

**File name:** invest\_ni\_-\_social\_media\_trends\_webinar\_-\_1\_-\_introduction (240p).mp4

**Moderator questions in Bold**, Respondents in Regular text.

**KEY: Unable to decipher** = (inaudible + timecode), **Phonetic spelling** (ph) + timecode), **Missed word** = (mw + timecode), **Talking over each other** = (talking over each other + timecode).

**Deborah Johnston: Good morning everyone, my name is Deborah Johnston from Invest Northern Ireland and you're very welcome to today's webinar 'Social Media Trends for your Business in 2024'. This webinar is delivered today by Declan Murtagh of Brilliant Red Digital. Declan is a Digital Consultant with Brilliant Red Digital. He's a social media specialist and speaker, with over ten years experience across a range of industry sectors. He has an extensive social media background, having delivered campaigns both client-side, in senior marketing roles, and agency-side in account management and project based roles. After the presentation, there will be a question and answer session with Declan, and thank you to everyone who has already submitted a question. If you have a specific question now, or one that comes up during the course of the presentation, please use the questions tab on your webinar control panel to send it through to us. We are also recording this webinar and it will be available on the InvestNI.com website. We will email you to let you know when it is available online. It now gives me great pleasure to welcome our presenter today, Declan Murtagh from Brilliant Red Digital.**

Declan Murtagh: Thanks Deborah, and thanks to you and your team for having me back again this year to talk about what's in store for the social media landscape in 2024. As we know, it's a very, ever evolving landscape, that has impacts for both large and small businesses here in Northern Ireland. In terms of social media, there's no sign of it declining. It's still growing year on year. It's now amassed around 5 billion users globally, which is huge penetration of the global market, and it's projected to keep on growing for the foreseeable future. Last year was a very big year for social media. We've seen TikTok reaffirm its position as probably the fastest growing social media platform around at the moment. We've seen all the other social media channels scramble to introduce features similar to that of TikTok. We've seen YouTube shorts, and we've seen Instagram reels and Facebook reels. We've also seen the rise of nano and micro influencers, with all the content creators last year. We've also seen how important it was for businesses to produce authentic, or as authentic as possible, content. We've seen TikTok introduce social commerce capabilities with shoppers being more willing to buy directly on platforms and of course, probably the content trade of last year was that short form vertical video content.

As we step into 2024, we see those social media platforms really continue to-, as we shape the way we engage with content and how we connect with one another and how we connect with our customers and audiences online. In today's webinar, we are going to explore the latest social media trends, strategies, and some of the best practices which can really help businesses here in Northern Ireland and further afield to really excel and grow their social media audiences. I suppose whether you're a seasoned marketing professional, a seasoned social media professional, a business owner, or someone who's just curious about

what's in store for social media in 2024, hopefully there's something in here for everyone. So let's dive into what trends are in store for 2024 and what are the opportunities that may exist.

Captions by Verbit Go

**File name:** invest\_ni\_-\_social\_media\_trends\_webinar\_-\_2\_-threads (240p).mp4

**Moderator questions in Bold**, Respondents in Regular text.

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Speaker1: So, the first trends we're gonna look at is, is Threads, and how Threads is, is on the up. And Meta, which is-, which is the holding (ph 00.17) company that owns Facebook and Instagram, launched Threads last year, in July 2023. And so far, it's amassed over 160 million users to date, which is a significant amount of growth. It was always launched as a direct alternative to X, formerly known as Twitter. It's short form, text based, but also media images and video into the mix too. But, it's a-, it's a place topical conversations, it works very similar to Twitter. It also has some design elements taken from the Instagram platform. It was always Meta's intention for Threads to be as decentralised as possible, trying to make sure that their users are in control of their own privacy, and how they they view content, how they create and interact with, with content as well.

Now, it's not quite fully there in terms of total decentralisation, but, as recently as the end of last year, Meta made a number of announcements about how how Threads has become more interoperable. Meaning, it will give people more options in how they interact and, and how that-, their content can actually reach other social platforms. So, it's interoperable between various social media platforms, which we'll touch on in a second. But, this-, so, decentralisation notion is, is really about groups of social media channels using very similar protocols, and essentially, all these social media platforms will be hosted on millions of independent servers, and they're all teamed up to run multiple social media platforms. And, I guess, nobody's in charge, and there's no central source pulling the strings, there's no central source with its own rules and its own algorithms, and dictating who sees what content. And Meta really wants to roll the dice on this decentralised approach. I think it's been termed the Threadiverse, and that's where we'll see Threads content turn up on other platforms, like, other decentralised platforms like Mastodon, (inaudible 02.51). So, I guess, the regular social media users-, this isn't maybe hugely important, but as we see-, maybe over the next twelve months or so we'll see this become more and more important for social media users.

As a summary, I've mentioned before that, you know, Threads is about showing (ph 03.14) text and image updates, it's mostly about participating in conversations. Maybe 6% of Thread users frequently use the Instagram platform, and that's probably one of the key reasons for its growth. Basically, if you had an Instagram account, with the click of a button you could create a Threads account and all your Instagram community would-, if they have Threads as well, they would instantly follow you and you would instantly follow them. So, there's a ready-made audience there that's really helped its growth I think. It grew 100 million users in the first week or so, and largely that was to, to do with, with the tie in it has with Instagram. As I said before, it was launched pretty much in direct competition to, to Twitter or X,

and the decline in, in X in terms of usage, in terms of, you know, large global brands pulling their, their spending from the platform due to, I guess, the negative publicity and, and some of the decisions that they've made in terms of premium accounts and where anyone can be verified if they pay. And so, some, some of those items have really left some disenfranchised users.

So, it's come at a really good time for that platform, which could take really-, take hold over the next twelve months. And, I suppose, it, it's quite strange that even though this platform was only launched maybe six months ago last July or whatever, a lot of social media experts have been talking about the resurgence of, of Threads, even though it's a very new platform. I suppose what-, to explain that a little is-, what happened was obviously it had all this, you know, huge fanfare of launching 100 million users in a week, and a lot of column inches, I suppose, were dedicated to it, and then all of a sudden it, kind of, started to plateau a little, the active users was, you know, dwindling. But, in December, there, of 2023 it was then made available to more EU countries, which obviously is a huge audience, and they weren't able to use it before. So, that is expected to give it another boost. And with more and more features coming over the next twelve months potentially advertising as well. It's expected to get a little bit of a resurrection and be, be more popular and used more broadly in, in 2024.

And just in terms of, of Threads, so, the, the, the main goal of Threads is to really allow users to have more meaningful conversations and join connected communities. And, I suppose, if your business has had some good success on, on, on the Twitter platform, for example, or you feel this platform could help you engage with a niche audience that you might have, I would suggest the very least to register for an account, you know, lock in your brand name on, on Threads. But, do your research, you know, look at brands that are doing really well on Threads, such as Canva-, already good on Threads, as are TED talks, as are Spotify, as are HubSpot. See what type of content that they're putting out there, see how they are sparking discussion rather than trying to drive traffic to their websites or their platforms, and they're really sparking discussion. And it's really-, Threads is really all about that in-platform discussion and getting involved and participating in the conversation.

So, if you think that's something you want to participate in or it could be really beneficial for your business, get on the platform, seek out targeted communities, find a community of like-minded people to your customers, avoid posting bland or throwaway (ph 07.25) content. Instead post topical questions, conversation starters, discuss trending news in your-, in your geographic area or in your business area, or in general, give your opinion on it. You know, personal or business or brand opinions and stories really resonate well with audiences because they're authentic. I guess because it's a-, it is a-, I suppose, a text-based platform, quotes always seem to work quite well on the platform as well.

Captions by Verbit Go

**File name:** invest\_ni\_-\_social\_media\_trends\_webinar\_-\_3\_-\_artificial\_intelligence (240p).mp4

**Moderator questions in Bold**, Respondents in Regular text.

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Speaker1: The next trend we're going to look at is, is artificial intelligence and how AI is going to integrate with all aspects of social media.

In 2023, AI really started to, to gather steam. A lot of businesses started to dabble in, in various tools. I think by the end of last year, everyone had dabbled in, in ChatGPT. But, 2024 we'll start to see, I guess, more formal approaches, we'll start to see AI become part of the, the social media workflow. We'll see adoption and full integration into marketing in, in social media departments. Hootsuite did a study there recently, and they claim that organisations are-, have reported that they're planning to double their use of AI across social media activities, even tripling or, or quadrupling it in cases. The average figure they're putting out is that there'll be an increase of 318% in terms of the use of, of AI in, in various social media departments. These AI tools are really going to help and support marketers optimise their workloads really, and, and, not replace them. We're seeing people like Sprout Social have said that more than 80% of their marketers reported AI tools have saved time and created more (inaudible 01.43) efficient workflow processes right across the whole social media task spectrum, from strategy, social media planning, social listening. Content creation, which is going to be a big one. And, targeting, the whole automation, and publishing process, as well as obviously, the decision-making aspect where AI can obviously (inaudible 02.08) of data. So, we'll start to see AI become more integrated into that whole process.

And as I said, these tasks will be optimised by AI. They're going to help marketers, and particularly generative AI is going to help marketers develop more human-based ideas, which may leave marketers, I suppose, more time to think strategically. We'll see AI help enhance images. We'll see AI actually create brand new images from scratch. You know, you can ask generative AI tools to write headlines and posts that would resonate more with certain types of audiences. Not only that, and there are AI tools which can help unleash user data, behaviour, which will businesses to gain more deeper insights into their audience's-, deeper insights into their audience's needs, preferences, behaviours and what they want. And obviously, if we're better informed and we're using generative AI, we're, we're able to use prompts to ChatGPT and, and Jasper and Dall-E, and those types of platforms. Or able to use better prompts, which will get us better results. So, if we're better informed by AI, the results will also be better.

You can see there a couple of images from some of the new tools that Google have been trialling and launching over the last number of months. They began testing a platform called Dream Screen, which is-,

you can see the (inaudible 04.05) there at the-, at the bottom, and they are AI-powered videos, videos. Where, basically, you can generate your own backgrounds, you're own photo and video backgrounds to use on YouTube shorts. You know, so that particular video was generated by prompts. You know, 'Give me a background video of a panda drinking from a cup,' for example. And just above that you'll see Dream Track, which is another tool that Google has been testing, where they've partnered with lots of musicians to help develop this, this Dream Track. And this is where you can create your own background music basically, you're own background tracks, you're own background songs for your videos. You can literally-, there's a video online and you can see how a user can hum a tune, and ask it to play that tune with any instrument. Like a saxophone, for example. And it'll play that tune all within seconds. So, you can see the, the potential of some of the content that AI will be able to create and help you create. So, you know, really untold potential for content creators and businesses that are going to be creating content over the next twelve months. And some of the tools that I've mentioned, ChatGPT, obviously, Dall-E for creating generative AI images, Jasper for content, OwlyWriter as well for, for content, Canva for imagery, and Murf for audio.

It is important to say that obviously the-, there are-, the benefits of using AI in content creation and marketing in, in general are significant. There are lots of challenges, there are lots of concerns that us businesses, we need to be aware of. There's risks around copyright, privacy, AI scams, misinformation. And these are unfortunately probably all going to increase as well over the next 12 months. We've seen-, you can see Mark, Mark Zuckerberg here. And this is a deepfake image where AI has been able to regenerate humans and their, their voices, and have them say things on video that they haven't said, which is obviously quite concerning for people in the public eye. And, you know, probably this is going to get more sophisticated, and there're obviously concerns around AI in general in terms of, of bias, and in some of the results that might create for you. And there may be bias around race, around socio-economic discrimination, and things like that, especially when you're creating image content. There are other concerns around how AI is gonna have an impact on, on jobs and job displacement.

So, there's lots of-, lots of concerns around AI, but I think if, if all try and mitigate against that-, if possible, I would advise trying to put in some rules and responsibilities around using AI in your organisation. You know, define its role, define what you should and what you shouldn't be doing with AI, have an airtight evaluation process so that before anything goes live on, on social media that has been created by AI, that it's double and triple checked, or four sets of eyes have viewed it before it's published. And really continue to try and educate your team on AI, you know, you can keep up to date with all the latest tools and, and trends within AI. There's a blog called Simplify AI, which will keep you up to date in terms of legislation and technological advancements. You can simply create a Google Alert, which will notify you if, if there are certain keywords or phrases mentioned in articles online, and it'll help keep you up to date with the latest, I suppose, news and, and trends within AI.

I would encourage you to experiment daily, really, with AI. If you're using generative AI like ChatGPT or any of those types of platforms, you'll enter a prompt when you ask it to do something. If it gets really

good results from that prompt, you know, note, note it down, note down what you said, keep a database of-, and, and rate each prompt from one to 100 in terms of, of output. And continue to refine that prompt because that's, that's going to be more efficient for you. That if, if you know the exact prompt to create the best types of, of headlines for your social media posts, you know, that's, that's going to be more beneficial, and again, save you time. You know, there's no doubt about it that AI is, is designed to be a, a support tool. It's designed to aid and, and assist rather than replace. So, you have to bring that human touch to the whole process.

For example, you know, you can't forget that, that AI for all its power, for all its features and functionality, it, it struggles with that authenticity. AI really struggles to think, sort of, creatively and develop unique approaches and unique ideas. It can only reference historic information really, and information that exists. And I'm sure anyone that has used it is, is fully aware of its-, of its limitations. And that human touch is important, you know, no one knows your customers better than you, you're the one having conversations with them, having sales conversations with them, having customer service enquiries. You're answering their questions, so you know what their concerns are, and so, you know, AI doesn't know that. So, create content that's personal and resonates with them 'cause you have that knowledge. And of course, AI can, can interpret data, it can find trends and, and things like that, but human marketers really possess the experience and the expertise and the intuition to interpret those insights, which, you know, in, in their business context align with their business goals. AI doesn't have foresight of that.

So, we're at a-, we're at a unique advantage in terms of being human and being able to interpret that and relate what data we're seeing to your business. In terms of social media, what works really well, and in terms of content, what works really, that emotional connection that content can have through storytelling, AI has no real understanding of emotions. So, having, again, that human element that it's able to-, you know, that will really resonate with my audience, that will really evoke some sort of an emotion. We all see the Christmas ads, which evoke emotion, which perform really well. So, that's what we're trying to do with content. And it's a real advantage that human content marketers really cements (ph 12.01) the importance of humans in this whole process. So, whereas AI is, is, is going to be extremely beneficial, it's not going to replace humans.

Captions by Verbit Go

**File name:** invest\_ni\_-\_social\_media\_trends\_webinar\_-\_4\_-\_social\_search (240p).mp4

**Moderator questions in Bold**, Respondents in Regular text.

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Speaker1: The next trend we're going to look at is social search and how social media platforms are rapidly evolving into powerful search engines.

Hootsuite, one of the social media giants, reported that in, in January of 2023 last year nearly 95% of internet users between the ages of 16 and 64 visited the social networking site. Whereas in the same month, only 81% of 16 to 64 year olds visited a search engine. So, more people were using social media platforms than they were search engines. So, there is a, a shift, albeit search engines are, are not dead by any stretch, but we are seeing a, a, a shift-, a shift in user behaviour towards, you know, using search-, using social to answer queries. And this is probably driven by, you know, the innovative algorithms, the growing emphasis on content discovery. You can see there in the graph, 31% of, of consumers use social media to answer questions. Getting questions answered on, on social media is now a task that can be easily completed, just like discovering new products on social media, researching brands on social media, can be really easy to do.

Interestingly, you can see there, that TikTok is the number one search tool for more than half of Generation Z. Like, a lot of people talk about generation Z, you know, that's anyone basically from the ages of 12 to around 27 or 28. A lot of people, you know, reference this, this, this group of people and-, largely because they are the ones that are going to be using online, digital and social platforms more and more. And usually what the younger generations are doing, that tends to shape how these platforms behave and look.

And these are audiences and these are consumers that are really captivated by this, sort of, bite-sized, hyper-specific, genuine and personal content. And mostly video content. It is the convenience really, and the speed and the quality of results that attracts them to use it. So, it makes total sense that if you're getting, you know, high-quality information that answers your questions perfectly, and you're getting that quickly, you know, why wouldn't you continue to use it? And it's probably created a new expectation of that immediacy and relevancy. And that-, the nature of social media in terms of it has real-time updates, you know, very, very recent content, that really lends-, these platforms really lands itself well to that immediate search query. And if we think about it, our social platform are updated more regularly than any of our websites. So, there is a, sort of, shift towards social media as a search tool.



And so, essentially, if you want your content to be discovered, you know, you need to be optimising your posts with keywords that are relevant to your organisation, to your products and services. And it's the same SEO principles for your websites that are important here for social too. Like, you know, obviously using the most relevant keywords, optimising your titles, your captions, your descriptions, using the most relevant hashtags, are all important here. You know, the tools that you use for SEO, so for search engine optimisation, like, SEMrush, Ubersuggest, Keyword Planner, Ahrefs. All those tools that you use to plan and execute on-page optimisation are all important here, are all useful here. They're also very good for spotting some edutainment opportunities, which is a term that has been used to describe an educational content delivered in an entertaining way. So, you know, if people are asking questions and these reports tell you that people are asking a question, like, you know, 'How do I get a mortgage?', for example, you know, you're able to be informed about that. How you could create an article or a video or whatever it is, educating that audience in an entertaining way. So, answering that question in the form of social content.

Also, creating engaging content tailored to that platform's audience is critical, that's a, a, a no-brainer. And it's also important to say that if anyone here does have an SEO strategy for their website and, you know, maybe they're-, they have link-building strategies, they have homepage optimisation techniques, their focus on user experience, you know, that may-, that may now be the time to include social search or social search strategy into their overall search engine optimisation strategy.

Captions by Verbit Go

**File name:** invest\_ni\_-\_social\_media\_trends\_webinar\_-\_5\_-\_social\_media\_analytics\_and\_data (240p).mp4

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Speaker1: The next trend we're going to look at is social media analytics and data, and how social media data will become more advanced and probably cross-functional in terms of how it's used right throughout the business and not just in the marketing or the social media departments. You know, social media managers and executives and marketers have always known the importance of using data to inform decisions but that's going to evolve, I suppose, and that's-, it's going to be both, involve both inside that social media and marketing department, but also in other areas of the business. You can see in the image here, social media teams are planning to use their data to connect their efforts to larger social media goals. You can see here 60% of marketers plan to connect the value of social activity to business goals, and they're going to do that by quantifying the value of their social engagement in terms of potential revenue impact, so new data and new metrics. You'll also see a similar percentage of marketers planning to track conversions and sales resulting from social efforts, so we'll see, sort of, more sophisticated data.

You know, I've, I've seen myself, when helping some of my clients, that other departments within that business, you know, think sometimes the marketing teams perform some sort of wizardry or, you know, especially in terms of social media. I think we'll see this year, more and more of those other departments, sort of, want in on that and they'll, they'll start to want to know in terms of, you know, who are we reaching? Where are we reaching them? What platforms are most people engaged with? Geographically, how many people have seen our content? What age profiles are they? So the data will start to trickle down through all the other departments. You can see a statistic there from Sprite Social, and it's 70% of marketers agree that their team's social insights inform other departments, particularly I'd say the sales department, product service development departments, are all, should all be privy to the information and metrics that are gathered from social media. I think we'll also start to see marketers and social media executives become better and more adept at presenting the data and start to use more, sort of, storytelling and visual representations to explain the metrics of what impacts that they're having for the organisation and for the business and how they can translate into other departments.

You know, so, you know, if you do want to become more sophisticated with the use of data and finding new ways to share it, you know, I, I would, you know, encourage you to bring your team together, discuss what information that you can get from your social channels, what others outside of the marketing department might want or need. As I said, particularly the sales departments, product development, product, sort of, service development, HR departments in terms of from an employee's perspective as well and how they can get involved with that, so bring everybody together, have a discussion. Of course utilise

AI tools and other social tools such as, you know, Hootsuite, Spryte Social, Later, they all can provide, you know, higher level insights such as audience sentiment analysis which will give you an insight into how positive or how negative something is for you online. So whether that's more of your products, your brand name, your, your market or your segment in, in general, start to look at what product insights you might be able to gather, and also look at competitors and what competitive analysis that you can do and, you know, not just locally, but, but internationally as well. Start to test, test, test, whether that's in the form of AB tests, you know, test audiences, test content, test images, test AI generated images compared to designer generated images. (mw 04.45) various calls to action and just get a little bit more sophisticated with your data.

Captions by Verbit Go

**File name:** invest\_ni\_-\_social\_media\_trends\_webinar\_-\_6\_-\_growth\_of\_linkedin\_and\_youtube (240p).mp4

**Moderator questions in Bold,** Respondents in Regular text.

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Speaker1: We're also now going to talk about probably two platforms, as well, that, that will start to see continued strong performance. For example, we'll see LinkedIn maintain strong performance over the next twelve months. It'll solidify its role as the premier platform for professional networking. I think we all are very aware of its continued growth. It's hit a billion members worldwide. You know, it's come a long way from when it used to be a place where you just uploaded your CV and look for a job. It has become, really, the go-to tool, an essential tool for anyone in the B2B market. It's grown, as I said, over a billion users worldwide. Recently, I've seen that when running advertising campaigns on LinkedIn, if you select the UK, it opens yourself to-, it opens that ad to a platform of 40 million people, which is almost one in three people in the UK.

You know, and, you know, considering there's, you know, people not in the workforce that maybe aren't using LinkedIn, and children and all sorts of people, that's a colossal amount of people in the UK on LinkedIn. We've seen millions and millions of professionals from a diverse range of-, of sectors. You know, there are doctors on it, there are people from finance and marketing and creative industries and engineering and science and so on. A real diverse range of-, of people and from a diverse range of sectors. Their innovation probably has set them apart and been a critical factor in their success. Not having to rely solely on advertising revenue has been a very important factor for them. They have a variety of other services for selling products and services for recruiting people, and also for learning, that you can subscribe to. Which has been important for-, for their growth.

They've also continued to invest in the platform's features and functionality, in terms of messaging, in terms of your profiles and your descriptions and-, and so on. They've really invested heavily in that. It helps that they're owned by Microsoft. So, they're in that space, that software space. So they-, they know how things work. There are more features on the way for 2024. For video, especially, and no doubt there'll be AI integrations within that, as well. And, I suppose, if you're a B2B organisation, I would encourage your salespeople or your employees to better leverage their LinkedIn personal profiles and try and start to use it as a social selling platform. And this is where you utilise your individual profiles, we start to see them overshadow company profiles as the demand for that, sort of, brand humanisation increases over the next twelve months and we start to see more and more individuals use LinkedIn rather than the company LinkedIn. And, so, it's this direct engagement between employees and clients will help build trust, it'll help nurture those online relationships.

You know, we'll see salespeople create content, which is helpful and valuable for their existing customers and potential customers on the platform. And that valuable content really helps position them as-, you know, in a positive way, as authorities in-, in that particular space. Which, you know, will, obviously, help nurture that relationship and build-, build that trust. Part of the content that we see these people produce will be more short-form video-style content we'll see on the platform. We also start more B2B influencer collaborations. Possibly because a lot of companies maybe do struggle with that authenticity, with that authentic content. And a good way to, kind of, you know, bridge that, is by getting a B2B influencer to help create content for you, or on your behalf, or endorse you, or-, or talk through case studies because it comes across as more-, as authentic content. And that's where we'll see some businesses move towards, over the next twelve months.

It is predicted that we'll see a sharp rise in organic engagement on LinkedIn, which is not quite in line with what we see on other social media channels. Organic engagement does tend to be decreasing on, you know, Facebook and Instagram, and those types of platforms. But, we'll see that actually increasing on LinkedIn. You know, that may be fuelled by more and more people updating LinkedIn profiles and, you know, not just about their work life, or work topics, we'll start to see that more personal posts. We'll start to see more posts about general life skills, about general advice in the world of-, of-, of work, or community. We'll start to see more support posts, we'll see mental health issues being raised, family issues. We'll see tips on leadership and-, and so on. So, we'll start to see a lot more personal content. And, maybe, that will fuel that-, or-, or increase in organic engagement. So, keep posting, keep posting organic content on your personal feeds. If you want some-, some enhanced tools for creating content and reporting on content, you know, anyone can turn on the creator mode within their personal profiles, and that'll give you more access to more advanced features and tools. (silence 06.56-07.11)

It's also important, I think, to mention YouTube Shorts. And that's the-, the-, the shorter form version videos that you'll see within your YouTube channel or within YouTube now. It's growing 135% year-on-year. It has over 1.5 billion monthly users watching billions and billions of, of, of seconds and minutes of-, of video content. And since launching in 2005, I suppose, YouTube has really shaped and influenced the way we create and consumer video content. And they've-, last year or so, they jumped on that, sort of, short-form video bandwagon because of probably the emergence of TikTok and Instagram reels and Facebook reels and-, and so on. And that short-form video content bandwagon is called YouTube Shorts. And, it's traditionally, you know, fifteen second videos and mostly designed to entertain audiences. Which can really help businesses and brands drive engagement. Mostly short-form vertical content created on a smartphone, you know, and you can share, like, comment and subscribe. They really made it easy last year to make money on the platform, but, like, YouTube, they have a partner programme now, which you can use solely for, for Shorts. Content doesn't disappear, it remains on YouTube, you know, maybe, on, like, the likes of Instagram stories, Snapchat, and so on, it has longevity, I suppose. And, as I previously mentioned, they're working on a suite of AI tools to really enhance that video and, and music creation.

And, I suppose, if, if you think that short-form video content is a space that you want to move into and you have the capabilities. And you think it could be useful for your audience and your potential customers, I would, you know, have a look at-, at YouTube Shorts, and to some tips and-, in terms of video, you know, start with a hook-, if you're creating a video, start with a hook that grabs attention right away. Some people, you know, and you've maybe seen this, where they start with the end of the video, and then they retell the story, that tends to be a trend in-, in-, in short-form video content. Play around, maybe with different cuts of the video and edits to keep the viewers engaged. You'll-, you'll see that, as well, on-, on lots of popular short-form video content. You know, do start to use those-, some of those amazing AI features when they launch, which-, which should be soon. You know, so, the storytelling potential on YouTube Shorts is-, is going to be huge. And that's probably one of the main reasons I've included in-, in a trend to keep an eye. Some other tips include, you know, don't just create video content for the sake of it. You know, give value to your audience, you know, build towards a-, a-, a climax or a valuable insight, or an outcome of the video. If you-, if you can. As well as that, it's, you know, again, people are searching for-, for queries and answers to questions on YouTube. Be sure to optimise the video for-, for-, for search. And that's, you know, optimising titles, captions, descriptions, tags, and- and-, and so on. And the whole notion of this edu-, edutainment area of content. So, you know, make it entertaining, make it interesting, make it informative, give it-, make sure it has value. And you're not going far wrong with creating content on YouTube Shorts.

Captions by Verbit Go

**File name:** invest\_ni\_-\_social\_media\_trends\_webinar\_-\_7\_-\_content\_trends (360p).mp4

**Moderator questions in Bold**, Respondents in Regular text.

**KEY: Unable to decipher** = (inaudible + timecode), **Phonetic spelling** (ph) + timecode), **Missed word** = (mw + timecode), **Talking over each other** = (talking over each other + timecode).

I thought it as well might be useful to pull some just quick information together in terms of what content trends we'll see on social media over the next twelve months, sort of, to get the sense of what types of content maybe will get the most engagement. Of course, we've mentioned that more and more businesses are going to use generative AI to create content for their social medial channels. We'll start to brands experiment a little bit more with, with different types of content. We'll start to see a variety of, of content including no doubt short-form video content, as it will be the most popular, but we'll see a healthy mix of, of maybe multi content carousels on Facebook, and, and Instagram, and, and LinkedIn. A variety of static posts, and static photo posts, and, and so on, but short-form video-, short-form vertical video content will still be the most popular type of content. There will be a shift towards tailoring each post, and each video to feel, sort of, native to, to each platform. And that basically means that it, you know, it's content made specifically for-, or for TikTok, content made specifically for YouTube Shorts.

So, the video will be repurposed, and even rerecorded for, for different platforms. We start to see media publications like Sky Sports, Sky News, create that vertical video content in their news stories. So, that'll, that'll flow on to, to the different social media channels as well, and, and video content will be optimised for each specific platform, rather than uploaded into multiple destinations. One of the key trends as well I think we'll, we'll see in terms of content is this thought leadership content that has been around for, you know, a long, long time. But it'll be that, sort of, critical differentiator for, for businesses, and brands to ensure that the content really stands out, and it articulates something new. So, giving your opinion on a certain sector, or a certain topic, or whatever cannot be replicated by AI as it's your-, it's your thoughts, and that can be a real differentiator. So, I'd recommend, you know, some thought leadership pieces, or, or some opinion pieces, and that could be the form of edutainment. But if that, you know, looks to be the go-to content piece for, for this year, we have mentioned what, what that is, we'll start to see perhaps consumers pick up on that image, or that video has been totally generated by, by AI, and, and doesn't look good.

So, consumers will start to see through AI generated posts, and, and so on. So, you need to make sure to add that human touch to it. We'll start to see more and more businesses partner with content creators, and, and people to produce content on their behalf in the style of, of influencers, but not quite influencers. And, and that's really to try and get that authenticity across, 'This is real. I, I love this product. This is what this product does,' and, and so on. And we'll start to see that user generated content become more and more valuable, and that's again feeding into that authentic piece. You know, if you have your customers creating videos on your behalf they're, they're gonna be real, and they're gonna be authentic.

And we'll start to see more and more of that as it will become extremely valuable to businesses. So, other generic trends not, not specifically content trends, but we'll start to see raw content perform just as good, if not better, as, as polished content. Neil Patel, one of the, I suppose, globally recognised experts in digital marketing, did a study of over 100,000 pieces of video content on Instagram.

Some of it was raw content, you know, so basically, you know, not edited, not filtered, and so on, and they compared it to polished content, which was edited, nice graphics, nice visuals, and, and so on. And he found that videos with little, or no visual design elements actually perform better in most cases. So, we start to see raw content perform just as well as, as polished content. And again, that's, that's feeding in to this, you know, continued rise of that authentic creator content. There's a hashtag called Hashtag No Filter, and it's been growing in popularity over the years. And that's, again, mainly down to, to what consumers want. They want authentic content. They want videos, and, and images in original formats, unfiltered, unedited. And that's what creators, and, and brands are really moving away from that perfectly created, sort of, feed, and aesthetic feed, and they're switching to less, less filtered content. Now that's not a new social media trend, but it's gonna continue to have a strong showing in, in the next twelve months. Paid advertising, again, it, it pretty much is a necessity to really break through and reach people on, on social media.

We'll see organic reach, you know, dwindle on, on most platforms unless it's, it's really, really popular, and viral content. So, we'll see, you know, the number of brands that aren't spending money on social media will actually be, be quite small. We'll see social commerce continue to, to grow. We'll see-, I think social commerce has been on our, our radar for, for quite a long time. It was a trend we mentioned last year in 2023, and, and both businesses, and, and social media platforms work hard to try and refine how that works, and how to convert their social media platforms, and, and users into, to sales. TikTok has gotten pretty close to that for-, with that, sort of, full in-platform shopping experience, and it will begin to get more and more traction over the next twelve months. We'll also start to see Amazon really ramp up its efforts to better integrate with social media platforms. You know, they see the billions, and billions of users that use their platform, but also the billions of users that use social media platforms, and they're gonna try and integrate this year with, with the social media platforms.

We'll also see niche communities, and, and gated content continue to grow, and these, sort of, niche, niche, and micro communities are, like, smaller, specialised groups of users that have common interests, hobbies, passions, and they live within that, sort of, broader, sort of, big social media ecosystem. And what they're seen as are trusted spaces with virtually no selling, and very little advertising, but they're, you know, they're great spaces for social listening for businesses, and, and finding out, you know, what people are talking about in relation to their, their market. And we'll also start to see some businesses, and some, I suppose, influencers, or creators, create their own communities, and, you know, you know, rather than giving away content for free the content will be specifically for people who are in that community. So, that gated content. So, 'If you join this group we will give you, you know, a drip feed of, of, you know, how-tos,' or, you know, 'How to leverage whatever tool it is for your organisation,' or whatever it



is. But we'll start to see more and more of that, sort of, niche community, and, and gated content.

Again, we'll see more businesses, and, and brands use sustainability marketing, sustainability marketing practices over the next twelve months. And that's where they'll responsibly use social media platforms to promote their sustainability measures, their, their sustainable practices. They'll advertise, you know, their eco-friendly efforts, and what they're doing for the environment. And they'll try their best to educate their viewers on their-, all, all-, everything sustainability within their organisation. And we'll start to see people more actively do that. We may see (ph 09.50) user generated content, and that's gonna become more, and more important, and, and valuable to brands. It's-, I suppose it's the, you know, it's the type of content that's perfect for unlocking a business' authenticity really. And on the last one there we, and maybe this is a little bit for larger organisations this year, and maybe that's-, will trickle down in 2025 to maybe smaller businesses. But we'll see, you know, some big businesses investing in predictive analytics, and audience modelling. Predictive analytics is really where businesses will use big data, AI machine learning tools, to accurately predict what marketing tactics, and what strategies, and what actions are gonna be the most likely to succeed.

And audience modelling is, is really a data driven approach, where it will identify distinct and high value audiences that you can leverage in marketing both strategically and, and, and technically. These are big tools, and they'll-, you know, I'd say maybe they're more accessible to larger, larger organisations, but, like everything in, in technology, it's expensive at the beginning, and then it, it starts to trickle down, and become more expensive-, or more, or less expensive to smaller businesses, and individuals. And, and so that concludes today's webinar on the top social media trends for your business in 2024. I hope you found some of the trends, and insights useful. And look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Captions by Verbit Go.

**File name:** invest\_ni\_\_\_social\_media\_trends\_webinar\_-\_q\_&a (720p).mp4

**Moderator questions in Bold**, Respondents in Regular text.

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**Moderator: Thank you, Declan, for that. Lots for businesses to think about, and a huge area that's obviously always changing, always growing, and at quite some pace. We've a few questions have come through, some submitted in advance and some during the session, so we'll just about ten minutes now to go through the questions. Just a reminder to the audience, this session is being recorded today and will be available on the Invest NI website, and we'll let you know when that, that is available for you to see. So, if you're happy, Declan, we'll make a start.**

Declan: Sounds good, Deborah.

**Moderator: Okay. Declan, do you have any specific B2B guidance, as it can often be quite a bit harder to follow trends and socials compared to your typical B2C businesses?**

Declan: Yes. So, so, yeah, no, I totally understand where, you know, that person's coming from. I think, sometimes, social media lends itself quite well to, to B2C and, maybe, consumer products and so on, where, you know, entertainment content and, and humorous content can be a bit easier to create for those businesses. So, yeah, it can be difficult for, for B2Bs to, kind of, find that, sort of, speciality, and, and so on. I think, in terms of B2B, we mentioned it there earlier, in the race and, sort of, LinkedIn continuing the race, and so on. I think, you know, if you are in the B2B sector, you need to be engaging with, with LinkedIn, for sure, and have some strategic element in terms of who you're targeting, and so on. But it's all about creating content which is going to be useful to your customers, or potential customers, on LinkedIn. So, high-quality content that's going to be useful and relevant and, and important to them, but also, networking with, with individuals on LinkedIn on a-, on a consistent basis. So, commenting, engaging with posts, liking posts, and, and so on, building your network, as well, on, on LinkedIn. As we've seen, there, in some of the latest trends, we've started to see more video content on, on LinkedIn, so, if that's something that you're able to do, start to think about how you can leverage video within your LinkedIn posts. And as well as that, we're starting to see more brand humanisation and, and individual posts about, you know, journeys and how they've got to where they are, and some of their, their personal-, again, so, you know, if that's something that you think could be relevant, then add into your content some more personal-, add into your content calendar more personal content.

**Moderator: Okay-, sorry, Declan. You mentioned there LinkedIn. Do you see there being a trend towards more video-based content on LinkedIn, rather than the written content that we see today?**

Declan: Certainly, the, the experts would, would say that, and sometimes that does happen. I think a lot of the trends start off on the, maybe, more what's seen as B2C platforms, like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and they eventually trickle down, maybe a year or two later, to the likes of LinkedIn and, and so on. So, I, I can see that happening, I can see, you know, video has, has really dominated the social media content world, and, you know, most of the people that are on LinkedIn are on those other platforms engaging with videos, so I can certainly see more video-based content on the, the LinkedIn platform. I don't think long-form, you know, articles and, and content posts are gonna disappear, at all, but we will start to see more video-based content on LinkedIn, for sure, yes.

**Moderator: Yeah, and linked to that, I see a question has just come in, would it be beneficial to be on LinkedIn for an interior design business? And certainly, I would imagine, in that type of business, video content could be very important.**

Declan: Yes. I, I think-, so, again, this comes down to the strategic question. If you're an interior design business and, you know, you fit out offices and work spaces, then absolutely. If you're an interior design business that's maybe more focused on, on the home, then, obviously, there are maybe better platforms, like Instagram and, and so on. However, if you have the capacity, and if you have the, the time, to, to work on the Instagram channels and Pinterest, and whatever channels, so if you have the time, I could see-, I could see an argument for using LinkedIn, because there are a lot of professionals on LinkedIn, you can target via, via job title, and if you're a high-end interior designer, you could target, you know, a certain demographic of people. So, absolutely, you could certainly make a case for, for joining, joining LinkedIn in that sense, as an interior design business. But it all comes down to, you know, what capacity you have, what resources you have, how many, you know, channels that, that you can work on well, you know, and doing, you know-, you're better doing one well rather than two at 50% capacity. So, there's certainly an argument for it, but there's a lot of nuances and, and considerations needed on that.

**Moderator: And you talked about demographics, Declan. What are the most popular social channels based on age demographics? Is it useful, you know, are there some channels more popular with certain ages and so on?**

Declan: Yes, so, I think, Facebook is obviously the, the largest social media channel, with something like 2.8 billion users, at least, maybe, maybe more, now, at this stage. But the largest demographic within Facebook is probably the, the 25 to 40 segment. Instagram is slightly younger, where you have maybe 18 to 30-year-olds on Instagram. The highest demographic on TikTok is 18 to 24. LinkedIn is a slightly older audience, where you have probably 35 and above, would be the largest demographic. So there-, it's a good question, because whenever you're thinking about your target market and who your customer is, it's very important to look at the demographics of each platform, and who uses each platform, and if your audience is actually on that platform. A lot of that information that, that I mentioned is widely available online, so if you are thinking about a channel that you maybe haven't used, or that you are using and you want to get more of, by all means, you know, simply, you know, Google the, the latest 2024 demographics for, for Facebook and Instagram, or whatever channel, and there'll be fairly accurate results

of who, who is on that platform. So, yeah, good question.

**Moderator: Okay. In relation to TikTok, Declan, any hints on how best to grow on TikTok?**

Declan: Yeah, TikTok is one of those platforms that, you know, there shouldn't be a secret formula, but, but there is, sometimes, in the sense that, you know, you can go viral overnight and get millions of views, and with views comes followers. So, we say there's no secret formula, but sometimes there is. But what, what I would say is that, again, it has to come from the strategic background in, in the sense that, what do you wanna achieve on TikTok? Who is your target audience? You know, what type of content resonates with them? What are other similar organisations doing on TikTok, and is it working, and can I-, can I emulate that? So that, that strategic element obviously needs to be taken into account, but there's also things like utilising hashtags, and making sure you're using the right hashtags in order to be discovered. Can you come up with your own challenges, TikTok challenges, that potentially could go viral? What works for some people is identifying a, a niche within their area that they-, that they can create content on, be it, you know, cheap holidays to the USA, be it, you know, tax advice for, for business owners, or, you know, how to get your car insurance down. Whatever it is, if you can potentially find your niche, that can really help carve up an audience and, and grow on, on TikTok. As well as that, collaborating with influencers, creators, to help you with content and promote your, your products and services, that can also work as well. So it's-, I suppose there's no one secret formula, really, you can get lucky, but if you combine all those strategic elements and the little other tips, or with hashtags and influencers, and so on, you know, theoretically, that should help grow your, your TikTok audience.

**Moderator: Okay, thank you. We have a question in from a manufacturing company. So, 'We are a manufacturing company of big equipment. We sell B2B. Is it worth creating an Instagram account?'**

Declan: Yeah, that's similar to, I suppose, the other question, in terms of, 'Should an interior designer use LinkedIn?' And, I think-, so, I think, again, the answer to that is, depending-, depends on your, your capacity, depends on your resources. I think Instagram is all around nice images, lifestyle posts. You know, is your audience on Instagram? If you think that they might be, then again, yes, have a-, have a go at it. There's a-, there was a-, there's a shipping company called Maersk, and you, you may have heard of them before, so, typical B2B company, but they created an Instagram profile where they, they took of photos of, basically, their ships going around, you know, close to the Antarctic and so on, so there was lots of really nice images around ice and so on, and, and in those real, secluded locations, with their ships' branding. And that really grew their Instagram audience, but also had a-, had an effect on, on lead generation and sales. So, it worked for that B2B organisation because they had a, a clear objective in mind, they wanted to, you know, showcase the brand in nice photos and, and, and build brand awareness that way. So, I think we can always make a case for using, you know, various platforms, as long as your audience is there and you're clear about your objective and, and your strategy. So, I suppose the answer to that is, yes, but it's, again, nuanced with, with lots of strategic and practical sort of thinking.

**Moderator: Okay. And coming right down to the other level, a small business that works within the local community, so, we've somebody asking, 'We're a small business with only one person working on our social media strategy. Because our business is geographically local, it's a gym, people are only going to travel a short distance. What is the most effective use of our time to get maximum local exposure?'**

Declan: Yeah, so, yeah, quite a-, quite a question there. So, yeah, gyms, there's, there's only a certain distance that people will travel to a gym. So, there is a-, there is a, I suppose, a finite audience there, potentially, and what you want to do is try and maximise your reach within that audience. And I get, obviously, capacity and resources might be an issue, so, just off the top of my head, there's, there's a number of targeting tools that you can use for paid ads on Instagram and Facebook, where you can target geographic locations and reach people without having to do lots of, you know, content over that week. You can, kinda, shortcut that and pay to reach the exact type of gym member that you might have in a geographic location. There's also a, a geo-targeting tool on Facebook posts in general, so, if, if you're posting on Facebook, you can select a geographic location for it to be-, to be shown only, which might, you know, limit, you know, people outside of that geographic location seeing it. So, so, I think what might be a good idea is to try and release some budget so that you can run some Facebook, maybe Instagram ads, maybe, maybe TikTok ads, depending on your-, on your audience, and set it geographically and-, you know, we've ran campaigns in the past with, you know, not huge budgets, but have reached a lot of people and have driven a lot of traffic to the site. So, you know, I'm not talking about thousands of pounds' worth of advertising here. You know, smaller budgets can actually go a long way on, on some of these platforms.

**Moderator: Okay, great, thank you. Just a, a couple of quick questions before we, we close, Declan. So, we have somebody asking, 'Are some social channels penalising you for putting links back to your website on your posts?'**

Declan: I don't know if any social media platform has ever admitted that, but certainly, we would see the trend among media sites, if anybody follows any media sites, media organisations, on, on those platforms, you can certainly see, a lot of people don't put links in their posts, they put it in the first comment, and so on, which would, would make you think that they are, but, but they haven't admitted to it.

**Moderator: Okay. Okay, and one final question, and it's in relation to AI. Do algorithms recognise AI-generated content, and how does it react. So, does AI-generated content perform as well as non-AI-generated? Is there a difference?**

Declan: Yeah, so, well, my understanding at the minute is that it, it can't tell the difference, but I, I suspect that they're working on it, and they will be able to, to identify AI-generated content. Now, the AI experts would say that AI will become that good that nobody will be able to tell the difference, so, I, I don't know what-, where, where it will go. But at the minute, I suspect they're, they're working on it, but they, they can't tell the difference at the minute.

**Moderator: Okay, thank you. Declan, we'll conclude our question and answer session there. Obviously, social media is one of those areas that's continually moving, and trying to keep on top of trends is challenging. So, that's our webinar finished for today. I'd very much like to thank Declan from Brilliant Red Digital for presenting for us today. We tried to get through as many of your questions as we could, and we hope that you found the session useful. If you were not able to have your question answered today, we continue to update our business website, NI business info dot co dot UK, with the latest of guidance advice and FAQs. And to receive updates, if you haven't already, please sign up for the email newsletter on NI business info dot co dot UK. Also, do please keep an eye on the Invest NI website, where you can register for all forthcoming events across all topics and across all areas. I'd also like to take this opportunity today to mention our export health check. The export health check will assess your existing exporting capability. By answering a few short questions, you'll be provided with a tailored guide that will give you the tools to develop your own, bespoke export strategy. To take your next step in that direction, please complete the export health check on the Go Further, Grow Stronger webpage at Invest NI dot com, forward slash export.**

**As I mentioned previously, today's session has been recorded and will be available on the video tutorials webpage on the Invest NI website, and many pre-existing video tutorials across a range of topics are still available on that website, and should you wish to be notified of the latest events, news, and support from Invest NI, if you're not already, please ensure you have registered for our two-minute update email newsletter. And you can register at Invest NI dot com, forward slash newsletter. That's it for then, for today's session. I'd like to thank you all for attending. It's been great to have so many people along to the session today, and I wish you all a great day. Thank you.**

**Captions by Verbit Go**