

Facebook Reveals Several Updates to Instant Articles

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2 hours ago

The emergence of Facebook's stand-alone News tab in October appeared to signal that the end was near for its Instant Articles fast-loading rich media stories from publishers, but appearances can be deceiving.

Product manager Jaynth Thiagarajan detailed several updates to Instant Articles in a blog post Friday, adding that 30% more time is spent on Instant Articles than on traditional mobile web articles.

Facebook created a new recirculation and navigation surface for Instant Articles, which makes it easier for readers to browse other offerings from the same publisher, potentially discovering fare on other topics.

Users can swipe right on Instant Articles to see the "More from" recirculation surface, which provides up to 50 articles from the same publisher, in a personalized, chronological view.

A similar personalized, chronological also appears in the redesigned footer that follows each Instant Article.

And the footer now contains dedicated engagement buttons which enable readers to save, discuss and share Instant Articles.

Those buttons scroll away while people are reading, boosting the amount of visible content.

Thiagarajan also revealed that rather than being served

blindly, as has been the case, call-to-action units in Instant Articles now have an integrated CTA and ad-yield model, which enables publishers to estimate the value of a given CTA impression based on regional averages of what other publishers paid to achieve its objectives.

The model will then serve either a CTA or an ad, based on which provides greater estimated value to the publisher.

Finally, support for Instant Articles links was added to Facebook Stories, including those created by pages, as well as those cross-posted from Instagram.

Users can now read Instant Articles directly from Stories, with the same experience, while publishers can tap into the new source of potential distribution provided by the 300 million or so people who use Facebook Stories daily.

Thiagarajan wrote, "Since launching these features, we've observed an increase in RPMs (revenue per thousand article views) of 9% for Publishers across our ecosystem. People are also spending more time reading articles from the same publisher. We're excited about this refresh, and we'll continue to act on feedback to improve the Instant Articles experience."

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