle to make sure that we are running a measurable campaign that will allow us to make a complete and detailed analysis of the results.

Oana Pohrib

Digital Manager, Golin

INFLUENCER MARKETING AND THE FIGHT BETWEEN REAL OR FAKE PARTNERSHIP

After an uncontrollable boom of the concept, *influencer marketing* saw some changes in 2018, with specific questions and limitations and also tighter and stricter requests from authorities, brands, influencers and agencies, as well.

We look at 2018 as the “graduation year”, a *fast forward* graduation regarding *influencer marketing*.



to gain later benefits, even paid collaborations for the future.

For instance, Luka Sabbat, well known

entrepreneur and influencer, posted on his Instagram page an image where he tagged various brands in order to get their attention, using a personal description where he's inviting his community to interact.



Some of the influencers using this tactics didn't hold back from admitting they've done it. Sidney Pugh, a lifestyle influencer from Los Angeles admitted that he used this technique with a local coffee shop and the examples can go on¹.

Reactions to this phenomenon

As we are already used to, social networks answer very fast to all of customers', brands' and specialists' new requests, out of their will to win credibility as marketing platforms. As a consequence of the actions taken by the Federal Trade Commission (federal agency that has the dual mission to protect the consumer and competition from fraud through marketing tactics) in 2017, regarding more than 90 celebrities who

posted promoted content without it being transparent, Instagram introduced the **Paid partnership feature**, a *feature* that marks the paid materials made by influencers and celebrities².

That's why we need to remind ourselves that the core of *influencer marketing* was the exact opposite of this *feature*: a paid material that doesn't look like it's paid, a material that can naturally be integrated in the influencer's content that he/she delivers to the community, a personal recommendations, no matter the subject.

How this situation can be regulated over time

În Romania, RAC (Romanian Advertising Council) is the organization that deals with this problems by initiating the first actions and finding solutions that can solve this kind of unclear situations. Last year were made the first steps by organizing a conference on the theme of influencer marketing self-regulation.

EASA – European Advertising Standards Alliance is the industry's voice in Europe regarding the advertising self-regulation, that promotes high ethical standards in terms of advertising, in the benefit of consumers and European businesses as well³. Just like F.T.C. USA (Federal Trade Comission), EASA supports and imposes the usage of rules to mark sponsored content.

Some of the solutions for self-regulation include using specific hashtags, tags for the brands influencers work with and marking the content as

branded content or paid partnership.

1. The hashtag

Marking the paid material with a specific hashtag: #sponsored #partnership #paidcontent #sponsoredcontent #paidpartnership #ad and so on is more and more a common practice. Even if it's not the most effective one, since it's not always visible in the post's text, not giving users full transparency and clarity regarding the promoted product, especially if there are products from more



#pebune
EU PE BUNE VS EU PE NET
118,015 views

10K 156 SHARE

than one brand in one material, it is still an important step towards self-regulation of paid content.

2. The tag

Tagging the brand that supports (also financially) the content means taking a step forward and also another way of encouraging influencers to mention their paid partnerships. Even though some of their followers may lose faith in their recommendations

or the content they post because of this method, the main idea is to educate the public that will eventually understand the working process and will appreciate the influencer's and brand's transparency as well.

3. Branded Content feature and Paid Partnership feature

The most recommended and up to date method, officially recognized by social platforms is the **"branded content"** or **"paid partnership with..."** feature.

On Facebook, this method is available in Romania too, but for Instagram it's still in progress, since it's not available for every business account yet.

What are the risks influencers expose to if they don't accept this rules?

1. Lowering the credibility

If influencers use unclear methods when marking their content as paid partnership, the consumer will be confused regarding the recommended products, questioning his/her behavior.

2. Avoiding collaboration

Another risk may come from brands that will choose to collaborate with relevant influencers, the ones that correctly apply this regulations and accept using them if they haven't done it up to that point.

3. Natural selection

Since it's a rather uncontrolled field, it's very likely that those who don't follow market's needs to be left out or those who don't fully commit to the responsibility of their actions, but surely brands and consumers will feel the need of transparency more and more.

What are the most relevant 2019 trends regarding influencer marketing regulations?

Brands will choose relevant influencers rather than well-known influencers. They will develop long term partnerships and will apply the paid content regulations requested by responsible authorities.

Influencers on the other hand will focus their attention to brands that have a strong influencer marketing strategy, that constantly communicate using this tool and that are open to original collaborations and takes on the messages they want to spread.

In order to initiate an educational process for the public audience regarding the strategy behind paid content promoted by influencers, the responsibility goes to **brands** that use influencer marketing as well as to **agencies** that manage this process.

In conclusion, it's important to mention that the responsibility of educating the consumers and influencers goes to everyone involved in the process. Agencies can request using one or more rules stated above, brands can also ask influencers

to use this methods and influencers can proactively propose the self-regulation of paid content.

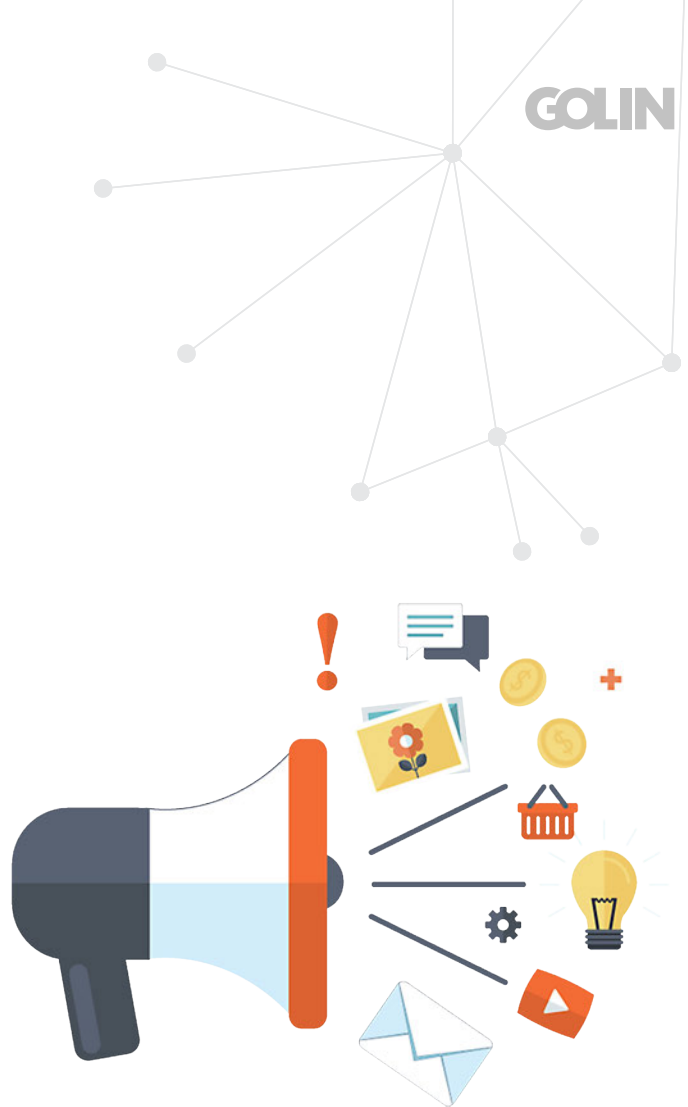
Alexandra Ion

Digital Manager, Golin

1) <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-6511171/Instagram-influencers-FAKING-sponsored-posts-increase-credibility.html> - decembrie 2018

2) <https://variety.com/2017/digital/news/instagram-paid-partnership-tag-sponsored-ftc-celebrity-warning-1202466310/> - 14 iunie 2017
Sursă foto: Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/p/BrOHh7MA/>

3) EASA Best Practice Recommendation on Influencer Marketing, 2018



YOUR GUIDE FOR PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH SOCIAL VIDEOS

Video content has been on trend for many years and every year brings something new for the evolution of this type of content. Video comes to fulfill our need of *entertainment*, either if we talk about a way of not getting bored when we consume information (for professional or educational purpose), or to make full use of the relaxation and disconnection opportunities that we have at our disposal. Videos' high-performance numbers determined the most important social media platforms to experiment with more and more ways to deliver this type of content. We have all seen the impact of *stories* in 2018 and how much the quality of the images published by content creators from all around the world has evolved. Creating and posting videos has become a necessity that all kind of businesses, from device creators to PR specialists, will try to fulfill.

2019 is the year of tools for creating videos. If so far we have witnessed the evolution of smartphones and a higher video quality that can they could offer, this year, an increasing number of users will become more interested in apps that can help them perfectionate the content they have filmed, or that can animate the static content. Also, users will be interested in video cameras and drones whose prices are significantly dropping. Recently launched *mirroless* cameras have become a favorite

alternative to DSLR cameras because they are smaller, lighter and they even offer the option to shoot at 4K at a much lower price than a professional DSLR camera¹. Along with these, the emergence of a growing number of drone models and the drop in their prices over the years are offering

just about all the options to produce video without the need for an entire production studio, as it was happening a few years ago.

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/filmmkrs/>



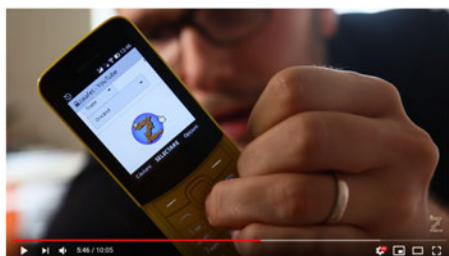
Which are the most recommended types of video for a business?

There are dozens of options for creating videos in social media, depending on the theme, formats and delivery methods. Before preparing similar materials to TV commercials or TV series, there are more accessible options that can generate great results as long as the quality of the story is put on the first place and the authenticity is kept.

Videos about products

They can be demonstrative videos in which is shown how a product is made (for example, a recipe), how a product looks like and works (for example, an *unboxing* video made by an *influencer*), or how to incorporate the product in your daily activity (for example, a video tutorial). These are showing, in a transparent way, the features of the product and its clear benefits for the consumer, which makes them credible and useful.

With the re-launch of the beloved Banana Phone by HMD Nokia - the home of Nokia phones, we have sent one of these phones to a well-known fan of this brand - Ziaiafet (blogger). In October 2018, he published a video showing how the new phone worked, including how he could access his YouTube channel with it. The video has reached almost 370,000 views. The secret? A balanced mix between a passionate performer for the chosen topic, who was also relaxed and funny, a product described by a connoisseur and an authentic and well-coagulated community.

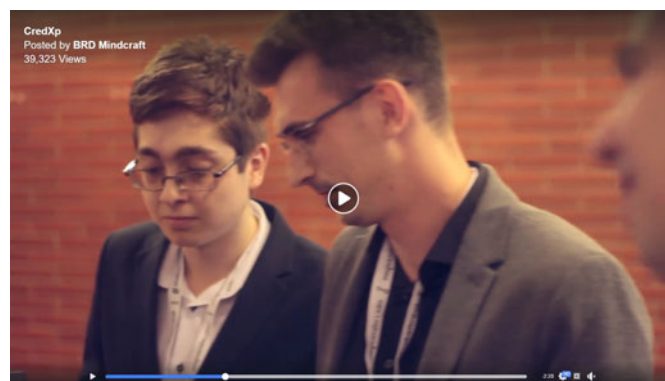


Source: Ziaiafet,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDd7LeCdvHA>

Videos about people

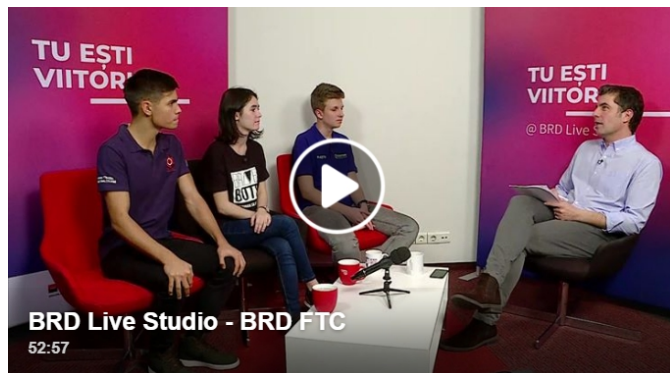
These give life to the brand, bringing to the attention of the consumers the people behind the brand or the people the brand chooses to support. At the same time, it outlines a clearer picture about the brand positioning and about the way it has an impact on the lives of others. For example, BRD - Groupe Societe Generale, a brand that invests in technology and in education with the help of technology, has brought to the attention of the public the talented people it has supported in this process.

At the beginning of 2018, we conducted a series of interviews with the start-up teams participating at the Innovation Labs competition, in the Fintech category (tech solutions for the banking industry), where BRD provided mentoring and financial support. To obtain qualitative editorial content, we had a professional interviewer (Vlad Petreanu) and a professional shooting team.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/BRDMindcraft/>

About people was also the social media communication of another video campaign made by BRD at the end of 2018. More precisely, it was about the people that BRD supports through its CSR strategy, the creators of tomorrow from various fields, including the robotics teams participating in BRD First Tech Challenge, the biggest robotics competition in the country. To make them known to the general public, the best way was to transmit live on Facebook a series of interviews with them. Here, as well, the quality was a priority, which is why BRD Live Studios was developed with specialized teams: PRO TV for video production, moderator (Cristian Leonte) and online transmission and Golin for editorial input, live broadcast on the BRD Facebook page and social media amplification.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/BRDGroupeSocieteGenerale/>

Videos about experiences

These are mostly about events. Whether we want to invite people to join us at events where a brand is involved or to tell them, post event, about the experience the brand has provided to the

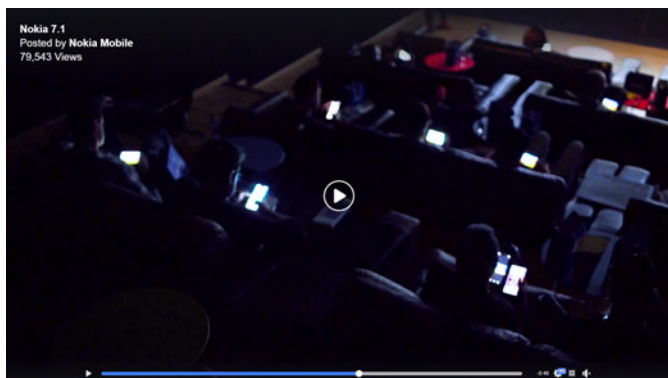
participants, video is the right solution. The first and most accessible option is to communicate on the spot with the help of video stories on Instagram and Facebook. The next step is to generate more awareness, curiosity and conversation in social media with the help of influencers, that can publish both raw content on stories and processed content, with professional video production, in posts and stories. For example, on the occasion of festivals supported by Mastercard in 2018, we involved some influencers who were known for their good results in video communication, who documented their experiences at TIFF, Electric Castle and Summerwell. Daddy Cool published video stories on Instagram during each event, while Sanziana Negru and Ioana Grama published a video at the end of each day of Summerwell, produced with the help of Bogdan Mustața, videographer.



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/daddycool.ro/>
<https://www.instagram.com/sanziananegru/>
<https://www.instagram.com/ioanagrama/>

Despite the fact that it had a commercial component, the content had tens of thousands of organic views. That's because it integrated Mastercard services naturally into the story of the festivals and it demonstrated, in a short and easy to understand format, the benefits offered to customers participating in the events that the brand was supporting.

In December 2018, in order to bring to the attention of the public the Nokia brand and the Nokia 7.1 message, "Stand out and tell your story," we organized an *experiential event*. A number of top influencers have been invited to the cinema, where they found out that the film would run on the Nokia 7.1 phones which we offered them on the spot. The whole surprise experience has been documented with the help of a dedicated video production team and published post event on the Nokia Mobile Romania Facebook page.



Source:
<https://www.facebook.com/NokiamobileRO/videos/338195043454422/>

With or without sound?

The way users are consuming content on a particular platform is determined by the need they seek to fulfill. This is the main aspect that must be taken into consideration when starting to produce a video. And this is also an important factor in choosing the right way of sending the message: with sound; without sound, but with subtitles or without sound and without subtitles (which implies a perfect understanding of the message in this form, as well). The main place where users watch video with sound and sometimes with subtitles is YouTube, a platform they choose for having fun, as well as for education. Along with music and entertainment, on YouTube you can find a lot of unboxing videos, tutorials, and documentaries.

Instagram, as well, is a favorite place for relaxation, especially when it comes to shorter breaks, whether we are talking about a break between office meetings or free moments when we wait for a taxi. That's the reason why, on Instagram, as well, users are watching videos with sound, although in a smaller percentage and mostly on *stories*. Here, 60% of the videos are watched with sound².

The situation is different on Facebook. People are using this platform rather to be informed about their friends, about society or about specific subjects that they are interested in. Here, 85% of videos are watched without sound³.

The situation is similar on LinkedIn, the percentage being 80%⁴, subtitles being more necessary than on Instagram.

What is the ideal length of a video in social media?

6-second video ads are announced to be the most effective ads on YouTube and they've even been replicated by US TV channels⁵. An interesting place is also occupied by the 15-second ads on YouTube that run before, during or after a video and can't be skipped (bumper ads). There are 15 seconds in which you must provide quality content in order to gain the sympathy of the user that YouTube is keeping entertained. This duration seems to be a magical one if we look at the predecessors of these online ads - 15-second TV commercials - and Instagram *stories*.

The next recommended durations are 26 seconds⁶ for posts on Instagram and between 30 and 90 seconds on Facebook and LinkedIn.



Source:
<https://www.facebook.com/corinacaragea/videos/787298781626970/>

80% of LinkedIn users said that they prefer to watch content with this duration⁷. And the newly-launched *YouTube Reels* and *WhatsApp Statuses*

(the equivalent for stories) are ³⁰ seconds long. With this occasion, we're waiting for updates from LinkedIn, which is surely preparing something..

These rules provide a useful framework when creating content, but let's not forget that if the story is captivating enough, the duration can be longer. Even a simple video, filmed with a phone and a fixed frame, can have a high number of views, if it's interesting enough and sometimes funny. An example is a series of 2-3 minutes videos that we have made together with a number of personalities from Romania (Corina Caragea, Vlad Petreanu, Vladimir Drăghia, Cosmin Natanticiu). Each of them was invited to make a video in which to express their opinions in a relaxed and funny manner about BRD Groupe Societe Generale's market study, regarding how the Romanians see the world over 100 years, mentioning the facts that will remain typically Romanian in the future. The videos have generated hundreds of thousands of views.

Of course, long-lasting video content also works in social media, if we produce videos following the model and quality of TV productions (live talk shows, documentaries) and vlogs with influences. The videos with a duration over 20 minutes are the most used by vloggers and the fact that they had so much success in Romania in the last year is not accidental. This proves the fact that they meet an equivalent need to watch shows or series on Netflix / HBO Go and on TV.

Landscape or portrait?

Square :) 77% of millennials don't turn their phone

horizontally when they watch videos on mobile⁹. And we already know that around three quarters of users consume social media on their mobile phones, including videos. So, landscape formats are not the best choice, especially if we want to optimize the costs of the production and publish the same video on multiple channels (this, of course, if the theme of the video is matching with all the social media platforms). That's why the square formats are ideal, starting with Instagram, where they look perfect in posts, and continuing with Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube. The portrait formats must also be taken in consideration, especially for stories and even for ads on Youtube. When users keep phones vertically, videos in this format occupy a larger space on the screen⁹.



Source: <https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/9128498>

What results can we obtain using videos in social media?

The videos in social media offer benefits in all aspects of the brand's communication. For starters, they have an increasing number of chances of being watched by comparison with TV commercials. The way social media platforms are built "forces", in some way, the users, including communication specialists, to post content that is adapted to them.

If for a TV campaign, the feedback comes much later and it involves a more tedious and expensive research process, in social media the evolution can be tracked in real time. Qualitative and attention-grabbing images in the first 2.6 seconds make videos get more views and are detected by the platform's algorithms as videos that are "worthy" of being delivered organically to other users. The formats tailored to each platform help the videos integrate naturally and be more user-friendly. And, of course, being present where users are always active increases their chances of being seen by the public of interest. Recent statistics show that 57% of millennials watch more ads on social media than on TV¹⁰, while Facebook videos are watched 5 times more, comparing to the static content¹¹.

Videos help us a lot not only from the point of view of awareness. This type of content helps us create memorability. 80% of social media users said in a study that they recalled the ads in this format that Then, the content of the published material is significant in terms of affinity towards the brand and the purchasing decision. 1 out of 4 consumers are looking for information about a product on YouTube before buying it¹³. More than half (62%) of social media consumers were more interested in a product after discovering it in a story¹⁴. Having these numbers in mind, we'll keep in mind to include links to the landing pages of the campaign or of the products in our posts and target the ads on stories as well. We won't use only Facebook when we have sales goals. Facebook remains, indeed, the best source of sales, but as the 2018 statistics show, YouTube and Instagram are coming fast from behind¹⁵.

A content based on the interests and needs of the users will easily transform them into brand supporters and, therefore, will generate a high number of shares. On LinkedIn, where the option to upload videos was launched only in 2018, this type of content has a great success. The videos are shared 20 times more than any other type of content¹⁶, proof that the consumers were anticipating them and there is room for growth for brands using this platform. For B2B, new perspectives are open. With the help of video, brands can be promoted in many ways, bringing, at the same time, a humanized perspective on them.

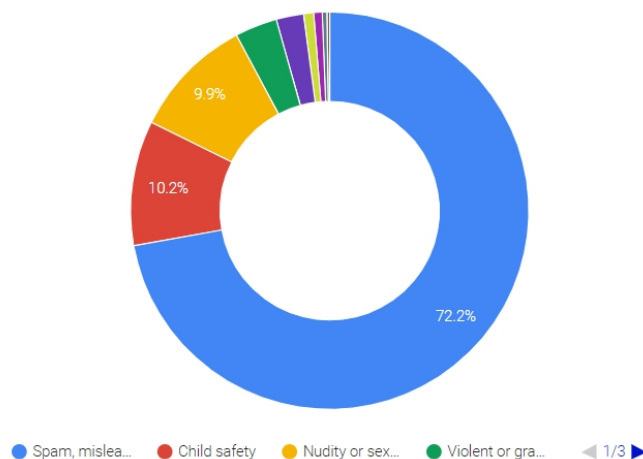
Meta: how much can we trust the platforms of video content?

YouTube is a platform that can be taken in consideration again for in-stream video ads, after making a lot of efforts in 2018 to resolve the inconveniences and risks the brands were facing. After important brands have decided on a global level not to communicate on this channel because they have found that their ads were running as pre-rolls at videos with extremist messages, Google has invested in cleaning the platform at an accelerated pace. Starting with April 2018, the company has begun publishing periodic reports in which was showing transparently how the inappropriate content was being removed from the platform and what numbers it has reached. At the end of September 2018, when the latest information was released, about 32 million videos had been deleted. The majority of videos were detected by machine-learning systems developed in the summer of 2017,

so they could be automatically deleted before getting views. The rest were detected by the Trusted Flagger community, a dedicated program, where authorized members can inform YouTube when the rules of the platform are violated¹⁷. The statistics do not include deleting content that violates less serious rules, such as copyright, but where detection is more and more optimized through machine-learning.

Videos removed, by removal reason

This chart shows the volume of videos removed by YouTube, by the reason a video was removed. These removal reasons correspond to YouTube's [Community Guidelines](#). Reviewers evaluate flagged videos against all of our Community Guidelines and policies, regardless of the reason the video was originally flagged.



Source: <https://transparencyreport.google.com/youtube-policy/removals>

Facebook has begun to test ads for several months inside videos. The company's caution in the context of scandals that took place in recent years and the pressure from governmental institutions, the press, and brands has led to an accelerated pace of

developing tools to "clean up" the platform of inappropriate videos. In the last 2 years, Facebook has implemented high-performance machine-learning tools that, just like the ones on YouTube, are detecting the materials that violate the platform rules and delete them automatically without the need of human moderation.

Risks will always exist, but the solutions listed above show us that in 2019 we can be more assured that our ads are far less likely to get close to extreme negative content. And it shows us that as long as we will have a civic spirit and we will be vigilant, the giants of the online environment will mobilize in the direction that a free society needs.

Roxana Ionescu

Senior Digital Manager, Golin

- 1) <https://shopniac.ro/aparate-foto-mirrorless-vs-dslr-10524/>
- 2) <https://business.instagram.com/a/stories-ads>
- 3) <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/40-video-marketing-statistics-for-2019-infographic/545887/>
- 4) <https://business.linkedin.com/en-uk/marketing-solutions/blog/posts/B2B-video/2018/Ready-to-get-started-with-video-ads-on-LinkedIn-Here-are-9-things-you-need-to-know>
- 5) <https://www.shutterstock.com/blog/2019-video-marketing-trends-report>
- 6) <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-long-should-videos-be-on-instagram-twitter-facebook-youtube>
- 7) <https://business.linkedin.com/en-uk/marketing-solutions/blog/posts/B2B-video/2018/Want-to-drive-views-for-B2B-video-Heres-what-makes-people-watch>
- 8) <http://www.adnews.com.au/news/marketers-still-lagging-as-consumers-shift-to-vertical-video>
- 9) <https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/9128498>
- 10) <https://animoto.com/blog/business/2018-social-video-consumer-trends/>
- 11) <https://www.facebook.com/business/m/facebook-video-ads>
- 12) <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/40-video-marketing-statistics-for-2019-infographic/545887/>
- 13) <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/40-video-marketing-statistics-for-2019-infographic/545887/>

statistics-for-2019-infographic/545887/

14) <https://marketingland.com/facebook-stories-ads-now-available-to-all-advertisers-248982>

15) <https://animoto.com/blog/video-marketing/video-marketing-trends-2019/>

16) <https://business.linkedin.com/en-uk/marketing-solutions/blog/posts/B2B-video/2018/Ready-to-get-started-with-video-ads-on-LinkedIn-Here-are-9-things-you-need-to-know>

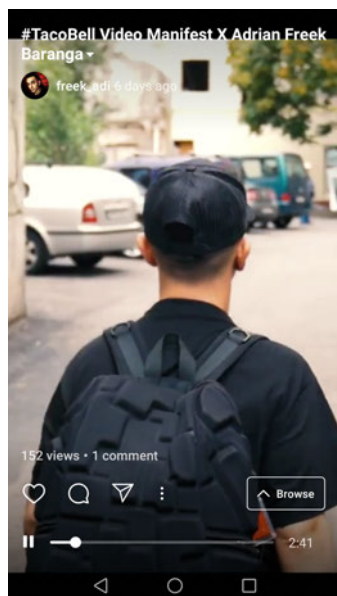
17) https://transparencyreport.google.com/youtube-policy/removals?total_removed_videos=period:Y2017Q4;exclude_automated:&lu=total_removed_videos

Photo source: robertkatai.com



IGTV: AWAITED SUCCESS OR JUST AN ABANDONED SCENE?

Instagram is the social platform that hasn't registered any drop or stagnation lately in terms of followers number, and has 1 billion monthly active users and 500 million daily active users on a global scale¹.



Even though Facebook is still the first social media platform regarding the number of users (2,32 billion monthly active users and 1,15 billions daily active users²), Instagram conquers more and more of the social media field, developers focusing their attention on creating new interactive features for it.

That's how IGTV lauched last year, a new feature, a new platform that was supposed to replace YouTube, as many specialists have stated.

A content boom was expected mostly in the first

days after launching, but the expectations from the new video platform were much bigger and promising as they turned out eventually.

For the time being, IGTV's success can be compared to Snapchat's or even the one of Instagram Stories at their launching moment, the latter being considered a rather boring and not so successful copy of Snapchat.

But later on, Instagram Stories took on the stage and won more and more credit (over 400 million daily active users on a global scale³) and have far exceeded their direct competitor to the point where it has become almost invisible on the social media scene.

At first, brands addapted their content and even created dedicated IGTV materials in order to their online presence become constant and well adapted to every platform's specifications.

After just a few months, the level of enthusiasm has dramatically dropped and it seems now that IGTV is almost invisible and the user numbers are going down rather than up.

If we're thinking about the video content that

registers higher and higher success, we should all remember that Instagram is the platform that has brought the vertical videos in the highlight through Instagram Stories, IGTV being nothing else than a new social platform created especially for this kind of content.

How did IGTV started on the social media scene?

At the middle of last year, there have been registered over ^{2,5} million IGTV downloads, on both iOS and Android, but the reduction percent was 94% in the immediate period of time, the numbers not being able to reach more than 70,000 downloads after just one week⁴.

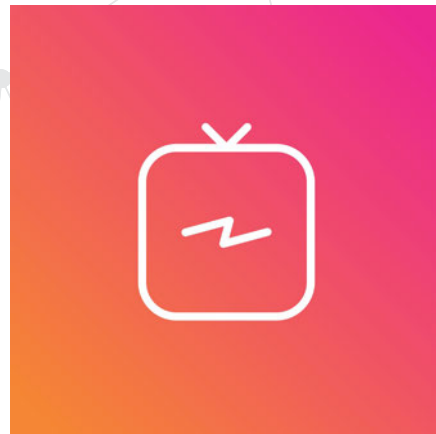


If it keeps going on this road, IGTV may risk becoming a ghost social platform and even have the same fate as Google Plus.

Kevin Systrom, Instagram CEO, bets on IGTV's

courage to impose on users a mobile only format and an unique content that can't be found on other social media platforms.

Because it doesn't register relevant numbers in terms of reach, IGTV is not one of influencers' favourite either. Since we are talking about a platform where the content must be individually created, this comes as an extra layer in their activity, being considered almost useless, given the fact that the results don't meet the expectations of views, reach and average percentage watch, as well as financially⁵.



What will happen with IGTV in 2019?

The questions reagarding the future of IGTV are numerous: from what strategy will Instagram use to promote its new platform to how can IGTV overcome YouTube and what new features will help.

2019 seems to be a year of great promises for IGTV. There are rumors that Instagram will invest a huge budget in promoting the platform, while in the meantime, Kevin Systrom believes that "All great things were small at first"⁶.

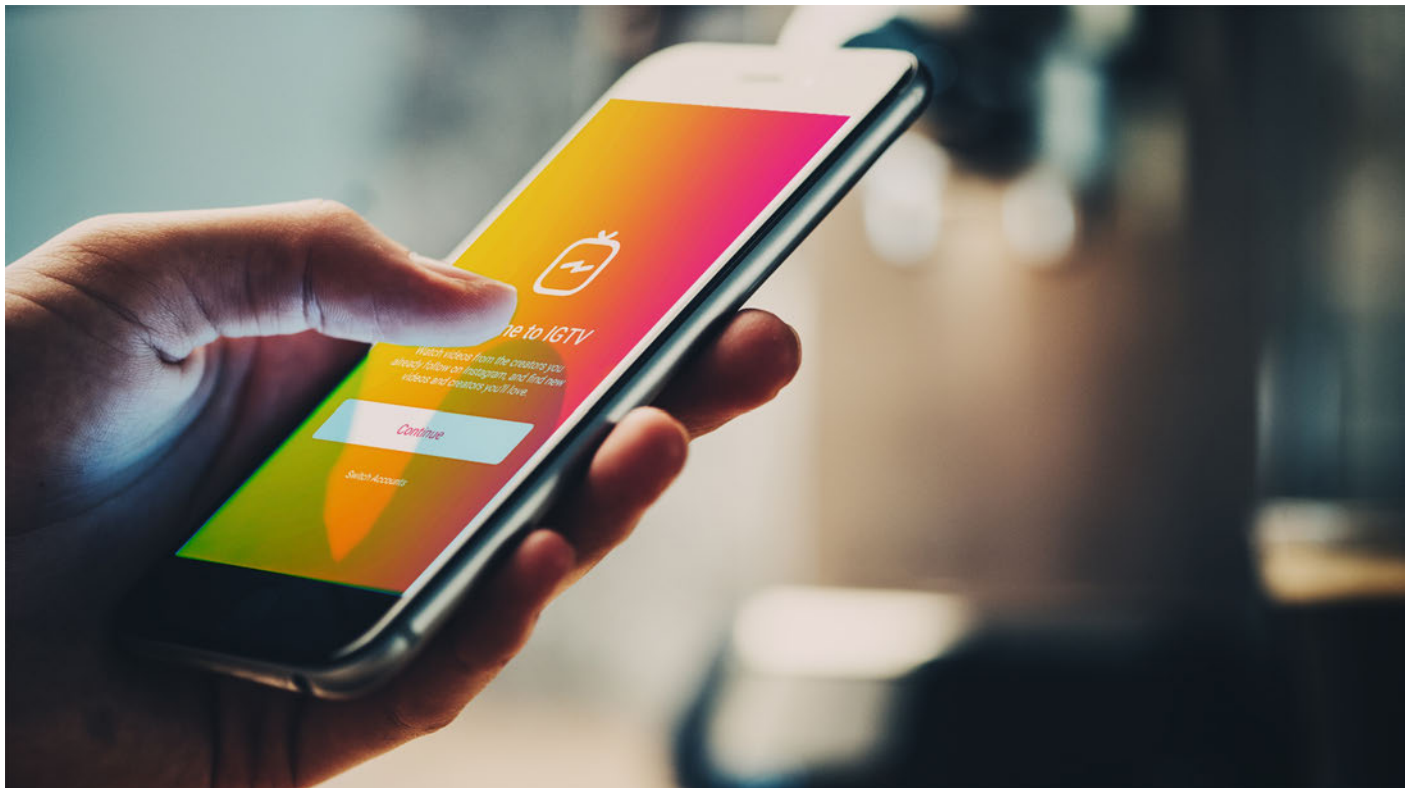
For obvious reasons, the exact statistics for IGTV were not made public by Instagram, leaving the opportunity open for this year.

Alexandra Ion

Digital Manager, Golin

- 1) <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/> , January 2019
- 2) <https://zephoria.com/top-15-valuable-facebook-statistics/> , January 2019
- 3) <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/> , January 2019
- 4) <https://techcrunch.com/2018/08/25/igtv-views/>

- 5) <https://techcrunch.com/2018/08/25/igtv-views/>
- 6) <https://techcrunch.com/2018/08/25/igtv-views/>
- 7) <https://digiday.com/media/instagrams-igtv-sees-growing-popularity-episodic-videos/>
- 8) <https://www.socialbakers.com/blog/instagram-igtv-everything-marketers-need-to-know-part-1>



NEW TERRITORIES IN BRAND COMMUNICATION: PODCASTS

Podcasts are recorded radio shows, which we can listen to on various devices, including on mobile, on the go. Even though they have a 15 years old history and in USA they are already very popular, in the last years they benefited from an increased interest, at an accelerated pace at a global level, also, becoming a topic of interest in Romania, too. In our country, appeared more podcasts that you would expect, their themes diversified, brands started to offer them sponsorship, dedicated awards launched, all of them being a sign that in 2019 this market will continue to develop.

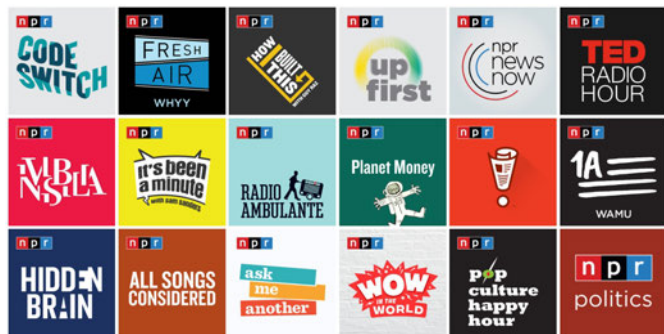
I remember when I was listening to online radio during my student years and I was noticing that the shows which were no longer live broadcasted could still be listened in the „podcasts” section. A simple and useful idea. Nevertheless, no one around me wasn't talking about them and didn't seem to consume anything but live content. I was doing the same. I didn't know why at that time, but now, looking back at how technology evolved, things are more clear. During this time, smartphones appeared and the last 2 years represented a mobile data revolution, which have become very accessible at very low prices. Nowadays, nobody turns off their mobile data anymore and the content they consume is usually online and not straight from the device (like

the content on ipods and mp3 players used to be), even in long journeys. Thus, podcasts started to get people's attention and gain traction.



Another reason why they became successful and they will continue to be is the quality they offer. If you can watch a TV show or online videos without being necessarily interested in the narrative, but rather in their visual aspect, when you listen to a podcast, the narrative is the only thing that remains. You don't see people, but you can imagine them. The whole experience takes place in an intimate context, you usually listen to them on your headphones. The speaker is motivated to grab your attention, because his voice and a good story are

the only things he has in order to do that and he has to make the most of them. Also, one's auditive attention is, many times, lower than the visual one, an extra reason for the content creator to focus on the quality of the podcast, in order to keep the listener close.

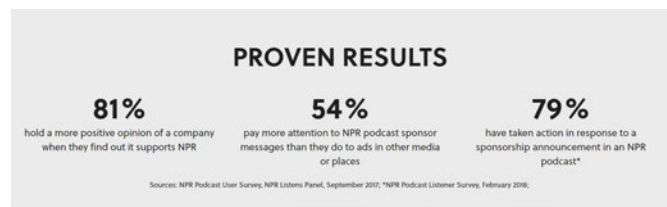


Source: <https://www.nationalpublicmedia.com/npr/platforms/npr-podcasts/>

Through the relationship they establish with their listeners, podcasts creators build a high trustworthiness level. Podcasts would become fatiguesome if they had the same number of commercials as a social media channel has. Also, the format the producers choose is very different than classical radio shows, which have very clear bounded commercials breaks, with separately produced radio spots. Instead, they choose commercial breaks presented by the same radio hosts. They usually describe products they tested themselves and they take responsibility for their quality. Promoting a product with issues would be an editorial suicide because they would easily loose their listeners. In the context of fake news which basically flood social media, podcasts offer a stable and trustworthy communication environment for

brand communication and they work very well amongst communities created around a specific interest.

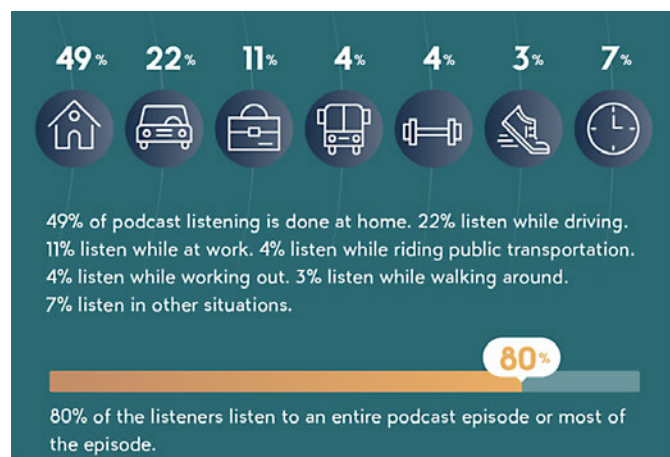
In USA, NPR (The National Public Radio), one of the best radio producers in the world, offers dozens of podcasts on various themes, such as culture, education, science, technology and psychology. They have a mature and educated audience, with purchasing power, which makes it the perfect category for many brands. And a recent study NPR launched shows how much commercial messages weigh when they are placed in one of their podcasts: 81% of their audience improved their opinion about a brand, 54% became more receptive to the commercial message, rather than on other channels, 79% took an action related to the brand after they listened to a podcast.



Source: <https://www.nationalpublicmedia.com/npr/platforms/npr-podcasts/>

Overall, it's estimated that there are over half a million active podcasts, with over 18 million shows¹, only in iTunes. If we take into account those available on the correspondent Android app, Podcast Addict, on Soundcloud and on independent websites, the number is much bigger. The American statistics are enough to form an opinion about this market, especially if we want to anticipate how the domain will evolve in Romania.

Culturally, Romanians are very influenced by the American culture, there is a lot of multimedia American content Romanians consume (music, movies or books) and this the main entertainment source in our country. Especially if we consider Millenials, who grew up right when American cultural products were entering our society and were influenced in believing that everything that comes from USA has a better quality than something created locally. Starting from these premises, we can easily estimate that the American podcasts market became a benchmark of quality and commercial communication.



Source: <https://www.nationalpublicmedia.com/npr/platforms/npr-podcasts/>

Musicoomph launched an extremely detailed infographic about the USA podcasts situation, at the beginning of 2019. Numbers show that almost half of the Americans have listened to a podcast, that smartphones are the main device they listen to them and their preferred place to do that is right at their homes (49%), followed by their cars (22%)².



Source: <https://www.scena9.ro/article/podcast-la-ce-e-buna-cultura>

There are also podcasts launched by brands, who developed so much that the prestigious competition Webby Awards created a dedicated competition category for them. The most recently awarded podcasts³ were: IRL (from Firefox, the creators of Mozilla browser), The Future According to Now (from the marketing team of The Atlantic publication, sponsored by Fidelity Investments), SyFy 25 Origin Stories (from ART 19, media agency specialized in podcasts), Trailblazers (from Dell) and Broadway Backstory (from Today Tix, an application which sells online theatre tickets).

In Romania, podcasts started to extend timidly, but there are already a few big shows, who gained certain niche target audiences. The recipe of success seems to be developing those podcasts as branches of preexistent editorial projects, which offer them an easier beginning, because they can borrow fans from them. For example, the podcast created by Robert Katai, who was already known by media & advertising people through [instagramology.ro](https://www.instagramology.ro), the podcasts created by [Scena9](https://www.scena9.ro)

and *Decât o Revistă* magazines and the podcasts created by Romanian comedians.

The podcasts of comedians offer many stories, jokes and behind the scenes information about them, which keeps their community close. Also, these podcasts are in video format, so they are watched by fans who prefer visual content, not just audio, and can easily get many views, thanks to being uploaded on YouTube, where these comedians already have thousands of subscribers. Thus, these podcasts work as great promotional tools for the activities these comedians usually unroll: stand-up shows in clubs all over the country.

Another reason they are such good promotional tools is that they are very authentic (both content wise and format wise, as they are not at all edited), they offer a glimpse of the type of jokes people can expect if they went to one of their shows and they keep their audiences engaged online while offline there are no big tournaments taking place.

Au început să apară și colaborări comerciale cu astfel de podcasturi, pe care au ales să le sponsorizeze în special branduri cu public masculin, precum cele de jocuri video sau auto.

The comedy podcasts started to benefit from brands' support, mainly those who target males, interested in video games and auto.

Overall, there are over 30 Romanian podcasts, some of them being listed below⁴.

Entrepreneurship: *Antreprenori care inspiră* (with Florin Roșoga)

Comedy: *Ceva mărunț* (with Sergiu Floroiaia and Toma Alexandru), *Cine știe ce* (with Teo and Victor Băra), *Cristi Miticaru's Podcast*, *Între show-uri* (with Teo, Vio and Costel), *Popesco Show* (with Cristi Popescu), *Victor Băra Podcast*

CSR: *Yes You Can* (with Cosmin Bârzan)

Education: *Temeri pentru acasă* (with Alice Mihalache)

Economy: *Banii vorbesc* (with Laurențiu Mihai)

Fiction: *Treasure Monkey with Madame Fournier*

Gaming: *All vorbe* (with Edgar and Paul)

History: *Podcast de Istorie* (with Dorin Lazăr and Sergiu Motreanu)

Marketing: *Podcastu' lui Katai* (by Robert Katai), *Subcast* (from Subsign agency)

Society-Culture: *Contrasens* (created by students from Cluj Napoca), *DOPcast* (with Mihnea and Andrei), *Geocast* (with Georgiana Doba), *Istoria Culturala a Romaniei de saptamana trecuta pana in zilele noastre* (with Dorin Lazăr and Ovidiu Eftimie), *Mai puțin prost* (with Doru Cătană), *OriginALL* (with Adrian Boioglu), *Pe Bune* (with Andreea Vrabie de la DOR), *PDCST Marți și Joi* (Vali Petcu), *Satul Mădălinei* (with Ana Maria Ciobanu de la DOR), *Scena 9* (from the magazine with the same name), *Trei Șase Cinci*, *Un român în Londra* (with Manuel Cheța), *Wineot* (with Simina and Cosmin)

Sport: *Zidul Galben* (created by fan club from

Romania of Borussia Dortmund)

Science: *Sceptici în România, Tehnocultura SciCast*
(with Manuel Cheța)

Tehnology: *Burzcast* (with Răzvan Burz)

Bonus: a podcast in English, created by Maria Nazdravan, Romanian Immigrant in UK: **Rejected.**



In conclusion, podcasts are a means of communication full of potential for commercial communication, through two main methods. The first is creating them in order to consolidate the brand positioning of their author, which makes them great teasers, amplification or localization tools. These are, for example, podcasts launched by brands (Mozilla) or comedians (*Între show-uri, cu Teo, Vio și Costel*). The second is using podcasts for buying media space (*branded content* or *product placement*). This is a very efficient tool especially for niche audiences. As the list above proves that in

Romania there are many opportunities for brand communication through podcasts.

Roxana Ionescu

Senior Digital Manager, Golin

- 1) <https://musicoomph.com/podcast-statistics/>
- 2) <https://musicoomph.com/podcast-statistics/>
- 3) <https://www.webbyawards.com/winners/all/podcasts-digital-audio/features/best-branded-podcast-or-segment/>
- 4) <http://alternativ.ro/index.php/2018/10/07/podcast-castigatorii-webstock2018/>
https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/List%C4%83_de_podcasturi_audio_rom%C3%A2ne%C8%99ti
<http://arcca.ro/top-5-podcasturi-cool-din-romania/>
<https://manuelcheta.ro/2018/05/25/podcasturi-romanesti-de-ascultat-in-2018/>
<http://www.citypodcast.ro/>
<https://florinrosoga.ro/podcasturi-romanesti-romania/>
<https://sirb.net/2018/personal/descoperit-podcasting/>
<https://www.revistabiz.ro/despre-podcast-si-valoarea-voce/>

QUESTION EVERYTHING. ESPECIALLY IN 2019.

It's the best advice I think I've given until now and it's an advice I'm trying to follow myself, without carrying it to extremes. Working in the field of communication comes with a lot of subjectivity, which is why, over time, various rules have been shaped to help us determine whether what we do is beneficial for a brand or not. Objective rules about people - such as professional expertise in a certain field, reputation, respecting the given word - or about campaigns - such as clear and measurable goals, the originality of an idea, fulfilling a real need through a creative concept, achieving the desired goals. But fakeness has always existed, and since social media have become available to anyone, it's even easier to fake the image of a person or of a campaign, in order to make the above-mentioned objective criteria seem respected.

At the same time, the human factor remains essential in our work. It works in two directions. First, because we are human, we sometimes subjectively evaluate objective criteria, or we end up falsely believing we have objectively assessed them because lack of information, misinformation or ignorance. We are influenced by the socio-economic context in which we lived, by our education and by our experiences. We have the courage to question what appears to us, depending

on these aspects, and the fact that we are a Baby Boomer, a Millennial, or a youngster from Generation Z, will make us express our critical thinking in different ways and sometimes will make us become



our own trap. Sometimes we'll be wrong with the best of intentions. That's why it's important to be aware of our own human bias every time we make assessments in our work as communication specialists.

The second direction in which the human factor works is that we have instincts and that we should listen to them. Even if we are not aware of certain aspects, the instincts will help us detect the warning signals and adapt to them.

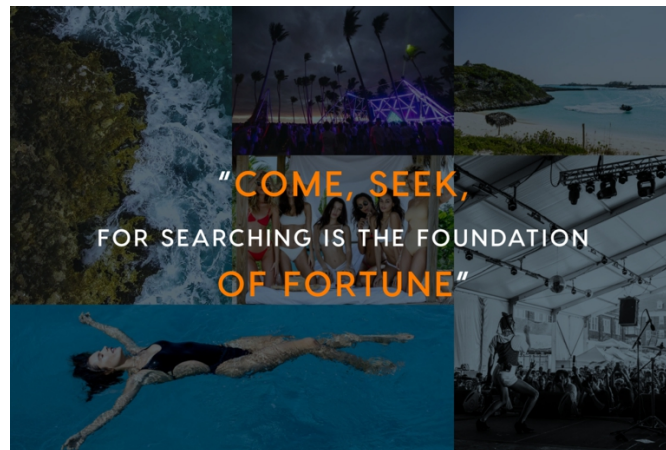
2019 is a year in which truth and honesty are weighing ever more. The mistakes of recent years (fraud, *fake news*, *fake content*) have begun to emerge and reach the general public, who started to ask questions, to be more attentive to facts, to objective criteria, to what the instinct says. This, in the context of technological development and the democratization of advanced communication tools, will mobilize people to develop their civic spirit through actions of *citizen journalism*, *crowdfunding* with social purposes, mobile applications for revealing the truth behind certain matters and many others initiatives. Here are some examples of how social media has shown us distorted realities in the last period.

There may be a Fyre in you

The documentaries launched by Netflix and Hulu in January 2019 made the Fyre festival known worldwide, an event that promised, from the first edition, an unforgettable experience in the Bahamas, together with popular influencers and in luxury conditions, but which turned out to be a festival without infrastructure and logistics, with no influencers and conditions at the limit of safety¹.

I think the most shocking thing about the Fyre Festival is the big number of people who participated in this common illusion, despite the fact that the whole workflow was full of warning signals. The failure of the festival and the six-year prison sentence of its founder, Billy McFarland, show how important it is to have a sense of reality, experience in the field in which you work, and

honesty to yourself before the honesty to others, to know when to say "stop" and own your mistakes. Each activity related to the festival can be extrapolated to social media and PR activities and as a lesson for future communication activities.



Source: <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2017/05/fyre-festival-pitch-deck>

Copyright: make sure all the people and brands you want to get involved in the campaign have agreed to do so. For example, if you want to communicate that you are doing a festival on an island belonging to Pablo Escobar and it's not true, the Escobar family can issue a writ against you.

Location: choose a location that can provide at the event date all the space and all the necessary conditions for a pleasant experience. For example, if you choose an island, choose one that already has plumbing and electricity.

Human Resources: calculate from the beginning how many work hours it takes for all aspects of the

event and what budget is needed to cover those hours. At the same time, listen to your more experienced colleagues. If a colleague who has worked for many years in logistics tells you that your logistic plans are not feasible, follow his advice instead of firing him.

Timing: communicate the event date once you've made sure you have all the human and financial resources to help you finish the job by that date. If you realize that you have not chosen the date well, postpone it before it becomes a crisis. 6 months are not enough to organize a festival for 40,000 participants on an island, especially if it's the first edition.

KPIs: promise your partners the media exposure that you certainly know you can deliver, after making sure you have enough budget for influencer marketing and for your communication team, including a backup budget.

Budget: invest in a teaser, whether it's a teaser event, after making sure you have money set aside for the final event.

And, last but not least, a piece of advice for all who are, who follow, or who work with an influencer: investigate whether what is communicated is true or at least realistic. Kendall Jenner's agent agreed to sign a collaboration with Fyre Festival for promoting it. Kendall accepted to promote on Instagram a festival that had not yet happened, without having any benchmark from the past. Her fans chose to buy a ticket at the festival being influenced by her. Perhaps things would have been

different if each of these people had informed themselves from at least three trustworthy sources.

Truth Is In the Eye of the Beholder

A growing trend is #DeepFake, a form of image and sound manipulation through artificial intelligence, more precisely through deep learning. The latter is an algorithm that is taught to recognize patterns in a person's audio or video recordings. Once the algorithm can faithfully detect enough such patterns, it becomes very easily for the elements to be interchanged in the lines of code and for false images to be generated. The most common way to use deep fake so far was to swap faces of celebrities on common with other people's faces, starting with those of XXX stars and continuing with those of other celebrities. For example, someone has replaced Jennifer Lawrence's face with Steve Buscemi's in a video recording taken at a Golden Globe Gala Q&A with the press.



Source: <http://fortune.com/2019/01/31/what-is-deep-fake-video/>

The videos became viral on social media, have generated amusement and appreciation, but they have also drawn attention regarding how false information can be dressed in such a credible form so easily. If a few years ago replacing a face from a video with another face was being done manually, by a person in Photoshop, this process can now be done automatically by a code. If for the film industry this method is a great solution, that saves millions of dollars, to citizens it's a source of concern and can lead to new conspiracy theories.

For the time being, the technology has not advanced so much that historical large-scale events can be manipulated². That's because deep learning algorithms have not yet been "fed" with all the information they need. For example, a video in which the mimics and the voice of actor Jordan Peele were overlapped on Barack Obama's image required processing 56 hours of recordings.



Source:
<https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2019/01/business/pentagons-race-against-deepfakes/>

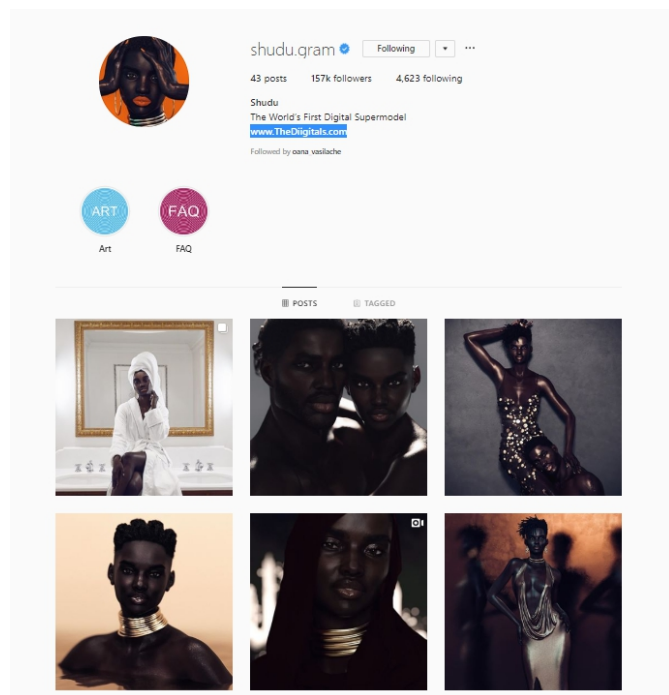
For audio recordings it takes much less - Apple, for example, needed about 20 hours for Siri³. Adobe has been working since 2016 on an application that can generate words with the voice of a person, without those words being actually said by that person. Named Project VoCo, the app is a kind of Photoshop for audio and is developed in partnership with researchers at Princeton University⁴.

There are already researchers working on applications which can find out if a video or an audio is being manipulated, with the support, in the USA, of the Pentagon and some members of the Congress. The technology behind deep fake and VoCo is the same, it starts from deep learning, but we shall see which one will evolve faster and will have more impact.

In order to protect ourselves, we need to pay more attention to the things we see and hear and to become comfortable with not believing them easily. Once we become aware that Deep Fake is real and accessible to everyone, we have the power to question things that at first glance may seem real. The above-mentioned videos can be easily accepted initially, but on a more detailed research, discrepancies can still be observed (eyebrows, head rotation, blurred areas compared to clear details in the rest of the face). At the same time, it's important to keep in mind, again, the sources of information, to compare more of them, to evaluate their credibility and their political or commercial affiliation.

AI Influencers are Here to Stay

Shudu Gram is the first 100% digital Instagram model. In other words, she doesn't actually exist, but the photos which are published on her account seem pretty authentic and she has over 1 million followers and tens of thousands of interactions on a post. Like #DeepFake, at first glance, Shudu can easily seem a real fashion influencer, just like any other. With a little more attention, the lack of depth in her eye-sight, the perfect skin and the artificial light are warning signals.



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/shudu.gram/>

Shudu is created by Digital, the first agency „managing” digital influencers. They use 3D modeling in order to demonstrate how far brand communication can go. Alongside Shudu, the agency also “manages” six other models (other women, a man, a plus size model, and an alien).

Beyond the digital experiments that we need to vigilantly watch to keep in touch with reality, there is another aspect to consider. Shudu is perhaps one of the most honest models that communicates on Instagram. We find out from her bio who she really is and we are directed to www.TheDiigitals.com site for details. All her posts include hashtags like #digitalsupermodel #3D #3Dart and #digitalart. Most of the descriptions speak about Shudu in the third person and about its author in the first person, explaining the 3D techniques which were used in creating the image. If they include commercial communications, brands are referred to as inspiration for those images and not as products that were actually used by a person.

Shudu has created a precedent in the online industry and probably many similar experiments will follow. She's a source of inspiration for designers and for content creators who want to produce and publish artistic, qualitative images. Also, the project demonstrate us, through its transparent communication, that you can not be real, but if you admit that, users will follow you anyway, and the brands will contact you for paid deals.

Therefore, fakeness can take many forms and it's not always something negative. So, in 2019, it would

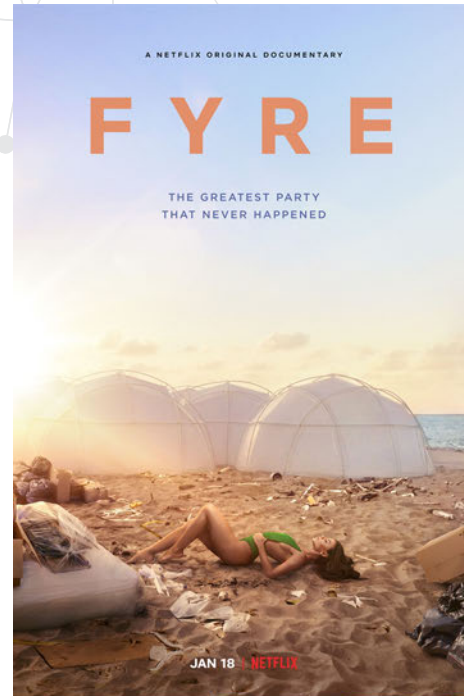
be better to pay attention to the difference between lies and truth, manipulation and honesty, rather than to the difference between the manufactured and the real. Because, in a digital world, where we talk and become attached to various artificial intelligence forms, where we have fun in VR, we play in AR and where we admire the art created through a software, **reality, in its classical sense, is already altered**, but in a way that it often enriches our lives. Instead, truth and honesty remain intrinsically human values and will count regardless of the century we live in.

Roxana Ionescu

Senior Digital Manager, Golin

- 1) <https://www.vulture.com/2017/05/fyre-festival-fiasco-the-complete-timeline.html>
- 2) <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2019/01/business/pentagons-race-against-deepfakes/>
- 3) <http://fortune.com/2018/09/11/deep-fakes-obama-video/>
- 4) <https://www.theverge.com/2016/11/3/13514088/adobe-photoshop-audio-project-voco>

Photo source: <https://medium.com/swlh/the-fyre-festival-deck-shows-what-is-wrong-with-modern-fundraising-6b85fb38f75b>



DIGITAL RECAP 2019

www.digitalrecap.ro

hoinaru

Alexandru Ciucă

www.hoinaru.ro
www.facebook.com/hoinaru.ro

GOLIN

Golin România

www.golin.com/ro
www.facebook.com/GolinRo