Will IGTV Follow Facebook Watch's Monetization Path for Publishers?

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The introductions of long-form video platforms Facebook Watch in August 2017 and IGTV in June 2018 gave publishers food for thought on a lower-cost, easily accessible alternative to television, complete with Facebook's robust targeting capabilities.

While neither platform has come close to making a meaningful dent in TV's video advertising dominance, Facebook Watch is a little closer than IGTV is.

That may soon change, according to some video publishing executives who spoke with Adweek.

Currently, publishers and creators can monetize their presence on Facebook Watch in different ways. That is not the case for IGTV. For example, Facebook Watch provides funding for select premium publishers to create content exclusively for the social giant's platform, but also includes pre-roll ads and mid-roll Ad Breaks. IGTV, not so much.

Michael Philippe, co-founder and CEO of social video outfit Jellysmack, remains bullish on Facebook Watch. He sees IGTV as more of a mid-term or long-term bet, pointing to brand partnerships as the only way to make money on the platform.

"The monetization is as big as YouTube, if not bigger. Facebook Watch can drive significant revenue if you do it right," Philippe said. "Some creators are making up to six

figures per month.”

Some industry insiders say the writing is on the wall for IGTV monetization, though it’s been a bit slower than they would have liked.

“If IGTV had been funding original programming like Facebook Watch, I think it would be a way more high-profile platform,” Matthew Segal, co-founder of issues-driven media company ATTN:, said. “They probably will down the road, after figuring out how to optimize the product a little bit more.”

ATTN: shared this update on the fires in Australia via IGTV
George Stewart, chief revenue officer of lifestyle entertainment company Kin, sees change coming down the pipeline.

“I absolutely believe that Facebook will extend some variation of monetization to IGTV,” Steward said. “The real innovation in marketing has been around the platforms. IGTV provides another means for reaching people under different circumstances.”

Direct monetization opportunities are not yet available via IGTV. IGTV is open to any person or brand, who creates a video at least one minute long, while only Facebook pages with at least 5,000 followers or verified profiles with 50,000 followers or more can publish on Facebook Watch.

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Instagram spokesperson
“We have a small number of tests to help cover production costs for creators while we explore different ways for them to monetize, but we are not pursuing a licensing or originals strategy,” an Instagram spokesperson said.

John Holdridge, general manager of social media content

creation company Fullscreen, said while he doesn't think of IGTV as a monetization play in terms of ad units or pre-roll, he believes conversions ultimately lead to monetization. He compared the current state of video efforts on Facebook and Instagram to that of early YouTube.

"YouTube was just a marketing platform and repository for 15- and 30-second spots until two to three years ago, when big entertainment brands saw that there was serious money to be made," Holdridge said. "The dollars were not TV dollars, but not nothing. Facebook and Instagram are in that moment as well."

Kin's Stewart also believes IGTV is worth the investment, as it offers opportunities to be seen by TV companies that might want to license shows. The platform could attract talent and advertiser interest.

"We are working outside the monetization delivered today to understand overall monetization value," Stewart explained.

Tia Mowry can do fondue on Facebook Watch
Adam Williams, CEO of influencer marketing platform Takumi, said the debut of IGTV previews in Instagram's main feed last February caused traffic on IGTV to skyrocket, as did the addition of horizontal video last May.

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Pages: 1 2

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