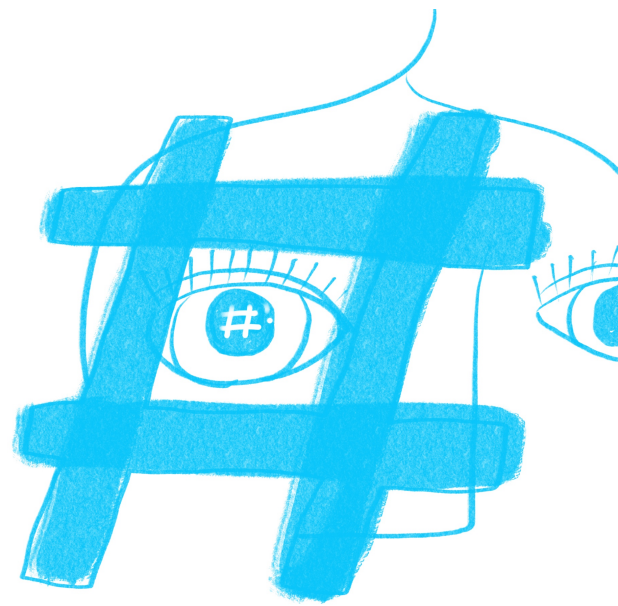


# DESIGNER CAREER IN THE DIGITAL ERA



BA THESIS 2020

YUTIAN ZHOU

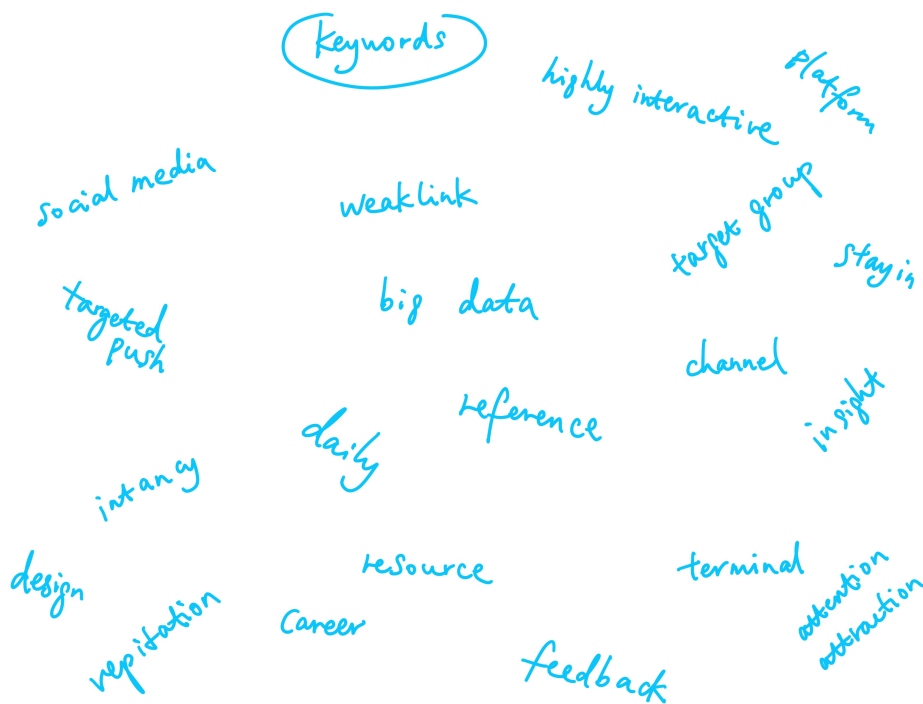
SUPERVISED BY PROF. HERBERT GRÜNER

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# Summery

It is the year 2020. The human interactive technology is now reaching for the next singularity. Biometrics & FinTech, Smartphones, Social media, Cyber crime, Artificial intelligence are considered as the most significant scientific breakthroughs<sup>1</sup>. It is not hard to see, that all of these breakthroughs are somehow to do with the human-machine interaction. As designers, we will have to pay close attention to the development of those breakthroughs, or even join in the developing process. It is as well seminal to use the technologies as our career constructing tools. Among these technological breakthroughs, Social media is the subject of this essay. What is exactly social media? What does social media mean to regular users and designers? The angle of consuming and creating content could be very different. There are lots of these questions, await to be asked and to be answered. In order to dissect the relevant factors and phenomenons, this essay re-discuss and sets their definitions, so we can organically link the concepts within the academic range.



<sup>1</sup> [cityam.com/biggest-tech-breakthroughs-of-last-decade/](http://cityam.com/biggest-tech-breakthroughs-of-last-decade/)

# Chapter 1

## On social media: Definition

Content creators and consumers abound on social media. I don't know when did it starts, programs like Instagram, which were only used to share daily smart phone photos, have also become platforms where designers approach to customers. Designers continue to post to maintain interest and memory in their work. It's a bit like religious content brain-washing, constantly reminding users of the existence of designers.

The word Social media is highly accentuated in modern context. Education, working communication, relationship communication, news press, advertisement, propaganda, entertainment, pornography...you name it. But how does social media work with designers? We do know this word. But where did this word come from? What is the difference between a normal website and social media? Let's find out.

There are still controversies over who was the first to propose the term of 'social media'. On the Q &A website Quora, a a user called Jarratt Isted wrote: According to Jeff Bercovici (Who Coined 'Social Media'? Web Pioneers Compete for Credit) Tina Sharkey, Ted Leon-sis and Darrell Berry all appear to be fighting for the title of coining the phrase social media:

Darrell Berry, a self-described "photographer/writer/social media researcher & strategist/hacker," says he began using the term sometime in late 1994 as he was developing an on-line media environment called Matisse while living in Tokyo. In May 1995, he wrote a paper on "social media spaces," arguing that the internet had to evolve from what was then essentially a static archive of documents into a network of users engaging with each other. "I have no recollection of having seen that expression prior to that, apart from myself and a couple of friends," he says. And since the Web had not yet evolved into the sort of place where memes could spread around the globe rapidly, he adds, there's little chance he heard it somewhere else. "We were fairly cut off from the mainstream," he says. "I think we developed the thought in isolation."<sup>2</sup>

Regardless of who first proposed this concept, the definition of social media is very clear today and is well known by most people. It is displayed on the first screen of our smart-phone. For many people, it is even the app that consumes the most mobile phone data and power every day. More and more non-social media software is beginning to add chat-box functionality.

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<sup>2</sup> source: Forbes.com

How does the definition look anyway? If you type search words social media in Google, this page of graphics and definition will show up:

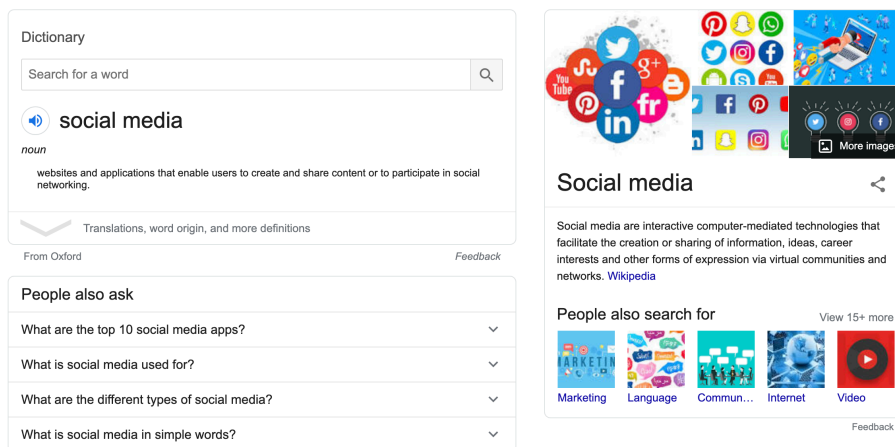
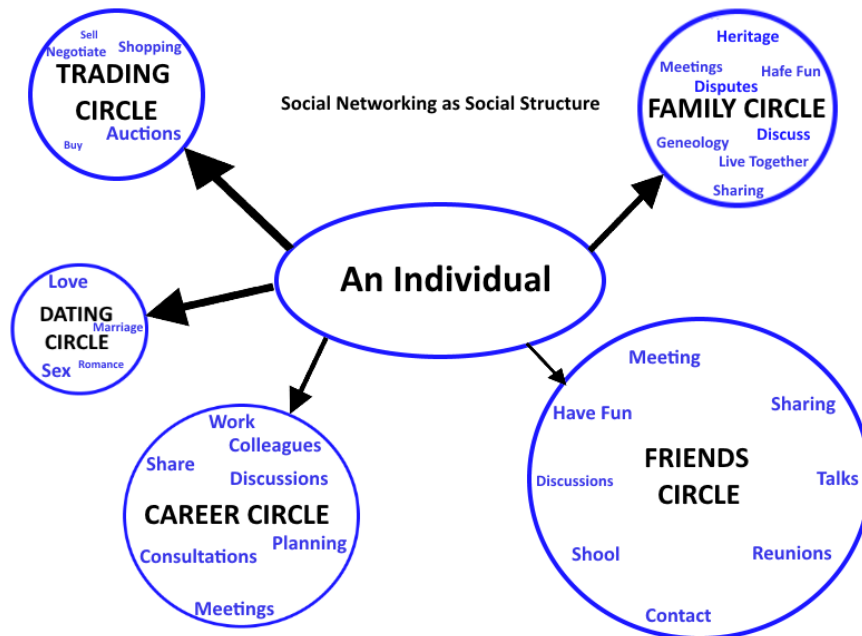


Image 2: This is is the screenshot of keyword social media on google

According to the definition of dictionary.com, social media means the websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Create and share are the keywords of defining social media. They are clearly distinguished between social media and ordinary website. On ordinary websites, you may only have the opportunity to comment or register. But reposting content or creating content as an user is not possible. Reposting and creating content is a necessary element of social media. For example: You can share shopping links on amazon.com, you can also comment on the quality and experience of one product. Unless you are a seller, it is impossible for you to create a page on Amazon and publish content by yourself. The division between merchants and buyers is very obvious. The same goes for restaurant and online clinic bookings.

In the definition of dictionary.com, the term social networking is also mentioned. The word social networking looks very similar to social media. In these two definitions, the answers given by each knowledge-based website are very different. A rough summary: social media is an online platform and a coded facility. And social networking is a behavior. Social networking doesn't necessarily happen online. It is an act, a communication happens in a certain circle with similar interest or purpose. Social networking is taking place on social media. 'social networking is an act of engagement. Groups of people with common interests, or like-minds, associate together on social networking sites and build relationships through community', wrote Sarah Hartshorn<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> socialmediatoday.com



Author : Thomas Saacke , Copyright 2018

Image 3: Social Networking as social structure  
[https://medium.com/@christina\\_meyer](https://medium.com/@christina_meyer)

# Chapter 2

## On designer's career path

Identifying the role of the designer provides a framework for our research. But to understand the relationship between designers and social media, it is essential to understand the way they work. Designers' contemporary work forms are mainly divided into freelancer, full-time employee and freelance + fulltime employee. This article wants to complete a virtual scenario in the form of story telling:

Ella received her Master Degree in Visual Communication in September 2017. After nearly two years of full-time designer work, she has to choose:

1. the company's contract has just expired, the supervisor is satisfied with her work and has expressed his intention to renew the contract;
2. Ella has already had a certain professional social network in her work in the past two years, and some people want to express her invitation to do some design for his/her new rising business . But the premise is that these companies only want to hire freelance designers.

It is a difficult decision. If Ella wants to start freelancing, she must consider the advantages and disadvantages of such. After all, she is new to this employment type... In fact, Ella can find a lot of feasibility analysis on becoming a freelancer on the Internet. An article on medium.com clearly lists the pros and cons. And under each one, Ella made a careful note:

### Design / Freelancing: The Brutal Truth, Jamal Nichols, 2019

#### Pros of freelancing:

- More variety & more experience, faster.
  - This one is pretty obvious: As a designer, nothing is more important than his/her portfolio. Ella can get job offers from different clients. That means, the portfolio can be enriched with diverse works. It is definitely beneficial for future development.
- You can take time off whenever you want.
  - There is no option for an employee to choose when is the time for work, and when can Ella take some time for Ella's family. Instead, freelancers can always set their own schedules. If it's not the right time to work, why not take a rest?
- Make more money (usually)

- Ella can always choose who she worked for. Once she has a good portfolio and connection und clients, they can do several jobs at the same time. And it will lead to more income.

- Less company politics

- More freedom on constructing Ella's career, and make adjustments to approach for more good jobs and career development.

## Freelancing cons

- No paid time off?

- Sick? There is no excuse for being not able to work. Ella might got to work even when she is not feeling well. No work no money is the motto.

- No benefits

- Ella could earn more as a freelancer, but she'll also have to give up all the constitutional benefits such as company gyms, free rest time coffee and annual bonus.

- No growth opportunities (except the ones you create yourself)

- Ella is her own boss. They only way to get growth opportunities is the growth of the business.

- Taxes, paperwork and business development

- Ella can't expect anyone to do the paperwork. Taxes and paperwork are usually covered by her employer. Now she has to figure these out all by herself. A wrong calculated tax can also cause her trouble.

- You often work on the least interesting projects

- Well, this one is debatable. There can be boring jobs anywhere.

- No long-term connections / loneliness

- Ella can only reach for advice and connections with her friend designers. There is no strong concept as co-workers.

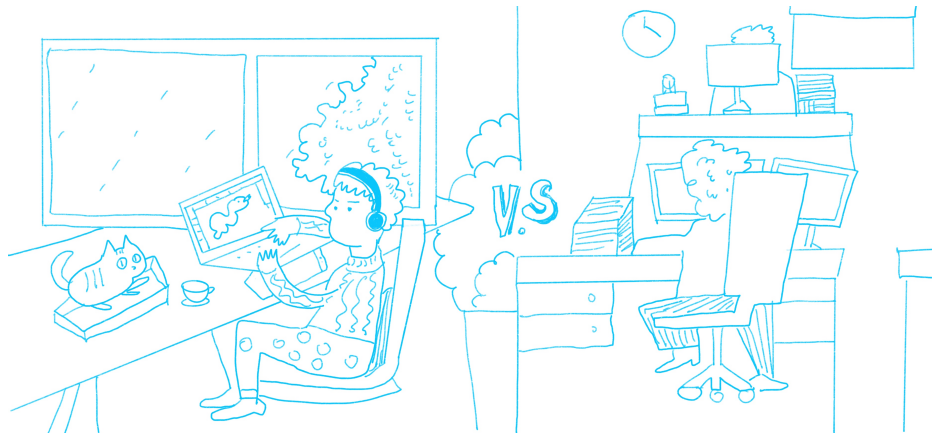
- You may not find work

- The income might be turbulent sometimes. Be prepared to reach for clients. It will take some effort.

After careful consideration, Ella thinks that long-term full-time jobs will damage her creativity to a certain extent, and the job may become less challenging. Choosing freelance not only works for different customers but also has the flexibility to schedule your own



time. Ella is ready to accept the instability and difficulties brought by freelancing psychologically. But she is too excited and careless to think about anything else other than the challenge. So she gave up renewing her contract with the previous company. If freelance doesn't work, she can always apply for a job in the future. There is nothing to lose.



Four months later, she is about to complete her first freelanced contract project. She will also start her second project soon. There is a problem here: Ella has not received more offers, and she has already had enough experience. The portfolio is also completed, the contents are abundant. In addition to getting more opportunities through the weak links, what other platforms are available? Can you show your work and ensure a high degree of interaction with the potential client? She looked back to those four interactive breakthroughs of the 2010s, the word "social media" strikes her.

# Chapter 3

## Which social media fits?

As I mentioned before, social media has the feature of freely uploading content and unlimited sharing by users. Designers can classify this photo or video into the corresponding category by tagging the content they upload. Users or potential customers who are interested in a certain category can find their favorite rite works across different designers at the same time. A fully-exposed portfolio environment is guaranteed. Because of the repost function of social media, the designer's work can also spread farther. In the process of continuous reposting, works can break through offline social networking to reach another city, country or a completely different group of people. Otherwise, you never know where the next customer is.

Ella's decision is exciting, but she doesn't know where to choose a social media focus. After all, she has limited energy. She decided to conduct an online survey of the most used social media in her home country, Germany:

### Leading active social media platforms in Germany in 2019

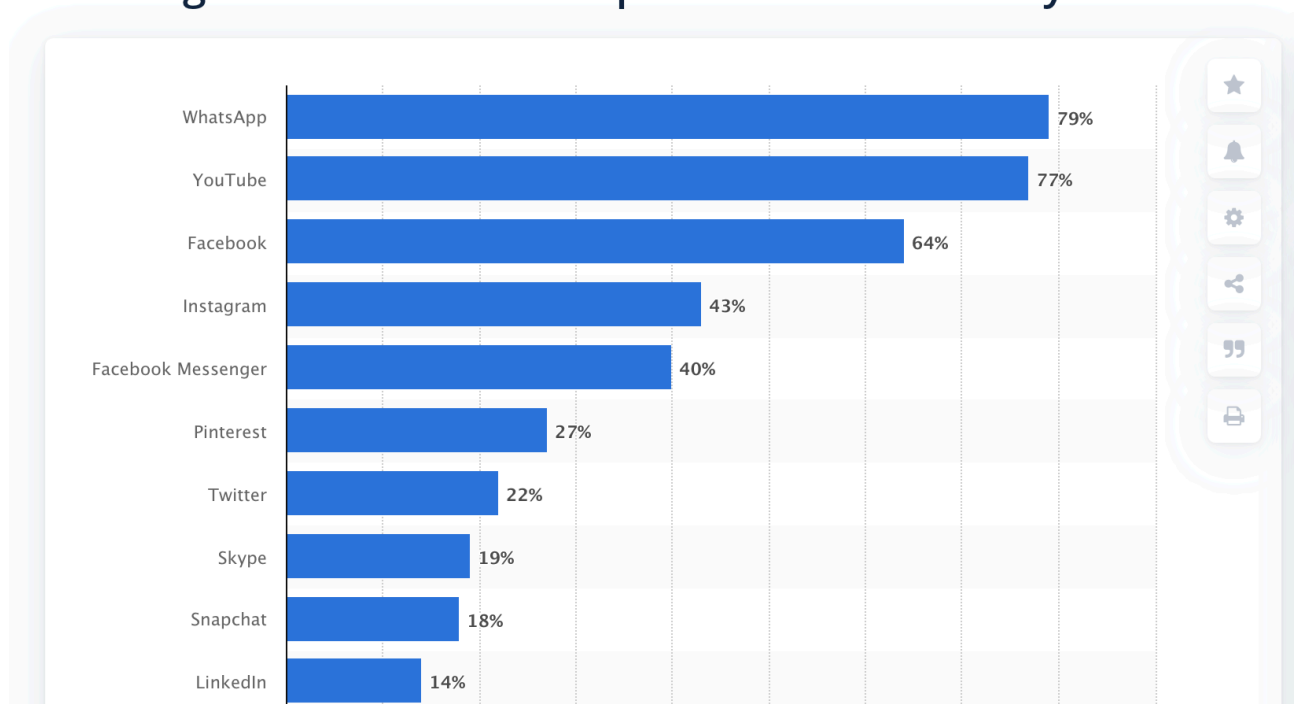


Table 2: Leading active social media platforms in Germany in 2019

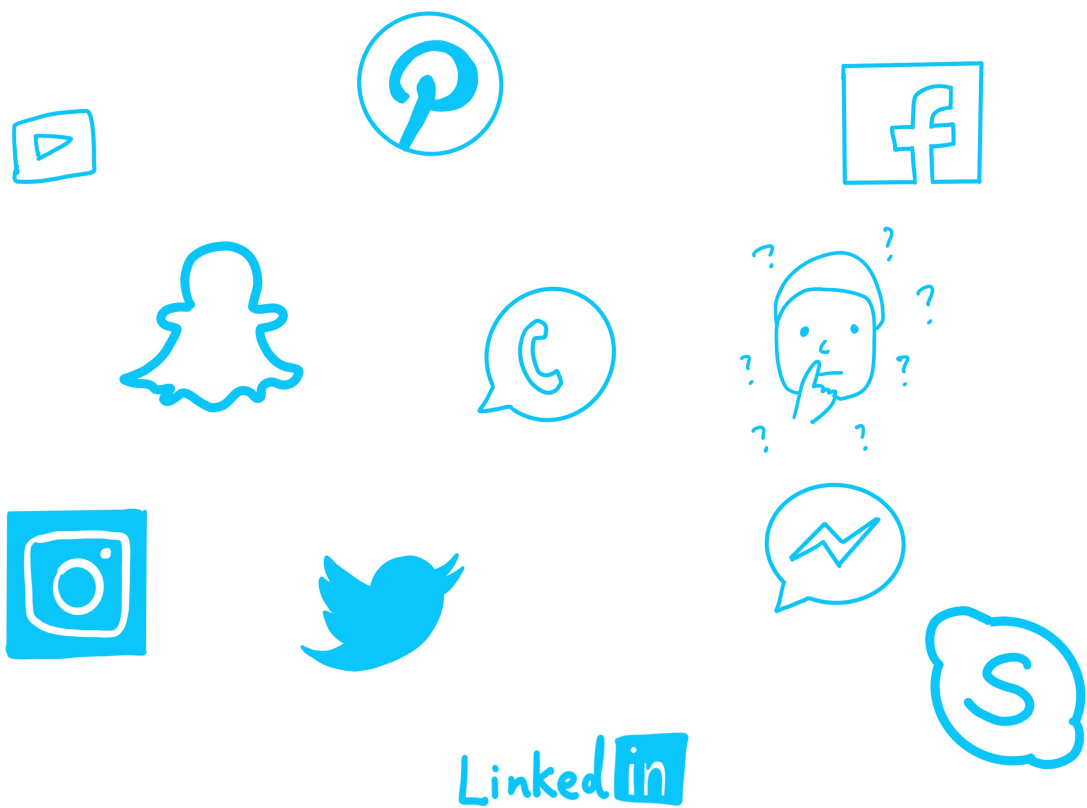
Of the 10 most used social media, 5 are communication tools. You can show your work to contacts by sharing the link. Dialogues can be one-on-one or in a group. Their function is basically to use the Internet to perform information transmission functions, and they do not have the function of permanently uploading content to public stages. Instead, social media like Youtube, Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest have the ability to open and display content for a long time. As long as you do not set your profile to private mode, almost all international users can trace back to your archive based on the pictures or videos that were previously distributed.

Here I listed 4 visual based social media as comparison.

	<b>Content form</b>	<b>Homepage inter- face</b>	<b>Suitable for</b>	<b>Promotion</b>
<b>YouTube</b>	Video	Videos from different content creators, both subscribed and random.	Video creators, who make money from numbers of viewing for each video. Payed back advertisement fee	Through similar search/view algorithm, advertising
<b>Facebook</b>	Image/article/video/link, etc.	Mixed information from subscribed users	Content creators, who must post different type of informations. Such as Politicians, certain organisations, etc.	Through similar search/view algorithm,
<b>Instagram</b>	Image/Short video	Images/short videos from the subscribed users, Discovery feed	Business that use picture as it's main media. Visualized commodity/service	Through similar search/view algorithm, Link from repost, similar following user
<b>Pinterest</b>	Linked image	Similar images from the previous pinned ones	Business that use picture as it's main media. Visualized commodity/service	Through similar search/view algorithm, repin

Table 3: A comparison of different visual based social media.

Ella is a visual communication professional who uploads mostly visual content. Compared to other applications, Instagram has the simplest user interface and a relatively large user base. If we compare Instagram with the picture-sharing site Pinterest, you will find that Instagram pays more attention to the display of personal profiles, and also leads users to original profiles through original content. Pinterest, on the other hand, focuses on grouping pictures from normal websites and letting people categorize them quickly. It is true that original users rarely upload content directly to Pinterest. In other words, Pinterest is more like a source of reference.



There are indeed special online analyses of which social media is more suitable for designers and artists. This article analyzes the pros and cons of Instagram:

## INSTAGRAM

Expected Use: Post daily or multiple times a week and interact daily

### Pros:

Channel is known to be used by art collectors to find artwork

Suits artwork sales since it 's a visual-oriented platform

Use hashtags to help people easily discover your artwork

Save drafts of your posts to publish later or use scheduling tools

Post directly from your phone without needing to use a computer

Show all facets of running an art business, including behind the scenes studio pictures and works-in-progress

Advertise and receive insights with a free business account

Easily share Instagram posts on Facebook and Twitter

### Cons:

Direct links to a website only work in your bio, not in a post 's caption

Only works on mobile, not on a computer

No matter from which perspective, Instagram has many benefits for art practitioners. I think the most interesting point is the powerful hashtag function. Due to the dispersed Instagram users, the hashtag has become the most effective and convenient retrieval method for this platform. No matter where the photo is, you can always easily find it through certain keywords. At the same time, as a designer, you can also see which photos other people put into this category. Ella will also have a new understanding of her work overtime.

The article specifically mentions that Instagram is particularly suitable for visual arts workers. As a visual communication worker, Ella's goal is to leave a strong first image with people combined with images and words.

Instagram it is!

# Chapter 4

## Analysing Instagram

For a deeper understanding of the platform, Ella is about to use, here is a little history about Instagram:

**Instagram** (colloquially **IG** or **Insta**) is an American photo and video-sharing social networking service owned by Facebook, Inc. It was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, and launched in October 2010 on iOS. A version for Android devices was released in April 2012, followed by a feature-limited website interface in November 2012, a Fire OS app on June 15, 2014 and an app for Windows 10 tablets and computers in October 2016. The app allows users to upload photos and videos, which can be edited with filters and organized with tags and location information. Posts can be shared publicly or with pre-approved followers. Users can browse other users' content by tags and locations, and view trending content. Users can like photos and follow other users to add their content to a feed.

Instagram was originally distinguished by only allowing content to be framed in a square (1:1) aspect ratio with 640 pixels to match the display width of the iPhone at the time. These restrictions were eased in 2015, with an increase to 1080 pixels. The service also added messaging features, the ability to include multiple images or videos in a single post, as well as "Stories"—similar to its main competitor Snapchat—which allows users to post photos and videos to a sequential feed, with each post accessible by others for 24 hours each. As of January 2019, the Stories feature is used by 500 million users daily.<sup>4</sup>



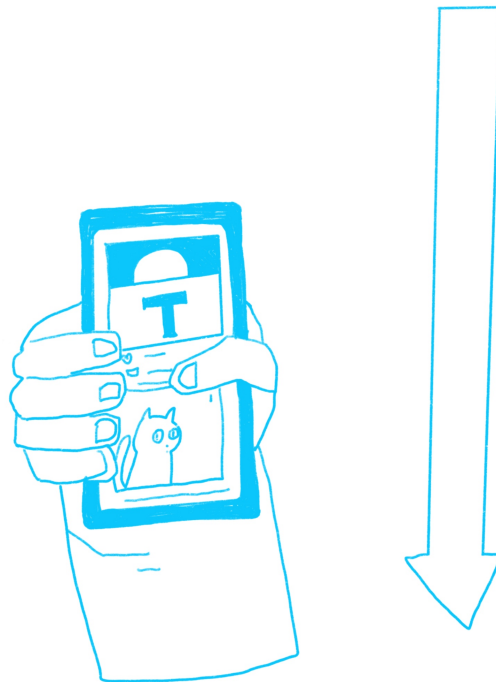
*Image 3: two cofounders of instagram,  
Left: Mike Krieger Right: Kevin Systrom  
source: <https://techcrunch.com/>*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instagram>

Looking back to the history of Instagram, it now has far more functions than they originally planned. The two founders wanted to bring the functionality of analog Polaroid to their smartphones. They never thought that this would be the best choice for professionals to show their work. The original setting of taking photos and uploading at any time is broken. Now the photos are usually been carefully designed to upload at any time. Because of the continuous improvement in the quality of Instagram photos, businesses and designers have the opportunity to upload quality images.

Ella needs to know more information about the platform she is about to use, just as it is necessary to enter a new house and know where the switch of the heater is. What are the advantages of Instagram? Perhaps it is the most scientific to analyze it through the eye of statistics. We scroll our Instagram screen with our thumbs every day, consume endless images. They are so attractive and even addictive. Ella should know how to manage her account.



# Chapter 5

## Instagram statistics for designers

1. Instagram has 1 billion monthly active users and more than 500 million of them use the platform every day.<sup>5</sup>

2. 63% log in at least once per day.<sup>6</sup>

3. Instagram users spend 53 mins per day on average. People spend almost as much time on Instagram as they do on Facebook.<sup>7</sup>

4. About 800 million Instagram users follow business profiles.<sup>8</sup>

4. 200 million Instagram users visit at least one business profile daily.<sup>9</sup>

5. About 60% of Instagram users claim to discover new products via other profiles.<sup>10</sup>

According to 'the rule of 150'<sup>11</sup>, the number of friends that the human brain can reach through social networking is mostly around 150. It is very difficult to exceed this number while offline. Of course, this number doesn't mean that our brains only allow us to know so many people. Ella decided to work in freelance, so it is necessary to increase the exposure of her work as much as possible. From this point of view, the fact that Instagram users view a large number of pictures every day exists. Instagram's Interface design is also based on an unlimited push of new content to keep users addicted to scrolling down. If 200 million people read a business profile every day, and most of these users can discover new profiles through their known profiles. Even if there is no promotion, Ella can reach his potential customers through the link. However, using ordinary web-

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<sup>5</sup> [blog.hootsuite.com/](http://blog.hootsuite.com/)

<sup>6</sup> [oberlo.com](http://oberlo.com)

<sup>7</sup> [oberlo.com](http://oberlo.com)

<sup>8</sup> [99firms.com](http://99firms.com)

<sup>9</sup> [blog.hootsuite.com/](http://blog.hootsuite.com/)

<sup>10</sup> [99firms.com](http://99firms.com)

<sup>11</sup> Dunbar's number is a suggested cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships—relationships in which an individual knows who each person is and how each person relates to every other person. This number was first proposed in the 1990s by British anthropologist Robin Dunbar, who found a correlation between primate brain size and average social group size. By using the average human brain size and extrapolating from the results of primates, he proposed that humans can comfortably maintain 150 stable relationships. Dunbar explained it informally as "the number of people you would not feel embarrassed about joining uninvited for a drink if you happened to bump into them in a bar".



site promotion and introductions with acquaintances, there is no such thing as free access to the visual world.

Regular users spend almost 53mins per day on Instagram. How about for Ella? How long does it take for her to maintain her profile notable and the engagement daily? Sure you can post thousands of photos on Instagram and wait for someone to like your post or even get in contact. The number base looks very promising for Ella's career development.

# Chapter 6

## Target Group

Statistics look good. But let us step a bit back for a rethinking: Why is Ella using Instagram anyway? She is not intended to entertain herself from it or post her pictures on it. Ella is looking for clients, potential clients. And that creates another question: How does the target group look like? Instagram has a large range of global users but it is not guaranteed to cover Ella's target group. Ella has to make herself clear first: What kind of client did I usually have in the past? With whom I'd like to work with? And what kind of work I'd rather produce?

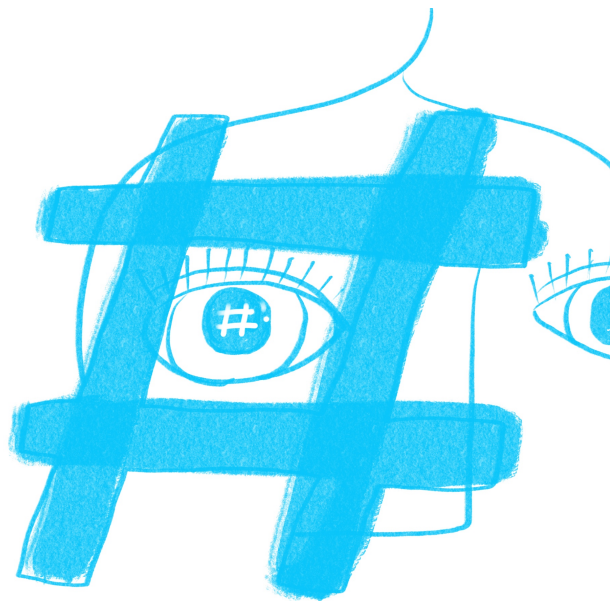
It was already mentioned that Ella worked full-time for a Company before. She has done many layout designs and illustrations for the company. What she most interested in is the digital illustration and its editorial work. The illustration can be needed and used in many fields. Illustrations for the press, especially for magazines and newspapers/websites are often required from Ella. Art Directors are mostly responsible for finding new blood illustrators. No matter what kind of client, Art Directors are the keystone getting a job. From a more traditional perspective, Art Directors will receive Emails from illustrators, who are trying to get themselves known. The Email pile can easily bury those talented. Otherwise, Art Directors will find new illustrators through recommendation or other fellow press/company.



Image 4: It is hard to find a press company that don't own a instagram profile.

Things are different here on Instagram. Almost every business own its own profile on Instagram. It keeps them up to the younger generation and remind people of their engagement. If the illustrator or the designer also owns one profile there, it's more likely to be discovered by Art Directors. Instagram is a communication tool, a social media platform. Everyone is equal on this platform, no matter the profile is for business or for private use.

The hashtag, another great tool for sorting pictures on Instagram. It was almost unimaginable to access for so many potential clients. If Ella wants to make her illustration/graphic design work more visible in the beginning, she can always use the tagging system to “organize” her work within one or several categories. People who have an interest in this field can type in there wanted hashtag and view these related contents.



Another notable feature on Instagram is the related account search function. Pretending I am the Art Director who is constantly looking for new talented, browsing hashtags can be very frustrated. Good content can also be buried with hobby pictures. At this point, the related account search can help the director out. I can go to the known illustrator/designer I like, and click the little arrow just below to the follow button. The algorithm will find me a similar profile for me. Vice versa for designers. If Ella would like to know about more potential clients there, she can always try to follow these business accounts and even DM(direct message) them. Instagram is both way tool: discovering and advertising. Every individual has the chance to get near to a not-so-familiar circle. It is efficient for both designers and job providers to find each other. Picture based features can give both sides a direct, non-veil impression.

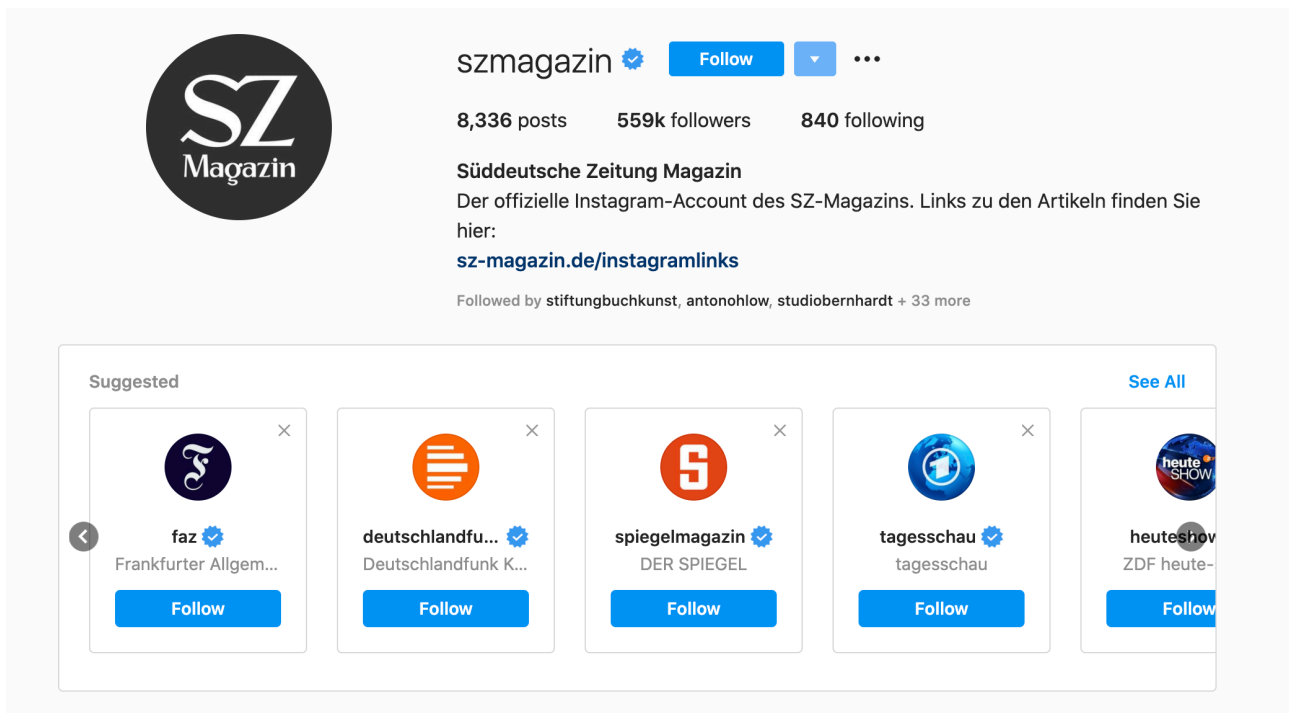


Image 5: Same example from Süddeutsche Magazine. You can get to know more similar profile through the app algorithm.

Since we already mentioned algorithms, the inevitable topic in the age of the internet. Let's look deeper into how the algorithm affects finding target groups. Instagram provides the possibility to promote your post or profile to a certain target group by setting with keywords and co. The system will help you find these users and push your content to them. Here, Instagram can be used now as a portfolio, message sender, content discovery, and advertising tool with preference!

Back to the core of the target group. Any business needs to know their target group to maximize the profits. It helps reduce the promotion cost and work efficiently. But still, I'd like to point out: For young designers like Ella, it will be a bit difficult to settle her target group yet. She only worked for a few clients and it's too arbitrary to hand out a conclusion that XYZ will be my potential target group. Instagram can help her analysis who is interested in her profile by using the business account. Gender, location, age of the viewer will be shown clearly. Therefore, the target group reveals. Of course, it is also wrong to be blindfolded by these data. But some information with science won't hurt anybody.

To know deeper about designer's career by posting on Instagram. Ella decided to search for people who already have experience with it. And most importantly, to save her from the detour. Ella thought about her classmate at school, who has succeeded in building up her career as an illustrator with only posting on Instagram. Ella planned an interview with Molly, who is also willing to give her core advice for young designers.

# Chapter 7

## An Interview with Molly Dyson

Q: Hello Molly! Can you please introduce yourself a bit for us?

A: Hi! I'm Molly Dyson. I am 30 years old. I come from Melbourne, Australia. I've been living in Berlin for 7 years. I studied Fine art in Australia first. Currently, I'm studying in Kunsthochschule Berlin Weißensee, department visual communication. My main interests are graphic design and digital illustration.

Q: You have almost 7k followers on Instagram! It is an amazing result for a young undergraduate designer. Can you share your Instagram journey with us?

A: I started using Instagram 6-7 years ago. I didn't post any Photoshop work on Instagram at the beginning. I only posted some analog drawings, along with my private photos on it. Once I started making posters, and that is when my page got more followers. Around that time, I decided to make the page less personal and started to transform it into a professional account.

Q: When did the followers gain drastically? Is there a milestone post that you got most attention and followers?

A: It is hard to say, which post was the milestone. The followers started to grow drastically as I posted my work more regularly on Instagram. I think the work which changes all is the one for Bloomberg Businessweek, a well-regarded business site. This is also my first serious job. I think people are also giving more response to the official works than the 'casual ones'.

Another work that got a lot of attention is my illustrated work for the book '(definitely) the best dogs of all time' with Jadan Carroll. Also, people will respond to work more when it has a clear purpose. And when people see the work is appearing in a magazine or a book form, it feels like more than just an image. It is generally more powerful. Once the clients can see, that I'm capable of doing these work on a certain level, they will provide more jobs.

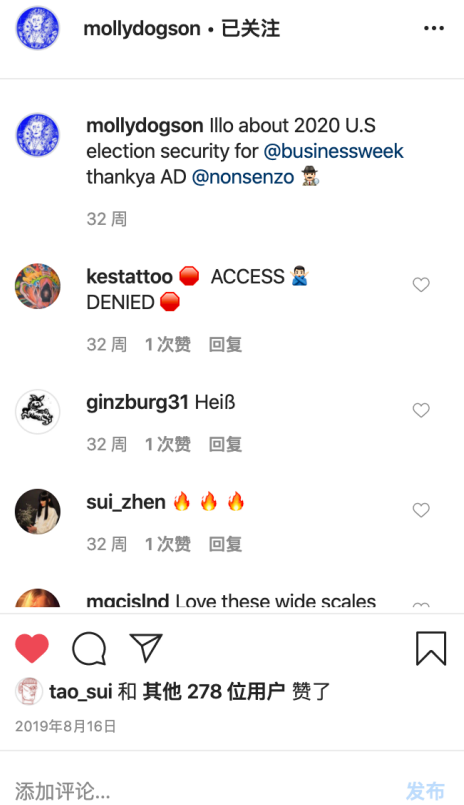


Image 6: A work form Molly Dyson, Buisnessweek Bloomberg

Q: Can you describe yourself as a freelancer now? How do clients usually approach you?

A: I guess I can. 99% of my clients DM (direct message) on Instagram. And 5 out of 10 of those DMs will end up as real jobs. They usually discover my Instagram profile and find my works interesting. It is easy to work with those clients who already have an idea. I did publish my Email address on Instagram description box once but end up receiving crazy spams. So I took it off.

Q: Can you explain to me just one case? How did the client approach you and how was the whole project done?

A: Recently I did a job for Zeit Campus. First, I got a DM from the Junior Art Director from Zeit Campus. Asking me if I'm available. That is very important for a job because sometimes I have some other jobs on hand. And then they informed about the budget, like how much they can pay. And the deadline. So these are the information that your client would usually provide. Later they send me an Email about the content: A Company is movi



Image 7/8: A work form Molly Dyson, Zeit Campus

ng from the UK to Europe due to Brexit. We had a brief discussion about how the illustration will look like.

The whole process would usually take about 4 days. On the first day, I usually do some research and make 3 or 4 different sketches and send them off to the client. It will take about a day for them to decide which one is their favorite. The client will tell me the part they'd like to change or offer some suggestions. If I'm not sure about some detail in the process, I will send them the work and clarify it, to make sure that I don't have to go back to change it in the future. On the last day, we will make the final adjustments together.

Q: Do you have about your target group? Is there a pattern of your clients?

A: Hmmm, this is hard to say, I actually don't really post strategically to anyone in particular... I would say most art directors are in their late 20's early 30s but I don't know exactly.

A lot of my clients are from my home city Melbourne. It is very funny to have clients from there though I'm not physically there. I designed a few posters for local activities in Melbourne. My theory is: People tend to trust the out-printed works. Posters, books, even flyers. It shows that the designer can produce works on a certain level. The client approached me after they saw my work in a spatial context - in the city.

Q: Do you consider Instagram as your frontline portfolio? And how do you think of posting personal photos on Instagram now? Is there any connection between personal exposure and career attention?

A: Definitely. I only post some of my pictures on IG Stories. It only lasts for 24 hours for a row. The post section is now only for my works. I don't think that there is a strong connection between personal exposure and career attention. The more post I put on Instagram, the more job I'll get. I guess that is how it works. Haha.

Q: Do you use other social media for your artwork? When yes – What is the difference?

A: No I don't. Instagram is enough for me now. I spend almost 2 hours per day just check in it. I know it is weird, only to get job from this platform. But if it is working, why not put some energy into it?

Q: Can you tell us again the advantages and disadvantages of Instagram?



A: Just like I said, I always have to spend a lot of time on Instagram. Sometimes I would get anxious if I don't post my work for a while. The more works I put on there, the more opportunity I'll get.

Also, Instagram belongs to Facebook now. If my account is accidentally reported by someone, all data will be removed in an instance.

Sometimes I do worry about copyright. It's generally impossible to prevent someone from stealing the work and repost it without asking. I don't mind if people use my pictures as inspiration or reference. I also check on others' work for inspiration. Protect my privacy is essential. Leaking some privacy is also a part of it.

However, I love the design community on Instagram. Instagram profile with the specific topic would attract more followers. It is difficult to attract people like that only with your website. A profile only about beautiful textiles or jewelry. It is always better than a profile with all different kinds of pictures. A strong community of this subject can be bounden easily and therefore, more followers. I mean, there is a whole different world up there. You get to know new designer friends and discuss things with them. I think I feel most excited and confident when my favorite designer passes his/her compliment. People are truly connecting to each other even though we never met.

Q: Do you think that Instagram has changed your work flow/process.

A: Yes it does. Instagram has also become my source of inspiration. And see if it's possible to develop something really different.

Q: Do you think that Instagram can always provide you a great part of job offers? Have you ever thought about establishing your studio, having co-workers, etc..?

A: I hope so! I also feel the crisis about it. More and more talented illustrators will be soon on this platform. Everybody is starting 'like' each other's work and follow each other cause no one has anything else to do. I wonder if that is changing the job market with illustrations on Instagram. The upcoming generation will definitely rise in a year or two.

And yes, I'm actually considering the form of a studio with my friends. Often I get so many offers that I can't say yes to everything. An alliance of designers could be helpful. We can also pass jobs which we can't do to other designers in the studio. We can as well help each other with decisions or so.

Q: Do you feel psychologically secure to work on the base of Instagram?

A: No, absolutely not. I have to invest a lot of time on Instagram just to maintain contact with my friends and the market in Australia and other countries. The time difference makes me think and work on their behalf. Instagram is a huge complex with so many different things. Communication, entertainment, news update... I definitely need to cut down my browsing time.

Q: Any advice for new Instagram designers?

A: Always try to create something different! Your work will get more noticed if you make something unusual and doesn't look like anyone else's. If I work on something I think is weird or uncertain, I usually get more responses. Don't be afraid of being really different from others. That is a good sign.

Good timing of posting is also important. I usually post on Wednesday or Friday mornings, instead of on Mondays or Weekends. Just in order to get more exposure. A little strategy there.

Q: Wow, thank you so much for the interview Molly! Hope you the best.

# Chapter 8

## Future

The number of people using Instagram is increasing day by day. Not only designers, but also more Businesses from other fields are still coming on board. Not only can designers find clients on Instagram, but they can also network with their peers - after all, design is not a one-man show.

Indeed, Instagram seems like the perfect place to experiment and sell. But will things really stay the same, and is Instagram timeless? When we look back at Facebook we can tell that social media, which was blooming even five years ago, has become less viable in the face of other peers. Meanwhile, TikTok ranked as the top most downloaded app in Apple's iOS App Store for Q1 2019, with more than 33 million downloads, and 41 percent of TikTok users are aged between 16 and 24. If designers want to shift their target group to a younger demographic, then TikTok is the new battleground.

But is that really the case?