

IT'S STORY TIME

Instagram stories made easy.

BY WENDY LEWIS

As of June 2017, more than 250 million people are reported to be using Instagram Stories every day, compared with 166 million on Snapchat. And the heat is on.

Instagram Stories allow the user to post a selection of video snippets or photos that are strung together to be viewed like a slideshow that tells a story, and then fades away within 24 hours. If this sounds vaguely familiar, that's because it is eerily close to Snapchat Stories with a few neat twists.

The sad news for Snap (the new name for Snapchat's parent company post-IPO), is that Instagram Stories are picking up major steam in social media inner circles. In fact, they have quickly surpassed Snapchat Stories as the "go to" platform for photo and video disappearing content. (Yes, that's a thing.)

The Instagram Stories feature allows users to share photos and videos in slideshow format. Stories can include text, drawings, stickers, and other customized features to make these unique to your brand. Live broadcasting is another plus for practices to take their creative clout to a new level with attention-grabbing photos and videos. Subjects may include a sneak peek at a new treatment or product, events, or a behind-the-scenes look at a day in the life of the practice or staff members.

Here's how it works:

- Click on the '+' button on the top-left of your home screen, swipe left in your feed, or swipe right from the main Instagram screen.

- Next, click on the circle button at the bottom of your screen to take photos or tap and hold down to record a video. You can also start a live event or a Boomerang (fun, mini videos that loop back and forth), and use the hands-free mode.
- Then, you can edit the photos or videos with text or add a drawing. If you hit the pen icon, there are three types of pens to choose from.
- Tap 'Done' to save your story.
- Then click on 'Add Your Story' to share it. You can also click on the 'Save' icon to save your image or video on your phone.
- Click on the arrow icon to send your image or story to



one of your friends. Just tick the bubble by “Your Story” and whomever you want to share with. (Note: The image will disappear as soon as your friend sees it.)

- If you want to add more than one photo or video to your story so it plays like a slideshow, just keep repeating the above steps. Each photo you took during a 24-hour period will be put into your story.

The photos and videos you chose for your story will be a series that followers can swipe through for the next 24 hours. You will see a colored circle around your profile photo to alert followers that you have a story to view, and your profile photo will also show up at the top of your followers’ feeds. They just tap on your face to view your story. It’s that simple.

Stories can be removed if you change your mind or made a misstep. Click on the three dots at the bottom right of the photo or video to be deleted, hit delete and confirm, and poof, it’s gone forever! (Warning: Although stories disappear after 24 hours, if someone takes a screen shot they can live on forever ... So post wisely.)

DRESSING UP YOUR STORIES

You also have the ability to add photos from your gallery and Snaps to your story. When you create a Snap in Snapchat, tap the download button to save it to your camera roll. To add a photo from your photo gallery, open Instagram, start a Story and swipe down; a gallery of your recent photos will appear. Tap on your saved Snap and post. You are only able to use photos that have been added to your camera roll in the past 24 hours for this.

Another important feature of Instagram are sponsored posts. Ads are a fact of life in the digital world, as popular

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platforms need to prove their market value to hungry investors. Instagram will notify you if a post is performing better than other content, with a friendly suggestion about promoting it. The good news is that it takes just minutes to do so and can cost as little as \$10. Go to the post, click on Promote and you will be prompted to make selections in terms of what you want to get more of and how long you want your promotion to run. These ads will be labeled as “Sponsored.” ■



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