Foursquare: Foot Traffic to Trails, Parks Rises in the Era of Social Distancing

|
7 hours ago

Location technology platform Foursquare updated its foot traffic analysis in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic with data through March 27, as well as the addition of trends by region and of new categories outdoors (parks and trails), supply stores and drug stores.

Foursquare shared some of the highlights from its update.

The company projected in a previous update last week that people will look for new ways to stay fit while adhering to social distancing requirements, such as running or hiking outside.

Indeed, visits to trails were up 34% across the country compared with the previous week, while parks saw a 10% uptick in visits during the same time period.

Foot traffic to sit-down casual dining restaurants is down over 73% nationally, while fast-food restaurants have only seen an 18% drop, which Foursquare attributed to the availability of drive-through and takeout.

With few places to go, people are spending less time on the road, leading foot traffic to gas stations to drop between 7% and 8% across the U.S. in the week ending March 27, compared with the week ending Feb. 19.

Foursquare said the West saw the biggest drop, 13%, while the

South only declined by 4%.

The Western region was the first part of the country to really begin feeling the impact of Covid-19 and, as a result, it has seen steeper declines in foot traffic than other regions, while the Midwest has seen later and smaller behavioral shifts.

Foursquare said foot traffic to bars was down 64% in the West, versus just 52% in the Midwest, adding that the West started feeling the impact as early as Feb. 28, while this did not occur in the Midwest until around March 20.

The difference was not as large when it came to clothing stores, with foot traffic in the West down 81% as of March 27, compared with 74% in the Midwest.

Foursquare also found that the effects of the coronavirus were felt more in urban areas than in rural areas, citing bars (down 67% in urban areas and 43% in rural areas), fast-food restaurants (23% and 13%, respectively) and gyms (75% and 59%, respectively).

The company wrote, “While Covid-19 is influencing people’s actions nationwide, the timing and scale of these behavioral shifts vary by population density and by region. For example, people seem to have distanced themselves socially most and earliest in urban areas and in the West, while rural areas and the Midwest have been slightly slower to adapt. We’ve also noticed trends changing over time since the outbreak began, such as waves of consumers first flocking to warehouse stores, then to grocery stores and, most recently, to drug stores.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/foursquare-foot-traffic-to-trails-parks-rises-in-the-era-of-social-distancing/

eBay Pledges Up to $100 Million to Support Small Businesses During the Coronavirus Pandemic

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9 hours ago
eBay is helping retailers make the transition to going all-ecommerce during the coronavirus pandemic by waiving all seller fees through June 30.

As part of the ecommerce company’s Up and Running program—in which it pledged up to $100 million in support for small businesses across North America—sellers that are new to eBay will also receive a free basic store for three months, which includes everything they need to conduct business via the site, including discounted shipping supplies.

Sellers will also receive free access to eBay’s educational webinars, one-on-one support and communication with experienced sellers on the platform who are willing to mentor them.

Finally, eBay will highlight small businesses on its homepage, creating new ways for shoppers to support their favorite businesses while remaining at home and following social distancing guidelines.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/ebay-pledges-up-to-100-million-to-support-small-businesses-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/

Twitter Removed Over 1,100 Tweets Since Putting New Rules in Place for Covid-19

|
11 hours ago

Twitter is following through on the policy change it enacted last month to remove tweets that increase the chance of someone contracting or transmitting the coronavirus.

The social network said in a Twitter Safety tweet that over 1,100 tweets containing misleading and potentially harmful content have been removed, and over 1.5 million accounts targeting manipulative discussions about Covid-19 have been challenged.

While Twitter’s ban hammer has yet to come down on President Donald Trump despite several tweets that appear to violate the social network’s policies, it has claimed some high-profile victims. Queenie Wong of CNET shared three examples:

Two tweets by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro that reportedly shared video of him questioning social distancing were deleted from the platform.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro had a tweet pulled for claiming that a natural brew was a potential cure for the coronavirus.

And Trump’s personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, temporarily had his account locked for quoting conservative activist Charlie Kirk’s claim that “hydroxychloroquine has been shown to have a 100% effective rate treating Covid-19.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/twitter-removed-over-1100-tweets-since-putting-new-rules-in-place-for-covid-19/

Instagram Changes Wording on Questions Sticker After Suggestion on Twitter

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12 hours ago
Ask, and ye shall receive: A mere 12 hours after Airbnb Experiences global head of marketing Musa Tariq suggested changing the default text in Instagram’s questions sticker

from, “Ask me a question,” to, “How can I help,” with the coronavirus pandemic in mind, the change was made.

Tariq said in a tweet Wednesday evening, “I have a small request, @instagram: How can we change the default text here from, “Ask me a question,” to, “How can I help?” Even just for one week. Changing four simple words would spread more kindness in the world than most of us could ever dream of.”

> *I have a small request @instagram — how can we change the default text here, from “Ask me a question” to “How can I help?”. Even just for a week. Changing 4 simple words, would spread more kindness in the world than most of us could ever dream of. ???????? @kevinweil @ajlucio5 pic.twitter.com/rMl0UJRwGs*
>
> *— Musa Tariq (@MusaTariq) April 2, 2020*

After quickly responding, “I like it,” just 12 hours later, head of Instagram Adam Mosseri said in another reply Thursday morning, “We love the idea of reframing the question to focus on others—so we just launched it right now. We’re hoping it’ll be a small way help people spread kindness and support.”

> *We love the idea of reframing the question to focus on others — so we just launched it right now. We’re hoping it’ll be a small way help people spread kindness and support. pic.twitter.com/ZAqq6MfUF2*
>
> *— Adam Mosseri (@mosseri) April 2, 2020*

Instagrammers aren’t the only people feeling helpful, as the term, “how can I help,” has also been spiking sharply upward on Google Trends since March 8.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/instagram-changes-wording-on-questions-sticker-after-suggestion-on-twitter/

Snapchat Reports Engagement Records During the Coronavirus Pandemic

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5 hours ago
Adweek platforms reporter Scott Nover wrote last month that Snapchat might be the best-positioned social platform during the coronavirus pandemic and, with the crisis worsening in recent weeks, data provided by Snapchat late Wednesday appears to back up Nover's theory.

Snapchat published a blog post Wednesday divided into three parts: increased engagement across its platform in recent weeks; emerging trends as social distancing has caused Snapchatters' interests and priorities to shift; and a look at resources Snap Inc. is providing to help its users stay informed about Covid-19.

The company said that in the past few weeks, as the coronavirus crisis has ramped up, Snaps sent between friends reached an all-time high, topping the application's typical peaks on Christmas and other major holidays. Group chat engagement also reached an all-time high.

Time spent on video and voice calling via the app was up more than 50% in late March compared with late February, and Snap said augmented reality is often incorporated into those calls.

Snap Games, the real-time multiplayer gaming platform that debuted last April, is seeing its highest figures ever for overall time spent, player count and use of in-game voice and chat features.

Snap said time spent playing with its AR lenses was up more than 25% in late March compared with the same time in the previous month.

On the video front, time spent watching Snapchat Shows reached its highest level ever, and content in the News, Health & Wellness and Gaming verticals in its Discover content platform are seeing spikes in engagement.

Snap said that to date, more than 445 Stories or Shows related to the coronavirus have been produced on Discover, and they were viewed by over 68 million Snapchatters worldwide, with more than 40% of Generation Z in the U.S. viewing Covid-19 content on Snapchat.

Engagement with Snapchat ads is also on the rise, as the company reported a 36% rise in install volume for app ads and a 19% overall swipe-up rate in late March versus late February.

Snap said news and financial sites are seeing surges in activity, as are equity trading apps.

Online shopping in categories such as athleisure, pet products and home goods is also up with store visits on the decline due to social distancing.

The company also said the shutdown of public entertainment and fitness venues across most of the U.S. has spurred spikes in fitness/wellness, streaming/music, gambling games and mobile gaming.

Snap said in its blog post, “Our top priority is ensuring that Snapchatters have the resources they need to stay informed.”

The company reiterated that its Discover content platform is curated, with news channels that appear on it fact-checked and credible, adding that it works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization and trusted news organizations from around the world.

Snap also mentioned the early debut of its Here for You feature, which surfaces when Snapchatters search for topics such as those related to anxiety, depression, stress, grief, suicidal thoughts and bullying, as well as its suite of creative tools enabling users to share best practices approved by the WHO with friends and family members, including a worldwide filter with advice on staying safe and links to the WHO website.

Finally, SnapLab, the team behind the company’s Spectacles camera sunglasses, is now producing medical face shields, which will be donated to augment the N95 masks Snap already donated to hospitals in need, and the company also provided thousands of meals and childcare essentials locally through partnerships.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/snapchat-reports-engagement-records-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/

Molson Canadian Is Making Virtual Happy Hours Pay Off in Canada

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9 hours ago
Molson Canadian is raising a virtual glass to the local bars and restaurants in Canada that are temporarily shuttered due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Throughout the month of April, people who participate in virtual happy hours can share screenshots with the #VirtualHappyHour hashtag and tag @MolsonCanadian on Instagram or @Molson_Canadian on Twitter, in addition to tagging their favorite local establishment, and they will receive $25 gift cards to enjoy when social distancing rules are relaxed and the bars and restaurants reopen.

Molson Family of Brands North America marketing director Joy Ghosh said, “For now, while we can’t raise one at our favorite local spot, we can raise one for it, and with the promise of an in-real-life meetup to come. Supporting local businesses—in the good times and the not so good times—is part of John Molson’s legacy as one of Canada’s first entrepreneurs.”

He added, “it was important to us to not limit the gift card recipients to only those drinking Molson beers during their #VirtualHappyHour, or only to local establishments serving Molson beers. Getting together is universal and brand-agnostic. The key, especially in trying times like these, is to get people (virtually) together over things we can all enjoy: beer and good company.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/molson-canadian-is-making-virtual-happy-hours-pay-off-in-canada/

Facebook Updates Its Efforts to Protect and Promote the 2020 Census

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9 hours ago
Facebook used the occasion of Census Day in the U.S. to provide an updates on steps it has taken to protect and promote the 2020 Census.

People on Facebook and Instagram began seeing notifications at the top of their feeds last week, leading them to information about the Census and reminding them to complete it.

Facebook chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg said in a Newsroom post Wednesday that over 11 million people on the two platforms have clicked through those notifications to get to the Census Bureau website, where they can enter their information.

The social network has also been working with and supporting state and local governments in efforts to train people how to use digital tools, and with civil rights organizations, nonprofits and other entities that focus on underrepresented communities, which the Census Bureau helped Facebook identify.

Sandberg added that the company is supporting the Count All Kids campaign, which was created after more than 10% of young children were not counted in the last Census.

She also reiterated steps Facebook detailed last December to prevent misinformation about the Census or efforts to suppress participation.

Sandberg wrote, “We’re using our virtual Election Operations Center that brings together more than 40 subject matter experts from across the company for real-time monitoring for misinformation or abuse related to the election or Census. The team is made up of specialists from our threat intelligence, data science, software engineering, research, community operations and legal teams. They’re trained to quickly

investigate spikes in misinformation, hate speech or Census or voter suppression—and take action when warranted."

Local officials and Census Bureau partners will also get full access to and dedicated support and training on CrowdTangle, a tool the social network uses to track how content is spreading online, all free-of-charge.

Sandberg said Facebook will provide Public Live Displays for all 50 states to help people track Census content on a local level.

She added that Facebook is working with Census Bureau officials to secure the accounts of people directly involved in running the Census via its Facebook Protect program, which includes the activation of two-factor authentication and additional monitoring for hacking.

Sandberg wrote, "Making sure that everyone gets counted is hard enough in normal times, but during an unprecedented public health emergency, it is a major challenge. People are understandably much more concerned about their health, their loved ones and, in many cases, their jobs and livelihoods. But the Census really matters. It has important and long-lasting implications—it determines everything from congressional representation to how federal funding for schools, highways, hospitals, fire stations and other resources are distributed. It is that funding—and the services it provides—that we rely on when crises hit."

https://www.adweek.com/digital/facebook-updates-its-efforts-to-protect-and-promote-the-2020-census/

Facebook Updates Aim to Help Video Creators Streamline Process, Boost Discovery

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5 hours ago
Facebook revealed several updates aimed at making it easier for creators to upload and manage videos on their pages, as well as to drive discovery of those videos.

An update released Tuesday for pages globally contains changes to its playlists feature, as well as a new option, series, enabling creators to better organize their videos and improve related content that is suggested to viewers, boosting discovery.

The social network said in a blog post Tuesday that it rolled out a new videos tab, providing viewers with a central

destination for a page’s series and playlists.

The videos tab will appear on pages regardless of whether their administrators opt for a traditional page template or a video template that provides a video-first experience for people visiting the page.

The new videos tab for pages also enables viewers to opt in and receive notifications when new videos are uploaded.

Facebook said in its blog post that the revamped playlists feature enables creators to publish new videos without the need to create separate pages, giving creators a better way to organize topical or thematic content, and potentially upping distribution of their videos via related content recommendations.

Viewers can click to open playlists directly via News Feed, and those playlists have unique URLs that can be shared on or off Facebook.

When viewers open a playlist, whether from News Feed or a page, videos will play back in the order set by the creator.

The new Series option also brings better distribution for videos through related content recommendations.

Series are featured prominently on creators' pages and, much like playlists, they have unique URLs that make them easy to share, and videos are played back in the order set by the creator.

Viewers can continue watching episodes on the series page or within the Facebook Watch video destination.

Also, whether they arrive from News Feed, the page or the videos tab, viewers will see a list of all episodes in a series, enabling them to navigate between seasons and episodes, or they can continue watching where they left off, as well as view trailers.

Playlists can be created, managed, edited and reordered via Creator Studio.

Facebook wrote in its blog post, "Your playlists and series will perform best when the content you add to them is truly thematically related. For example, a playlist of recipe videos will perform better than one covering a range of topics without a coherent theme. Curating your content by theme provides the best viewer experience, gives Facebook stronger signals about when to recommend your content and increases the likelihood that viewers will discover and watch videos from your playlist or series."

The social network revamped its Bulk Uploader last December, and Tuesday, it added Bulk Actions, which it described as "smarter editing tools that will enable you to apply settings or take actions on videos in bulk," either at the time of upload or via the content library.

The updated Bulk Uploader lets creators upload up to 50 videos to a page in a single action, as well as to edit titles and descriptions, add tags, schedule posts and choose other settings.

Actions that can be handled via Bulk Actions are: in-stream ads, Rights Manager (Lite and Pro), bulk scheduling, add tags, add custom labels, add video to playlist/series, auto captions and audience restrictions.

The social network cautioned that actions will only be visible to creators who are eligible for them, saying as an example that the enable ads option will only be seen by monetization-eligible creators.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/facebook-updates-aim-to-help-video-creators-streamline-process-boost-discovery/

Facebook Makes Its Community Help Feature Available for

Covid-19 Efforts

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7 hours ago
Facebook will begin rolling out its Community Help feature in Australia, Canada, France, the U.K. and the U.S. over the next few days to enable people to help community members who are most impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

The social network debuted Community Help in February 2017 as an extension to its Safety Check feature, activating it in cases of natural or accidental incidents, such as earthquakes and fires.

Once it is available, people can access Community Health here and use the feature to request or offer help to neighbors, as well as to donate to fundraisers for relief efforts.

A Facebook spokesperson offered examples such as delivering groceries to elderly neighbors or volunteering to distribute food via local food banks, adding, “For this experience, we really looked to build on existing tools within Crisis Response to make it as easy as possible for people to take action and get help with urgent needs.”

Facebook also created a short film in partnership with Droga5, Never Lost, which will run across national and local broadcast television, as well as digital advertising channels, through this weekend.

Facebook/Droga5
The social network said the 90-second film tells real stories from people around the world, and the voiceover was provided by British poet Kate Tempest reading her 2019 poetic song, “People’s Faces.”

A Facebook spokesperson said, “Never Lost illustrates the idea that as humans we are never truly lost as long as we can connect to each other.”

And CEO Mark Zuckerberg touted the film in a post, writing, “We made a short film, Never Lost, to honor the solidarity and resilience of so many people coming together during this time. Thank you to everyone doing your part.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/facebook-makes-its-community-help-feature-available-for-covid-19-efforts/

Artists Share Their Quarantine/Work From Home Playlists on Pandora

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9 hours ago
Pandora debuted its Listen In With series Tuesday, featuring quarantine/work from home playlists from musicians.

The playlists also include commentary about their track choices and connection to the music, as well as what’s inspiring them and keeping them busy.

Listen In With is available on all tiers of the audio-streaming service.

Artists available at debut are: A$AP Ferg, DaniLeigh, Godsmack, H.E.R., Kiana Lede, LeAnn Rimes, Marshmello, Meghan

Trainor, Rod Wave, Tate McRae, The Chainsmokers and Tommy Vext of Bad Wolves.

Pandora said the list will soon include All Time Low, Broken Social Scene, Fitz and the Tantrums, Jeezy, Jim James and Prince Royce.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/artists-share-their-quarantine-work-from-home-playlists-on-pandora/