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Chapter **1**

Instagramming Like a Pro

Welcome to the exciting world of Instagram! This is an incredibly fun and interactive social media app that allows you to connect with more people and brands around the world — all through the power of images and videos.

If you're overwhelmed by the idea of Instagram or how to use it effectively, have no fear! This book is designed to cover all areas of Instagram to bring you up to speed on what works, how it works, and what you need to do to make it work for you.

So, let's dive right into all the basics you need to get started.

Figuring Out What You Need to Get Started

To get started, Instagram is a mobile app, designed for use on smartphones and tablets. It isn't designed for use on a computer, even though there are ways to access Instagram on a laptop or desktop.

So, the first thing you need is a smartphone. Instagram works best on iOS devices (like an iPhone or iPad) and Android devices. These days, smartphones come equipped with well-designed cameras (both front and rear facing) to allow you to take high-quality images and videos directly from the device.

The next thing you need is the Instagram app, of course! In Chapter 2, we explain all the steps to find, download, and set up the Instagram app on your phone. When you're ready for that step, head over to Chapter 2.

Discovering How to Add Posts to Your Instagram Account

There are actually quite a few ways to upload content to Instagram.

First, you can add photos or videos to your *feed* (the part of your profile where all your photos appear). These uploads can only be done via your mobile device, not a computer. And there are multiple formats you can use for uploading, including square, portrait, and landscape orientations, for both photos and videos. We cover how to upload photos and videos in Chapters 6 and 7.

You can also add photos and videos to your stories. Stories expire 24 hours after you upload them. They're displayed as circles at the top of your feed and denoted by a colored ring around a profile photo of anyone who has active stories on his or her profile (see Figure 1-1).

FIGURE 1-1: Instagram stories are displayed at the top of your home feed. Anyone with an active story has a ring around his or her profile photo.



Stories can also only be uploaded via your mobile device, and they have limitations — videos can't be more than 15 seconds long. We cover Instagram stories in Chapters 12, 13, and 14.

Finally, you can upload videos to IGTV. This is a separate channel within the Instagram family of apps that allows you to create and watch long-form video. Videos on IGTV must be at least 15 seconds long and, for some accounts, can be up to 60 minutes long. Videos under 10 minutes in length can be uploaded via your mobile device or computer, but videos longer than 10 minutes can only be uploaded via a computer. Currently, larger accounts and verified accounts have the ability to upload videos over 10 minutes in length, but Instagram plans to remove time limits to videos in the future. Chapters 18 and 19 are devoted to IGTV.

Connecting with Others on Instagram

One of our favorite reasons for loving Instagram is that it's a great platform to connect with more people. Fortunately, there are plenty of ways to stay connected!

You can follow as many accounts as you like, up to 7,500 accounts (but we can't imagine actually following that many people!). You'll want to start by following the friends, family, celebrities, brands, and other accounts that you enjoy. When you follow someone on Instagram, the content they post to their accounts will appear in your feed, allowing you to see their posts and interact with it. You can simply double-tap a post to like it, or you can tap the heart icon to like it. You can also leave comments on people's posts to share your thoughts or add into the conversation on their posts.

We talk much more about finding the right people to follow and how to interact with them in Chapters 9 and 10.

You'll also be able to see the stories of people you follow and you can watch and interact with their stories directly. When you choose to reply to someone's story, the reply is sent as a direct message (DM) to that person's inbox. This keeps the conversation private between the two of you rather than publicly visible to anyone looking at that content.

Speaking of DMs, you can send private messages to one or multiple people via Instagram as well. Again, this keeps your conversations strictly between those in the chat and allows for more means to communicate. You can share photos, videos, and text messages via DMs. You can even do a live video chat with people in DMs if you want to. We cover all of the details on messaging in Chapter 11.

Exploring the Excitement of Instagram Stories

Instagram stories are such a hot topic that we dedicate a whole part of this book to this subject. Instagram stories combine videos and photos to tell a sequence of posts as a “story.” Videos can be 3 to 15 seconds in length, and photos play for 7 seconds. You can easily tap to navigate forward or backward through a story or swipe to change whose story you’re viewing. If this sounds overwhelming, don’t worry! We’ve got you covered in Chapter 12.

One of the main attractions to stories is the ability to customize the content in so many different ways. Stories have a variety of “stickers” that allow you to add emojis, GIFs, polls, questions, music, and so much more. You can also doodle and draw or add text to stories. There are a variety of camera effects that allow you to take different styles of videos for added fun and intrigue. And, of course, there are filters! It wouldn’t be Instagram without filters. Chapters 13 and 14 dive deep into all these features for you.

In addition to creating stories, you can also broadcast live video in the story section of Instagram. These live videos can be up to 60 minutes in length and they disappear after 24 hours just like your other story posts. But we won’t leave you hanging! Chapter 17 gives you all the information you need to host a successful live broadcast.

Creating Videos with IGTV

IGTV was launched in June 2018 as another component of Instagram. Originally, the videos had to be formatted to a vertical orientation in order to be uploaded. And all videos auto-played through the sequence in which they appeared in your feed.

Instagram encountered growing pains with this feature, however, and had to make some changes over time to make IGTV more user friendly and more accessible. Now, even though IGTV is still a separate component of Instagram, you can see IGTV videos in the feed and the Explore page. The IGTV home page now displays all videos of those you follow and those they recommend for you in one scrolling feed, rather than auto-playing in a set sequence. This gives you more freedom to choose which videos you want to see.

IGTV will continue to be a presence on Instagram and is a clever way to share longer-form videos with your followers. Because there are so many aspects of IGTV that differ from the other Instagram features, we dedicate all of Part 5 to IGTV.