Spotlight on Media Tracking Trends on Popular Social Platforms

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Introduction

Recently, there has been a shift in the social media space as people move from public to private platforms like Discord. Along with this shift, social media platforms that center around videos and video sharing like TikTok and Instagram(Reels) and live streaming platforms like Twitch have been quickly gaining traction too. These alternative platforms are most relevant to the younger generation, and they continue to prove themselves to be the new frontiers of social media.
The focus of this research is Discord because Discord has the most potential to become a platform that can be monitored more regularly. Along with Discord, Twitch, Instagram, and TikTok were closely examined.

Key Insights

The current method of monitoring Instagram and TikTok is the best as of right now:
Instagram and TikTok were some of the social media platforms that were already being monitored and were further researched to see if they could be improved. Both platforms posed a number of challenges, the biggest for both being that posts are not arranged by date, which makes monitoring more difficult. Unless a filtering feature that allows posts to be arranged by date or the AI tool improves, there does not seem to be a more efficient way to monitor these platforms.

Twitch cannot be efficiently monitored:
One of the main focuses of the research was to see if there was a way Twitch could be monitored. Researching the platform unveiled that Twitch had too many obstacles such as no transcripts to develop a thorough method of pulling information. If Twitch were to be monitored, it would most likely be monitoring certain streamers for any relevant content.

Discord is our best bet:
In our research project on media monitoring across various social media platforms, we initially explored popular choices like Instagram and TikTok. These platforms offer robust engagement metrics and vast user bases, making them seemingly ideal for media monitoring. However, as our investigation deepened, we discovered that Discord, an instant messaging and VoIP social platform primarily used by gamers but increasingly popular among diverse user groups, emerged as the most effective platform for this purpose.

Discord's unique structure of servers, text, and voice channels, combined with its powerful keyword-based search engine and advanced filtering options, facilitates comprehensive and organized media monitoring. By leveraging tools such as webhooks, bots, and custom data aggregation methods, Discord allows for efficient real-time tracking and detailed analysis of user-generated content. Despite some challenges related to search scope, privacy, and scalability, the platform's capabilities ultimately offer unparalleled advantages for media monitoring, making it the optimal choice compared to other social media platforms.



What is Twitch?

Twitch is an interactive live-streaming platform that provides content ranging from gaming to political commentary. This platform has been gaining traction lately with some influential streamers being Ninja, KaiCenat, and Pokimane. Due to its wide variety of content and popularity among young people, Twitch was one of the platforms that was looked more extensively into.

Who is the main audience for Twitch?

The main audience for Twitch is males from the age of 18-34. Around 70% of Twitch viewers are from this age range and 63% of the viewers are male, making 37% of Twitch users female.

How is Twitch organized?

The front page of Twitch are channels and livestream recommendations catered to the viewer. Based on what content is provided, Twitch streamers, current live streams, and past streams are organized into different categories. The most popular categories are named Just Chatting, which is where a streamer gives story times and has an interactive conversation with their chats and gaming ones like Elden Ring and Grand Theft Auto.

How does the Twitch search bar work?

The Twitch search bar is keyword-based, if a live or past stream has the keywords in its title or description, the following videos will be pulled up. Searches can be further filtered with a variety of tags.

Information that can be pulled from Twitch

A variety of information can be pulled from Twitch, such as the account name, subscriber count, and the number of views the stream received. Additionally, any clips that went viral on a different platform such as TikTok or Instagram Reels can easily be traced back to the original Twitch creator.

The pitfalls of Twitch

Though there is a solid amount of information that can be pulled from Twitch, this platform poses a number of other problems. First and foremost, Boolean searches are not available on Twitch, even for tags, making searching for more specific topics or creators more challenging. Transcripts are not available for any past live stream or clips of streams and while close captioning is a feature that is available, most streamers do not enable it.

Conclusion

Realistically, Twitch is not a very practical platform to do real-time monitoring. A brand competitor, Meltwater, provided insight as to how they monitor Twitch. They focus on streamers and keywords that the client asks them to monitor and from there, they use the keywords to find any past streams that contain it in the title or description. The videos are watched to see if they are relevant. This method is not very efficient but with the many obstacles that Twitch poses, it might be the best way as of right now. If Twitch monitoring is to be implemented into our services, developing a method that is like what our competitor does is most likely the best course of action because of the limitations. However, even if Twitch is not added to our services, the company will not be considered "falling behind". There does not seem to be an efficient method as of now.



What is TikTok?

TikTok is one of the most relevant social media platforms to emerge from the past years. TikTok centers around video creation and video-sharing, particularly short videos. There is an extremely large range of topics and content TikTok holds and TikTok allows for a more accessible first-person point of view on events, making it important enough to be looked into.

Who is the main audience for TikTok?

The main audience for TikTok is females between the ages of 18-34 years old. Around 55% of users are from this age range and 55% of users are female, making the other 45% male.

How is TikTok organized?

The way TikTok is organized is similar to how Instagram. There is a separate feed where the content is shown from the user's following and followers. There is a separate feed called the For You Page where content and creators that the user has previously interacted with appear. TikTok's algorithm does a good job at curating the For You Page to the user's interests.

How does the TikTok search bar work?

The TikTok search bar, like many others, is a keyword-based one. Videos that have the keyword in the caption or hashtags are pulled up from the searches. Profiles with the keyword in their usernames will also be shown. Booleans are allowed for hashtags, adding another layer of filtration to the searches.

Information that can be pulled from TikTok

Information that could be pulled from TikTok includes the username, profile bio, number of followings, the number of likes the video got, how many views the video got, the caption of the video, and any relevant comments that have a lot of likes or are pinned.

The pitfalls of TikTok

As important as TikTok is to this new era of media, it presents a multitude of challenges when it comes to accurate real-time monitoring. One of the biggest challenges is that the videos that are

pulled up after searching do not appear in date order, or any order at all for that matter. Another downside of TikTok is that many clips of videos that were created elsewhere end up on the platform. Finding the source for the videos, especially when there are no credits to the original creator, can be challenging.

Conclusion

The method that is currently used to pull from TikTok is most likely the best one for the time being. For TikTok to become a platform that is more regularly monitored, features like a date arrange feature need to be added. The TikTok template could possibly tweaked to add a notable comments portion. This could be adapted from the Reddit template. There were no specifics as to how brand competitors monitored TikTok but because of the limitations TikTok poses, their method would assumingly be similar to ours. Though there is no change from the process as of now, it would be best to keep an eye out for how TikTok evolves and adapts as a platform.



What is Instagram?

Instagram is a popular photo and video-sharing site with over 2.4 billion active users. Much of the content a user sees on Instagram is from the user's following and followers. Though Instagram harbors a wide range of content, there is a focus on fashion, food, lifestyle, fitness, pop culture, sports, and travel. Prominent Instagram influencers include Kim Kardashian, Addison Rae, Logan Paul, and Emma Chamberlain. Instagram was looked into to see if improvements could be made to the monitoring process.

Who is the main audience for Instagram?

The main audience for Instagram is females from the age range 18-24. About 31% of Instagram's audience is from that age range and 55.5% of the users are female, making 44.5% of users male.

How is Instagram organized?

A user's Instagram feed starts with posts that were made by the user's followers and followings, continued by posts from accounts that are not followed but have content the user has engaged with before. The Instagram Explore page pulls up posts from accounts the user has interacted with many times and content the user regularly engages with.

How does the Instagram search bar work?

The Instagram search bar is keyword-based, users or posts that have the keywords in the username, profile bio, or hashtags are pulled up. Boolean searches are allowed with hashtags, allowing for additional filtering.

Information that can be pulled from Instagram

Information that can be pulled from Instagram include usernames, profile bios, number of followers, the number of likes the post has as well as any relevant comments that have a good number of likes or are pinned. The relevant comments for Instagram could be adapted from the relevant comments portion of the Reddit template.

The pitfalls of Instagram

Though Boolean searches work for Instagram, it is only limited to hashtags. The posts that get pulled from the searches are also not arranged by date, but rather factors like if the post was made by a popular creator and how many likes the post has. Instagram is notorious for actively shadow-banning and deleting posts they deem “inappropriate”.

Conclusion

There is currently a method of pulling information from Instagram that is being implemented during monitoring. Upon further inspection, the way Instagram is currently being monitored and pulled from seems to be the best way. If changes were to be made, perhaps adding a relevant comments portion of the Instagram template could be useful. The brand competitors that were examined did not specify their method of pulling from the site, but with the limitations, it is safe to assume that it is not much different from ours. Meltwater’s format of monitoring is more centered around monitoring specific pages that the clients want. The improvement of the AI tool will be the best bet for improving the speed of finding relevant information on Instagram.



What is Discord

Discord is an instant messaging and VoIP social platform that allows communication through voice calls, video calls, text messaging, and media and files. Communication can be private or take place in virtual communities called "servers".

Who is Discord’s audience?

Discord is a social app that's primarily used by gamers but also attracts a growing number of users interested in other topics. As of February 2024, Discord's audience is made up of the following age groups:

25–34: 53.4% of users
16–24: 20.6% of users

How is Discord organized

Servers are made up of text channels and voice channels. Text channels are separate spaces for talking over text. They keep conversations organized and give everyone plenty of room to talk. Voice channels are where you can hang out over voice and video. There’s no calling or ringing required - just click on a voice channel to enter it. Friends in your server can see you’re in there, and pop in to talk, wave hello over video, or share their screen.

How does the Discord search bar work?

Discord's search engine is a powerful tool designed to help users find specific content within channels or across an entire server. It operates primarily on a keyword-based search mechanism, allowing users to input specific terms to locate relevant messages. To refine searches, users can apply various filters. The "From" filter enables searching for messages from a specific user, while the "In" filter focuses the search within a particular channel. Additionally, the "Mentions'' filter allows users to find messages that mention a specific user. For more detailed searches, the "Has" filter can be used to locate messages containing specific elements such as links, files, images, videos, or embeds. Users can also use date-based filters like "Before," "After," or "On" to find messages sent within a particular time frame. This robust set of features makes Discord's search engine highly effective for navigating through large volumes of conversation and content.

Information that can be pulled from Discord

Implementing media monitoring within Discord enables efficient extraction of valuable information from data. Begin by creating channels dedicated to specific topics, brands, or keywords you wish to monitor. Utilize webhooks to automatically pull in content from external media sources into these channels. Automate searches and notifications using Discord bots like MEE6, Dyno, or custom bots, which can track specific keywords or phrases and set up automated alerts. Enhance the search process with Discord's advanced search filters to narrow down results to the most relevant messages, such as using `from:User#1234 in:#channel has:link after:2023-01-01`. Regularly check key channels to stay updated and establish schedules for reviewing and analyzing collected data. Develop custom bots that can aggregate and analyze data from multiple channels and servers, helping to compile comprehensive reports or summaries. Finally, export the message data for further analysis using external tools like Python or Excel, allowing for advanced data analysis and visualization. This methodical approach ensures thorough and actionable insights from media monitoring within Discord.

The pitfalls of media monitoring on Discord

While media monitoring on Discord offers many benefits, there are notable pitfalls to consider. One major limitation is the restricted search scope; Discord's search capabilities are constrained by the amount of historical data accessible, making it difficult to retrieve older messages, and searching across large or multiple servers can be slow and cumbersome. Privacy and permissions also pose significant challenges, as monitoring is restricted to channels and servers you have access to, excluding private channels and direct messages without proper permissions. This raises ethical and legal concerns regarding user consent for monitoring communications.

Scalability is another issue, as handling large volumes of messages can be resource-intensive, and Discord's API imposes rate limits on bots, which can impede real-time monitoring and data processing. Additionally, data inconsistencies may arise due to message deletions and edits, leading to potential gaps and inaccuracies in the monitored data. These challenges highlight the need for careful planning and resource allocation when implementing media monitoring on Discord.

Conclusion

In conclusion, media monitoring on Discord is a valuable tool for extracting and analyzing a wealth of information from its diverse user base, particularly given its strong presence among the 25–34 and 16–24 age groups. Discord, an instant messaging and VoIP platform, is organized into servers comprising text and voice channels, facilitating both organized textual discussions and seamless voice/video interactions. Utilizing Discord's powerful search engine, users can effectively find specific content using keywords and various filters, making it a potent tool for media monitoring. Implementing media monitoring involves setting up dedicated channels for specific topics, automating searches and notifications with bots, and leveraging webhooks to pull in external media content. Despite challenges such as limited search scope, privacy concerns, scalability issues, and data inconsistencies, careful planning and resource allocation can mitigate these pitfalls. By regularly checking key channels, developing custom bots for data

aggregation, and exporting data for advanced analysis, organizations can derive actionable insights and maintain a comprehensive understanding of discussions relevant to their interests on Discord.

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