



# NEWS AND MEDIA SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT REPORT

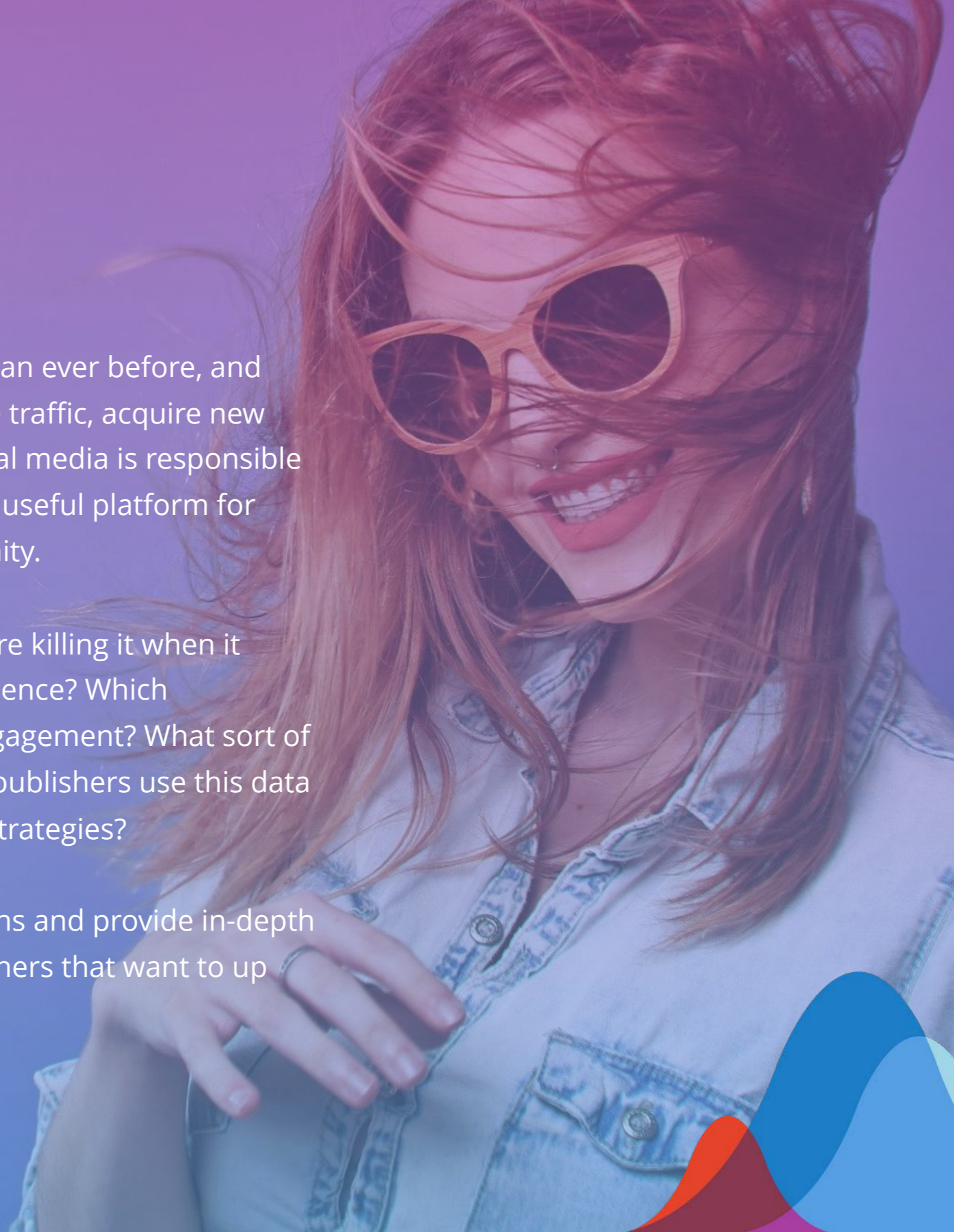
Rankings, analysis and recommendations  
for news and publishers on social media.

# INTRODUCTION

The news business is more fragmented than ever before, and organizations are struggling to lift website traffic, acquire new subscribers and grow revenue. While social media is responsible for much of that fragmentation, it's also a useful platform for building a dynamic and engaged community.

We wanted to find out which publishers are killing it when it comes to social - Who's growing their audience? Which organizations see the most consistent engagement? What sort of content are they posting? How can other publishers use this data to help them build smarter social media strategies?

We used Rival IQ to answer those questions and provide in-depth analysis and recommendations for publishers that want to up their social media game.



# METHODOLOGY

We used Rival IQ to analyze 662,000 social media posts across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for 50 top news organizations in the United States across the 90 day period commencing 1 February 2017.

We gathered data using Rival IQ's cross-channel ranking capability, as well as channel-specific rankings for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The cross-channel (or overall) ranking is defined by engagement average across all channels.

Engagement is defined as measurable interaction on social media posts, including likes, comments, favorites, retweets, shares and reactions. Engagement rate is calculated based on all these interactions divided by total follower count.

We've also provided qualitative analysis with best practice examples from some of the top-performing organizations.

[Try Rival IQ for free](#)



# CROSS-CHANNEL ANALYSIS

## From Trump

### Puzder Withdraws As Labor Nominee

Edward Hight, a career business adviser to President Donald Trump, resigned over conflicting statements he made about contacts with Russian officials last year.

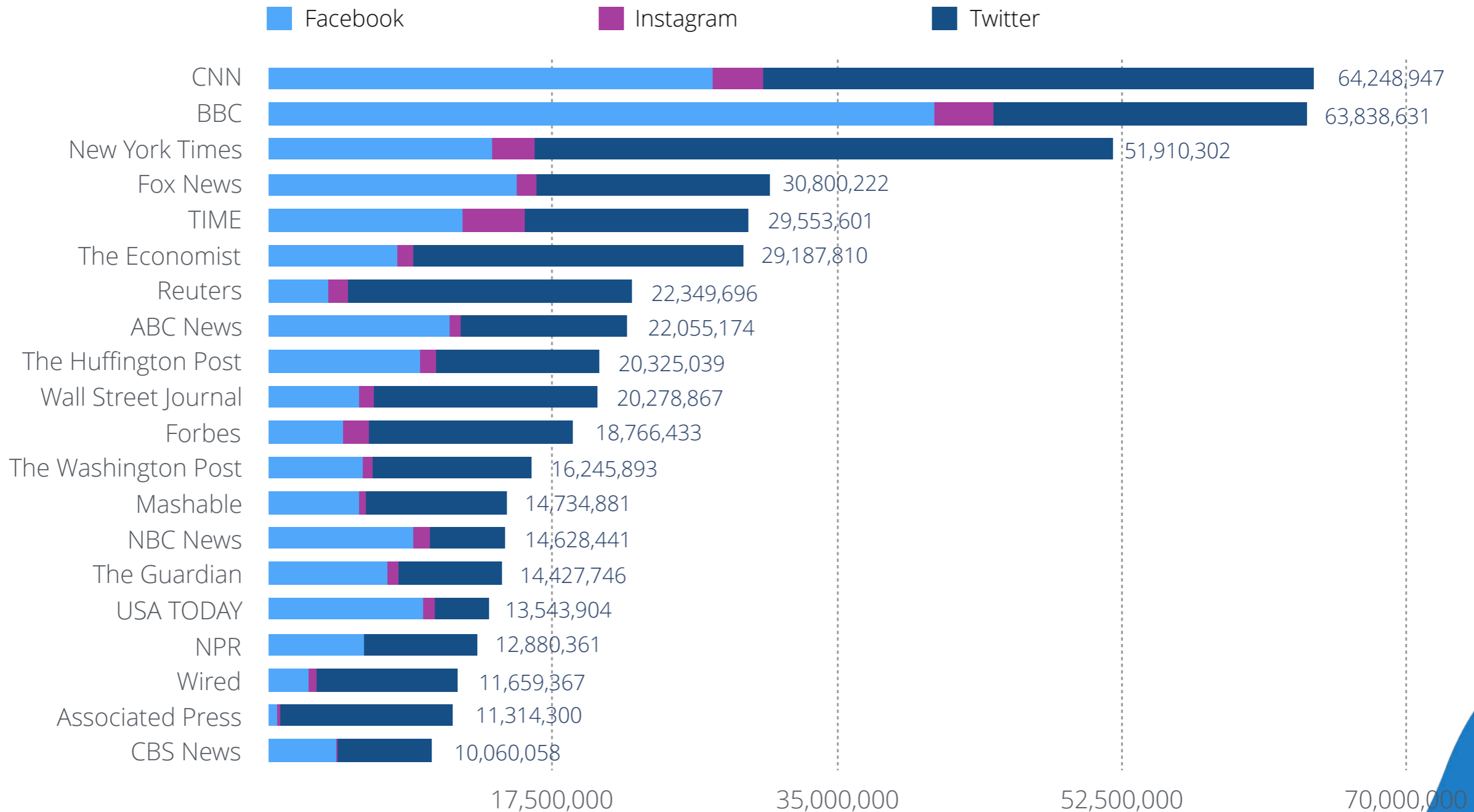
Edward Hight, a career business adviser to President Donald Trump, resigned over conflicting statements he made about contacts with Russian officials last year.

The Wall Street Journal

PRICE \$3.00

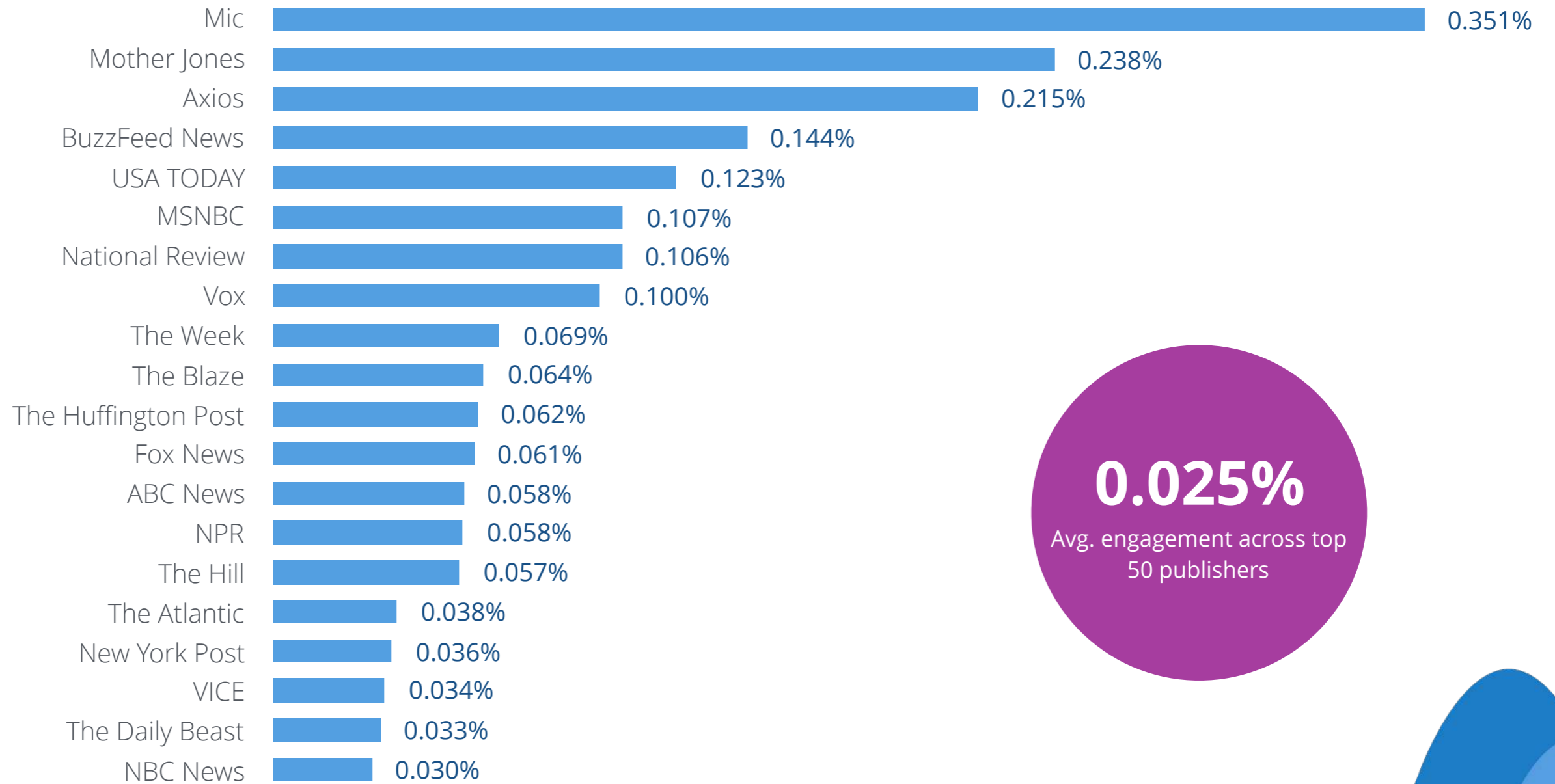
# TOP 20: CROSS-CHANNEL AUDIENCE

Calculated by total follower count as of April 25 2017



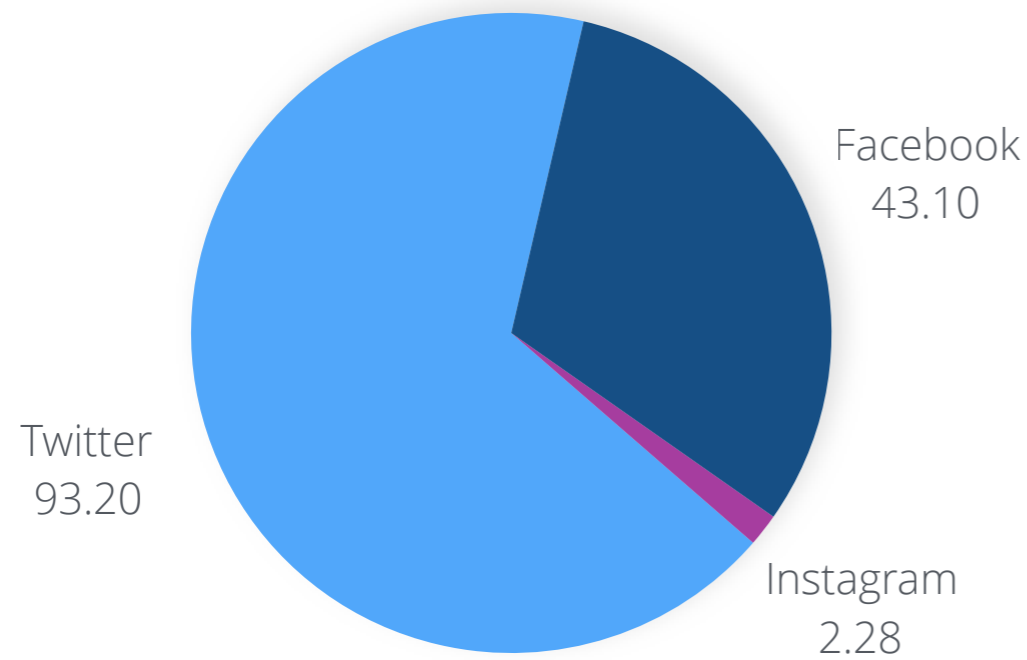
# TOP 20: CROSS-CHANNEL ENGAGEMENT

Calculated by average engagement rate per post across all social media channels



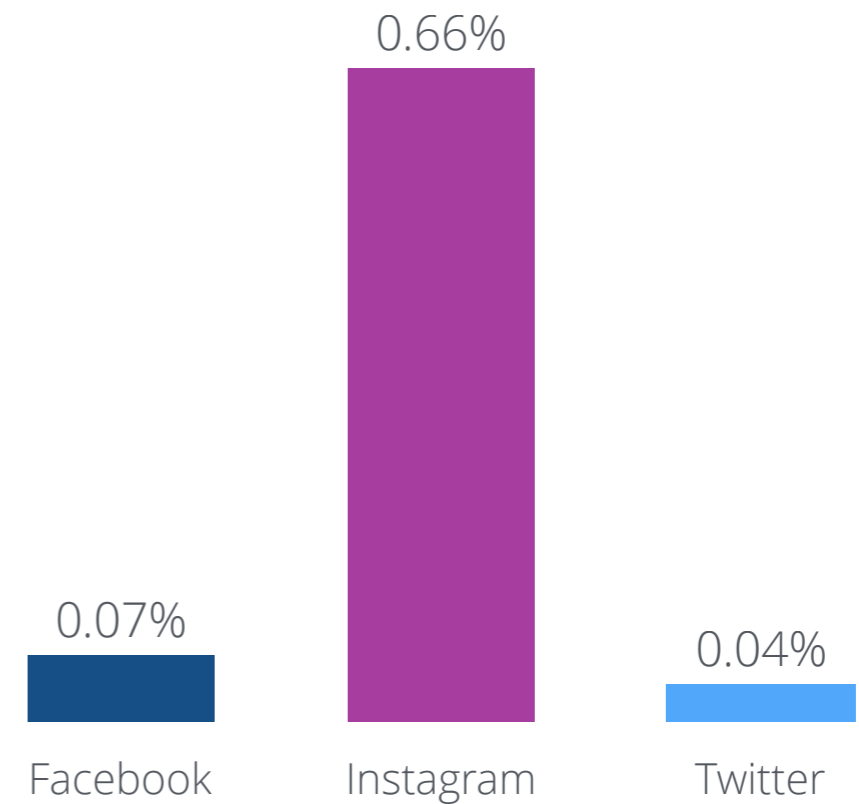
# CROSS CHANNEL POSTS & ENGAGEMENT

Average number of posts per day, per channel

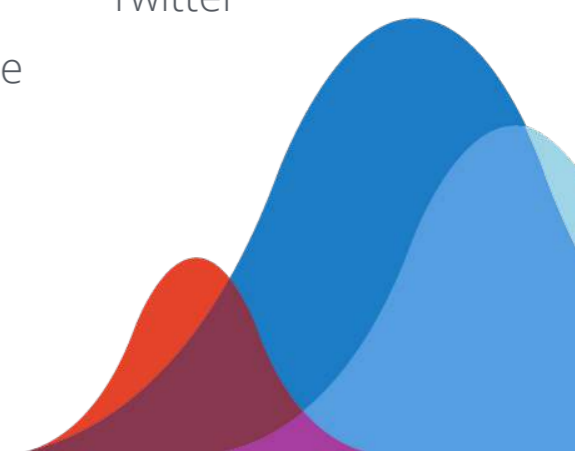


Avg. number of posts per day per channel

Average engagement rate per channel



Engagement Rate



# TOP 50: CROSS-CHANNEL AUDIENCE

Calculated by total followers across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

1. CNN
2. BBC
3. New York Times
4. Fox News
5. TIME
6. The Economist
7. Reuters
8. ABC News
9. The Huffington Post
10. Wall Street Journal
11. Forbes
12. The Washington Post
13. Mashable
14. NBC News
15. The Guardian
16. USA TODAY
17. NPR
18. Wired
19. Associated Press
20. CBS News
21. Business Insider
22. VICE
23. Financial Times
24. Bloomberg News
25. The Verge
26. Los Angeles Times
27. nypost.com
28. CNBC
29. Newsweek
30. BuzzFeed News
31. Fortune
32. MSNBC
33. Mic
34. The Atlantic
35. The Hill
36. The Daily Beast
37. nydailynews.com
38. Slate
39. TheBlaze
40. Mother Jones
41. Vox
42. Salon.com
43. Chicago Tribune
44. National Review
45. FiveThirtyEight
46. The Boston Globe
47. Chicago Sun-Times
48. The Week
49. RealClearPolitics
50. Axios

# TOP 50: CROSS-CHANNEL ENGAGEMENT

Calculated by average engagement rate per post across all Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

1. Mic
2. Mother Jones
3. Axios
4. BuzzFeed News
5. USA TODAY
6. MSNBC
7. National Review
8. Vox
9. The Week
10. TheBlaze
11. The Huffington Post
12. Fox News
13. ABC News
14. NPR
15. The Hill
16. The Atlantic
17. nypost.com
18. VICE
19. The Daily Beast
20. NBC News
21. The Washington Post
22. The Verge
23. Los Angeles Times
24. Chicago Sun-Times
25. BBC
26. Salon.com
27. nydailynews.com
28. RealClearPolitics
29. CBS News
30. Chicago Tribune
31. Slate
32. The Boston Globe
33. FiveThirtyEight
34. CNN
35. Business Insider
36. Mashable
37. CNBC
38. Wired
39. New York Times
40. The Guardian
41. Forbes
42. Associated Press
43. TIME
44. Financial Times
45. Fortune
46. Reuters
47. The Economist
48. Bloomberg News
49. Newsweek
50. Wall Street Journal

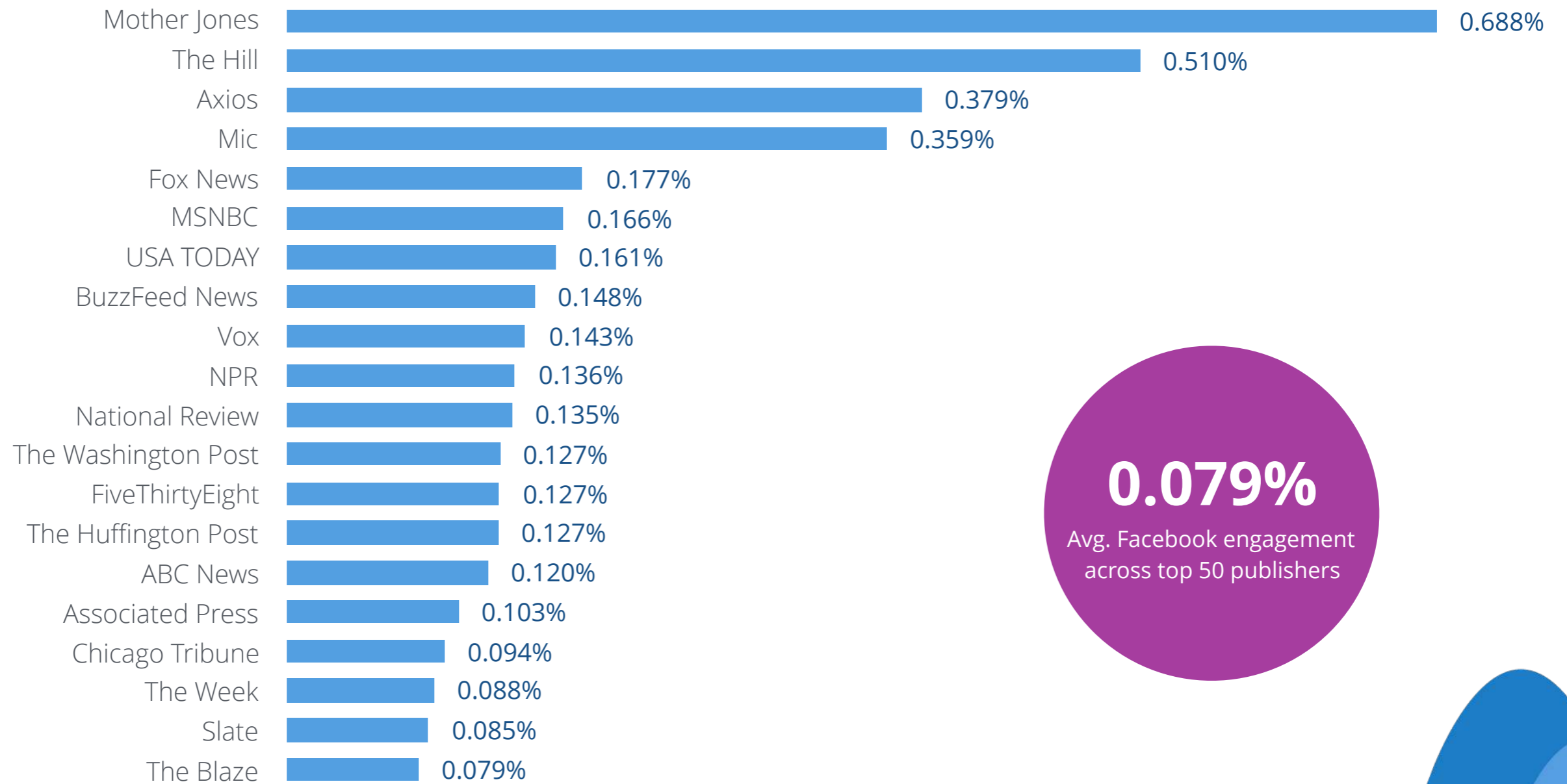


TOP PUBLISHERS: FACEBOOK

# TOP 20: FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT



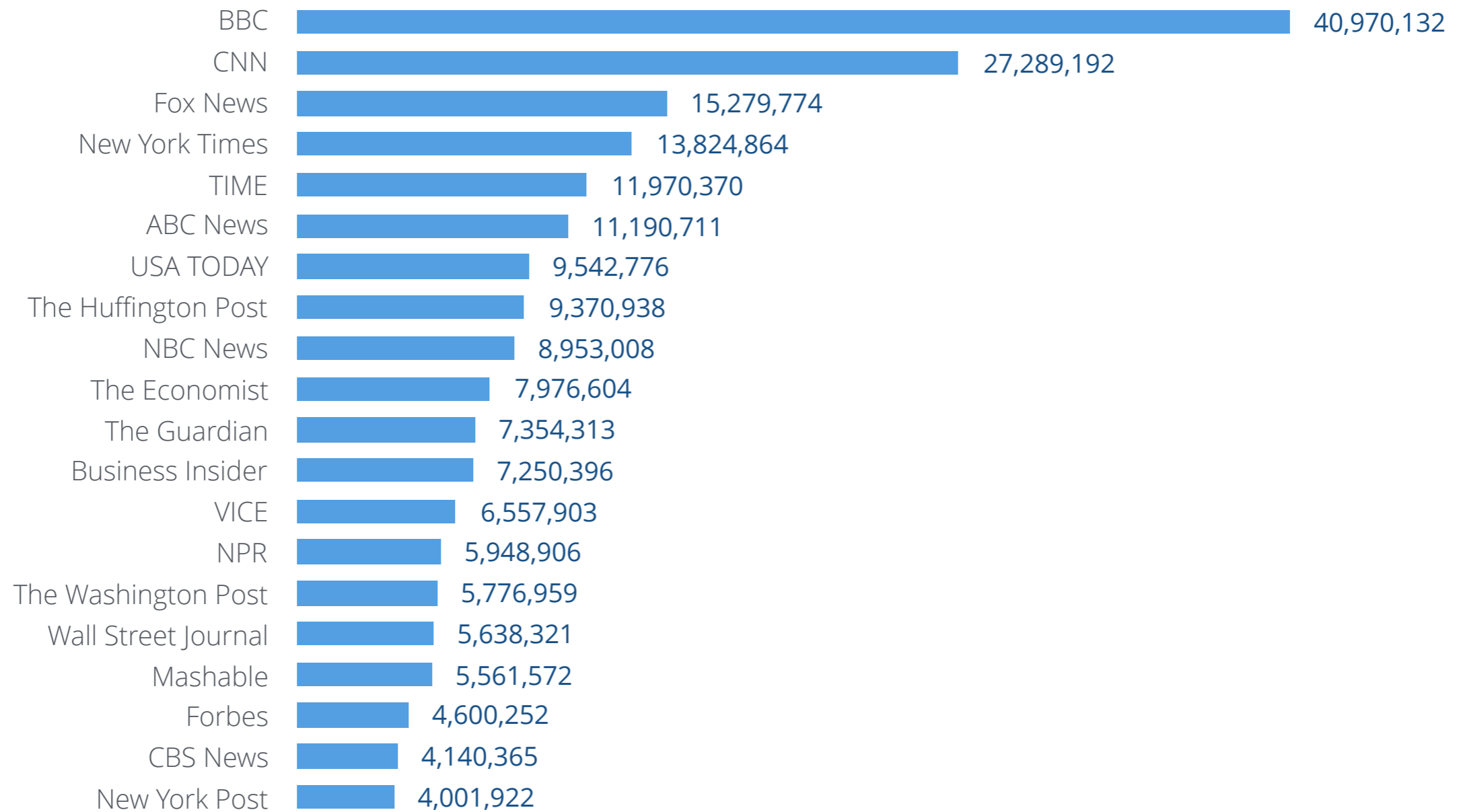
Calculated by average engagement rate per post on Facebook



# TOP 20: FACEBOOK AUDIENCE



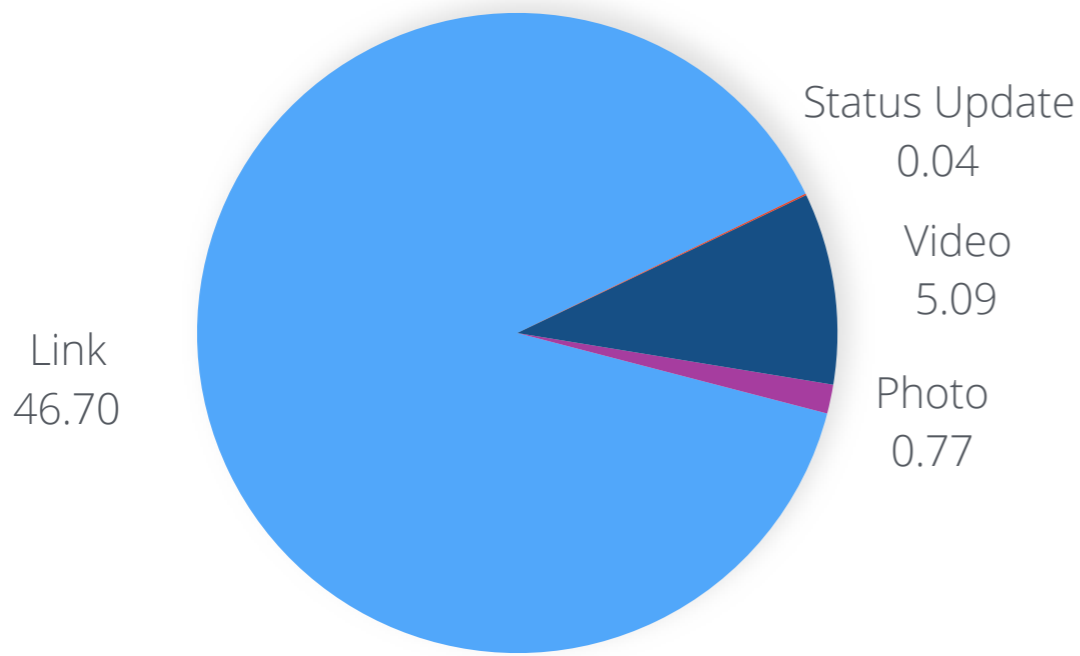
Calculated by total Facebook fans as of April 25, 2017



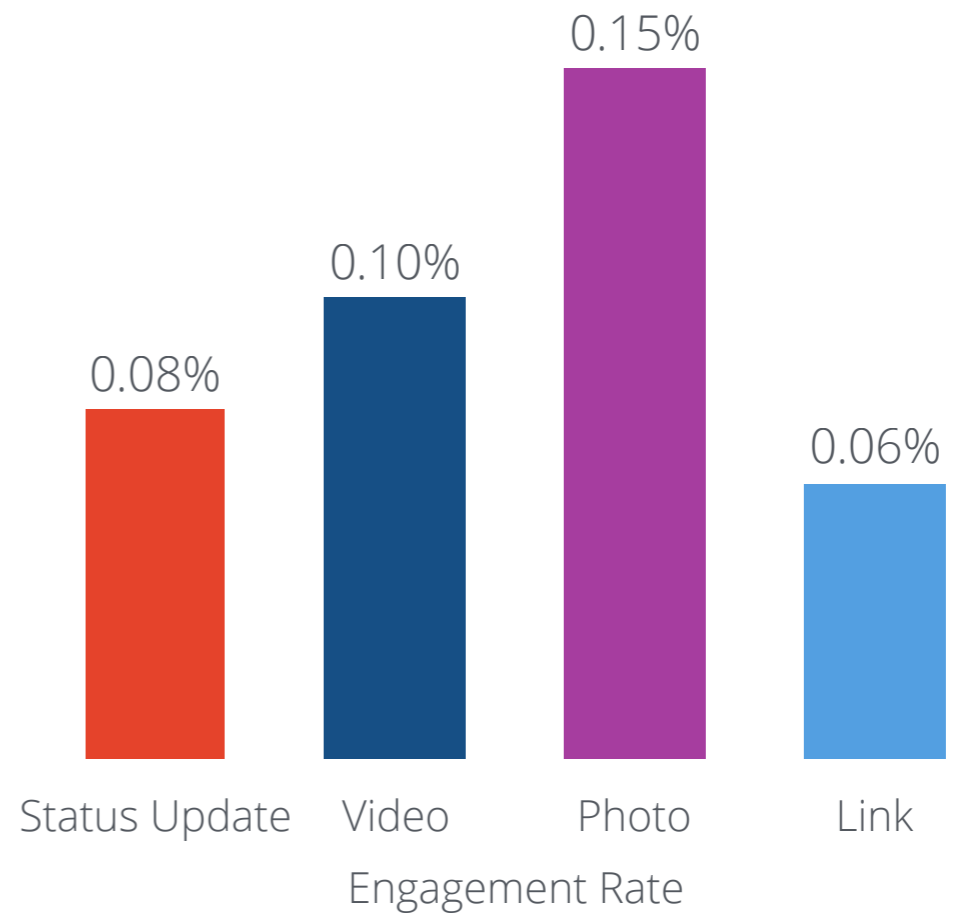
# FACEBOOK POST TYPES



Average number of Facebook posts per day, per post type

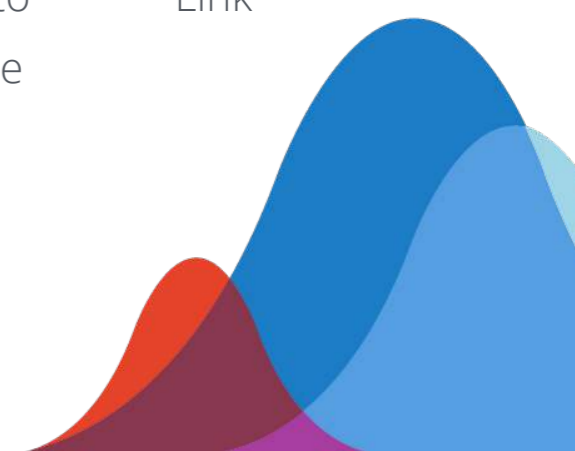


Average engagement rate per Facebook post type



Avg. number of posts per post type, per day
















- Status Update
- Video
- Photo
- Link



# FACEBOOK TOP POSTS



Calculated by engagement rate per post across all Facebook posts across the top 50 media companies

Published At	Post	Eng. Rate
Feb 15 2017 4:16 PM	 CBS News EARLIER: Ashton Kutcher gives emotional testimony while discussing the child trafficking of a 7-year-old girl at Senate hearing. <a href="http://cbsn.ws/2lPoJY4">http://cbsn.ws/2lPoJY4</a>  Ashton Kutcher chokes up at Senate hearing   View on Facebook	 36.9%
Feb 14 2017 12:00 AM	 CNBC This hi-tech cushion stops babies from crying.  Parents say this cushion stops their babies from crying   View on Facebook	 29.9%
Mar 3 2017 2:02 PM	 Mashable A construction company printed an entire house in 24 hours and it only cost \$10,000.  <a href="https://www.facebook.com/mashable/videos/10154991052664705/">https://www.facebook.com/mashable/videos/10154991052664705/</a>   View on Facebook	 25.8%



# FACEBOOK BEST PRACTICES



## Capitalize on Native Video like CBS

CBS News had the most engaging post in the 90 days period that we studied, for numerous reasons:

1. Facebook's algorithm favors long-form videos (that is, videos that are more than 90 seconds long). This means that videos get higher-positioning in the news feed than other post types.
2. A celebrity in your video never hurts
3. People tend to share and engage with more emotive content - we see this in the higher engagement rates enjoyed by most nonprofits too.

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from CBS News, dated 15 February. The post text reads: "EARLIER: Ashton Kutcher gives emotional testimony while discussing the child trafficking of a 7-year-old girl at Senate hearing." followed by the URL "http://cbsn.ws/2IPoJY4". The video thumbnail shows Ashton Kutcher at a Senate hearing, with a play button overlay. The video title is "ASHTON KUTCHER SPEAKS AT SENATE HEARING" and the subtitle is "ACTOR FOCUSING ON FIGHTING CHILD EXPLOITATION". The video has 56M Views, 820,022 shares, and 34k comments. The post also shows engagement options like Like, Comment, and Share, and a notification that "Matt Martin and 629k others" reacted to the post.

# FACEBOOK BEST PRACTICES



## Go LIVE like The Hill

Facebook's live video feature is giving media companies the opportunity to connect with their followers in real time.

Facebook's own data shows that people are 10 times more likely to comment on live video than regular video.

The Hill's live broadcast of the Betsy DeVos vote had a 16% engagement rate - that's almost 23x the average engagement rate across the 50 companies we studied (0.07%).

For tips on how you can use Facebook Live, check out our blog.

**THE HILL** The Hill was live.  
31 January · \*

WATCH LIVE: Senate Education Committee votes on the nomination of Betsy DeVos for Education secretary.

2.2M Views

Like Comment Share

Pat Rigdon, Jerri Stanley and 62k others Top comments

13,179 shares 98k comments

# FACEBOOK BEST PRACTICES



## Make sure your images tell a story

Mother Jones's post is classified as a 'link' post type, but it outperforms the average engagement rate for links (0.06%) by 31x, with an engagement rate of 19.2%.

This post is particularly effective because, as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. In fact, the picture IS the story in this case.

All too often, media companies run with a generic image that bears little relevance to the story they're trying to tell. There's a lesson to be learned from Mother Jones: images matter - sometimes more than words.

**Mother Jones**  
23 March · 🌐

Not. A. Single. Woman. Was. At. The. White. House. Meeting. On. Women's. Health.



**What's missing from this photo of politicians deciding the future of women's health?**  
Anyone?  
MOTHERJONES.COM

Like Comment Share

👍👎👤 Betsy Strausser, Lorraine Bucklew and 91k others Top comments ▾

182,391 shares 10k comments

# FACEBOOK BEST PRACTICES









## Boost your posts like Mic

Mic is a relative newcomer to the publishing space, founded in 2011 as a millennial-friendly news site. In the 90 day period that we studied, Mic enjoyed an 18.2% increase in its audience size, growing to a total Facebook following of 3.36 million.

It's likely that, given the millennial focus, Mic has strong organic Facebook growth. However, our machine-learning algorithm detected a number of 'Likely-Boosted' posts.

Mic has a trend when it comes to boosting: they do it once a week, usually on video that they've produced themselves. It sure seems like an effective strategy to acquire followers and increase engagement.

[Check out our blog on boosted post best practices.](#)

	ABC News BLOWN AWAY: 4-year-old girl gets caught by a wind gust when trying to open her front door on a windy day in Ohio. "She is perfectly okay and laughing..." 4-year-old girl swept off her feet by fierce Ohio winds <a href="#">View on Facebook</a>		9.22%
	Mic Are all white people racist? Yes, of course they are. Let us explain. Racism is a spectrum <a href="#">View on Facebook</a> <b>\$ Likely Boosted</b>		9.21%
	The Hill WATCH LIVE: Senate Democrats are holding the floor all night to protest the nomination of Betsy DeVos for Education secretary. LIVE: Senate Dems protest Betsy DeVos <a href="#">View on Facebook</a>		8.61%

# TOP PUBLISHERS: INSTAGRAM

"All the News  
That's Fit to Print"

## The New York Times

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2016

VOL. CLXV ... No. 57,348

© 2016 The New York Times Company



### Koch Brothers Move to Shape A New G.O.P.

Classroom Training in  
Free-Market Values

By ASHLEY PARKER  
and MAGGIE HABERMAN

ARLINGTON, Va. — The rise of  
Donald Trump, with his hostility

### TRUMP DOUBTS HIS LATEST BRICK WITH FUND RULES

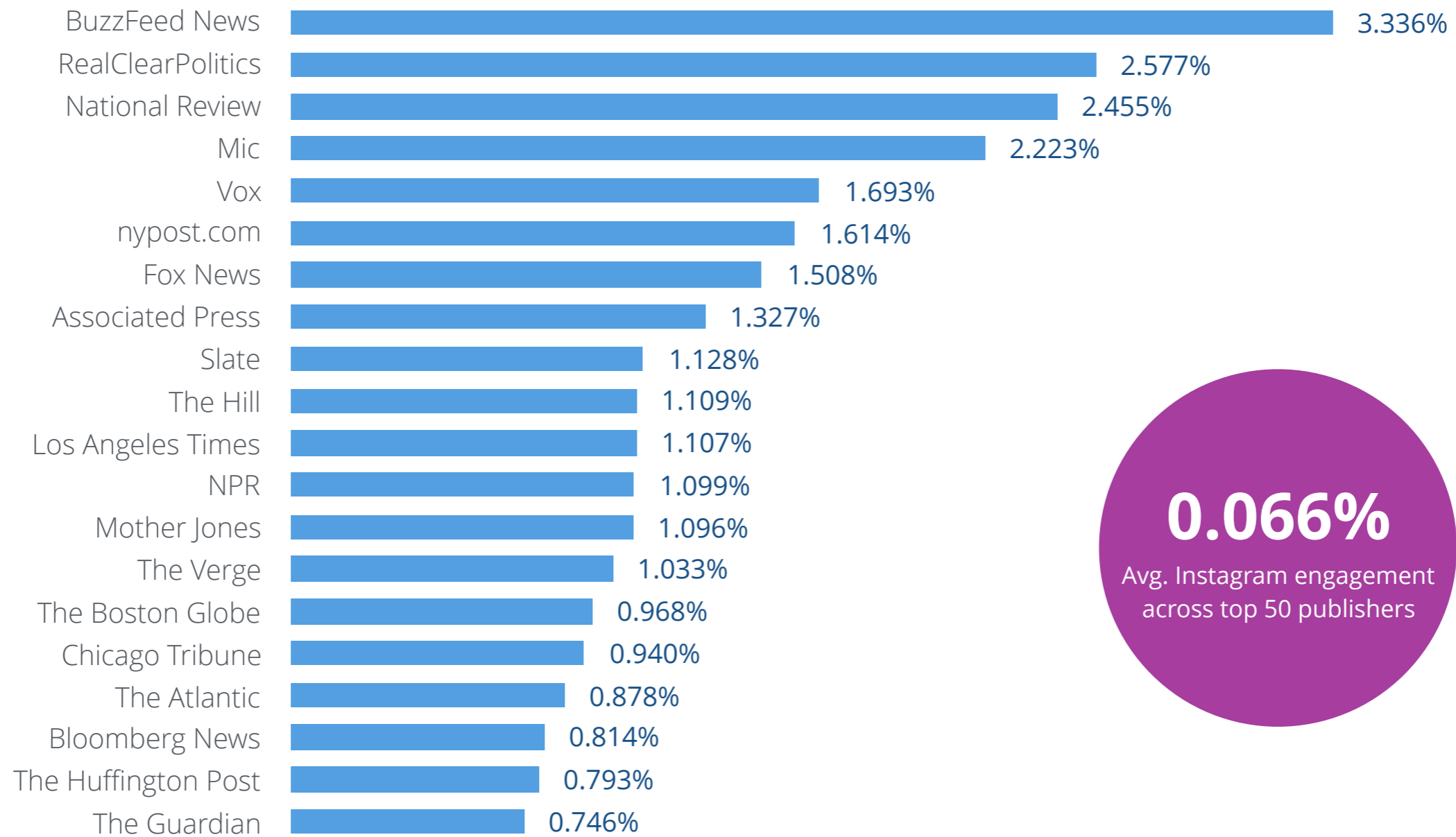
FLORIDA CONTRIBUTION

History of Penalties and  
Allegations of Paying  
to Quash Inquiry

# TOP 20: INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT



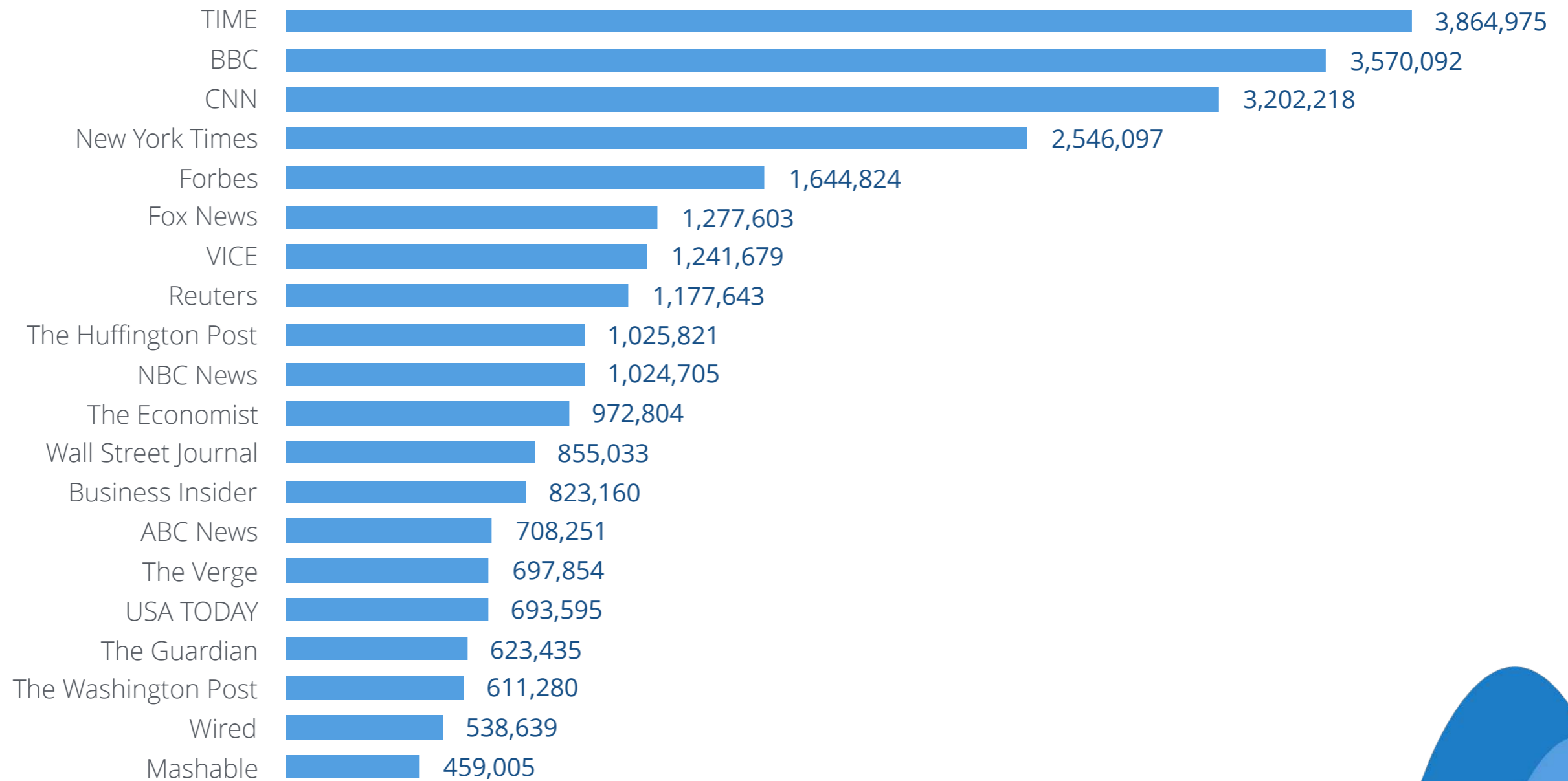
Calculated by average engagement rate per post on Instagram.



# TOP 20: INSTAGRAM AUDIENCE



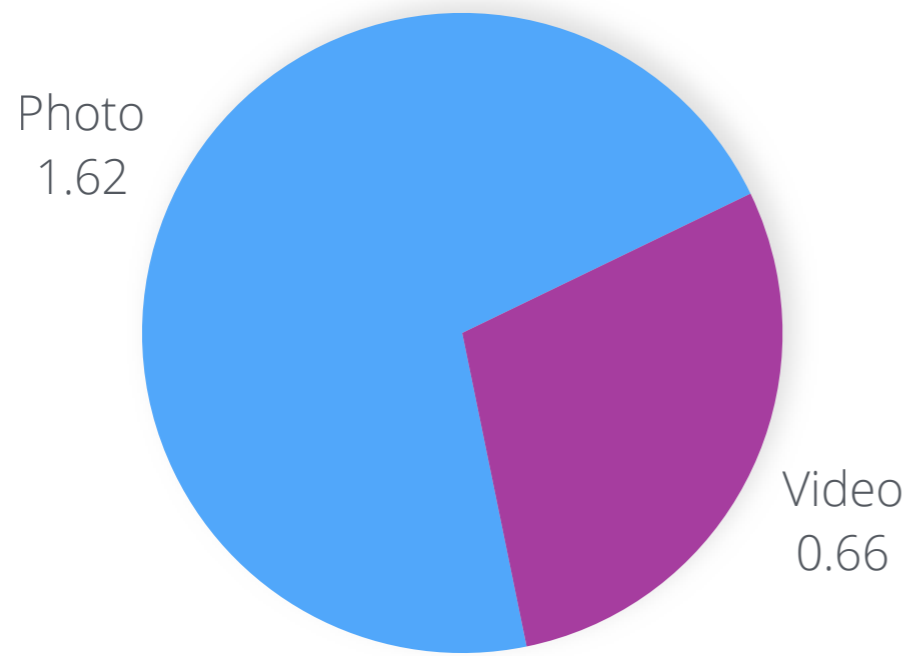
Calculated by total Instagram followers as of April 25, 2017



# INSTAGRAM POST TYPES

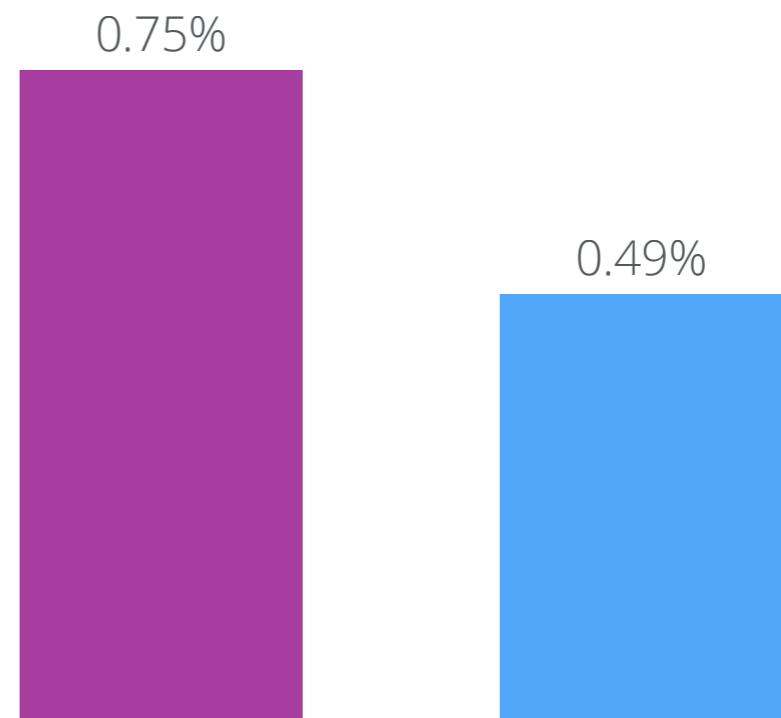


Average number of Instagram posts per type

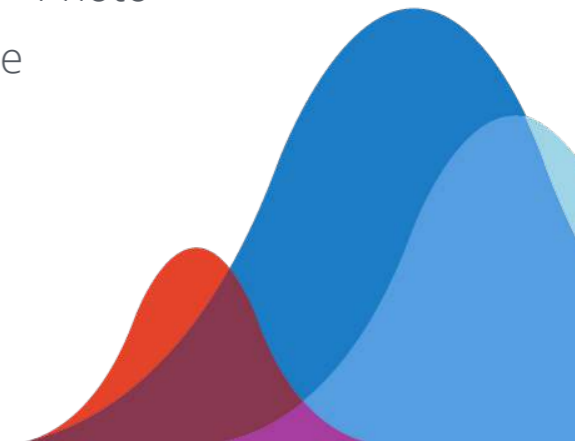


Avg. number of posts per post type, per day

Average engagement rate per Instagram post type






Engagement Rate



# INSTAGRAM TOP POSTS



Calculated by engagement rate per post across all Instagram posts across the top 50 media companies

Published At	Post	Eng. Total	Eng. Rate
Feb 23 2017 11:49 PM	 Salon.com Terry Sylvester/Reuters One of the saddest early progressive losses in the first month of Trump's presidency was any hope that the protests at... <a href="#">View on Instagram</a>	163	37.8%
Mar 24 2017 3:56 PM	 BuzzFeed News This dad gave his son the best pep talk 🍌 <a href="#">View on Instagram</a>	144k	34.3%
Feb 25 2017 7:18 PM	 Mic The first-ever transgender doll is here. <a href="#">View on Instagram</a>	20.1k	26.4%

Download our free [Ultimate Guide to Instagram Marketing](#) for more Instagram inspiration!



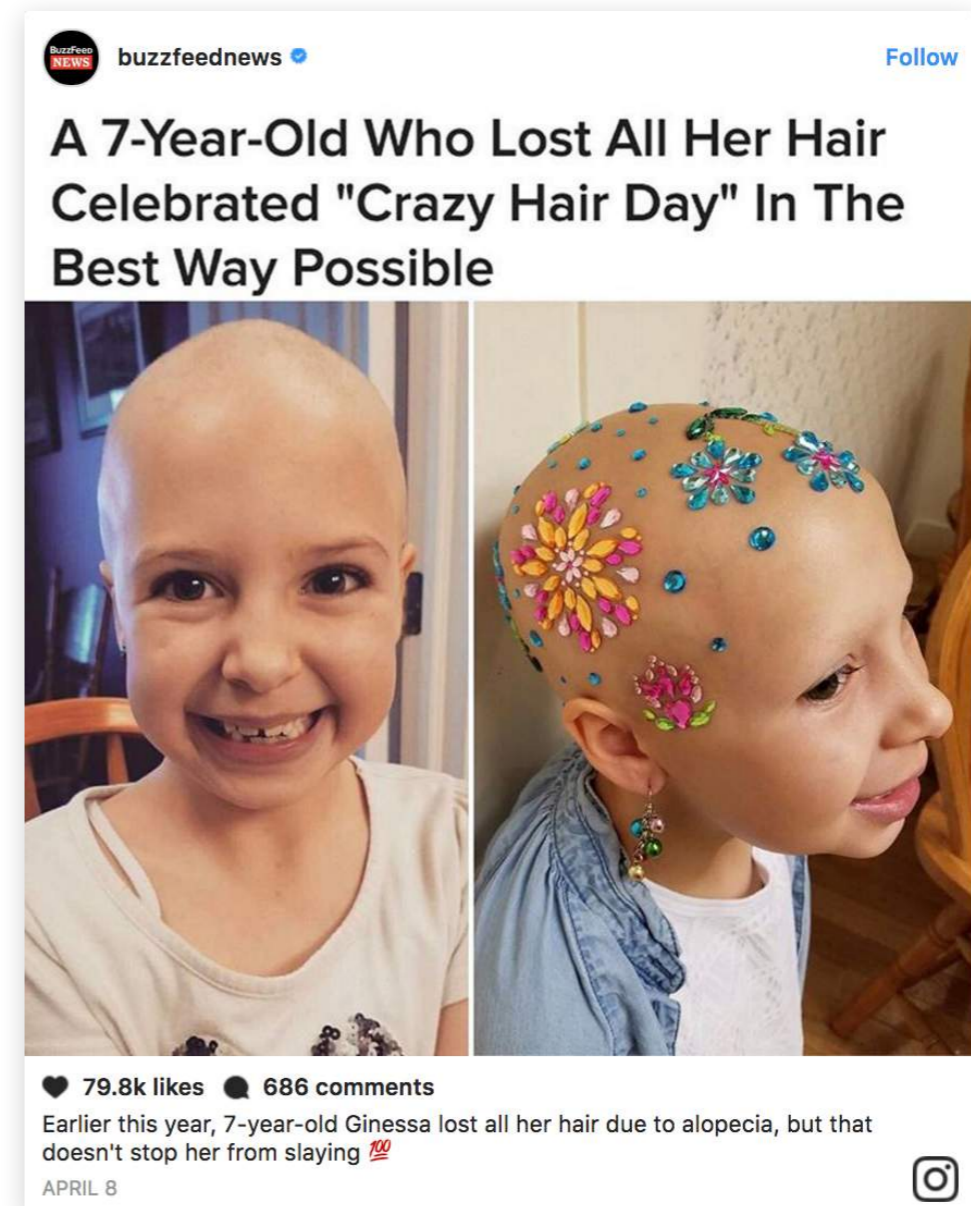
# INSTAGRAM BEST PRACTICES



## Understand that Instagram is fundamentally different

Instagram is unlike other social channels in that you cannot place links in your posts. Considering that across the companies we studied, links were the most common post type on Facebook (88% of posts) and Twitter (50% of posts), this puts more of a burden on social media teams to create more video and photo content than they ordinarily do.

Because publishers can't link to their article from organic Instagram posts, they're forced to think differently about the sort of content followers will engage with. Of the highest-engaging posts we studied, most were feel-good stories such as this one from BuzzFeed News. The best-performing media companies are recognizing that Instagram isn't a place their followers to go news - it's a place they go to feel good.



# INSTAGRAM BEST PRACTICES



## Work with the platform, not against it

As we noted in the previous page, Instagram doesn't allow links to be placed in organic posts, preventing media companies from generating website traffic.

Fox News found a way to tell their story within the platform itself, creating a short video news story, complete with captions (because who listens to video anymore?).

This was Fox's highest-performing post, engaging 88,900 people in total.

[Download the Ultimate Guide to Instagram Marketing](#)



# INSTAGRAM BEST PRACTICES



## Tick all the boxes like the Boston Globe

The Boston Globe doesn't usually see huge engagement figures - their average engagement per post sits just under 1% - but this post scored a massive 7.36%. Let's look at some of the boxes this post is ticking:

1. Great, original imagery from the Globe's photojournalists
2. Eight diverse but relevant hashtags (studies show seven is the optimum number)
3. This post is relevant to the Globe's primary audience - Bostonians - but it's also a huge topic with reach that extends far beyond their regular followers.

Download the Ultimate Guide to Instagram Marketing



# INSTAGRAM BEST PRACTICES

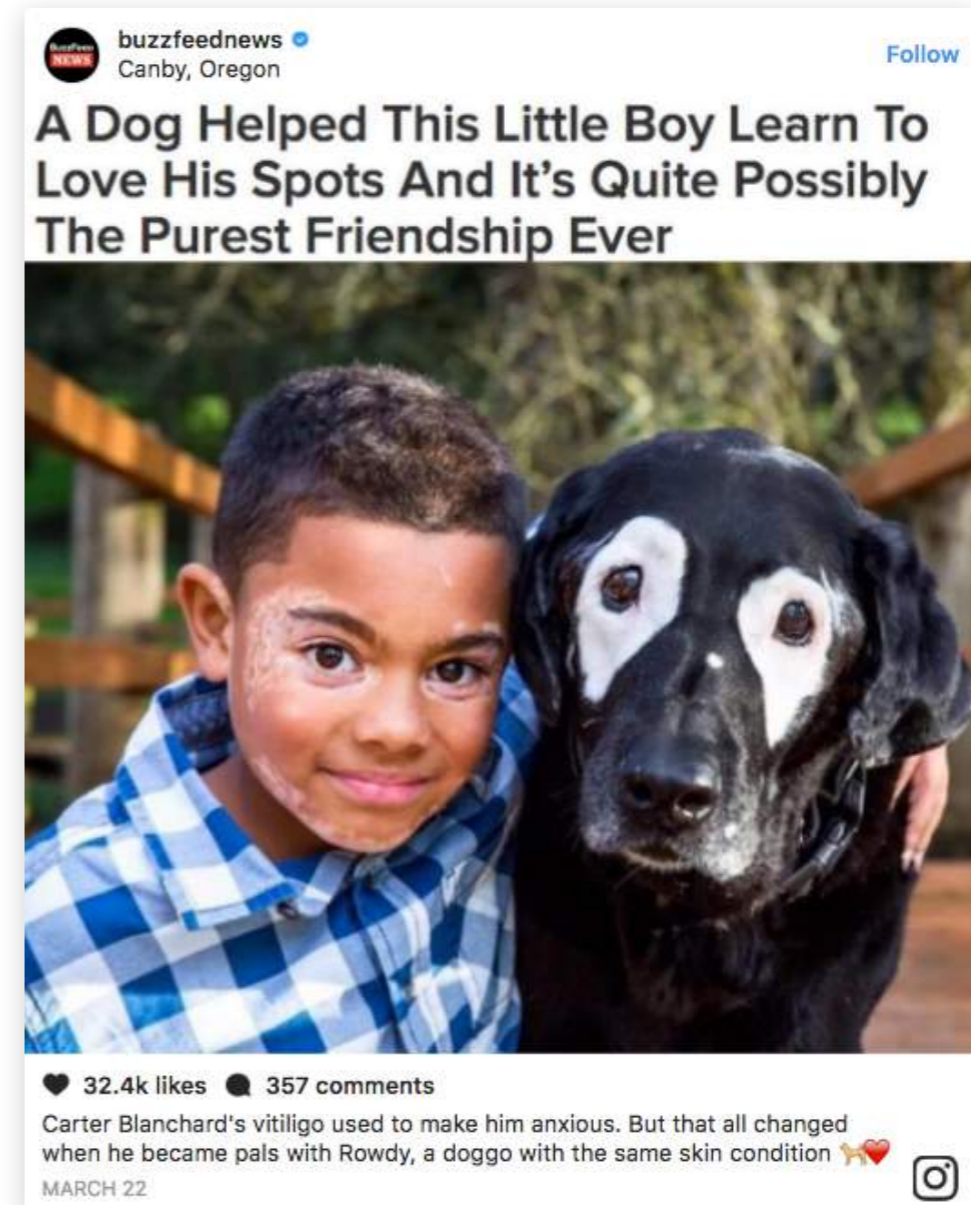


## Speak Millennial

Yes, we're using another BuzzFeed News example here. When looking through all the highest-performing posts, 80% of them were from BuzzFeed News - they're clearly doing something right when it comes to Instagram.

As the youngest-skewing social media platform (bar Snapchat), Instagram is the place where millennial and Gen Z spend a lot of time. So it makes sense that BuzzFeed is making use of emojis to generate some cut-through in the crowded Instagram feed.

Of course, this post's performance (7.76% engagement) is due to more than emojis - it's following BuzzFeed News's social strategy of sharing feel-good content in the right place at the right time.



Download the Ultimate Guide to Instagram Marketing

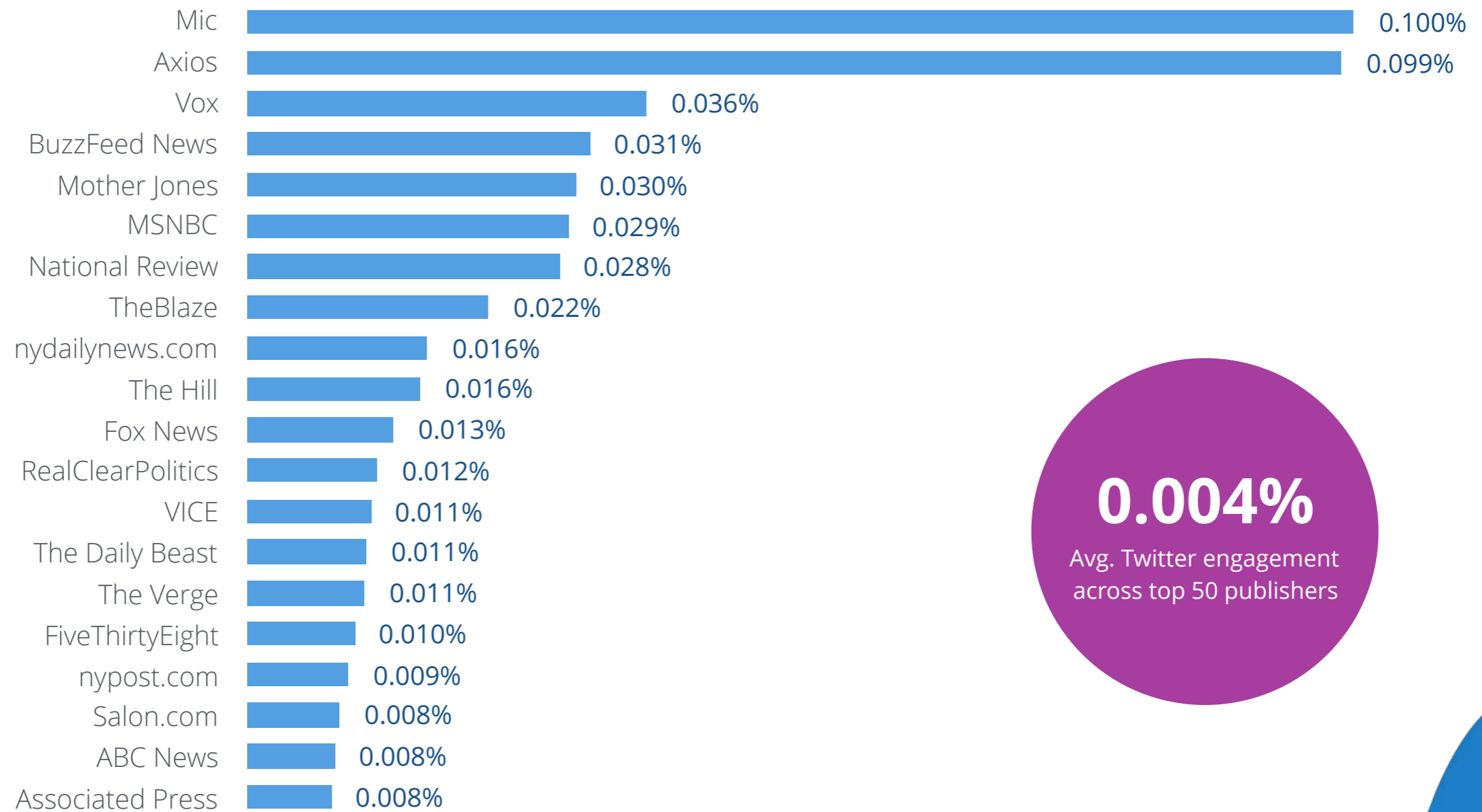


# TOP PUBLISHERS: TWITTER

# TOP 20: TWITTER ENGAGEMENT



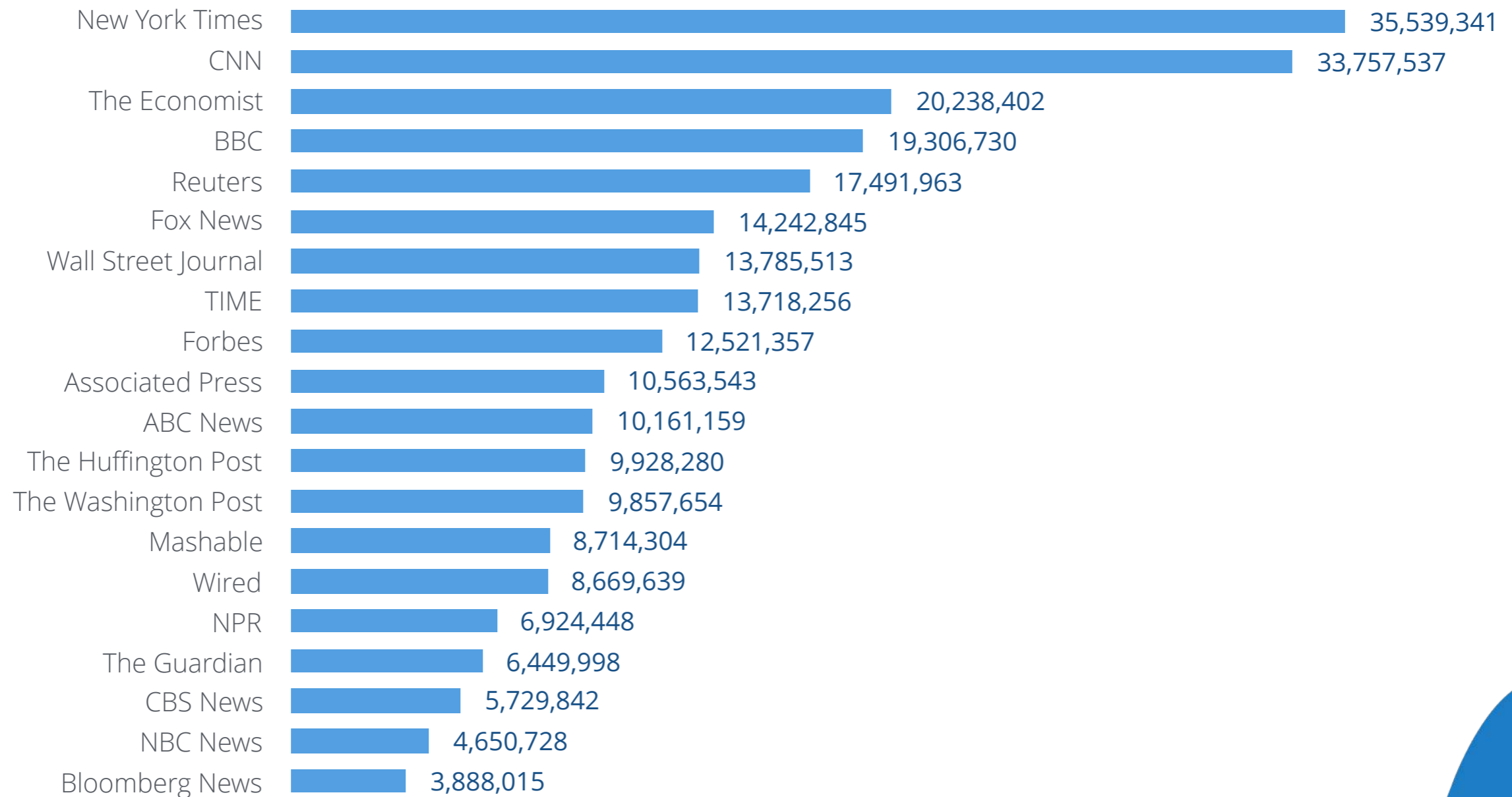
Calculated by average engagement rate per post on Twitter



# TOP 20: TWITTER AUDIENCE



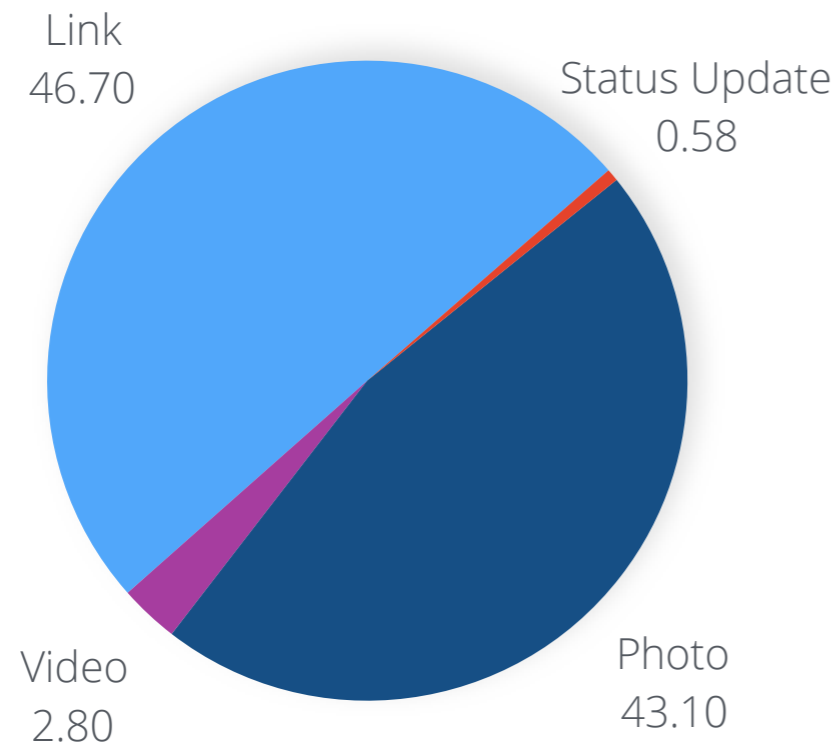
Calculated by total Twitter followers as of April 25, 2017



# TWITTER POST TYPES

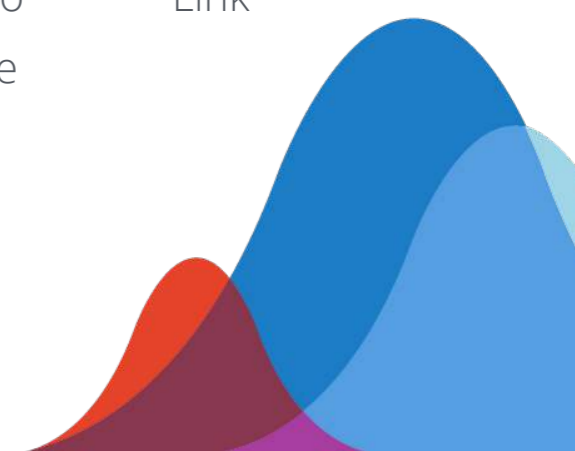
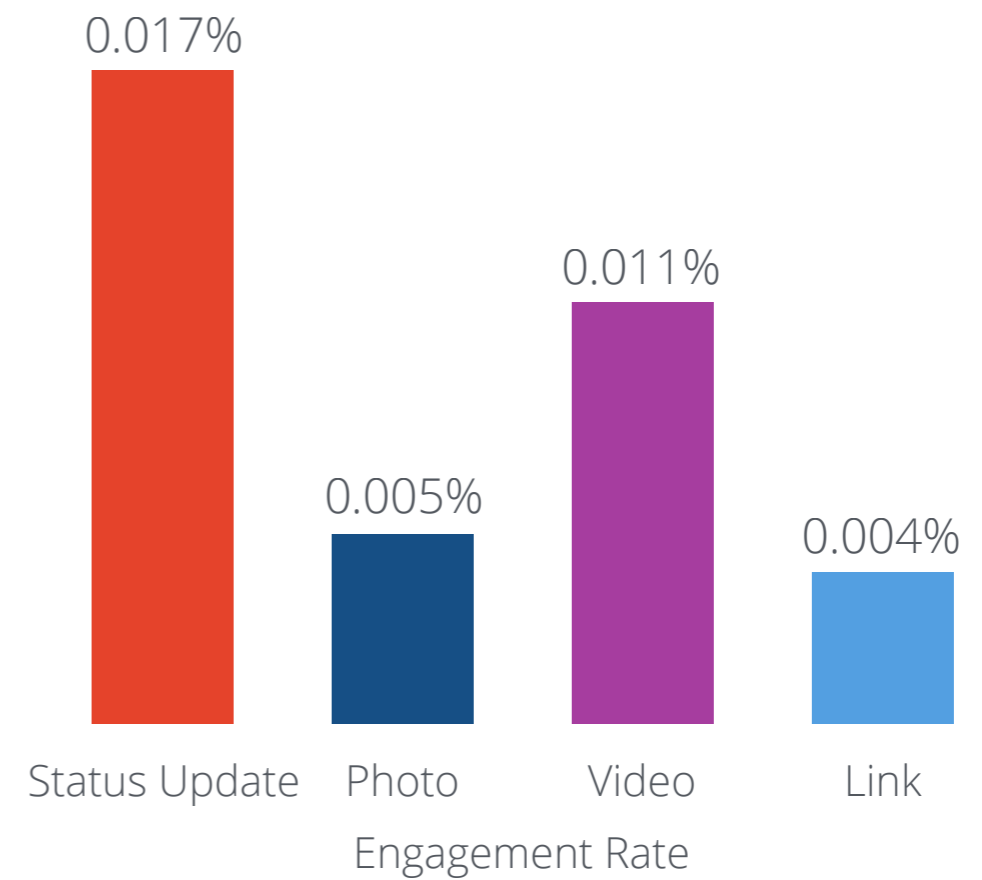


Average number of Twitter posts per post type



Avg. number of posts per post type, per day






Average engagement rate per Twitter post type



# TWITTER TOP POSTS



Calculated by engagement rate per post across all Twitter posts across the top 50 media companies

Published At	Post	Eng. Total	Eng. Rate
Apr 4 2017 2:52 PM	 nydailynews.com @NYDailyNews Beyond race discrimination, Fox News employee Monica Douglas says ex-comptroller Judy Slater mocked her for being a... <a href="https://twitter.com/i/web/status/849273596396658688">twitter.com/i/web/status/8...</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/i/web/status/849273596396658688">https://twitter.com/i/web/status/849273596396658688</a> <a href="#">View on Twitter</a>	1.19k	59.5%
Mar 31 2017 12:08 AM	 Axios @axios Michael Flynn in September: "When you are given immunity, that means that you've probably committed a crime." <a href="pic.twitter.com/w5wir35ZfX">pic.twitter.com/w5wir35ZfX</a> <a href="#">View on Twitter</a>	 11.8k	23.6%
Feb 21 2017 9:53 PM	 Axios @axios "If you can answer any of that, I'll sit down and shut up like Elizabeth Warren." - constituent to Mitch McConnell <a href="pic.twitter.com/M3hPrVkUmF">pic.twitter.com/M3hPrVkUmF</a> <a href="#">View on Twitter</a>	 7.55k	20.3%



# TWITTER BEST PRACTICES







## Focus on photography like Axios

Axios is the newest media company on the block - it began in 2016 with a 'reader-first' mission that disavowed traditional tactics such as click-bait titles or banner ads to grow their revenue.

Axios has quickly grown their Twitter following through high-performing posts with an average engagement rate 24x the industry average.

One thing that all their top performing posts have in common? They're images. These posts also include short, succinct commentary that provides context and engages users.

Post	Eng. Total	Eng. Rate
 Axios @axios Michael Flynn in September: "When you are given immunity, that means that you've probably committed a crime." pic.twitter.com/w5wir35ZfX <a href="#">View on Twitter</a>	11.8k	23.6%
 Axios @axios "If you can answer any of that, I'll sit down and shut up like Elizabeth Warren." - constituent to Mitch McConnell pic.twitter.com/M3hPrVkuMF <a href="#">View on Twitter</a>	7.55k	20.3%
 Axios @axios Mulvaney: No evidence that after-school programs to help kids get fed improves performance. pic.twitter.com/ShSSeatmMs <a href="#">View on Twitter</a>	6.66k	15.5%
 Axios @axios Comey: Russia's goals in 2016 were to hurt U.S. democracy, hurt Hillary Clinton and help Trump pic.twitter.com/IF9IRnsNN1 <a href="#">View on Twitter</a>	5.64k	12.8%



# TWITTER BEST PRACTICES

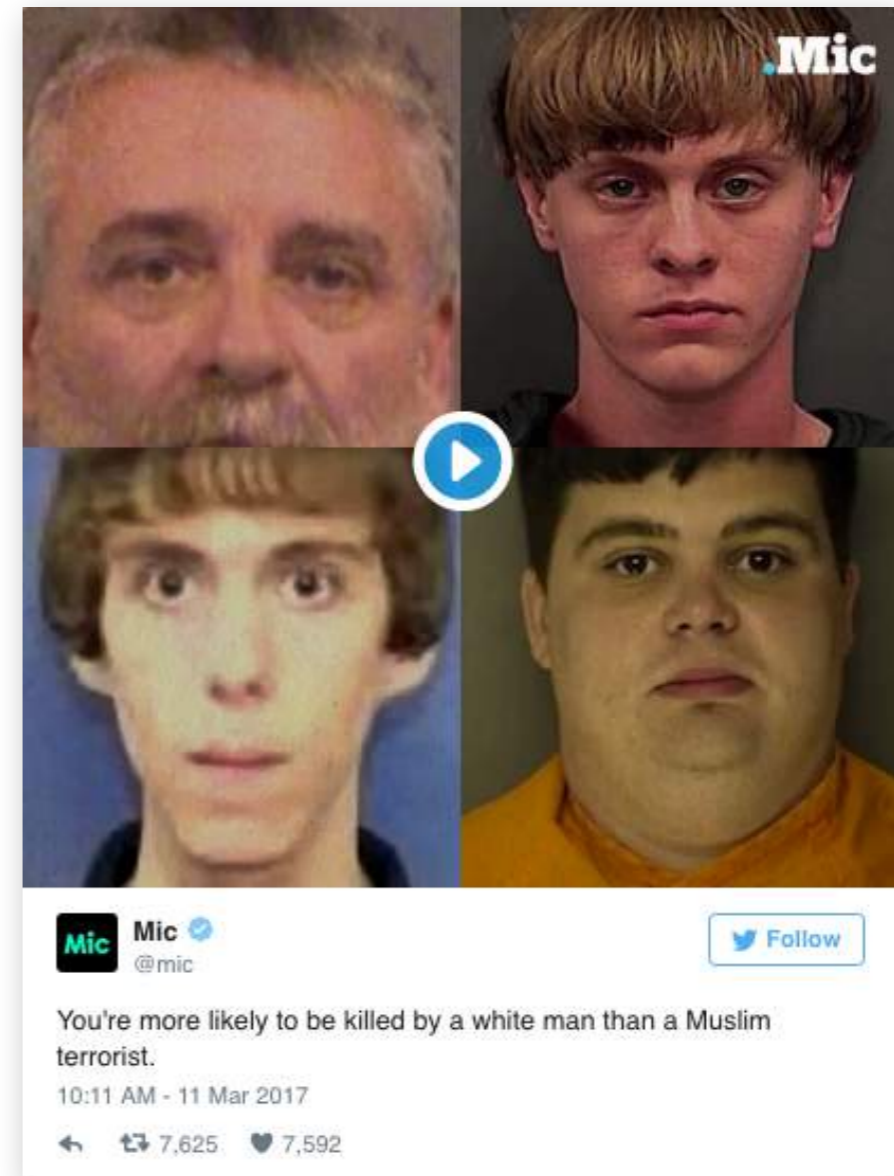


## Break through the noise with photos and videos (and challenge the status quo a little)

Mic sees the highest Twitter engagement rates of any publisher across the 50 outlets we studied. When we delved deeper into the data, we found that their highest-performing posts tended to share one thing in common - they broke from the regular media narrative and challenged the status quo.

Mic's top posts were also overwhelmingly visual, in that 16 of their top 20 posts were either photos or videos.

This is interesting because across the entire landscape of companies, Status Updates were the best performing post type. However, when you examine the most engaging individual posts, from the most engaging publishers, photos and videos tend to win the day.



# TWITTER BEST PRACTICES



## If you're going to post a status update, make sure it's **BREAKING**

Status updates overall tend to be the most engaging post types on Twitter - but when you dive into the top updates, a common thread appears.

Breaking news is the most appropriate content for a status update: it's happening too quickly to write an article, but you want to get the information at there as quickly as possible.

Keep it short and informative, and skip the hashtags; Twitter's trending topics will pick it up regardless.

These three example posts experienced between 190x and 350x the average media company engagement rate.

The image displays three example tweets from verified accounts, each starting with the word "BREAKING" or "LATEST". Each tweet includes the account name, a "Follow" button, the text of the tweet, the time and date, and engagement metrics (retweets and likes).

- AP The Associated Press (@AP)**: BREAKING: US appeals court refuses to reinstate Trump's ban on travelers from seven Muslim-majority nations. 3:14 PM - 9 Feb 2017. 37,929 retweets, 63,215 likes.
- CNBC (@CNBC)**: BREAKING: Seattle judge says state has standing to sue over Trump's immigration order, grants temp. nationwide restraining order -Reuters. 3:47 PM - 3 Feb 2017. 6,883 retweets, 12,352 likes.
- Mic (@mic)**: LATEST: judge in Brooklyn rules that people can't be detained at airports. 5:53 PM - 28 Jan 2017. 1,015 retweets, 1,365 likes.

A woman with blonde hair and glasses is drinking from a white coffee cup. She is wearing a dark jacket and has a bag slung over her shoulder. The background shows a campus path with trees and other people, all overlaid with a blue-to-purple gradient.

WHERE DO YOU RANK?

# CLAIM YOUR FREE 7-DAY TRIAL

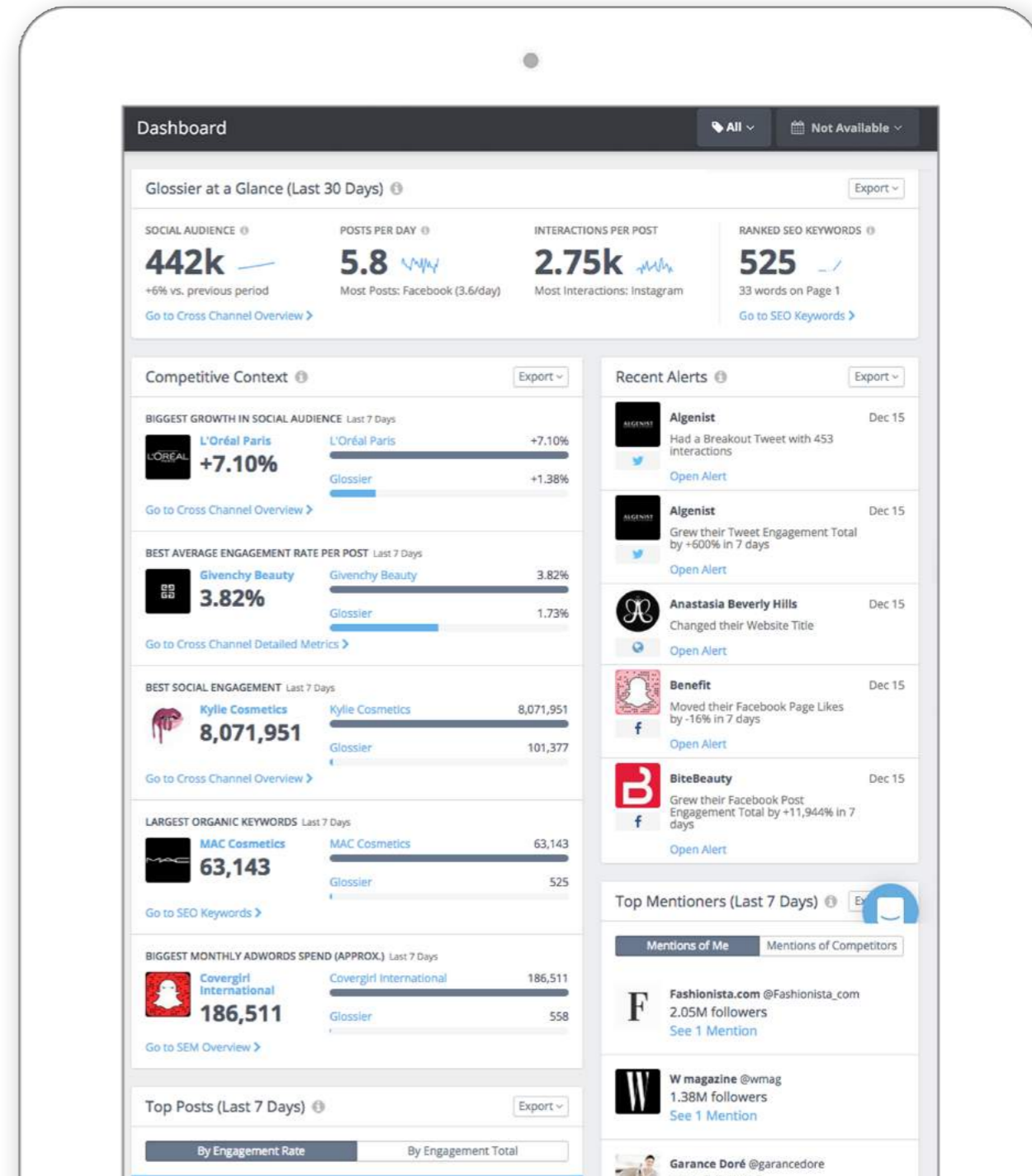
## Be inspired by others in your industry

One of the best ways to get ideas for new content or social strategies is to check out what other institutions like yours are doing.

You might find that they're having success by using a specific hashtag, or running a competition that sparks an idea for you to create your own.

If you'd like to give it a try, you can claim your free 7 day trial of Rival IQ and start tracking other organizations today.

Claim your free trial. No strings attached. ▶



# ABOUT RIVAL IQ

Rival IQ is an easy-to-use tool that helps you:

## **Understand Your Social Landscape**

Track results across all social profiles, including engagement, in influencers, social bios, and sentiment—for you and your competitors.

## **Gain Competitive Insight**

Conduct competitive analysis in minutes. Monitor your industry, create benchmarks, and evaluate competitor activity in time to respond before the market shifts direction.

## **Simplify Access to Data**

Find comprehensive analytics for all major social channels and the web, both for your company and your competitors - all from one source.

Get your free trial ▶