

2020 SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT



OVERVIEW ANALYSIS

As we neared 2020, we had high hopes and big goals. However, with the onset of the pandemic coming to a head in March, the new strategies for social media took a backseat while we tried our hardest to share information in as many places as possible. Throughout this report, you'll see the impact of COVID and how it shaped our year. — Kati Hartwig, Coordinator, Social Media & Digital Marketing

Youngstown State University currently has an active profile on each of the top social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and TikTok. This report will provide an overview of where we stand at the end of the 2020 calendar year, and what our goals are for 2021.

In this report we'll measure followers (total audience), engagements (likes, comments, and shares on a post), reach (how many individuals the post was served to), impressions (how many times the post was served), and engagement rate (the percentage of potential users who interacted with a post).

TOTAL FOLLOWERS

on all accounts

160,794

TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS

on all accounts

664,500



57,277 Followers
313,365 Engagements



20,813 Followers
113,009 Engagements



18,726 Followers
218,628 Engagements



2,161 Subscribers
6,764 Reactions



61,446 Followers
12,468 Engagements



371 Followers
266 Engagements

FACEBOOK ANALYSIS

Going into 2020, we felt that Facebook was one platform we needed to spend a little TLC with to get a better understanding of their algorithms and constant changes. But when the pandemic hit, we knew that we had to share internal information in places we wouldn't normally — and it worked.

We rounded out 2020 with a total of **57,277 followers**. This was an increase of 4% from 2019. With **255 posts**, our engagement rate increased by over 500%. Much of this is in relation to the amount of engagements we received from the many COVID updates we provided to our audiences throughout the year.

Top posts were mainly centered around our COVID-19 updates, as well as virtual commencements and the assets that went along with both of those. **Posts that had a lower engagement rate** included event promotions, and announcements that could be categorized as internal (deadline reminders, on-campus special events, etc.).

NUMBERS TO NOTE:



FOLLOWERS

57,277
+4%

Followers are always slow to gain on Facebook, especially with the challenges the platform continually faces with users and security.



ENGAGEMENTS

1,234 per post (this isn't a joke!)
+400%

An engagement on Facebook is any reaction, comment, share, or link click. Creating more audience-centered posts will increase engagements.



REACH

8,786 per post
+8%

Facebook reach is the number of people the post was served to. Facebook's algorithm change has hurt page reach for the past few years, but it's starting to make a comeback!



ENGAGEMENT RATE

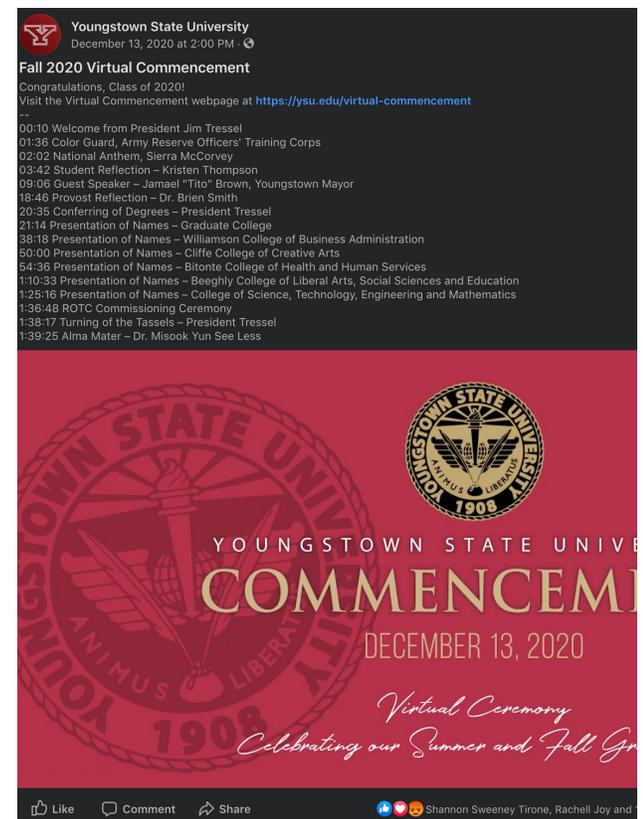
9.13% per post
Goal: >3.5%

The engagement rate is the percentage of users that engaged with the post after it was served to them. Industry standard is 3.5% — we came in quite a bit higher!

VIDEOS:

In 2020, we posted **46 videos** to the Youngstown State Facebook page, doubling what was put out the previous year.

The **top video of 2020** was the Fall 2020 Commencement premiere. COVID made many things difficult this year, including the ability for us to celebrate our graduates. However, the premiere of the virtual commencement for Fall included watch parties, photos, and a fantastic production. So why did Fall do better than Spring? We were ready ;)



INSTAGRAM ANALYSIS

Instagram's robust story features had us ditching Snapchat in late 2018 to focus more heavily on our strategy on the Facebook-owned platform. Much of our time was spent in the stories feature, creating content that was timely for our college and high school age followers. While engagement on in-feed posts was down about 5%, we made up for it by engaging users in our takeover series on our Instagram story.

The **top post of the year** was a photo of the Youngstown State University sign outside Jones Hall at night, in the snow. The February 12 post had over 2,000 engagements total. Our lower performing posts were all videos that were posted to IGTV. They mostly covered COVID-19 protocols and updates, as well as some peer-to-peer messaging. As we move into 2021, we'll become more strategic on the types of videos that are posted, knowing audience members like short-form content when scrolling through platforms like Instagram.

NUMBERS TO NOTE:



#YSUGRAM REGRAMS

22 total; 14 less than 2019

The #ysugram initiative invites students and community members to share their photos of YSU. We then share the best ones, and the ones that fit our aesthetic.



ENGAGEMENTS

813 per post; +1.3%

Engagements on Instagram are any like, comment, bookmark (save), share, and click on a photo that is posted.



REACH

7,172 per post; +12%

Instagram's reach is the number of individuals your post was shown to. At least 34% of our followers are being served posts.

GUINFLUENCERS

TOTAL
GUINFLUENCERS

14

TOTAL
FOLLOWERS

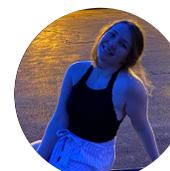
4,920

+14% increase

The Guinfluencer program is a student ambassador program that originated in early 2019. Each student represents a different college on campus, as well as a different type of student (commuter, resident, involved in student organizations, works off campus, etc.) All Guinfluencers have their own branded Instagram account that they post to throughout the year.

In 2020, the accounts accumulated **12,635 engagements across 14 users**. The top engaged account was Serene Koirala (@ysugram_serene), a junior marketing major who is very involved with International Programs.

In 2021, we'll look to continue to increase engagement, but also utilize our Guinfluencers to help grow some of the student-centered channels like TikTok and Instagram.

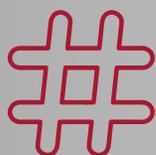


TWITTER ANALYSIS

Twitter continues to prove to be one of our most successful platforms, continuously keeping us engaged with students and community members. It's easy to share exciting content and celebrate with our community, while also providing helpful responses to burning questions.

Out of our **634 tweets**, we earned a total of **218,628 engagements** (including likes, retweets, link clicks, and media views), which was a 12% increase overall. The **best performing posts** told the story of our 2020. From campus events pre-COVID and alerting the campus community of new protocols and procedures, to celebrating an engagement and mourning the loss of two of our students, we got through it as a community.

NUMBERS TO NOTE:



FOLLOWERS

18,726; +3%

Our follower count typically surges during the summer, with the new incoming Freshguin class. It tends to level off during the spring.



ENGAGEMENTS

327 per post; +32%

Engagements include post likes, replies, retweets, link clicks, media clicks (clicks into our posted photos/videos), and profile clicks.



IMPRESSIONS

5,793 per post; +28%

Impressions is the number of times a post is served in total. This could include the same person several times.

TOP POSTS



We celebrated President Tressel's birthday with our followers on December 5 — our audience loved the photo choices!



Before COVID hit, we took Pete the Penguin downtown to show off the new Youngstown sign outside of the Covelli Centre.

YOUTUBE ANALYSIS

While our YouTube strategy in 2019 was focused more on student-curated videos, our 2020 strategy shifted to provide updates and live videos of town hall sessions. A total of **60,582 views** spread across **54 public videos** that were posted during the calendar year (*this number is organic only and does not include videos used in paid advertising*) for an increase of viewership by 312%. The **interactions on those videos equaled 6,764**, which was a 175% increase from 2019.

NUMBERS TO NOTE:



SUBSCRIBERS

2,616; +75%

We broke 1,000 subscribers in 2019 and then smashed that with over 2,000 in 2020! Subscribers are those who wish to follow our channel.



HOURS WATCHED

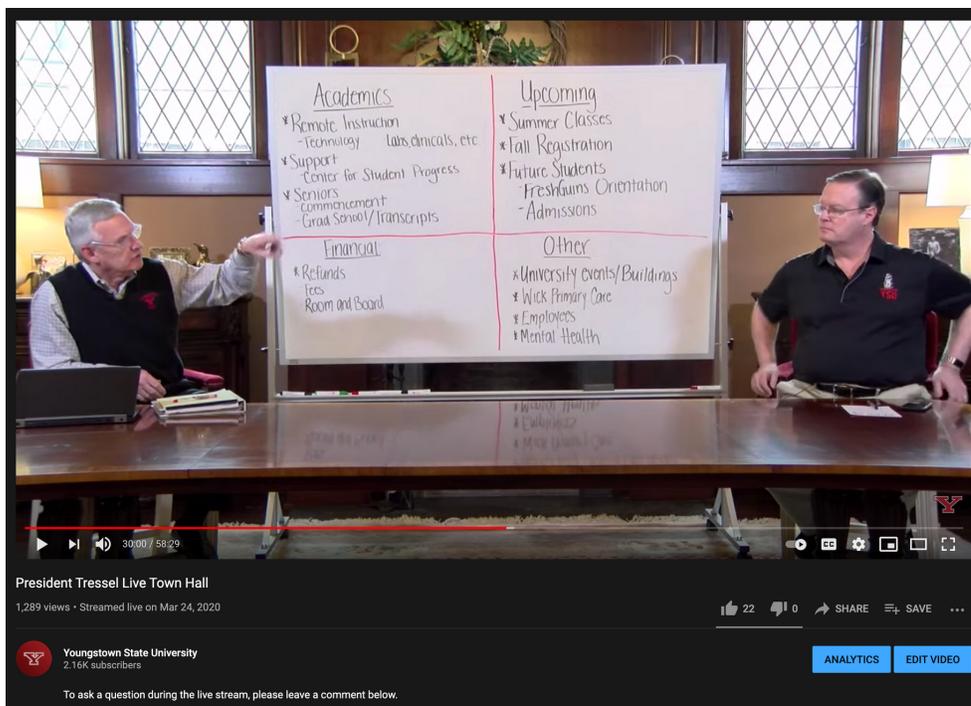
19,000; +77%

This is our channel watch time — the amount of hours users spent watching our videos. This includes public, private, unlisted and deleted videos.

LIVES AND PREMIERES

As mentioned on previous social media platform recaps, COVID-19 really forced our hand when it came to content decisions throughout 2020. From town hall live sessions with President Tressel to premieres for important events like Commencement, our audience grew quite a bit and tuned in way more than previous years.

As we head into 2021, a lot of what we end up doing on YouTube will continue to be driven by our current climate.



President Tressel was joined by Dr. Brien Smith, Provost, on a March 24 townhall live stream. It was one of the top performing YouTube videos of the year.

LINKEDIN ANALYSIS

Over the course of the past few years, LinkedIn has become a Facebook for professionals. Between sharing updates, blog posts, and opportunities/achievements, the platform is a gold mine for content engagement.

For Youngstown State, we have a healthy following of **61,446** (an increase of over 4%). News stories and campus updates are the types of content that reign across the LinkedIn platform. Nostalgia runs deep as the largest following demographic is **alumni of YSU**.

NUMBERS TO NOTE:



REACTIONS

5,477; -19%

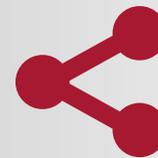
LinkedIn has a variety of ways users can react to a post, including liking, loving, celebrating, marking something as insightful, and curious.



COMMENTS

257; +4%

Even in a year when there was so much chaos, we still had a lot to celebrate. The top commented post was a celebration of YSU Day, where users reminisced on their time here.



SHARES

184; -17%

The goal is to create shareable posts so others can see what we're up to. One of the most shared posts in 2020? The Penguin to Penguin Fundraising Campaign announcement, helping our students in need.

TOP POST

A total of **16 posts** were shared on the Youngstown State LinkedIn page in 2020. The **goal for 2021** is to double that number to continue increasing engagement on the platform.

The top posts for the 2020 year on LinkedIn continued to show excitement over projects and student successes. This included the update on the Center for Innovation construction, the "We See Tomorrow" campaign goal increase, and showing off our students' service learning trip to Japan, pre-COVID.

The number one post, however, was the announcement of the \$1M donation from Phantom Fireworks that will benefit our business and nonprofit leadership students.



Youngstown State University

61,556 followers
1mo • Edited •



Today we announced a \$1M donation from the Zoldan family, founders of Phantom Fireworks, to the [Youngstown State University Foundation](#). The gift is being made in honor of their parents, Sam and Sylvia Zoldan, and their uncle, Abe Yampolsky, and will benefit students in the Williamson College of Business Administration through scholarships and the newly established Zoldan-Yampolsky Family Executive Fellows Program in the Center for Nonprofit Leadership.

With the fellows program, YSU juniors chosen to participate will work with senior leadership on campus or at non-profit organizations to gain practical work experience. The goal is to increase capacity at local and regional non-profit organizations.

The gift also increases the Sam and Sylvia Zoldan Memorial Scholarship endowment, established by the Zoldans in 2006. The renewable annual scholarship is for YSU business students who also take at least one class in Judaic and Holocaust Studies.



911 • 43 comments

TIKTOK ANALYSIS

TikTok took the world by storm as it became the number one most popular social media application for Generation Z. During the Fall of 2019, we adopted our own TikTok account and had students help us curate content that would be shared on the platform.

Heading into 2020, we had big plans for the platform and how we'd use it — hosting TikTok competitions, making our own dance routines to songs unique to us (like the fight song), and showing off more of campus and campus life from student perspectives.

We were able to record and upload **three videos before the shut down, seven encouraging students to keep their heads up and minds fresh during the remote learning, and one celebrating our Spring 2020 graduates.**

It wasn't the year we had hoped for our TikTok, but with 2020 in the rearview and students back on campus (partly), we're ready to get our content machine going once again. 2021 will be our year to hit it out of the park and double the 2019 numbers (2020 doesn't always count, right?).

NUMBERS TO NOTE:



FOLLOWERS

371; +93%

This is a totally unique and different audience than on other social platforms. A lot of our followers have never heard of us before.



LIKES

266; -71%

TikTok displays the sum of how many likes you receive on your videos right on your homepage. It's almost like a Rite of Passage for TikTok creators, as they battle to get over a million likes.

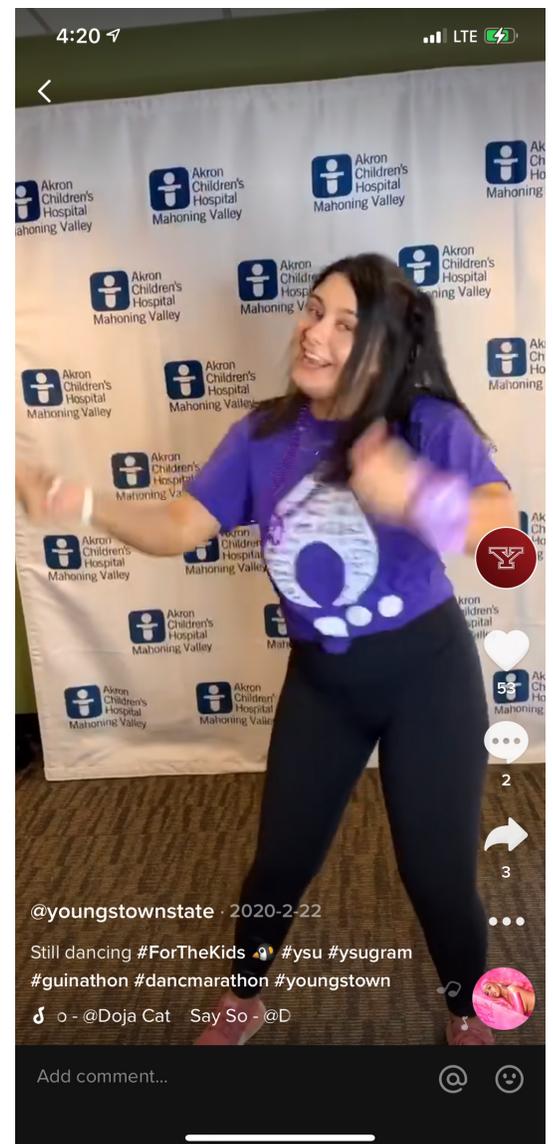


POSTS

11 total

Posts are a combination of 15 - 60 second videos. There are a number of effects, filters and songs that can be applied to each production.

TOP TIKTOK



The last large event on campus before the shutdown was Guinathon - raising money for Akron Children's Hospital. The top TikTok is student, Lauren Cooper, dancing to a popular song on the app during the month of February.

PRESIDENT TRESSEL



@JimTressel5

President Tressel's Twitter is a key social media channel for the University. Sharing campus updates and exciting announcements from the President's voice is a powerful contribution to our social media strategy. In addition, President Tressel's audience stretches far and wide, allowing Youngstown State to reach millions.

NUMBERS TO NOTE:



IMPRESSIONS

13,672,621; +2%

Impressions on Twitter are the number of times a tweet is viewed overall. In 2020, President Tressel's tweets were put in front of Twitter users over 13.5M times.



ENGAGEMENTS

375,034; +23%

Engagements are any like, reply, retweet (share), link click, or profile view on a tweet. President Tressel's brought in over 375,000 for the year, which was a significant increase from 2019.



FOLLOWERS

159,189

In 2020, President Tressel's follower count decreased by less than 1%. Twitter spent a lot of time purging accounts that were fake or spam. Since President Tressel is a public figure, his account is susceptible to accounts like those.

TOP POST:



The top performing tweet on President Tressel's account was a photo of our students honoring the late Kobe Bryant by placing his jersey on the Howard Jones statue on campus.

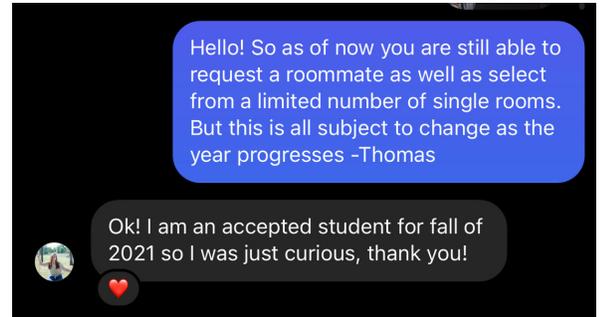
2020 CAMPAIGN: TAKEOVERS

TAKEOVERS

Takeovers on Instagram accounts are a tale almost as old as when stories first originated (so, a few years old). However, after running a few unsuccessful takeover campaigns in the past, we decided to ditch them for a year to rethink the strategy.

Reintroduced in Fall of 2020, individual students were able to apply to takeover our Instagram account for a day, showing off their life as a YSU student and answering questions from prospective and current students in their own voice.

A few of the most engaging and best performing takeovers were ones where students included the question and answer sticker, and also utilized the direct messaging feature.



Thomas Kushner, RA in Kilcawley House, ran a takeover on the YSU Instagram in early September. He was super helpful, answering questions from students about Housing in the direct messages.

EVER WONDER HOW YOU CAN LEARN MORE AND STAY CONNECTED WITH YSU ON SOCIAL MEDIA? OR WHETHER OR NOT THERE'S AN ACCOUNT FOR YOUR COLLEGE OR DEPARTMENT?

GET READY TO HEAR FROM ACCOUNTS ALL OVER THE UNIVERSITY. ALL DAY TODAY!

**Choose Your Own
Adventure:**

Takeover style

CLICK AHEAD TO BEGIN. EVERY 10 MINUTES DURING THE 9:00 HOUR, WE'LL INTRODUCE A NEW CATEGORY OF ACCOUNTS. CLICK ON EACH STORY TO VIEW MORE FROM THAT ACCOUNT. THERE MIGHT EVEN BE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIZES...



The opening slide to the campus-wide takeover explained the "choose your own adventure" style journey students were about to take.

CAMPUS-WIDE TAKEOVER

In late Fall, we ran a campus-wide takeover. With digital being the main way to communicate in 2020, we knew that we had to meet our students where they were in order to introduce them to what's available at YSU.

35 YSU-affiliated Instagram accounts, including almost every college on campus and many of the resource departments, took part in the day-long event showing YSU students where to go for information and who to follow for help. Each account had an intro that was then posted to the main YSU Instagram story, where audience members could click over to their account and hear more from them.

Each account had one individual who ran the takeover (mostly students for peer-to-peer messaging). They shared information on how to get in touch, tours of their facilities, ways to get involved, and where to find resources.

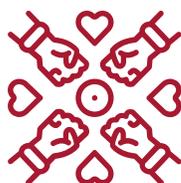
Top stories that audience members visited that day were by YSU Sports, YSU Honors College, and Housing and Residence Life.

In total, we had **3,553 clicks** into the accounts that joined the campus-wide takeover event. We definitely intend to do this again in 2021, and hope that more YSU-affiliated accounts will take part.

2021 TRENDS & GOALS



Silence is golden. If 2020 taught us anything, it's that what happens in the world also translates online. Social justice issues and political events were the forefront of all our minds this year, and brands began to find where their voice fits. In 2021, we'll continue to sit back and listen, making sure that Youngstown State University rises only when we need to for our audience members. It's most important that we add value and not noise, especially when our community is hurting.



Inclusivity is key. This past year, we used Instagram Stories to highlight the significance of Juneteenth and provided tips for creating an inclusive campus environment during some difficult times. We will continue utilizing our platform to educate our audience and support everyone in our community. In 2021, we'll be amplifying our student voices, especially those in marginalized groups, by inviting them to tell their story on all platforms — curating user-generated content for important events like Black History Month, Women's History Month, Pride month, and so much more.



User-generated content is king. More and more, audience members are resonating with content created by their peers. In the past, we've utilized the #ysugram tag on Instagram to pull student photos and repost on our account. In 2021, we'll continue to look at social channels where Gen Z spends their time. A TikTok contest will allow us to get some creative videos of our campus and the way in which our students see themselves as Penguins.



Influencer marketing will continue to rise, still. One of the main reasons we chose to identify ambassadors in 2019 was because of the influencer marketing trend. We can market the University on social media all day, but when it becomes a peer-to-peer conversation, there's a more relaxed and positive interaction for younger users. Not only will we continue to utilize our social media ambassadors, but we'll identify students who are vloggers and social media influencers on their own accounts to continue to help us tell our story.



Live events will be re-thought. We know that our audiences are tired. Our digital world became our reality in early 2020 when the pandemic shifted how we interacted with one another. Everything became virtual, causing Zoom and Facebook Live burnout. In 2021, we'll start to reign in some of those live events, making sure that what we're producing and put out is valuable to our community. For example: if one is needed, Facebook Lives will be focused on sharing important YSU information with audience interaction, like the town halls during the height of COVID.



Strategy is our number one priority. Coming out of a year where everything was a whirlwind, our 2021 goal is to get back to the basics: strategically thinking. Content will be well-thought-out — easy to consume with smaller bits of information for our audiences to grasp, all media meeting accessibility requirements (alt text + captions), and making sure that departments know a heads up is needed for larger content pieces and campaigns to be placed on the main accounts.



SOCIAL MEDIA

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