"Nostalgic for the present":

Digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity on Instagram

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Abstract

Retro art and technology have been on the rise in recent years, the phenomenon is fuelled by the nostalgia of a sense of authenticity that the offline world can no longer satisfy. The integration of technology into human's social conduct has made it an extension of their beings. Faced with technological progress, people also yearn to regress to the age-old days of their childhood. Nostalgia often comes with romanticization of the past, but it also offers a sense of security and realness that is seemingly lost amid the constant exchange of data in the present time. This lays ground for the rise of faux-vintage photos on social application Instagram. Bracing itself as a modern digital media, Instagram capitalizes on nostalgia for the analog and fetishization of the retro aesthetics of old media. While researchers have noted the link between Instagram and digital nostalgia, these works remained within the theoretical realm. Using a combination of interface criticism and interview, the paper focuses on human and computer interaction to study digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity on Instagram. The findings point out the complexity of Instagram as a social network and a creative tool in the emerging age of pervasive computing, in which the technology increasingly integrates and fades into the background of our everyday lives. The paper's intention is to develop further understanding of retromodern technology, particularly Instagram, in reconstructing our knowledge of society and everyday social conduct. A better comprehension of our digital culture is crucial to the development of the self and society.

Key words: Instagram, digital nostalgia, mediated authenticity, human computer interaction, faux vintage filters, ephemerality, interface criticism, qualitative interview

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1. Introduction

Since its invention in the early days of 19th century, photography has been endowed with multiple roles: documentation, art, recreation and increasingly mass communication. The camera photography was first acknowledged as an instrument to record reality. Its ability to capture and deliver better detail and information makes it more reliable than other traditional media in the nature of painting or sculpture. Sontag writes, "Photographs – and quotations – seem, because they are taken to be pieces of reality, more authentic than extended literary narratives" (Sontag & Rieff 2013:580). 'Authentic' here can be understood in abstract terms, broadly referring to the 'real', the 'genuine', or in its opposition to the 'fake', the 'unreal'. That authenticity, in today's golden age of Instagram and Snapchat, is translated into the phenomenon 'Pics or it didn't happen', as the act of documenting everyday experience is a testament to life itself. Funnily, this is exhibited in the form of faux-vintage photos, fuelled by the nostalgia for the immediate past. While nostalgia often comes with romanticization, today's nostalgic expressions indicate a coping mechanism against technological progress, either in the mourning for the loss of authenticity, or escapism by increasing media consumption/production. In the ubiquitous computing era when technology progress transcends beyond speed and space, people yearn to regress to the age-old days of the childhood teddy bear and blanket, for they offer human a sense of security and realness that is seemingly lost amid the constant exchange of data in the present time.

Although nostalgia for authenticity is not exclusive to any generation, this day witnesses the intriguing way it is communicated and capitalized via social media, post trend such as #ThrowbackThursday is an example. This lays ground for the faux-vintage filters fostered by photo-sharing social media application Instagram. Developed in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, Instagram is a photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service built strictly for mobile device. Instagram was acquired by Facebook in 2012 for approximately one billion US dollars. Although the app is integrated more closely into Facebook, it is built and grown independently (Gavaghan & Warren, 2013). Until December 2016, Instagram has reached 600 million monthly active users, in which 88% is made up of people under the age of 30 (York 2017). The idea for Instagram stemmed from the founder Kevin Systrom's vision of a cross between Hipstamatic and Facebook. Hipstamatic is the first popular photo app that is associated with the vintage filters. Hipstamatic delivers the retro effect in both digital filters and physical experience, as it simulates the Polaroid camera's photo production process: users choose the faux-vintage filters

before taking a photo, and afterward wait for the app to develop the photos. The excitement that goes with using a real analog camera is maintained as Hipstamatic users are never sure how the photos will turn out. Instagram adopted the retro spirit but with a modern twist. The name "Instagram" is a combination of "instant camera" and "telegram". Like what the name suggests, Instagram embodies both elements of a camera and a communication tool. The mobile application is broadly defined by two frameworks: the culture of connectivity and convergence as a social media application[1] (Van Dijk 2013, Jenkins 2006), and the widespread hype for digital retro in its special vintage photo filters (Caoduro 2014:71). In this respect, Instagram can be recognized as a salient retromodern technology. Bracing itself as a modern digital media, Instagram capitalizes on nostalgia for the analog - the 'real' and 'authentic' - and fetishization of the retro aesthetics of old media (Caoduro 2014:67). This is manifested by the digital skeuomorphism[2] of retro photography. Instagram encourages and strengthens this practice through the creation of the retro filters, the sharing of faux-vintage photos and the post trend #throwback. This phenomenon now transpires to other social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, many smartphones also offer built-in retro filters within their photo-taking application. To take this further, in *Media and Nostalgia: Yearning for the past, present and future*, Niemeyer mentioned a linguistic shift in our contemporary use of the word 'nostalgia'. The verb 'nostalgize' is increasingly used in our discourse, the scholar suggested that 'nostalgia' is no longer a symptom, an expression or feeling, but becoming a force, an act, a constructive process (2014:25). Media, or Instagram specifically, in that respect, can be a platform to 'nostalgize'.

Such change demands an updated study of digital nostalgia and authenticity, in particular how these concepts are redefined today. Do the faux-vintage photos generate the same sense of authenticity and nostalgia embedded in the historical vintage pictures? Or has technological change and its

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[1] In *Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (2013), Van Dijk introduced a new understanding of 'connectivity', which is no longer restricted to our traditional understanding of 'connectednesss', but developed into an automated forms of connections that are engineered and manipulated to generate great revenue (2013:4-6). The 'culture of connectivity' encloses both connectedness and connectivity, and increasingly blurs the line between them.

'Convergence' in our participatory culture, according to Jenkins in *Convergence Media: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006), refers to a shift where users are encouraged to seek out information and make connections among dispersed media content. Convergence occurs within the individual consumers and their interactions with others (2006:3).

[2] In computing terms, a skeuomorphism is an element of graphical user interface that imitates a physical object.

interrelation to human altered the very idea of authenticity and nostalgia? By studying Instagram and its users, this paper will attempt to resolve these inquiries.

1.1 Research aim and questions

Though many researchers noted the link between Instagram and digital nostalgia, these works remain within the theoretical realm, very few offer an empirical answer to this issue. This paper takes a different approach to investigate Instagram in its relation with the Instagram users. Using a combination of interface criticism and interview, the paper focuses on human and computer interaction to study digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity on Instagram. In specific, it addresses two issues:

RQ1. How are the concepts of nostalgia and authenticity integrated into the Instagram interface?

RQ2. How do Instagram users respond to the Instagram logics, especially in terms of authenticity and nostalgic values?

The intention is to develop further understanding of retromodern technology, particularly Instagram, in reconstructing our knowledge of society and everyday social conduct. Throughout history, the introduction and integration of media technologies have affected how humans come to perceive and ultimately, define reality. The magnitude of such integration suggests new socio-cultural development and ways of life to be augmented and studied. That is the main motivation for this paper.

2. Theoretical framework and literature review

This analysis would be built on the conceptualization of nostalgia in its relation to photography, and idea of mediated authenticity on social media. The focus would be to define the terms, review previous literature on the same subject, and navigate this study theoretically to fulfill the research aim.

2.1 On nostalgia and photography

The 17th century clinical understanding of nostalgia mostly deals with homesickness (Boym 2001:3). Since the 19th century, nostalgia has departed from this personal level of understanding

and has been used as cultural, political and commercial products and symbols. Nostalgia in today's understanding has adopted the view of the 19th century, referring to a past that one cannot return to, one that could only be invoked via the sensory stimuli (Boym 2001:16). Once a medical disease, 'nostalgia' is now an ambiguous phenomenon, a commodity to be sold and an aesthetics to be fabricated.

History has witnessed the complicated affair between media and nostalgia. Media produce and prompt nostalgia, nostalgia in return offers a reflection on the media and their technologies (Niemeyer 2014:22). Photography, in that respect, is a nostalgia machine - the act of photographing itself promotes nostalgia, "When we are afraid, we shoot. But when we are nostalgic, we take pictures" (Sontag & Rieff 2013:538). An interesting instance of such is the polaroid photography, which is part of retro technology. What sets it apart from others is the camera's ability to produce instant photos. The photographers are tourists in other people's realities and in their own, they take photographs with the belief that life is perishable, and therefore reality should be instantly documented. Walter Benjamin argued, "To renew the old world, that is the collector's deepest desire when he is driven to acquire new things" (ctd. in Sontag & Rieff 2013:582). The old world cannot be renewed, but new beauty can be borne out of vanishing moment. The photographer is never sure of how the image will turn out on instant film; it is this sense of unknowing that gives analog and instant photographs more authenticity, for the photographer cannot tamper with the end product. The photograph is not a mere reflection of reality, it offers a new angle of what happened. It is not completely artificial either, for the camera also takes part in the process of creating. The camera does not simply document, it creates. This was realized since the late 19th century when photography was freed from its realistic representation purpose, and started to follow its painting counterpart in the pursuit of more abstract images.

Photography as an art lends photographing a new purpose in the celebration of freezing time and space. That, in turn, accelerates the time's wheel. The logic follows us to the present time, even in the form of disposable media; "from the start, photographers not only set themselves the task of recording a disappearing world but were so employed by those hastening its disappearance" (Sontag & Rieff 2013:582). Reality as it is only exists in the precise moment that the photograph was taken; after that, it becomes something else. Digital technology furthers this disappearance of reality. Sontag wrote, "Photographs may be more memorable than moving images because they're a neat

slice of time, not a flow" (2005:20). But what happens when these images are no longer static and concrete, when they are nothing but a string of codes? The photograph's value is diminished as a result of today's data overload. Even though there are more information and images created than ever, they hardly hold any values. Our digital history grows longer but less meaningful, for we are encouraged to constantly generating new content, which soon becomes digital debris after garnering enough likes and comments.

New media technologies add another layer to our understanding of nostalgia: the 'false' nostalgia, "a pleasure-seeking yearning for former times that we have not, in fact, lived" (Niemeyer 2014:24). The term "nostalgia for the present" is coined by Fredric Jameson, who proposes: "Historicity is, in fact, neither a representation of the past nor a representation of the future […]: it can first and foremost be defined as a perception of the present as history; that is, as a relationship to the present which somehow defamiliarizes it and allows us that distance from immediacy which is at length characterized as a historical perspective […] whereby we draw back from our immersion in the here and now (not yet identified as a "present") and grasp it as a kind of thing -- not merely a "present" but a present that can be dated and called the eighties or the fifties" (1991:284). In other words, it refers to the yearning for a made-up past, one that can be pushed to the extent people become nostalgic for the moment they are living in. As fictitious as that sounds, the logic resonates with the faux retro pictures trend, most smart phones offer high-quality camera today, yet people still opt for the gritty, over-saturated faux-vintage filters to express themselves. Improvements in mobile phone technology turn to be "a precondition for an illusionist technology that would ultimately produce simulations of analogue photographs, which would be able to evoke same emotional associations as the originals" (ctd. in Niemeyer 2014:68). The explosion of hashtag #tbt (Throwback Thursday) on Instagram celebrates the reminiscence of past experiences, legitimizing digital nostalgia as a habitual activity. Instagram along with its digital retro filters provide a gateway to create and consume time and place as an object, "a thing" that people can put a label on (hashtag #tbt) and control - the present is one vintage filter away from the past. The act of picture sharing on social media complicates the issue because the image is personal yet socially distributed. Nostalgia hence goes beyond the individual sphere, especially when the users go through the deliberate effort of adding caption, tags, and comments.

Our history could be measured by technological progress, but technology has outgrown human race. Today's technology no longer caters to but rather invents the consumer's needs in the name of 'innovation'. New media are not meant to last, they are meant to disrupt. Every year since 2013, Apple has increased the number of their big events, creating buzz before, during and after their product launch or update, adding up the number of outdated iPhones. By the time we are comfortable with our iPhone 5, Apple already releases the iPhone 6, 6S, and then 7 and 7 Plus. This is not new, industrial design and economic experts call this notion 'planned obsolescence', referring to the strategy of planning or designing a product with limited useful life so customers will have to make repeat purchase after a period of time, the ultimate aim is to boost consumption (Bulow 1986:729). Today witnesses the technological product's replacement cycle increasingly shorter and shorter. Digital nostalgia has become a coping mechanism. People are nostalgic for a period of time that they have never lived, but that is not the entire reason why many turn to retro cameras and the vinyls today. The term 'analogue nostalgia' is coined in response to such trend. Marks noted how this phenomenon is not about rejection against digital technologies, but rather the digital remediation of analogue aesthetics *within* the digital - in communication studies terms, it is all about the noise and not the signal (ctd. in Niemeyer 2014:34). In other words, it is film camera against Instagram, not digital camera nor iPhone. Analogue nostalgia is most prevalent in the digital age, for there is "a tendency in digital media [. . .] to reassert imperfection, flaws, an aura of human mistakes to counterbalance the logic of perfection that pervades the digital" (Rombes 2009 ctd. in Niemeyer 2014:35). Analogue nostalgia celebrates the artificial ageing process that will never happen to the digital. The nostalgia is hence proliferated in the digital's attempt to simulate the physical. The abundance of images and communication today reduces the importance and realness of the digital photographs, forcing people to look for them in the application of the faux-vintage filters. It is not new that people try to seek authenticity in simulations. That is in line with Baudrillard's concept of simulation and hyperreality, which he defines as "a kind of virtual reality [that] is produced by models of what we want reality to be" (ctd. in Lane, 2000). The resurgence of the retro technology invokes fragments of the past, digital nostalgia is hence proliferated in the digital's attempt to simulate the physical. The Instagram-filters-laden photos function similarly to Baudrillard's analogy of Disneyland and its imitation of the retro American street, the purpose is to invoke nostalgia for the past. In the age of synthetic remembrance, the faux-vintage photographs are significant to people's daily process of documenting their lives, for they are constantly viewing life through the retro filters, the present thus becomes "a potential documented past" (Jurgenson 2012). That, as a result, invalidates the Instagram faux retro photographs' role as an authenticity machine,

its purpose is to present what it is to be vintage rather than enhancing authenticity. This point will be further elaborated in the next part on mediated authenticity.

2.2 Mediated authenticity

Oxford dictionary defines 'authentic' as "of undisputed origin and not a copy; genuine" (2017). The concept is not static though, it is deeply rooted in culture and continually changing as our society hops from one trend to another. In the media context, the term is largely considered positive, media prosumers (the portmanteau of producer and consumer) generally value the 'authentic', the seemingly raw and impromptu moments of mediated representations of reality. At the same time, we are fully aware of that the media are constructed and manipulated. This paper would not focus too much on the definition of authenticity itself, but rather its intricate relation with media, demonstrated by the concept 'mediated authenticity'. Enli explains, "in the context of the media, authenticity is defined through as a communicative process, and the degree of authenticity depends on symbolic negotiations between the main participants in the communication" (2015:3). Mediated authenticity is hence a social construction, and can be achieved through production techniques and authenticity illusions, such as incorporation of raw material through adjustments that make it seem more realistic, honest and trustworthy (Enli 2015). Media prosumers accept this thanks to the 'authenticity contract' - "an informal agreement regarding where the line is drawn between reality adjustment and outright fakery" (Enli 2015:132). The emergence of new media technologies introduces new media systems and user patterns, the authenticity contract is thus constantly challenged and renegotiated.

As people communicate simultaneously online and offline, it becomes harder to tell where one begins and one ends, the dichotomy between online and offline world is increasingly blurred, and the online reality is no longer separated from offline. This triggers greater resistance from advocates of "digital dualism" – a term coined by Jurgenson referring to the habit of viewing online and offline as largely distinct (2012). The repercussion is evident by the proliferation of essays and books condemning the oversaturated digital age, mourning for the loss of the logged off real life, and romanticizing the retro days of vinyl records and analog cameras. People contrast their online activities with what they do IRL (in real life), boasting about how long they have not used the internet, how brave it is to disconnect from social media, how original it is to turn to analog cameras in place of digital ones. This is, in essence, what Jurgenson calls "the fetishization of the offline",

reflecting the 'analog nostalgia' that was previously discussed. This social backlash results in a universal campaign for the preservation of authenticity in human connection and ourselves, making digital communication more dependent on authenticity illusions and authenticity contract than ever (Enli 2015:89). Authenticity illusions are often created by making reference to offline evidence, one example on social media is the profile picture or avatar, which works as identification and authenticity marker (Baym 2010:109). Photos are preferred as identification in social media because they have the power to demonstrate authenticity and build intimacy between users (Enli 2015:90). Faux-vintage photos, in that sense, double the effect as they embody the physicality of retro camera, albeit fabricated, which makes up for the lack of physical substance in digital communication.

Based on a rigorous study of different case studies, Enli concludes that mediated authenticity can be outlined by seven characteristics: predictability, spontaneity, immediacy, confessions, ordinariness, ambivalence and imperfection (2015:136-137). These criteria provide the guideline to investigate how mediated authenticity is constructed and applied. Due to the research focus on digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity, this paper would only examine four key criteria that are deemed more relevant: ordinariness, imperfection, confessions and ambivalence. These criteria are closely related, sometimes overlapping. 'Ordinariness' and 'imperfection' refer to the mundane and ordinary representation on media, plainness or flawed is considered as authentic because it challenges the overtly edited and polished media performance/persona (Enli 2015:137). 'Confessions' indicate the uninhibited disclosure of personal details and secrets on social media, making the authenticity illusions all the more plausible as they are relatable for the audiences. 'Ambivalence', on the other hand, is the backlash against the all-too-perfect confessions: the equivocal representation and tentative revelation of the 'truth' seem more honest and authentic than confident confessions that claim to be authentic in a mediated communication (Enli 2015:137). Together, they are utilized in tactical way to craft authenticity illusion on social media. Its complexity goes beyond the physical face-to-face communication and is bound to certain protocols that are specific to digital communication. These elements are applicable on Instagram because the social media is especially known for daily photo sharing, hashtags such as #photooftheday (photo of the day), #picoftheday (pic of the day), #instadaily (insta daily) and #tbt (throwback thursday) are among the most popular hashtags on Instagram for many years (Webstagram 2017). Photo of everyday, mundane activity is captured and shared on regular basis. These ordinary photos are then enhanced with some sort of editing and faux-vintage filter and added caption, which can be a backstory to the

#throwbackthursday or some harmlessly fun statement adorned with hashtags and emoticons. As most social trends, the backlash eventually catches up, the hashtag #nofilter started to seep in Instagram around 2014 as a movement against the highly edited society, which was once the purpose of the faux-vintage filters against the high-definition, photoshopped pictures. The quest for authenticity on Instagram carries on, just in different shapes and forms.

To quote Baym, "In a time when communication technology and online interaction is no longer separated from our offline reality, we seem to have become even more oriented towards preserving authenticity in human connection and of ourselves" (2010:155). While face-to-face communication can build trust via the physical presence and materials, online trust is dependent on faith in the contribution of others and replacements such as photos (Enli 2015:91). The profile picture is the one of the oldest yet effective ways to identify the authentic self, it has increasingly become more relevant since most mobile apps nowadays are using social media ID logins such as Facebook and Twitter. Of course, it needs more than a smiley picture to prove that you're a trustworthy human being. In the digital sphere where there is so much blank space to fill in, it's the little detail that matters. Enli cites the use of emoticons, informal language and talk-like phonetic spelling is among the few common ways to draw trust on mediated environments (2015:91). In their efforts to imitate the face-to-face conversation, they become signifiers of authenticity. Self-disclosure - the revelation of intimate, personal details is also considered a prime authenticity illusion. Though oversharing has become more acceptable now than ever, it by no means indicates that people are more honest. Some people are simply more comfortable sharing secrets online, and some are getting better at managing self-image by "a strange balance of sharing, withholding and distorting information" (Baym 2010:108). At the same time, the audiences need this kind of authenticity illusion to fully engage in the shared narrative. Another authenticity illusion is the support from networks, online identities need confirmation and support from their networks to be considered authentic (Enli 2015:92). On social media, this translates into different kinds of sharing and linking exercises. Facebook, for example, becomes a powerful verification gateway between online and offline. Our social media existence now serves as a verifier of our being as an upright member of society, in which our virtues are measured by likes, follows and mentions. This kind of support from our networks is clearly an authenticity illusion, since it lends these social updates more credibility, thus making users less critical of the crafted 'authenticity' (Enli 2015:93). Genre conventions also contribute to the robust authenticity illusion on social media, a status update seems real because it imitates the style of

posting from previous ones (Enli 2015:93). Fake news, for instance, falls into this category, as they so convincingly resemble the genre conventions for online news, from headline to photograph. This is the reality of our network society, or what Baudrillard would call 'hyperreality'. The authenticity illusions have ambivalent effects, they can help build trust among users in a space where there is so much gap to fill in, but they are also powerful tools to trick and mislead people. Far gone the utopian vision of the Internet as a space for independent, egalitarian and responsible users, specially when the line between truth and fraud is obfuscated by the users themselves. Authenticity illusions can then be considered a side effect of digital participatory culture, for they require both the promoting and approval from the social media users to be effective. This form of acceptance suggests that the prosumers are responsible for their own authenticity contract. The study of mediated authenticity on social media is a study of neither authority responsibility nor personal liability, it is rather an all-encompassing inquiry into the crafting and negotiation of authenticity on new media. This research would set its course from this point of departure.

3. Methodology

As it has been introduced, this paper's aim is to deepen the understanding of retromodern technology in shaping human social conduct, specifically, the interrelation between Instagram and its users. In order to do that, one has to investigate from both perspectives: the computer and the human. This study opts for a combination of interface criticism and interviews to answer the research questions. Interface criticism builds a structure for interpretative research of Instagram interface, while qualitative interviews reveal the users' responses to the interface, giving insight into their motives and opinions.

3.1 Interface criticism

Interface criticism provides the methodological framework to answer the first research question *How is the concept of nostalgia integrated into Instagram?* It is a newly emerged approach that traces its root to interface aesthetics and interaction design. Interface criticism as a research discipline refers to "a rigorous interpretive analysis that explicates how elements of the interface, through their relationships to each other, produce certain meanings, affects, moods, and intuitions in the people that interact with them" (Bardzell & Bardzell 2008:2464). Interface criticism can be considered as a paradigm for critical discussion of human-computer interaction (HCI) (Andersen & Pold 2011:10). Due to the rise of augmented reality and pervasive computing, interface criticism

can also provide a backdrop for analyzing human-human communication, as the interface has integrated so seamlessly into our lives that it recedes into the background. In "Manifesto for a Post-digital Interface Criticism" (2014), Andersen and Pold defined an interface as a technological artifact optimized for seamless interaction and functionality, but also as a cultural form that mediates not only between human and computer but also between cultural and technological materiality. The interface embodies both functionality and representation, it is simultaneously a tool and a medium with which we communicate. In this sense, interface positions itself between the signals (algorithms and executions) and the signs (mediation and representations), placing representational value on the technology, and conversely, technological value on the representation (Andersen & Pold 2014).

Today, the term 'interface' is no longer restricted to the WIMP formula of desktop interface (Windows, Icons, Menu, Pointers), it implicates multiple layers of contact surfaces and exchanges: between programs within the computer, between computers in the network, between human and computer, between humans (Andersen & Pold 2014). This myriad of levels allow for diverse approaches to study the interface, it can be linked to different issues such as technological, sociological, historical and political ones (Andersen & Pold 2014). Furthermore, the question of aesthetics has always been circulated within the human-computer interaction realm, but it is often subordinated to functionalism. Smith identifies a lack of expressive language of interaction, and called for an improvement in awareness of "the symbolic level of mood and meaning, of sociability and civility" within interaction design (2007 ctd. in Bardzell & Bardzell 2008:2464). With the flourish of digital art, aesthetics theories are proving to hold a more important role in the study of cultural interfaces. Modern art is linked to modern media aesthetics in their concern with how modern media's representational techniques are changing our perception and experience, and how the sense perception become mediated in the modern age (Bertelsen & Pold 2004:24). The introduction of interface criticism can help draw insights from contemporary aesthetics and socio-cultural analysis, thus contributing to a better understanding of today's media ecosystem.

Based on the core idea of Instagram as a retromodern technology, this paper's interface criticism of Instagram addresses two levels of analysis: the development of Instagram interface in relation to the concept of nostalgia, and the critical theoretical discussion of socio-cultural and representational issues of Instagram. The latter draws on a more general discourse, which is instrumental in raising

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awareness of certain issues and can be applied to similar interfaces, much similar to the role of art and literary criticism (Bertelsen & Pold 2004:31). Admittedly, interface criticism is largely interpretative and prone to subjectivity, especially when concerning aesthetics as it is a matter of taste. This weakness in return implies the capability of today's users, as they also participate in interpreting and co-creating the experience (Bertelsen & Pold 2004:31). In fact, within the HCI discipline, it is quite uncommon for users to follow the designer's intentions, the users generally matter more than the designer, and the design research often synchronizes with user research (Bardzell & Bardzell 2008:2468). As HCI's significance extends, interface criticism also goes beyond subjectivism, and instead provides systematic, evidence-based inspection of a subjective issue (Bardzell & Bardzell 2008:2464). The theory-based discussion to some extent helps justify the subjective judgement (Bertelsen & Pold 2004:31), this highlights the importance of critical theories in interface criticism, proving that it is necessary for interface criticism to be both practical and theoretical.

From this understanding, the paper adopts the structure of interface criticism proposed by Bertelsen & Pold (2004) by following these steps:

- Analyze stylistic reference in Instagram interface design in relation to concept of nostalgia
- Identify the representational techniques and how they work in Instagram: how the concept of nostalgia is translated on the interface (realistic, naturalistic or symbolic), how visible/invisible the techniques are.
- Study the materiality and remediation[3] of Instagram: how Instagram draws on the materiality of its features. Discussion of the immediacy, permanency as well as ephemerality of the interface is also included.
- Examine the relation between the control interface and socio-cultural interface of Instagram: how the concepts of nostalgia and authenticity make Instagram a hybrid of both.

With this structure of analysis, the study aims to have a balance between the arts & humanities and the scientific aspects of interaction design. As a result, the findings will provide a foundation for the next step of this study - interview of Instagram users.

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[3] According to Levine & McLuhan, remediation refers to the blending of old and new media - "the content of a medium is always another medium" (1964:8). Bolter and Grusin (2000) argued that digital technologies, rather than radically change the old media, alter and add on previously existed media. Instagram as a remediation borrows elements of the retro photography, representing new media's take on old media, or a way for old media to thrive in the digital age.

3.2 Interview

The qualitative interview was conducted to answer the second research question *How do Instagram users respond to the Instagram logics, especially in terms of authenticity and nostalgic values?* It followed a semi-structure style, allowing for open questions and follow-ups. This format also provides ample space for respondents to express their personal views and ideas, while researchers can also form theory-driven questions, which are largely based on findings from interface criticism analysis, and interpretation of the interview transcript (Flick, 2009). Through the interaction exchange, meanings and understandings are co-constructed, while relevant contexts are brought into focus so embedded knowledge can be produced (Mason 2002:62). This method was chosen to explore in depth the perception and motivation of Instagram users regarding the Instagram interface, the faux-vintage photos as well as current post trends such as #ThrowbackThursday and #nofilter. The result would offer insight on the user end of these social phenomenon. Ultimately, the inclusion of user opinions helped deepen the understanding of today's changing ideas of nostalgia and authenticity in their relation to social media, in particular Instagram.

Unlike quantitative studies where the sample is required to be random and representative, qualitative research targets a specific group, generating a collection of examples to explore a phenomenon. A characteristic of qualitative interview is that it is theoretically driven, this also applies to the sampling. Selection is made based on the relevance of the theoretical ideas, this will enable the study to test theoretical ideas and develop emerging ideas resulted from that process (Edwards & Holland 2013:6). Due to limited manpower and time, the qualitative interview was conducted on a group of six individuals whose characteristics matched with the research aim. They were selected by convenience snowball technique, either in my personal connection or acquaintances' network. The selection was based on these main criteria: relevance, activity, interactivity - which translates into the respondent's broad network or followership on Instagram.

The two methods interface criticism and qualitative interview were built to complement each other with the overarching research topic in mind. While interface criticism provided the concept of digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity from the computer's perspective, the qualitative interview helped provide the human's response to such. Following data collection, the study would search for the possible patterns (or the lack thereof) and conduct interpretation as systematic and comprehensive as possible.

3.2.1 Interview questions

The interviews were conducted following the user interface criticism. A set of questions was created to act as a guideline for discussion. The interviewer took it upon herself to intervene and pick up on interesting clues when necessary. The pre-determined questions were based on the user interface criticism findings, with a focus on 'storytelling', as the term is officially used by Instagram to refer to its user activity. The interview generally followed this order of questions:

1. How often do you log in Instagram? What do you usually do on Instagram?

2. How often do you upload to Instagram?

3. What kind of content do you upload on Instagram? Does your content reflect the kind of content you follow on Instagram?

4. Do you use filters on your Instagram photos? If yes, do you use Instagram filters and editing tools?

5. Why do you use the filters?

6. Do you use a specific filter for a specific post? Do you use the same filter(s) consistently on all your photos?

7. Have you used the hashtag on your Instagram photos? If yes, what are your most used hashtags? Can you elaborate on why and how you use those hashtags?

8. Do you interact with your followers? If yes, how? (via caption, comment, direct message or else?)

9. Do you use Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you update your Stories? What kind of content do you publish on Instagram Stories? Can you compare the kind of content you post on Instagram to Instagram Stories?

10. Do you watch other people's Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you check on their Stories updates? What do you expect to see on their Instagram Stories?

11. Have you used Instagram Live? Have you watched other people's Instagram Live? What do you think of Instagram Live compared to Instagram's other features?

12. What do you think of the new design updates that Instagram released last year?

13. How would you compare your Instagram usage to other social network usage?

14. Have you ever gone back to check on your old photos? Can you elaborate how often and why?

15. To what extent to do you agree with this statement "Instagram is a great platform to celebrate past memories" and why?

16. To what extent do you agree with this statement "Instagram is a tool for authentic storytelling" and why?

3.2.2 Sampling

A convenience sample by snowball technique was applied. Selection was made based on three criteria: relevance, activity, and interactivity. 'Relevance' means that the participants have to be active users of Instagram and have several years of experiences using Instagram to build up a substantial user profile, 'activity' means that they post content regularly and have used Instagram features, 'interactivity' refers to the broad network of followers and people they follow, whom they interact with. To do this, I sent out inquiries for interview to my network and asked friends to share, in which the research was described briefly as 'a study of Instagram usage'. Out of the positive responses, six people fulfilled the criteria, this was done based on a scan of their Instagram profile and feed. Incidentally, the interviewee ages are over 25, and five of them are female. This is, however, somewhat in line with Instagram user demographics, in which 68% of users are female, and 59% of them are between 18-29 (York 2017). This choice of people could be criticized as too similar sample but could be helpful in discovering attitude and behavior characteristics of such demographic group. The ethical guidelines require all names and user IDs anonymized, hence they are not mentioned in the table below. Throughout the data summary and analysis, they would be referred to as IND (short for individual) with their assigned number.

No.	Age	Gender	Number of followers	Number of following	Background and profile
1	27	Male	950+	1000+	Creative professional. Living in Bangkok.
2	26	Female	100+	300+	Art student. Living in New York City.
3	27	Female	150+	150+	Project Manager. Living in Melbourne.
4	25	Female	250+	150+	Writer. Living in Hanoi.
5	26	Female	150+	300+	Investment Consultant. Living in Hanoi.
6	26	Female	160+	250+	Business Consultant. Living in Hanoi & Tokyo.

Figure 8. Interviewee profile

3.2.3 Data collection and analysis

The interviews were conducted in English over Skype calls and transcribed. The findings resulted in a considerable amount of insight (see Appendix). Because of the semi-structured form of interview, the transcript contains mainly conversational English words, phrases, and expression, although efforts were made to minimize their appearance in the report, they would still show up in the quotations. The analysis was created based on these quotes, recurring words and themes, and

interpretations of these. The interviews would then be summarized and categorize. Eventually the results would be discussed in combination with the theoretical framework and interface criticism to provide a full account of the research issue.

3.3 Research evaluation

This research evaluation adopts the four criteria for constructivist report by Guba & Lincoln (2001): credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In terms of ethics, the research fulfills the ethical requirements, the author had the approval of the interviewees to use quotes and Instagram profile information.

3.3.1 Credibility

In accordance with credibility criteria for the constructivist report by Guba & Lincoln (2001), the paper establishes a clear step-by-step analysis, focusing on the two main notions: digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity. The theories lied at the heart of the research and were constantly cited and reflected on throughout the process of interface criticism and interview. Although there were a lot of interesting data generated from the interviews, the results were put into categories and systematically analyzed in a structure that best corresponds to the research questions. The aim is to search for possible patterns and explain them as explicitly and coherently as possible. Regarding interviews, the small sampling size is a weakness, though within the qualitative study, this can help provide interesting insight of certain group. The advantage of convenience snowball technique regarding interview is that it is easier for interviewees to trust, open up and give honest answers, especially when covering sensitive topic such as mediated authenticity. This strengthens the credibility of the findings.

3.3.2 Transferability

While Credibility roughly refers to internal validity, transferability refers to external validity. Although the interface criticism analysis is subjective, and the interview sampling size can be considered too small, these limitations can be challenged by a truthful and systematic analysis. The interviewees all come from different backgrounds and live in different environments, yet they are in the same age group and most of them are female - an accidental yet honest reflection of Instagram demographics. Since the research is concerned with the fundamental and universal Instagram experiences instead of their individual persona, it can produce better transferability.

3.3.3 Dependability

The paper made sure to have a comprehensive methodological guidelines. They helped create systematic data collection and analysis, clear interview guidelines, in addition to detailed report, pictures and quotes. The subjective observation and interpretation of interface criticism were grounded in the theoretical framework as well as related concepts. The interview guidelines were provided beforehand to make sure the interviewees were informed in every step of the interview. The results were reflected in the theoretical framework, conclusions were made with the research questions in mind.

3.3.4 Confirmability

As mentioned throughout this paper, the qualitative research was built largely on the subjective analysis of interface criticism and interpretation of interviews. This limitation, however, can be challenged when including the main theoretical concepts in every step of the analysis. Due to the large amount of interview materials, the interview transcript would not be included in this paper, but are available upon request. References and image credits can be referred to in Reference list.

4. Research findings

This section presents interface criticism and interview findings and analysis. The results are put into categories corresponding to the research topic, and presented in the methodological structure as mentioned above.

4.1 Interface criticism of Instagram

As introduced in previous chapter, the interface criticism aims to answer the first research question *How is the concept of nostalgia integrated into Instagram?* Following the structure mentioned in Methodology, this chapter would be divided into two parts: the development of Instagram interface over the years, and the most recent development in Instagram features. This approach offers a full account of Instagram from both interface design and media studies perspectives.

4.1.1 Old versus New: Instagram user interface over the years

This part utilises different perspectives of interface criticism to study how the concept of nostalgia is integrated into Instagram. The section provides analysis of Instagram stylistic choice and its representational technique by studying its old design in comparison with the new one.

Over the years, Instagram has introduced different updates to its design, with 2016 updates being the most drastic. Before that, the mobile application's old logo and features drew an immediate association to retro photography by its classic logo, the Polaroid square-styled photos and the faux-vintage filters. The faux-vintage world of Instagram was constructed on these little details, providing a platform for digital nostalgia to thrive. The first Instagram design was a prime case study of skeuomorphism in digital design.

Figure 1. Instagram old logo and the faux-vintage filters in 2011

Instagram's old logo, with its vintage lens and viewfinder design, is a shining emblem of skeuomorphism, echoing the trend that was set by the first Apple iPhone. Skeuomorphism refers to the practice of designing digital objects that resemble their real-world counterparts. The idea dates back to 1980s when Apple introduced the concept of desktop and icons that look like folders and piece of paper (Campbell-Dollaghan 2013). Perhaps hardcore iOS users may still remember the drop shadows on the user interface button, whose subtle intention is to simulate a 'Virtual Sun' that never sets. "Shadows give objects dimensionality and realism, and reflect how the objects would appear in the real world, if they were plonked down on a desk, a shelf, or on the ground", said Apple Human Interface Guidelines (ctd. in Evans 2014). "The Virtual Sun served to remind users,

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on some roughly sub-conscious level, that digital space, like real space, is navigable, that it adheres to physics" (Evans 2014). Mimetic designs were not made out of an accident, time after time they are summoned when something new comes up, as skeuomorphism uses the old metaphors to teach people new technology. Skeuomorphism succeeds when it makes an alien object that seems to come straight from a science fiction appear almost 'normal' and user-friendly. "Skeuomorphism was a teaching method to make the ambiguous seem obvious and the futuristic feel familiar" (Pavlus 2013).

For Instagram, skeuomorphism goes beyond personal clues. The logo of the vintage rainbow camera draws a link to the faux-vintage filters, which once were Instagram's specialty when the app was first released. Instagram was born in the cross between the development of smartphone high-resolution camera and the heightened digital nostalgia. Skeuomorphism helped ease the tension and made the idea of faux-vintage filters less contradicting, warmer and more inviting. The design invokes connotations of nostalgia and the good-old days that most Instagram users have never lived through but certainly romanticized. To this day, it is still the icon that people attach to Instagram, and perhaps something that Instagram fans will muse about in their #throwbackthursday ritual. As effective as it is, skeuomorphism is no longer relevant when 'new' technology becomes old. Instagram's old logo had to go when the company decided to do a branding overhaul. However, traces of skeuomorphism still linger in the new design, such as the Instagram typeface.
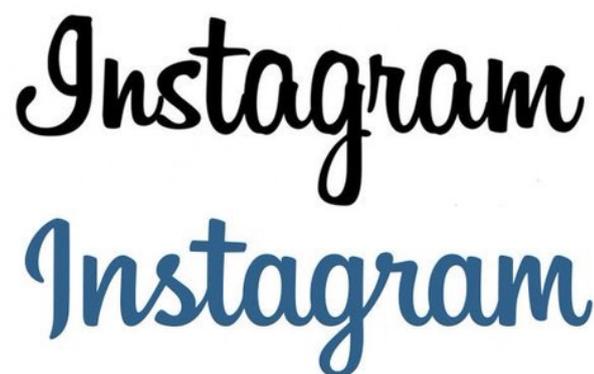

Figure 2. First typeface (above) and second typeface (under)

The old font is Billabong, the name of an Australian surf and skate brand born in the 1970s, which naturally is reminiscent of the surf culture and the 70s. In 2013, Instagram rolled out the new typeface, much neater and less cursive, but still in line with the nostalgic theme. "The new

Logotype connects with the nostalgia that Instagram was built from, maintains the important character of the original typeface, and places the brand in a unique and prominent position both in the current and future landscape", said Mackey Saturday, the designer that created the new typo for Instagram (ctd. in Foley 2016). This typeface is one of the few things that survived Instagram's 2016 redesign as the application joined the modern interface trend, which involves a lot of muted white space and minimalism.

Figure 3. Instagram feed evolution over the years

Along with the new interface, Instagram rolled out a new feature called Instagram Stories, which is placed on top of the user feed. The app tries to stay as monotone as possible, with only black, white and the red color of the notification.

At the same time, Instagram introduced a new logo design that is now flattened.

Figure 4. The old logo versus new logo

References to the old design can still be detected though. The old faux leather-clad vintage camera icon is swapped for a minimalist glyph, the retro rainbow is replaced with a warm gradient of pink, purple, yellow and orange. Instead of modernizing all the way, Instagram stays loyal to the vintage, Polaroid-camera shape, albeit with a modern twist. The plain logo possesses high propositional density, referring to a design able to convey maximal meaning with minimal detail. People are inclined to like images that are easy to look at and digest, especially when they are simpler than expected (Graf & Landwehr 2015). As mentioned in previous part, the vintage camera has a strong connotation to evoke nostalgia, aside from its direct association with the faux-vintage filters. The camera shape still evokes nostalgia and fond memories of childhood, though more subliminally as the implication becomes subtler now. Furthermore, the new logo's high visual saliency succeeds in catching users' attention and imprint on their mind. The human brain tends to pick up quicker and prioritize things with high levels of contrast, neuroscientists refer to this as visual saliency (Mormann, Towal & Koch 2015). Instagram's new logo has high visual saliency, the camera icon's white line is distinctive against the vibrant gradient background that reminds some of the Virtual Sunset and its sub-conscious representation of the physical world. This makes Instagram's new logo a strong competitor against Facebook and Twitter's classic blue logos or Snapchat's bright yellow icon. It is no surprise that Instagram design team took the neuroscience-inspired approach here, the technique is becoming more common to assist companies and organizations optimize reach and efficiency. The ideas of nostalgia and physicality embodiment still lie at the core of the modern manifestation, signifying the new age of augmented reality where technology integrates into human lives on a subconscious level.

The faux-vintage filters have always been a key feature that defines Instagram and sets it apart from other popular social networking as well as photo sharing apps, though that idea has increasingly been tested and challenged as Instagram grows bigger and faces more competitors. Instagram offers 38 filters in total, including Normal - a no-filter filter. Back in 2011, some filters also involved black and white frames for best simulation effects (see Figure 1), but gradually the frames were removed as the app was heading for a cleaner look. In 2014, Instagram added Lux effect that lets users quickly adjust exposure and contrast through a simple 100-point slider. Today the filters enjoy a much neater and minimal navigation bar, users have the option to choose which filter they want to be displayed. The colorful filters especially stand out in stark contrast with the white background and minimalist user interface, the intention is to place the users' content in the spotlight while the technology vanishes in the background. This perfectly embodies the Principle of Least

Astonishment (POLA) of user interface and software design, which basically says, "If a necessary feature has a high astonishment factor, it may be necessary to redesign the feature" (Cowlishaw, 1984). The principle states that the design should exploit user's pre-existing knowledge to minimize the learning curve, to match the user's experiences and expectations. Though Instagram users may need some time to get used to the new logo, they certainly benefit from the new interface, where a stronger emphasis is placed on the users' photos and videos instead of the application itself. Instagram new design shows a natural consistency with its predecessors while simplifying the whole interface down to its most basic feature: the faux-vintage filters.
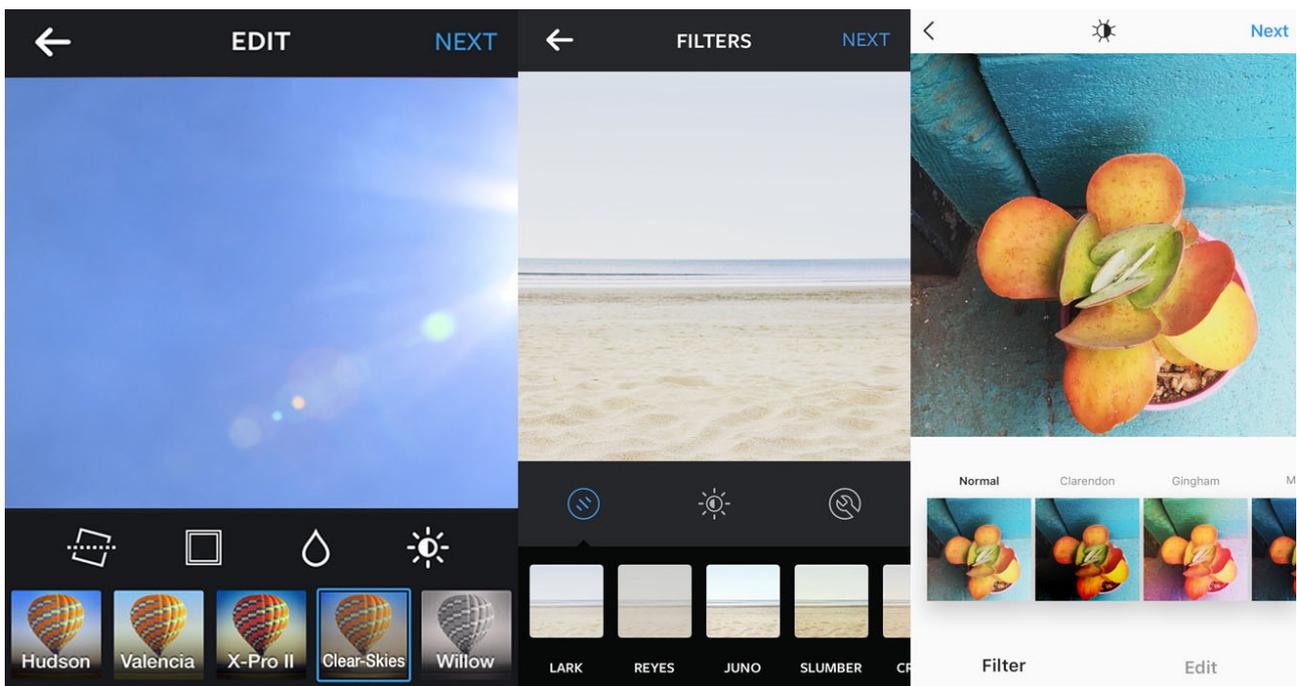

Figure 5. Instagram filters thumbnails evolution

With the less cluttered navigation bar, Instagram guarantees that the filters and filtered images are the first things that the users see when uploading pictures, making sure that they have the users' undivided attention. Moving the edit feature below the filters also makes it more subordinate, even a bit hidden away, especially for long term users who have been used to seeing the editing tools on top of the filters. Responding to the claim that Instagram faux-vintage filters' popularity is sinking, Instagram makes the deliberate efforts to put them at the center of the user interface, persuading users to continue using their filters. Of course, for a mobile application that has made a business out of the creation and sharing of faux-vintage photos, it comes off as no surprise that the filters should be in focus. However, the company is more ambitious in its endeavor.

Since 2015, Instagram users can start uploading non-square pictures, these pictures, however, are still displayed in center-cropped square frame in the user profile grid. The hybrid sense of aesthetics suggests that, although Instagram embraces its functionality as a new media, it still follows the logics of digital nostalgia as a creative tool. There is still a strong focus on the filters and square frame that have constituted the DNA of Instagram. This corresponds to Instagram's official statement when launching the new look, "The Instagram community has evolved over the past five years from a place to share filtered photos to so much more — a global community of interests sharing more than 80 million photos and videos every day. Our updated look reflects how vibrant and diverse your storytelling has become" (Instagram 2016). The purpose is not to recreate or reinvent Instagram - the company makes this point clear - but to better respond to today's digital culture. The concept of digital nostalgia is no longer expressed so explicitly, Instagram is ambitious to be a one-stop app for all photos and videos sharing, not just filtered images. In essence, the application doesn't change much, the nostalgia inspired approach is still there, just delivered differently. In its mix of old and new, the application effectively crafts a culture of digital nostalgia that translates into the era of pervasive computing when the technology increasingly fades into the background.

4.1.2 New: Instagram Stories and Instagram Live

This section focuses on the new Instagram features introduced in 2016 and early 2017 that go beyond the faux-vintage filters. As mentioned above, 2016 marked Instagram's big branding overhaul. Since then, the company has put many efforts in introducing new features that depart from its trademarked faux-vintage filtered photos and videos, as well as adopting Facebook-like features. Based on user interface criticism method, this part would examine these features, and further explore the concept of mediated authenticity embraced by the new Instagram.

When Instagram was first released in 2010, it only allows users to upload and share digital filtered photos. Since then, the app has gone through multiple big updates, adding new features regularly. In 2011, the app added hashtags to let users discover photographs and each other. In a blog post in 2012, Instagram encouraged their users to be specific and relevant with their hashtags, instead of a generic #photo, to attract more followers and make their photos stand out. The platform has thus given rise to social trend hashtags such as #throwbackthursday (#tbt), #photooftheday (#potd), #outfitoftheday (#ootd), etc. Instagram released the Android app in 2012, gaining over one million

downloads in less than a day, prompting a hefty $1 billion acquirement by Facebook the same year. In 2013, the app added supports for video, which can also be layered with the filters. In 2016, Instagram started to switch its chronological timeline view to algorithmic timeline similar to the Facebook, for which it received angry public response but refused to change. In August the same year, the company launched Instagram Stories in an attempt to compete against Snapchat. Two months after the release, the app saw 100 million users using it daily, surpassing Snapchat whose original idea it copied from. Instagram Stories is a feature similar to Snapchat, where users can upload pictures and videos on their Stories, which will be automatically deleted after 24 hours. Following that update, the app launched a new feature called Instagram Events on its Explore page that uses algorithm to collect and showcase Instagram Stories from public accounts. Instagram celebrated the end of 2016 with the launch of two Facebook-like features, namely Instagram Live, and the addition of like button on Instagram comments. In February 2017, Instagram rolled out a new feature that allows users to post up to 10 images or videos within one post. For businesses, since 2016, Instagram announced the launch of business tools, including business profile, analytics and the ability to turn Instagram posts into ads.

All these updates prove Instagram's ambition to grow beyond its original business model, which focuses on the creation and sharing of filtered photos. The filtered photos and their hashtags still account for the majority of uploaded content on Instagram, with roughly 80 million photos shared every day (Smith 2017). Instagram is not abandoning its core feature, but it is looking for alternative ways to extend reach, with a focal view on networking. The company is not hiding its endeavour to branch out to other types of activity and engagement: "There's nothing that irks me more when people call us a photo-sharing app because there's so much more that goes on in video these days," said Kevin Systrom - Instagram's CEO. One reason for this shift of focus is the fact that the faux-vintage filters have become so popular and normalized to the point that there is a backlash against the filters themselves, in the form of #nofilter hashtag and the trend of monotone, minimal, high-resolution photographs - Instagram adapted to this by allowing users to upload high-resolution photos in 2015. This flexible attitude toward trends proves successful, as the number of Instagram users continues to climb. Another reason that drives these changes is the need to boost engagement within the app. Despite Instagram's billion user growth, the level of engagement is still low compared to Facebook and even Facebook's Messenger. Prior to these new updates, statistics pointed out that only less than one-third of the app's daily users were posting each day (Bell, 2016).

This completely changed after the release of Instagram Stories. Though considered as a copycat of Snapchat[4], the feature ended up gaining more users than the original (Constine 2017).
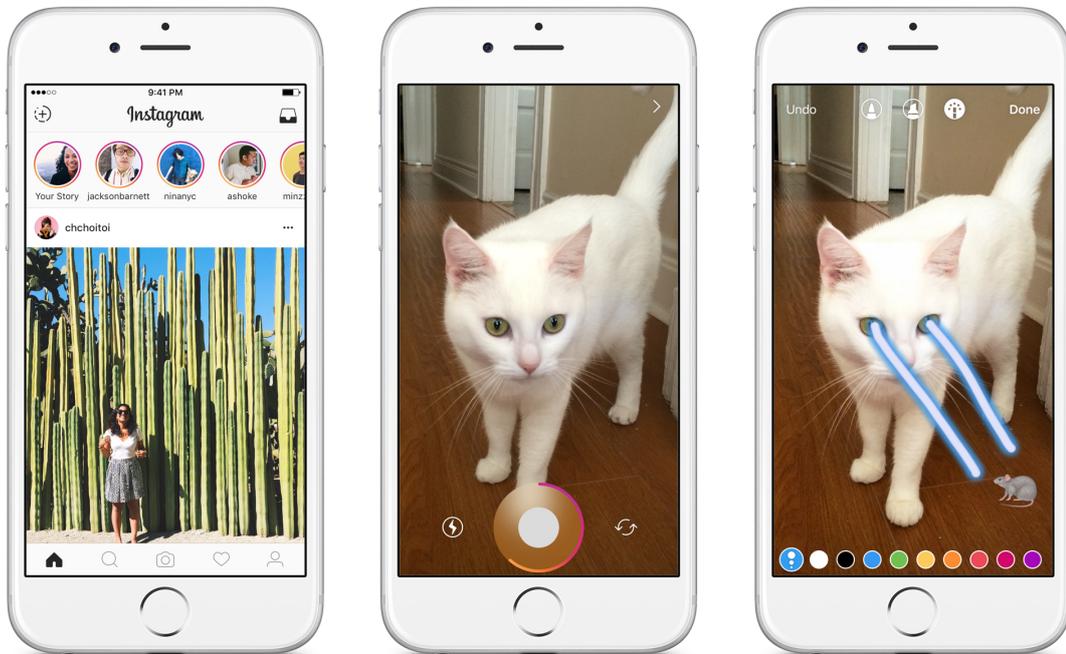

Figure 6. Instagram Stories

Instagram Stories user interface is designed to optimize the creation of user content. The feature provides plenty of tools and effects, yet these tools and effects are not offered in a visible navigation bar like the faux-vintage filters in Instagram standard uploading mode. Instead these tools blend into the image so seamlessly they become one. Instagram Stories were launched four years after Snapchat, many of its users are no longer newbies to the ephemeral technology. Therefore, there is less of a learning curve for Instagram users when it comes to uploading imperfect self-deleted photos and videos. While Snapchat user interface has been criticized for being user unfriendly, Instagram Stories was praised for the much neater, slightly more 'mature' look that quite corresponds to POLA. Funnily, the idea behind Snapchat Story/Instagram Stories, or ephemeral content, emerges from a direct opposition against the permanent record system that is characteristic of the online network. The concept of ephemerality, which sounded almost ridiculous at the beginning, motives its users, to communicate and social network *just for fun*, a motive that seems to

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[4] Snapchat is a photo-messaging, photo-sharing and social networking application that enables users to send ephemeral/self-deleted photos, videos and messages. Snapchat claims to keep no user data on its servers except for the username and phone number.

be lost due to the self-edit culture advocated by Facebook and Instagram. It also responds to the Big Data, behavioral targeting[5], the searchability, recordability, and findability that are the foundation of these social networks (Madrigal 2013). The appeal of ephemeral content, however, is not simply the sheer fun of creating it, but also the urge to constantly generate new content. In this regard, Peters writes:

> "Live" is the prosthetic form of life, something that announces its authenticity against potentially deceptive substitutes. Its fundamental sense is contrastive: "live" means "not dead." […] "Live" also means "communication power", and such is crucial to modern communications. Because life could be simulated by recording and transmitting media, liveness became something eagerly sought. (1999, p.218)

While the old Instagram seeks for liveness in the notion of "lived" demonstrated by the faux-vintage photos and the invoked nostalgia, the Instagram Stories pursue liveness through the never ending circle of "not dead". The ephemeral technology resurrects notions of human's mortality and time's eventuality by setting a strict time limit to data availability, which keeps us coming back to create new content only to have them all terminated once their existence - the extension of our beings - are confirmed (seen) and accepted (liked) by others. *Live* means *not dead*, but in terms of ephemerality, it is more of a *die another day*. Despite the differences, both look for liveness in the documentation of everyday activities. Though seem contradicting, they are actually enhancing each other, the Instagram app is thus integrated into every step of the daily life, be it glamorous or un-glamorous. The ordinary nature of Instagram Stories takes a further step in creating the authenticity illusion. For each edited photo on Instagram, there is a behind-the-scene that goes in its Stories. Although there is no indication of how 'authentic' it really is, Instagram Stories rides on the genre convention created by ephemeral technology and Snapchat: less grand narrative, more personal communication. However, the truth is, Instagram Stories is very much in line with Instagram's filtered, over-transparent culture, as the Stories are placed on top of the Instagram feed, screaming for attention. Overall, it simply adds a layer of complexity to today's concept of mediated authenticity.

A feature within Instagram Stories called Instagram Live, which allows users to broadcast live up to an hour, also contributes to the creation of authenticity illusion. The genre convention of 'live broadcasting' indicates rawness and reliability, while live commenting and liking strengthen the

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[5] Behavioral targeting is a technique used by online web publishers and advertisers to increase the effectiveness of advertising by using user activity information.
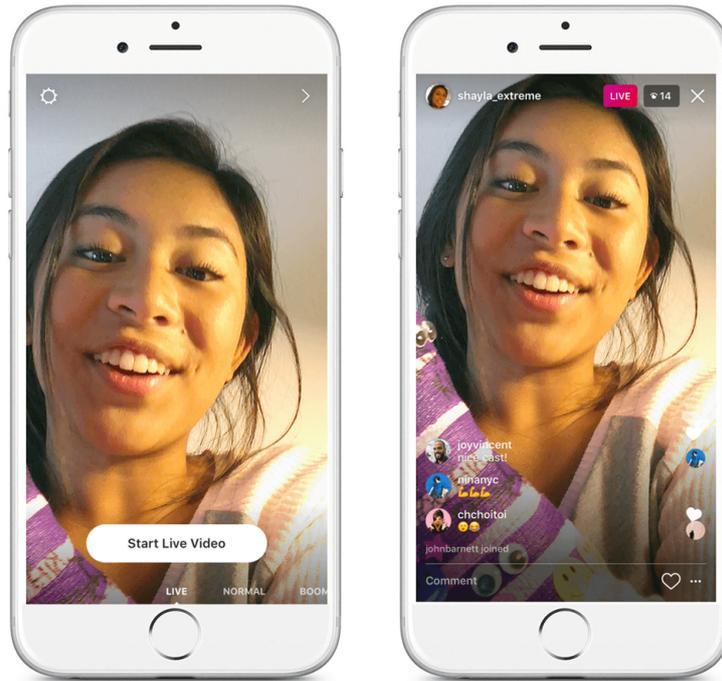
Figure 7. Instagram Live

conviction of real-time communication. In this feature, Instagram takes a step away from the faux-vintage lens of the nostalgia machine to become a trust-building machine. If the users are not seeking for acceptance and trust from the filtered photos, they can look for them in a more direct way. Again, the live video can still be staged and prepared, but in its newness and participatory culture context, it is a great tool to craft authenticity. There is very little to interfere the broadcaster and the viewers, the whole screen is taken up by the human, the rest of the technology fades into the background. The 'broadcast' sessions appears more private and intimate this way - almost like a video call, but in essence still a broadcast, as users get notified when someone they follow go 'live'.

It makes sense for Instagram to put the Live feature inside Instagram Stories, together they create a fuller experience of the behind-the-scene, the seemingly-authentic alternative answer to the faux-vintage filters, which were once the go-to tools to generate mediated authenticity. Their correlation is dependent on the users' grand narrative. As stated on Instagram blog, the motivation behind these updates is to better fit the user's need for storytelling (Instagram 2016). There is no doubt that Instagram is doing everything to put the users at the center of its every feature and activity, yet at the same time, encouraging a culture of incessant data generation and pervasive computing. The next part will discover the user's perspective on this issue.

4.2 Interview

As mentioned in Methodology chapter, six interviews were conducted over Skype calls and transcribed. The findings were then summarized and put into categories as below. The details can be found in the Appendix.

4.2.1. Instagram usage

All of the interviewees checked their Instagram daily, several times a day. Only two of them admitted to uploading photos daily (IND1&4), one person explained that he uses Instagram for networking (IND1). The others claimed that they only upload when something exciting happens, mostly when they travel. Interestingly, they were however not keeping track of how often they uploaded content. Two women actually checked on the spot and found out that they post more often than they thought (IND5&6). This indicates that these users are more active at browsing than posting content. The idea that only fun experiences should be shared on Instagram is dominating, reinforcing the social network's happy bubble in which everyone seems to be having an awesome life.

All the participants said the uploaded content reflect their daily life: scenery, food, daily activities, and selfies. Three said their content reflect the kind of content they follow, two out of them said this is because they only follow their friends(IND1,3&6). The latter explained, "I am interested in fashion, art, and living. Therefore most of my posts are associated with these topics. Because of my huge interests to these fields, I intend to follow people who share similar interests"(IND1).
The other three people said, in addition to friends and acquaintances, they also followed creative individuals, celebrities and brands on Instagram, hence their content do not always reflect what they follow.

Four participants said they don't post Instagram Stories (IND3,4,5,6), citing reason that they have nothing exciting to share. On the other hand, two out of these four said they sometimes check their friends' Instagram Stories to keep up with their daily lives (IND1&6), and one said she only checks Instagram Stories of "people I stalk"(IND4). Another one said she also watched Instagram Stories of celebrities and brands, expecting to see "cool events and things"(IND2). If have nothing to post, most interviewees browse their Instagram feed then check the Instagram Stories, except for one who said she always watches Instagram Stories first (IND2). This proves these users' preferred activity is still browsing. Although Instagram Stories is supposed to offer the more casual,

authentic, slice-of-life kind of storytelling, most of the users still cling to the narrative of the social media's happy bubble. On the other hand, it is interesting that these people are rather using Instagram Stories to watch other people's lives more closely.

Most of the participants are aware of Instagram Live, but not interested in posting or watching. All interviewees compared this feature to Facebook Live, most of them thought it cannot compete against Facebook. Only one participant was positive about Instagram Live, saying it is better for quick, casual streaming (IND2). It is very interesting how the interviewees are quick to compare the Live feature between Instagram and Facebook, despite that Instagram actually belongs to Facebook. As mentioned in the Interface Criticism chapter, since 2016 Instagram has been making many efforts to make its network resemble Facebook to boost engagement within the app. However, it seems that the users are still not used to seeing this shift of focus from filtered photos to networking.

Compared to other social media usage, except for one who said he only used Instagram (IND1), the others' answers were quite similar that Instagram is their secondary social media after Facebook. One woman said even though she uses Facebook more, Instagram is nicer because she doesn't have to read too much text (IND4). One said she is more inactive on Instagram because she mostly browses (IND2).

When asked about Instagram recently updated features, most of the interviewees praised the new minimalist design, with the exception of one who found it more confusing than before. Interestingly, three out of six brought up the new algorithm-driven timeline, two complained (IND4&6), and one said it was annoying at first but he grew used to it in the end. It indicates that Instagram succeeded at introducing the new design which puts the spotlight on the users' content. Although the Facebook-like timeline did not receive the same treatment, the users didn't really do anything against it and eventually learned to cope.

4.2.2 Instagram filters

All participants said they use filters on their Instagram photos. However, only half of them use Instagram built-in filters (IND3,4,6). The other half use filters from other professional photo editor applications such as VSCO Cam, Snapseed, Afterlight - these are also individuals who work in the creative industry (IND1,2,4). One interviewee admitted that this process of applying filter is more

time-consuming but he does it anyway because he likes the VSCO Cam filters more (IND1). It is interesting that there is also a shift in how users are using the filters. Instagram filters are now considered 'outdated' or not 'pretty' enough for a certain group of creative individuals that they seek for filters in other applications. On the other hand, Instagram still succeeds as a network, because these users are willing to go through more steps to edit and upload a picture, just to ensure the quality of their Instagram content. At the end of the day, filtered photos still prevail, and Instagram is still the winning platform to share them.

All of the interviewees asserted that the filters make the photos look better. The participants were generally quite confused as to why they think so. After a lot of small questions to get the interviewees thinking, two women revealed they want the photos to reflect their mood, one explained: "For positive or happy posts, I tend to use more bright and more saturated color tone. When I'm blue or down, the color can be colder and darker. It can also be another way to retell the authentic story, like how I want to live in the moment again, and want the color same as what I witnessed in real life. Normal camera cannot achieve it" (IND3). The latter shared the similar idea, "Black&white, blue, monochrome colours for sadness and isolation, warmer tones for happiness, but sometimes I mix them up just because I can"(IND4). One person said she uses the vintage filters when posting #throwback related photos (IND2). The rest admitted that they never think about why they use filters, and could not offer further reason except for aesthetic preference (IND1,5,6).

It can be interpreted here that the filters have become so normalized and integrated to the extent it becomes an unconscious, sometimes even emotional choice. Interestingly, one woman correlated the filter color with authenticity, citing reason that it best reflects her real life experience. This by no means refers to the true color of real life, but rather the emotions she felt at that moment, which can only be viewed through the color lens of the (faux) retro camera. This can be the link that connects the two concepts digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity: through the genre convention of retro images. This will be further discussed in the concluding chapter.

Five participants said they change the filters all the time (IND2,3,4,6), one said he always use the same filter consistently on all his Instagram photos (IND1). This simply says that the majority of users are quite spontaneous when it comes to how they create content on Instagram.

4.2.3 Hashtags on Instagram
All participants used hashtags on Instagram for different reasons. One woman said #throwback is

her most used hashtag (IND3), and two said they used to use popular hashtags for public validation but stopped after they set their account private (IND3&4).

Most said they used the hashtag to better express themselves: "I try to look for some sarcastic or funny hashtags, most of them are quite random and not following any trends. I use hashtags because it elaborates my caption. Sometimes if my caption indicates one idea, my hashtags can explain that idea in a funny way" (IND5). Another participant shared the same line of thinking, "The most popular one that I use should be #beautiful. I do not know why I keep using this word but it makes me feel happier. I don't take efforts trying to expose myself to the Internet. I only use hashtags because I believe that they help me emphasize what I would like to say on my post" (IND1). One woman said she used the self-invented hashtag to add her personality to the caption:

> "I usually use self-invented and spontaneous hashtags, I guess? Normally, I hashtag-coded my post […] Self-invented hashtags are usually shortened phrased which I feel would become awkward if they become full-fledged caption. Hence, I tend to use them to categorize my content and project some of my personality into it. They tend to be parodies of something else, say, a slogan or a common saying, but with just a twist of my personality. For example, if they are about my pets, you would usually see the hashtag #longdistancepets; if they are about food, it would probably be #foodIsMyFavoriteFWord, etc" (IND2).

It is interesting that people are using hashtags to insert their individuality. On the other hand, there is a stronger emphasis on storytelling through caption and hashtag, rather than public recognition. To a certain extent, it reflects Enli's concept of mediated authenticity, echoing the 'ambivalence' element of the authenticity illusion.

4.2.4 Digital nostalgia on Instagram

All interviewees answered yes when asked if they return to check their old photos. The frequency varied from a few times a month to once or twice every week. Reasons also varied. Three women said they check their old photos when they want to reflect on the old memories, "I like myself and my works, and I'd like to take a look back at my different states of mind in the past, a little reviewing, you can say" (IND5), "It's nice to reflect back on some moments that I may have forgotten" (IND2), "I often check when I want to renew my memory" (IND3). Some also said they often check when they need to show their friends something that happened in the past (IND2&6). One participant compared his Instagram feed to a mood board, "I often go back to either check or

delete old photos just to make sure that my Instagram looks like a complete mood board. I personally consider my Instagram as my face so therefore, I always want it to look perfect the way I want to portray myself" (IND1). Another interviewee had similar behavior, "I check on my old photos once or twice a week, and if I see pictures that bring back bad memories, I just delete them straight away" (IND4). These are also people who check their old photos more frequently than the others. This type of activity is known as *white-walling*[6], referring to the users' removal of the content shortly after it was posted. The purpose is to maintain the perfect profile, for the user is in fear that a social mistake may destroy their grand narrative. Although most of the interviewees check their old photos as an act of nostalgia, the others' behavior reflects the technoanxious age in which people are afraid of posting new content due to the over-transparency of social network. When years and years of updates are in display, the content remains while the context has been lost.

When asked whether Instagram is a great platform to celebrate old memories, all agreed with this statement though on different degree and for different reasons. One said, "All the photos are nicely laid out on the same platform, so each memory is one photo, it is easy to go back and relive the moment compared to other social networking services. So I agree with the statement" (IND3). The view was shared by another, "I agree. Because looking back at the timeline is like when you stroll through your memories" (IND6). This kind of reasoning ties digital nostalgia to Instagram interface design. Another shared, "Yes, I totally agree with this statement as it truly reflects what I have been putting my efforts into. Instagram is a great tool which I could keep great moments and share them with my friends. This is what makes me believe in the beauty of technology - improving everyone's lives" (IND1). One woman referred to the genre convention of photos as a reason, "It's a nice way to walk down the memory lane without using too many words. A picture can bring you back to that exact moment in time and the rest is history" (IND4).

The other interviewees shared similar yet less optimistic view:

> "I agree it was a great way to reflect on past memories, but not necessarily 'celebrate'. Sometimes people post quite sentimental and not necessarily happy things on this platform. I'm not sure what's to 'celebrate' about that. Also, I think it's not the whole scope of our memories, but only certain, sometimes random, moments and thoughts that we feel

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[6] The term was coined by Danah Boyd, who called it 'Risk Reduction Strategies', and first studied this phenomenon on Facebook: "If it's relevant now, it belongs on Facebook, but the old stuff is no longer relevant so it doesn't belong on Facebook. Her (the teenager's) narrative has nothing to do with adults or with Facebook as a data retention agent. She's concerned about how her postings will get her into unexpected trouble with her peers in an environment where saying the wrong thing always results in a fight" (Boyd, 2010).

comfortable posting them online. But as a whole, it's a good platform for reflection and preserving worthwhile moments" (IND2).

Another user added that the platform is also great to celebrate present:

"When uploading photos I think Instagram is a great platform, but not necessarily to celebrate old memories. Depends on what people think of photos. For me, my uploaded photos tell the present. I mean, even if the photos are taken in the past, my caption is what I want to say at the present. But in terms of reviewing previous photos, yes I agree that Instagram is a great platform to celebrate past memories, though my celebration is rather very personal" (IND5).

Overall, Instagram still stands out as an application for creation and reflection of memories, and specially optimized for digital nostalgia.

4.2.5 Authentic storytelling on Instagram

Regarding this issue, the opinions were mixed. One interviewee agreed that Instagram is a tool for authentic storytelling, citing that, "Instagram tells stories via photos. And photo is a way of freezing moment to capture the feeling. So I agree with this statement" (IND3).

The others were generally more skeptical. One acknowledged that Instagram is a great tool for storytelling, "I think Instagram gives people a platform to post a picture and tell a story that is more intimate than on Facebook. Personally, I use Instagram to experiment with words and pictures and how they connect with each other, but perhaps not all people do that: they just want to share without putting too much thought into the captions/texts" (IND4). Two participants also agreed about the storytelling tool but doubted authenticity on Instagram, "I believe that Instagram is a great way to share everyone's daily life. However, to be called 'a tool for authentic storytelling', I don't think so because the content we post to Instagram doesn't reflect every side of the story" (IND1); "I think Instagram is a tool for storytelling rather than "authentic storytelling". Like other social networks, it a tool for any users – a user to upload and share their stories via pictures and captions. Content can be made up and photoshopped, taken from various sources without credit or permission. At the moment, I don't see any factors that can make Instagram a more authentic storytelling tool than other social networks" (IND6).

The rest were more neutral in their opinions, saying that it depends on the users rather than the network:

"I guess it can be, depending on how "authentic" you want to your social presence be. After all, Instagram is a tool and we largely have control over our accounts, meaning its authenticity depends on how we use it. If we want to tell an authentic or meaningful story, Instagram offers a platform where we can freely utilize visual/photographic means to do so. Surely there have been many cases when our online personality or social life doesn't reflect our real ones. But I think it all depends on whether we – as owners of our online accounts – want to tell our real story or not" (IND2).

Another participant shared the same line of thinking, "Different people can have different ways of thinking and they use Instagram to their likings. For me, as I follow many types of accounts, I see besides storytelling, people can use Instagram to share to a smaller circle what they don't want to share on Facebook, to upload pictures of themselves, or to promote their products" (IND5). Compared to digital nostalgia, the users' opinions were more divided when it comes to authenticity, yet all contended that Instagram is a tool for storytelling. Instagram's effort at fostering engagement through the documentation of daily life/storytelling is accepted by its users, though the application definitely has no control on how the users interpret the content.

5. Conclusion

This final section discusses the research findings and proposes outlook for future studies. The aim of this study is to develop further understanding of retromodern technology, particularly Instagram, in reconstructing our knowledge of society and everyday social conduct. The paper draws on the concepts of digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity as the theoretical framework. Based on the two notions, the research takes the human-computer interaction approach to study Instagram. Interface criticism and qualitative interview were conducted to answer the research questions. The concluding chapter would first discuss the findings to answer the research questions, then reflect on the research process, how this research positions itself in the academic landscape, and the future outlook.

5.1. Discussion of results

The findings are summarized and structured around the research questions.

RQ1. How are the concepts of nostalgia and authenticity integrated into Instagram interface?

The interface criticism of Instagram was conducted to help answer this question. Interface criticism provides the methodological framework to study human-computer interaction, the discipline places itself between technological and socio-cultural materiality, combining elements of interface aesthetics and interaction design. In this paper, the interface criticism addresses two main issues: how the concept of digital nostalgia manifests in Instagram's user interface over the years, and how Instagram approaches mediated authenticity in its recent features.

Before the drastic rebranding effort in 2016, Instagram has been known for the classic retro camera logo and Polaroid square-styled photos, reflecting the skeuomorphism practice in design, in which digital objects are designed to resemble the real-world counterparts. Skeuomorphism is often employed in interface design when introducing new technology to make the digital object appear more user-friendly. For Instagram, skeuomorphism helps make the idea of faux-vintage filters less alien and more inviting. The retro design invokes the nostalgia of a past that most Instagram users have never lived through but certainly romanticized. However, over time skeuomorphism proves to be outdated as the users grow to be more accustomed to the faux-vintage filters - which once considered alien have become a norm. Over the years Instagram has introduced updates to its interface that slowly depart from the retro design. Late 2016 Instagram launched a big rebranding update, including the logo and user interface design. Although reference to the old design can still be detected such as the retro camera shape, the new logo possesses high propositional density and high visual saliency that better capture attention and imprint on users' mind. The Instagram design team has adopted the neuroscience-inspired approach in the update, signifying the new age of design where technology further integrates into people's lives on a subconscious level. Instagram user interface gets the same face lift, especially the filters. The colorful filters especially stand out in stark contrast with the white background and minimalist user interface, the intention is to place the users' content in the spotlight while the technology vanishes in the background. The new design is no subtle change, but still shows consistency with the previous version, while simplifying the whole interface down to its most basic feature: the faux-vintage filters. The filters still stand at the very core of the business, along with its square framed photo display in the user profile grid, even though users can upload non-square pictures now. The hybrid of aesthetics suggests that, although Instagram embraces its functionality as a new media, the application still follows the logics of digital nostalgia as a creative tool. There is still a strong focus on the filters and square frame that have constituted the DNA of Instagram. The concept of digital nostalgia is still there, just

repackaged now. The mix of old and new suggests a new culture of pervasive computing in which the technology increasingly fades into the background.

Since last year, Instagram has been releasing new feature updates, including Facebook-like updates and new features that have nothing to do with the faux-vintage photos and videos. Some of the most important ones include the Facebook-like algorithmic timeline, Instagram Stories and Instagram Live. These attempts show Instagram's ambition to grow beyond its original business model, which focuses on the creation and sharing of filtered content. The aim is to boost engagement within the app, as Instagram was reported to be falling behind Facebook and other apps. Instagram Stories, which is a copycat of ephemeral photo-sharing application Snapchat, helps put Instagram back in the game and even gains more active users than Snaptchat itself. Instagram Stories spots a much more user-friendly interface, it works together with the normal uploading mode to further integrate Instagram in the documentation of everyday life, whether there is a special event to document or not. Although there is no indication of how 'authentic' it really is, Instagram Stories rides on the genre convention created by ephemeral technology, self-deleted content: less grand narrative, more personal communication. The feature is put on the top of the feed once user is logged in, calling to action. This adds a layer of complexity to today's concept of mediated authenticity. Instagram Live is a copied feature from Facebook that was recently added inside Instagram Stories. The genre convention of 'live broadcasting' indicates rawness and reliability, while live commenting and liking strengthen the conviction of real-time communication. The feature is designed to resemble a video call with the main focus on the broadcaster and audiences, the live session, however, can be picked up by Instagram algorithm and featured on its public Explore feed. Together, Instagram Stories and Instagram Live create a fuller experience of the behind-the-scene, seemingly authentic alternative answer to the faux-vintage filters, which were once the go-to tools to generate mediated authenticity. The new user interface places the users and their content at the centre, while the technology blends seamlessly into the background.

To conclude, although Instagram has made some changes since last year to branch out of its trademark retro design, the faux-vintage filters and square frame photos still play the central role in the application. Instagram's approach to user interface design has migrated to the neuroscience level. The technology has become more subdued in the background, putting the users and the content in the spotlight. This change certainly encourages users to create content and engage more within the application, while not being distracted by the application itself. It indicates the emergence of pervasive computing, in which technology permeates every nook and corner of our daily life. Concepts such as nostalgia and authenticity on Instagram become harder to pinpoint and

define, as they are continuously challenged by the new technologies such as Instagram Stories and Instagram Live. Ephemeral photos were once considered a direct opposition against the nostalgia-infused faux-vintage Instagram photos, yet now they work together to enhance the 'authentic' daily storytelling. Whatever new technology comes up next, Instagram will make sure that it fits into this narrative.

RQ2. How do Instagram users respond to the Instagram logics, especially in terms of authenticity and nostalgic values?

Six interviews were conducted for this paper. Although the sampling was quite small and similar in terms of age and gender, the result provided interesting insight into this particular group of Instagram users. The interview questions were created based on interface criticism, which recognized daily storytelling as an instrument and motivation in cultivating digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity on Instagram. The faux-vintage filters still play large part in the photo-sharing process. However, the creative users started to seek for filters from other professional photo editing apps rather than using the Instagram built-in filters. Their willingness to go through this time-consuming process suggests that Instagram's social role has overtaken the creative role, which is in truth a bigger win for the application. On the other hand, it indicates how the usage of faux-vintage filters has become more intricate and developed into a sector of its own, to the extent that most photo taking applications these days offer built-in filters, and there is a great market for professional filter apps like Afterlight and VSCO Cam. As for reasons, aesthetics preference aside, two users made the connection between the retro filters and emotions, citing that retelling stories through the faux-vintage filters' saturated colors makes the photos more authentically emotional. This connects the dot between faux-vintage filters, digital nostalgia, and mediated authenticity: through the genre convention of retro photography. Unlike digital photography and its never-ending circle of data generation and manipulation, retro photography celebrates the perishable by freezing time and space. The retro photographs are neither a reflection of reality nor an artificial product, they are authentic because the photographer is never sure how the photos will turn out. In this light, retro photographs are endowed with authenticity and nostalgia, creating a genre unto themselves. The faux-vintage photos invoke nostalgic feeling as much as sense of authenticity, they validate each other in a way that prompts real emotional attachment, even though the process of creation itself is completely artificial and manipulated. Instagram is deemed the best platform not only to create memories but also to celebrate memories - the user profile grid with its Polaroid-like photos is a honeypot for digital nostalgia.

All interviewees agreed that Instagram is great for documenting everyday life, they were, however, dubious when it comes to authentic storytelling. Though the users trusted the authenticity generated from retro photographs, they did not trust the content itself. The users treat Instagram as a platform to share and connect, but with caution. Instagram Stories and Live, despite the deliberate efforts at supporting casual everyday documentation, were viewed and practiced by the users just as an addition to the happy bubble of the filtered social network.

Overall, Instagram's drastic branding overhaul was well received by the users. Although some users expressed discontent with certain features such as the algorithmic timeline or the built-in faux-vintage filters, they still stayed loyal to the application. Some even looked for a quick solution in the third-party apps but stayed rooted on Instagram photo-sharing platform. The photos no longer reflect what happens in their life, but rather how the users want them to be viewed and remembered in the present and future. The users' creation and usage of personalized hashtags strengthen the authenticity illusion, yet at the same time, rebel against hashtag guideline Instagram has been encouraging its users to use - creating short, concise hashtags for public recognition. The interviewees were not used to sharing content on Instagram Stories and Instagram Live, even though they warmed up to the idea of watching Stories of other people. Eventually, this should change, Instagram Stories will soon become a norm, similar to Snapchat. Over last year, Instagram has been launching more features resembling Facebook, the addition of like button on comments is the most recent update. This shift from creative tool to social network is a calculated move, as the user base grows stronger, it is getting harder for users to leave. The application has little control on how the users interpret the content, but it has the incentive and power to forge new user habit and behavior. Although Instagram's feature updates over the past year are simply copies from either Snapchat or Facebook, the app still manages to grow steadily. It is not hard to foresee Instagram's next move: the filters will still stay at the core of the business, but there will be more social network, more ephemerality, more augmented reality. The real questions are, how will that be executed, and how should we respond to it? At the end of the day, it is still the users that determine what works and does not, although it is becoming harder to spot the technological breadcrumbs as the screen fuses into our daily lives.

5.2 Reflection and future outlook

Adopting the human-computer interaction approach, this paper combines two methods interface criticism and interview to study the notions of digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity on

Instagram. The unorthodox choice of methods has yielded interesting insight from different angles: from the computer and human's perspectives. The interface criticism takes a descriptive approach. Although subjective, the analysis is grounded in interface design theories, which creates a foundation for interpretation and reflection. Based on the findings, interview questions were created. Due to limited time and manpower, six interviews were conducted over the course of two weeks. A great challenge that occurred in the interview is the interviewees' lack of self-reflection when it comes to social media usage. Several times the interviewees responded, "I don't know, I never think about that". The author had to make observation on the participant's Instagram profile and asked personal Instagram account related questions to prompt the answers. On the other hand, it justifies that the semi-structured interview is the right method for this study, otherwise, it would not be able to generate the same kind of results. One limitation is the small and similar sampling size, however, this helps shed light on certain group and issue, pattern behavior such as the usage of professional photo editing apps among creative professionals is an example. The interviews resulted in a considerable amount of information that was systematically summarized and categorized. Put together with the theoretical framework and interface criticism, the data was systematically analyzed based on the research questions. There is no simple one sentence answer to each research question. Instagram's employment of neuroscience-based technique in interface design and the app's narrative of creating better storytelling experiences show the company's commitment to the emerging era of pervasive computing. On the flip side, today users start to rely on Instagram less as a creative tool and more as a social network. As a result, concepts of digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity are further complicated. Instagram's business model is dependent on the users' creation and sharing of memories, the company makes it their mission to improve this service. In its simultaneous pursuit of faux-vintage photos and ephemeral content, Instagram slowly redefines how memories are remembered and celebrated - through the gritty lens of faux-vintage filters and the incessant flow of data that exist not to last.

Despite the aforementioned limitation, this paper has addressed issues that have not been properly explored in previous studies about Instagram. While previous qualitative researches have noted the connection between Instagram, digital nostalgia and mediated authenticity, these works are confined within the theoretical realm. Quantitative studies also touched these topics, however, they are mostly concerned with the survey of Instagram users and failed to provide an in-depth understanding of Instagram itself. Taking human-computer interaction approach, this research manages to provide a focused study on both perspectives. It also proves the growing need for human-computer interaction approach in new media study. Social networks like Instagram are significant to the young generation – the society members that will define the future of our

coexistence with technology. It is time that we start taking these mobile applications less as social fads and more as indicators of societal changes because our practice of social media today will reflect greatly in human's future social and daily conduct. This paper only addresses several aspects of the issue to help realize the state that we are living in. Further in-depth and up-to-date human-computer interaction studies are required, for our lives are susceptible to technology changes, whose impacts are quick and enormous. A better understanding of our digital culture is crucial to the development of the self and society.

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Images

Figure 1: Ferri-Benedetti, F. (2014, January 16). [Digital image]. Retrieved May 17, 2017, from https://features.en.softonic.com/20-apps-to-make-you-an-instagram-pro

Figure 2: Kotenko, J. (2013, May 6). [Digital image]. Retrieved May 17, 2017, from https://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/in-case-you-didnt-notice-instagram-did-a-logo-typeface-redesign/

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Figure 5: Valdivia, P. (2015, June 3). [Digital image]. Retrieved May 17, 2017, from https://www.buzzfeed.com/pablovaldivia/instagram-filters-you-wish-existed?utm_term=.hoxwYMb6X#.adDbKdOX5

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Figure 7: Instagram. (2017). Instagram Brand Resources [Digital image]. Retrieved May 17, 2017, from https://en.instagram-brand.com/assets

Appendix

Annex 1. Interview questions

For a logical presentation of findings, interview questions were reorganized and put into categories as follow:

Instagram usage

How often do you log in Instagram? What do you usually do on Instagram?

How often do you upload to Instagram?

What kind of content do you upload on Instagram? Does your content reflect the kind of content you follow on Instagram?

Do you use Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you update your Stories? What kind of content do you publish on Instagram Stories? Can you compare the kind of content you post on Instagram to Instagram Stories?

Do you watch other people's Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you check on their Stories updates? What do you expect to see on their Instagram Stories?

Have you used Instagram Live? Have you watched other people's Instagram Live? What do you think of Instagram Live compared to Instagram's other features?

What do you think of the new design updates that Instagram released last year?

How would you compare your Instagram usage to other social network usage?

Instagram filters

Do you use filters on your Instagram photos? If yes, do you use Instagram filters and editing tools? Why do you use the filters?

Do you use a specific filter for a specific post? Do you use the same filter(s) consistently on all your photos?

Hashtags on Instagram

Have you used the hashtag on your Instagram photos? If yes, what are your most used hashtags? Can you elaborate on why and how you use those hashtags?

Digital nostalgia on Instagram

Have you ever gone back to check on your old photos? Can you elaborate how often and why?

To what extent to do you agree with this statement "Instagram is a great platform to celebrate past memories" and why?

Authentic storytelling on Instagram

To what extent do you agree with this statement "Instagram is a tool for authentic storytelling" and why?

Annex 2. Interviews

Due to the nature of semi-structure interview, the actual transcript contains a lot of non-relevant responses and chit-chat. The transcript was hence tidied up with a focus on the questions, in order to deliver a comprehensive presentation of relevant information.

1. Interview with IND1

Male. 27 years old. Creative professional, living in Bangkok.

Number of followers: 950+. Number of following : 1000+.

01/05/2017.

1. How often do you log in Instagram? What do you usually do on Instagram?
I log in Instagram almost everyday. It is the first thing I do when waking up in the morning. It is also the last thing I do before I go to sleep in the evening. For the past two years, Instagram has become increasingly important to my daily life similar to email.

Uploading photos and updating my friends' daily activities are my normal activities on Instagram. This is the beauty of technology that helps me stay in touch with my friends regardless their different timezone and location.

2. How often do you upload to Instagram?
I do not have a specific time to upload photos to Instagram. It could be 3 A.M in the morning or 12 P.M in the afternoon. Sometimes, I decide to stay silent for a while. But, if I am travelling, I do upload lots of photos – just like 03 photos in just 05 minute.

3. What kind of content do you upload on Instagram? Does your content reflect the kind of content you follow on Instagram?

I am interested in fashion, art and living. Therefore most of my posts are associated with these 03 topics. Because of my huge interests to these fields, I intend to follow people who share with me similar interests.

4. Do you use filters on your Instagram photos? If yes, do you use Instagram filters and editing tools?

I do use filters on my Instagram just to make my photos look better. Besides, I also use third-party applications where I could add more effects to my photos. I am currently addicted to VSCO app which allows me to add many effects. I also use the editing tools of Instagram app to add some final touches to make my photos the way I want them to be. It is a really complicated and time-consuming process.

5. Why do you use the filters?

I do believe in natural beauty of each photo. However, I also believe in the power of filters that allow me to add some special effects like brightness, saturation to make photos better.

6. Do you use a specific filter for specific post? Do you use the same filter(s) consistently on all your photos?

I don't use many filters; I am faithful to only 01 filter for every post. This helps me keep the consistence of every post on my Instagram.

7. Have you used hashtag on your Instagram photos? If yes, what are your most used hashtags? Can you elaborate on why and how you use those hashtags?

I do use hashtag on my Instagram. The most popular one that I use should be #beautiful. I do not know why I keep using this word but it makes me feel happier. I don't take efforts trying to expose myself on the Internet. I only use hashtags because I believe that they help me emphasize what I would like to say on my post.

8. Do you interact with your followers? If yes, how? (via caption, comment, direct message or else?)

Since my Instagram is private, I know everyone who follows me. I often do comment, reply or direct message to my friends. Frankly speaking, Instagram is my ultimate communication tool nowadays.

9. Do you use Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you update your Stories? What kind of content do you publish on Instagram Stories? Can you compare the kind of content you post on Instagram to Instagram Stories?

Lately, I do use Instagram Stories more often. However, I don't update much on my Instagram stories. I only use my Instagram Stories when I want to share my experience. I post photos on Instagram if I want to share moments with friends.

10. Do you watch other people's Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you check on their Stories updates? What do you expect to see on their Instagram Stories?

Yes I do watch other people's Instagram Stories. But, I don't check on people's Instagram Stories that often. I only check their Stories occasionally.

11. Have you used Instagram Live? Have you watched other people's Instagram Live? What do you think of Instagram Live compared to Instagram's other features?

I do use Instagram Live function and also watch other people's Instagram Live. I do believe that it is a great function to add to Instagram.

12. How would you compare your Instagram usage to other social network usage?

Unfortunately, Instagram is the only social network app that I use at the moment.

13. To what extent do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a tool for authentic storytelling" and why?

Personally speaking, I believe that Instagram is a great way to share everyone's daily life. However, to be called "a tool for authentic storytelling", I don't think so because the content, we post to Instagram, doesn't reflect every side of the story.

14. Do you often go back and check on your old photos?

Yes, indeed! I often go back to either check or delete old photos just to make sure that my Instagram looks like a complete mood board. I personally consider my Instagram as my face so therefore, I always want it to look perfect the way I want to portray myself.

15. What do you think of the new layout design that Instagram rolled out last year?

I really enjoy the new layout design, although I didn't get used to it at first especially the new algorithm-driven feed. I couldn't really get myself updated with everyone's latest posts. However, I understand that it is what matters to me the most rather than what's the latest. I would say that I really enjoy the new layout design of Instagram at the moment.

16. To what extend do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a great platform to celebrate past memories"?

Yes, I totally agree with this statement as it truly reflects what I have been putting my efforts into. Instagram is a great tool which I could keep great moments and share them with my friends. This is what makes me believe in the beauty of technology - improving everyone's lives.

2. Interview with IND2

Female. 26 years old. Art student, living in New York City.

Number of followers: 100+. Number of following: 300+.

30/04/2017

1. *How often do you log in Instagram? What do you usually do on Instagram?*

   I check my Instagram feed almost every day, but upload photos irregularly.

   I usually browsing my feed, checking my friend circle's Insta Stories, and upload my own photos and stories whenever I feel like it. I would say browsing is my most regular activity on any social media.

2. *What is the order of your Instagram routine? (ie. check Insta stories then browse insta feed? etc)*

   If I don't have any update, I would go for Insta Stories first since it's a quick way of checking what others are doing daily, then I would browse my feeds more in-depth and kind of diverse updates.

   If I want to update, updating my photo usually comes first, then Stories and normal Insta feed. I either update my Instagram on-spot - meaning I update when I hang out with my friends, or random update at home, usually for throwback. If it's the former, I don't usually follow up by browsing my feed or Stories since I have other activities to engage in. If it's the latter, I spent time browsing others' updates at my leisure.

3. *How often do you upload to Instagram?*

Probably about 5-7 photos a month? As mentioned above, my updating schedule, if I ever had one, is as irregular as it gets.

4. *What kind of content do you upload on Instagram? Does your content reflect the kind of content you follow on Instagram?*

The majority of my upload is pretty casual. Most of them are about food and pets, with occasional selfies, sceneries and throwbacks. I have been uploading throwbacks more often these days, probably due to nostalgia's call.

To a certain extent, yes. I follow both personal and business/fashionista/celebrities accounts on Instagram. I would say my uploaded content rarely differ from those in my friend circle – mostly about trivial things in our daily lives. However, my content does not reflect those from more public type of accounts. I don't often showcase my purchase goods or endorse any brand on my account.

5. *Do you use filters on your Instagram photos? If yes, do you use Instagram filters and editing tools?*

Yes, but not heavy. I rarely use Instagram built-in filters these days. I use VSCO Cam mostly to adjust the coloring, brightness and contrast of my photos before transferring them to Instagram. I tend to upload multiple photos in one collage before Instagram rolled out its carousel features, so I use Instagram's layout and cropping tool pretty often.

6. *Why do you use the filters?*

I'm not sure…As someone with a designer mindset, I always want to make my photo look flattering and fit my own sense of aesthetic.

7. *Can you elaborate? How would you describe your sense of aesthetics on Instagram?*

Since most of my Instagram updates are photographic, (rarely illustrative), I tend to try to preserve the original lighting condition of each photo as much as I can. Normally I would just adjust the brightness and contrast of each photo and keep the original color tone. Overall I prefer something with enough contrast (which is why I rarely touch the "fade" effect), sharp and vibrant (unless I intentionally aim for black and white).

I think it also depends on the type of contents I'm updating. The general rule above applies to

most contents that requires true reflection of colors (for example, sceneries, selfies with makeup). But when it comes to homemade-food or childhood photos, which are not always taken in the most ideal lighting condition, I would want to retouch them more.

8. *Do you use a specific filter for specific post? Do you use the same filter(s) consistently on all your photos?*

   I don't usually use vintage filters on my photos since I find most of them rather "fake?" I do use them occasionally when it comes to throwback or childhood-related photos though. For other type of contents, I prefer to manually adjust the effects on my own.

9. *Have you used hashtag on your Instagram photos? If yes, what are your most used hashtags? Can you elaborate on why and how you use those hashtags?*

   I usually use self-invented and spontaneous hashtags I guess? Normally, I hashtag-coded my post. For example, if they are about my pets, you would usually see the hashtag #longdistancepets; if they are about food, it would probably be #foodIsMyFavoriteFWord, etc.

   I cannot tell which hashtag I use the most. I also use some common and simple tags that are related to the post's content, for example, #cats #dogs #food, etc.

10. *Can you elaborate why you use these hashtags?*

    Self-invented hashtags are usually shortened phrased which I feel would become awkward if they become full-fledge caption. Hence, I tend to use them to categorize my contents and project some of my personality into it. They tend to be parodies of something else, say, a slogan or a common saying, but with just a twist of my personality.

    Common tags are used since they are short, easy to understand and optimized for search engine, and I don't have to type a lot when writing caption or keyword to search for what I want. When I set my account public, I guess it also attracts all kinds of people to my account, which increases my views, though this eventually become annoying so I set my account back to private.

11. *Do you interact with your followers? If yes, how? (via caption, comment, direct message or else?)*

Yes, but not on a daily basis. I usually try to reply my friends' comment, liking them to show my appreciation, and sometimes PM if I came across something I would want to discuss privately.

When I set my account public, I also received many public comments from strangers, many of them are basic compliment like "Nice," "Like it!," or "Great!," to which I didn't bother replying. Many of them are also spams, so I have returned the private setting for the last couple of months.

12. *Do you use Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you update your Stories? What kind of content do you publish on Instagram Stories? Can you compare the kind of content you post on Instagram to Instagram Stories?*

Yes. I don't upload to it very often though. I think I have uploaded about 4 so far, which is about soy milk, coffee, beef stew and roasted black sesame respectively. So I guess they are all related to food and drinks. I uploaded quite a minimal amount of Stories that I remember everything I uploaded lol.

I don't know for sure, but I probably will become much more active on Stories if my life is more eventful. Most of the time, Stories just slip off my mind though, so I usually update to my main Insa account. The latter definitely has more diverse content, caption and photos. But even if I become more active on Stories, I would say they should become more similar in terms of contents.

13. *Do you watch other people's Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you check on their Stories updates? What do you expect to see on their Instagram Stories?*

Yes, and fairly regularly. I would check my friends' update every day, some business live stuff if the live event excites me enough. I don't have any expectation for my friends' Stories. I do enjoy catching a few quick glance into their everyday life and basically check if they are alive (and well).

When it comes to more famous accounts, I guess I do expect some sorts of eventful updates I guess. For example, companies would showcase their products, beauty gurus would show off some quick tips and such.

14. *Have you used Instagram Live? Have you watched other people's Instagram Live? What do you think of Instagram Live compared to Instagram's other features?*

I have never used Insta live. I don't think anything in my current daily life worth live streaming lol. I did watched others' live, though if they are not exciting enough, I wouldn't watch them for long.

I think it's a nice thing if you know how to use it probably, though I think Facebook Live is still more popular? Instagram Live is probably better for short and quick streams.

15. *What do you think of the new layout design that Instagram rolled out last year?*

The new design aligns more with the modern design trend. It's cleaner, more minimalistic and monotone so the actual photo contents can stand out more. At first, I was not used to the Stories section at the top, but now I think about it, it's actually a distinctive design choice.

16. *How would you compare your Instagram usage to other social network usage?*

Probably in my top 3 (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). I check all three everyday but use each one for a very different purpose. I would say Twitter is more of a self-initiated platform for me since I just usually jump in there and type in whatever I thought at the moment while ignoring other people's tweets. However, my Facebook and Instagram activities are mostly just browsing, which makes sense since I don't tend to share my thoughts on platforms with more public presence.

17. *To what extent do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a tool for authentic storytelling" and why?*

I guess it can be, depending on how "authentic" you want to your social presence be. After all, Instagram is a tool and we largely have control over our accounts, meaning its authenticity depends on how we use it. If we want to tell an authentic or meaningful story, Instagram offers a platform where we can freely utilize visual/photographic means to do so.

Surely there have been many cases when our online personality or social life doesn't reflect our real ones. But I think it all depends on whether we – as owners of our online accounts – want to tell our real story or not.

18. *Do you often go back and check on your old photos?*

Sometimes I guess. It's nice to reflect back on some moments that I may have forgotten. I also have this habit of checking old photos (be them my friends' or mine) to prove my point or remind my friends of photos they forget about.

19. *To what extent to do you agree with this statement "Instagram is a great platform to celebrate past memories"*

I agree it was a great way to REFLECT on past memories, but not necessarily "celebrate." Sometimes people post quite sentimental and not necessarily happy things on this platform. I'm not sure what's to "celebrate" about that. Also, I think it's not the whole scope of our memories, but only certain, sometimes random, moments and thoughts that we feel comfortable posting them online. But as a whole, it's a good platform for reflection and preserving worthwhile moments.

3. Interview with IND3

Female. 27 years old. Project manager. Living in Melbourne.

Number of followers: 150+. Number of following: 150+.

03/05/2017

1. *How often do you log in Instagram? What do you usually do on Instagram?*
   3-4 times a day. I check out newsfeed, check out Search bar.

2. *How often do you upload to Instagram?*
   Sometimes, I don't keep track. Maybe everyday if I'm going to somewhere cool. Sometimes no posts in a while.

3. *What kind of content do you upload on Instagram? Does your content reflect the kind of content you follow on Instagram?*
   Usually scenery or self portrait as in selfies.
   Yes, for landscapes, sceneries.

4. *Do you use filters on your Instagram photos? If yes, do you use Instagram filters and editing tools?*
   Yes. Yes for Instagram filters and editing tools.

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5. *Why do you use the filters?*

I don't know, I never think about it. I want to change the color tone. And perhaps too lazy for other apps.

6. *What do you mean by 'color tone'?*

Color tone is a way to express feelings. for positive or happy posts, I tend to use more bright and more saturated color tone. when im blue or down, the color can be colder and darker.

it also can be another way to retell the authentic story. like how i want to live in the moment again, and want the color same as what i witnessed/saw in real life and normal camera cannot achieve it.

7. *Do you use a specific filter for specific post? Do you use the same filter(s) consistently on all your photos?*

No, I usually try out every filter to see which suits the post. Different posts have different filter.

8. *Have you used hashtag on your Instagram photos? If yes, what are your most used hashtags? Can you elaborate on why and how you use those hashtags?*

Not really. The most used is probably #throwback

9. *Do you interact with your followers? If yes, how? (via caption, comment, direct message or else?)*

Yes, I comment and sometimes direct messages.

10. *Do you use Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you update your Stories? What kind of content do you publish on Instagram Stories? Can you compare the kind of content you post on Instagram to Instagram Stories?*

No, I don't use Instagram Stories.

11. *Do you watch other people's Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you check on their Stories updates? What do you expect to see on their Instagram Stories?*

No, I don't watch other people's Stories.

12. *Have you used Instagram Live? Have you watched other people's Instagram Live? What do you think of Instagram Live compared to Instagram's other features?*

Is it like Facebook Live? No I don't use Instagram Live.

13. *What do you think of the new layout design that Instagram rolled out last year?*

I think it gets more confusing whenever they update.

14. *How would you compare your Instagram usage to other social network usage?*

It is a bit less than time spent for Facebook. But it's the only two social network apps I use apart from Internet messaging.

15. *To what extent do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a tool for authentic storytelling" and why?*

Because Instagram tells stories via photos. And photo is a way of freezing moment to capture the feeling. So I agree with this statement.

16. *Do you often go back and check on your old photos?*

Yes. When I want to renew my memory, or compare with other Instagramers.

16. *To what extent to do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a great platform to celebrate past memories"*

All the photos are nicely laid out in the same platform, so each memory is one photo, its easy to go back and relive the moment compared to other SNS. So I agree with the statement.

4. Interview with IND4

Female. 25 years old. Writer, living in Hanoi.

Number of followers: 250+. Number of following: 150+.

06/05/2017

1. *How often do you log in Instagram? What do you usually do on Instagram?*

Almost every hour. Usually I check close friends' accounts to see what they're up to first, since IG changed their algorithm recently and stopped showing by timeline.

2. *How often do you upload to Instagram?*

I don't really keep track, but almost every day.

3. *What kind of content do you upload on Instagram? Does your content reflect the kind of content you follow on Instagram?*

Pictures taken by me with vague captions. My content doesn't reflect what/who I follow on IG. I also follow celebrities, pet accounts, fashion magazines etc.

4. *Do you use filters on your Instagram photos? If yes, do you use Instagram filters and editing tools?*

I use filters but not Instagram's. I edited the pictures using other editing apps like Snapseed or Afterlight before uploading on IG.

5. *Why do you use the filters?*

To achieve the right lighting/color so that the pictures can be as true to my mood/caption as possible, I guess.

Sometimes I have the perfect shot, I come up with the caption, then go back and edit the picture to fit with the caption. Sometimes it's vice versa (caption first – picture and edit later). Black&white, blue, monochrome colors for sadness and isolation, warmer tones for happiness, but sometimes I mix 'em up just because I can.

6. *Do you use a specific filter for specific post? Do you use the same filter(s) consistently on all your photos?*

I change filters frequently. I don't have a common theme or color scheme for my IG posts.

7. *Have you used hashtag on your Instagram photos? If yes, what are your most used hashtags? Can you elaborate on why and how you use those hashtags?*

I used hashtags that are related to the subject, color scheme, theme of the pictures/captions. Most used is probably #photography or #filmphotography. I used hashtags for recognition and public validation, but ever since I set my account private, I have stopped using hashtags.

8. *Do you interact with your followers? If yes, how? (via caption, comment, direct message or else?)*

Yes, via comment and direct messages.

9. *Do you use Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you update your Stories? What kind of content do you publish on Instagram Stories? Can you compare the kind of content you post on Instagram to Instagram Stories?*

When I first started using IG Stories, I update 3-5 times per day if it was an eventful day. Now I barely use it. IG Stories are more spontaneous and don't follow a certain theme/idea – just things I find interesting but not interesting enough to be made into a post.

10. *Do you watch other people's Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you check on their Stories updates? What do you expect to see on their Instagram Stories?*

Sometimes, only people I stalk haha. Usually I check every time they have a new story, and I don't expect much from them, I just want to know how they're doing and all that.

11. *Have you used Instagram Live? Have you watched other people's Instagram Live? What do you think of Instagram Live compared to Instagram's other features?*

I have used it once and watched it once. IG Live is... annoying? I don't know, I just don't like it that much.

12. *How would you compare your Instagram usage to other social network usage?*

I still use Facebook primarily, but IG is nice if you don't want to read too much text like on Facebook.

13. *What do you think of the new layout design that Instagram rolled out last year?*

Layout is alright, I'm not that picky of a user but damn I fucking hate the new algorithm that shows ads and people with whom you interact more first, not who post first show first like the old version.

14. *To what extent do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a tool for authentic storytelling" and why?*

Facebook is for acquaintances and Instagram is for friends, that's what I think and how I use Instagram. I think Instagram gives people a platform to post a picture and tell a story that is more intimate than on Facebook. Personally I use IG to experiment with words and pictures and how they connect with each other, but perhaps not all people do that: they just want to share without putting too much thought into the captions/texts.

15. *Do you often go back and check on your old photos?*

I check on my old photos once or twice a week, and if I see pictures that bring back bad memories, I just delete them straight away. Every few weeks I would go back and delete pictures that bring back bad memories or pictures that are not closed to who I am now.

16. *To what extent to do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a great platform to celebrate past memories"*

It's a nice way to walk down the memory lane without using too many words. A picture can bring you back to that exact moment in time and the rest is history.

5. Interview with IND5

Female. 26 years old. Investment consultant, living in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Number of followers: 150+. Number of following: 300+.

03/05/2017

1. *How often do you log in Instagram? What do you usually do on Instagram?*
   I log in Instagram whenever I have free time on my phone. Usually I check my Insta together with Facebook. I usually check for notifications then scroll down Insta dashboard for updates from my friends and others.

2. *How often do you upload to Instagram?*
   I'm not sure, I never keep track. I think 1-2 times a week? Perhaps more when I travel.

3. *What kind of content do you upload on Instagram? Does your content reflect the kind of content you follow on Instagram?*
   Scenery (cafe, pictures when I travel, some street corners that caught my attention), food, and selfies. They do reflect the kind of content I follow on Insta.

4. *Do you use filters on your Instagram photos? If yes, do you use Instagram filters and editing tools?*

Yes. I use Insta filters only.

5. Why do you use the filters?

They make my photos look nicer. When I first tried filters I liked the more dramatic ones. Now I prefer the plain ones or only adjust brightness and saturation, sometimes no filter.

6. What do you mean by 'plain'?

Plain filters are those that do not change the colors of original photos a lot, like Clarendon or Lark, but it really depends on the original photo colors.

The change of filter choice reflects what I see on the posts of people I follow, many of them are professional photographers who use dslr camera and do not need insta filters. I think at some time I stopped being amazed by those filters as well and went back to basic.

7. Do you use a specific filter for specific post? Do you use the same filter(s) consistently on all your photos?

I never thought about it. If I am trying to upload a photo I will choose a filter that makes that photo looks best. I never try to use the same filters consistently on all photos.

8. Have you used hashtag on your Instagram photos? If yes, what are your most used hashtags? Can you elaborate on why and how you use those hashtags?

I have. I try to look for some sarcastic or funny hashtags, most of them are quite random and not following any trend.

I use hashtags because it elaborates my caption. Sometimes if my caption indicates one idea, my hashtags can explain that idea in a funny way.

9. Do you interact with your followers? If yes, how? (via caption, comment, direct message or else?)

Yes. I answer all their comments, I don't have many followers and most of them are my friends in real life.

10. Do you use Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you update your Stories? What kind of content do you publish on Instagram Stories? Can you compare the kind of content you post on Instagram to Instagram Stories?

I don't use Insta Stories.

11. Do you watch other people's Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you check on their Stories updates? What do you expect to see on their Instagram Stories?

Yes. Are they the bubbles on top of the Insta main page? I sometimes click onto one bubble if it catches my attention, but always back out right away because I don't find interesting contents or it just doesn't load. Now I don't click to those bubbles anymore.

12. Have you used Instagram Live? Have you watched other people's Instagram Live? What do you think of Instagram Live compared to Instagram's other features?

No. Not yet. I don't know there is an Insta Live. To be honest I don't understand why someone would go live on Insta while they can on Facebook, since most of the contents on Insta are usually carefully edited before uploaded. I think Live is a feature too much influenced by Facebook and not really necessary.

13. What do you think of the new layout design that Instagram rolled out last year?

I think it was fashionable at the time. People changed to flat lays and minimalistic at the time and Instagram adapted to that. The new layout made photostream look refreshing compared to the old one.

14. How would you compare your Instagram usage to other social network usage?

Second to Facebook. Facebook is my most frequent social network.

15. To what extent do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a tool for authentic storytelling" and why?

I don't have an attitude towards that statement. Different people can have different ways of thinking and they use Insta to their likings. For me, as I follow many types of Insta accounts, I see besides storytelling, people can use Insta to share to a smaller circle what they don't want to share on Facebook, to upload pictures of themselves, or to promote their products.

16. Do you often go back and check on your old photos?

Yes. For 2 reasons: I like myself and my works, and I'd like to take a look back at my different states of mind in the past, a little reviewing, you can say.

17. To what extent to do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a great platform to celebrate past memories"

When uploading photos I think Insta is a great platform, but not necessarily to celebrate old memories. Depends on what people think of photos. For me my uploaded photos tell the present. I mean even if the photos are taken in the past, my caption is what I want to say at the present. But in terms of reviewing previous photos, yes I agree that Instagram is a great platform to celebrate past memories, though my celebration is rather very personal.

6. Interview with IND6

Female. 26 years old. Business consultant, living in Hanoi and Tokyo.

Number of followers: 160+. Number of following: 250+.

05/05/2017

1. *How often do you log in Instagram? What do you usually do on Instagram?*

   2~3 times per week.

   I usually check Newsfeed and Stories, then like and comment on friends' photos.

2. *How often do you upload to Instagram?*

   I don't keep track, 3~4 times per month, that's like once per week?

3. *What kind of content do you upload on Instagram? Does your content reflect the kind of content you follow on Instagram?*

   My daily life photos, or some interesting thing I bumped into.

   No, it doesn't. I also follow fashion brands and magazines like Vogue, Elle, etc.

4. *Do you use filters on your Instagram photos? If yes, do you use Instagram filters and editing tools?*

   Most of the time I use filters. Yes, I use Instagram filters and editing tools.

5. *Why do you use the filters?*

   I don't know. Because I don't like the original colors of some photos? Filters help a lot making the photo more beautiful.

6. *Do you use a specific filter for specific post? Do you use the same filter(s) consistently on all your photos?*

No, it depends. I try to use different filters and experiment more.

7. *Have you used hashtag on your Instagram photos? If yes, what are your most used hashtags? Can you elaborate on why and how you use those hashtags?*

Yes, I have. I don't have my most used hashtags. I rarely use hashtags. I only use it in case I want to express more emotionally.

8. *Do you interact with your followers? If yes, how? (via caption, comment, direct message or else?)*

Yes, mostly via comments. Most of my followers are my acquaintances though.

9. *Do you use Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you update your Stories? What kind of content do you publish on Instagram Stories? Can you compare the kind of content you post on Instagram to Instagram Stories?*

I have used it only once. It was about the lyrics of a song that had been in my mind for a while back then.

10. *Do you watch other people's Instagram Stories? If yes, how often do you check on their Stories updates? What do you expect to see on their Instagram Stories?*

Yes, I check Stories every time I log in.

Maybe some of my friends' quick updates that they only want to be seen online for a while.

11. *Have you used Instagram Live? Have you watched other people's Instagram Live? What do you think of Instagram Live compared to Instagram's other features?*

No. I am not interested in Instagram Live. Facebook Live is enough for me.

12. *What do you think of the new layout design that Instagram rolled out last year?*

I do not have any opinions about that, it's ok I guess. Nevertheless, I don't like the new timeline. I prefer the old chronological timeline.

13. *How would you compare your Instagram usage to other social network usage?*

I update Instagram the most often, compared to other social networks. Because for me the network size is private enough, while using Facebook to update makes me feel exposed.

14. To what extent do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a tool for authentic storytelling" and why?

I think Instagram is a tool for storytelling rather than "authentic storytelling".

Like other social networking sites, it is a tool for any users – a writer to upload and share their stories via pictures and captions. Content can be made up and photoshopped, taken from various sources without credits or permission. At the moment, I don't see any factors that can make Instagram a more authentic storytelling tool than other social networking sites.

15. Do you often go back and check on your old photos?

Not so often. Maybe once every 3 months? I check when I suddenly miss something, like my puppy when I was chatting with some friend and needed to show them. I did not save my Instagram photos in my phone, that's also one reason.

16. To what extent to do you agree to this statement "Instagram is a great platform to celebrate past memories"

I agree. Because looking back at the timeline is like when you stroll through your memories. It is neater and better organized than the normal photo folder too.