

MARKETING

## Instagram to test hiding likes in the US

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Instagram is bringing private likes to some U.S. users. Image credit: Instagram

By STAFF REPORTS

Social media platform Instagram is continuing its push to prioritize content and conversation over competition by testing hiding likes in the United States.

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After testing secret likes in seven markets including Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan and Brazil, Instagram is rolling out private likes to some users in the U.S. as early as next week. Facebook-owned Instagram's intent is to make its network safer, but at stake is an intangible social media status symbol leveraged by both brands and influencers.

### Popularity contest prevention

In April, reports began circulating that Instagram would possibly hide the number of likes from public view, as its platform becomes more known as a popularity contest. But the new design could have severe effects on luxury brands who highly value the image-heavy application.

A report from *TechCrunch* showed leaked images of a new Instagram design that eliminates the ability to see the exact number of likes a post has received. The company confirmed the prototype to *TechCrunch*, citing that the application wants to reduce the mob mentality that the numbered likes have caused and allow users to focus on the content, but its decision could alienate the very users it hopes to help ([see story](#)).

With the hidden likes, users including brands will still be able to see their own engagement metrics. However, they will not be visible to others.

During the Wired25 conference on Nov. 8, head of Instagram Adam Mosseri announced that the company is gradually introducing private likes to U.S. users.

Part of the reason for the change is to combat bullying and remove likes as a 21st-century popularity contest.

"It's about young people," Mr. Mosseri said during a panel discussion. "The idea is to try and depressurize Instagram, make it less of a competition, give people more space to focus on connecting with people that they love, things that inspire them."

WATCH: Instagram CEO Adam Mosseri announces that the platform will start hiding likes for

US audiences starting next week. It's the latest step in Instagram's quest to become the safest place on the internet. <https://t.co/BGkMG57rdk> #WIRED25 [pic.twitter.com/WNTyAPVhaD](https://pic.twitter.com/WNTyAPVhaD)

WIRED (@WIRED) November 9, 2019

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Facebook Inc. has also put a focus on authenticity on its platforms.

With brands relying heavily on influencer marketing on social media today, the sale of fake followers poses a significant threat to those who gauge partners based on number of followers, causing Facebook to crack down on the practice.

Facebook and its subsidiary Instagram have filed suit against four companies and three individuals from the People's Republic of China for allegedly offering the sale of fake followers. Those involved were said to do so on multiple outlets including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Apple, Google, Amazon and LinkedIn ([see story](#)).

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