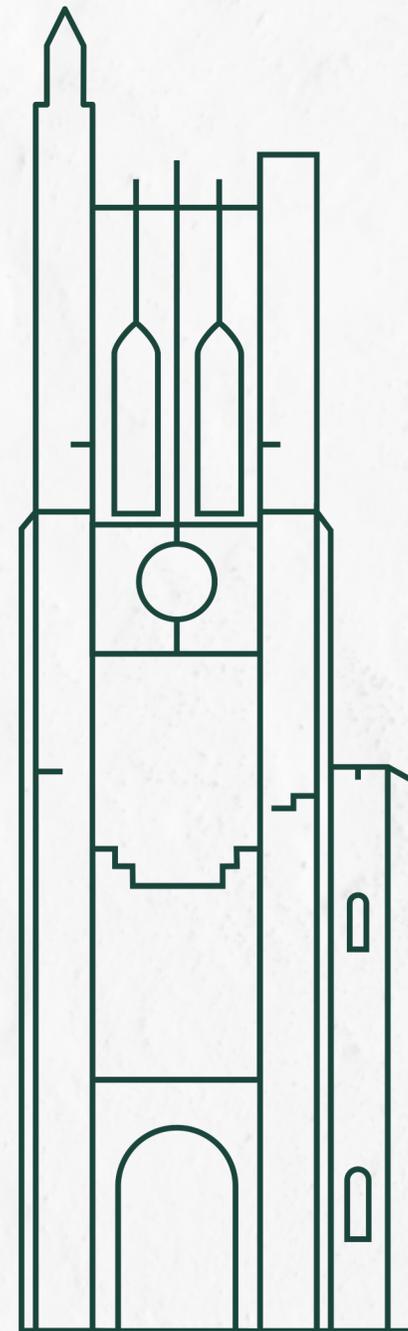




CONDUCTING AND ANALYZING COMPETITIVE RESEARCH



HELLO



Katie Bylin

Social Media Manager, University Communications



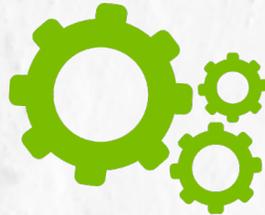
Josh Lange

Social Media Analyst, University Communications

BUT, WHY?



Find your strategy's strengths and weaknesses



Discover new opportunities



Get inspired



Stay informed

WHERE DO I START?

1 Develop goals

- What do you want to accomplish?
- What does success look like?

2 Identify competitors

- Pick 4-8 competitors
- Direct and indirect competition
- All shapes and sizes

WHERE DO I START?

3 Identify key metrics

- What would you like to track?
 - Quantifiable vs non-quantifiable behavior
 - Performance metrics

4 Collect Data

- Manual vs Automatic
- Decide on a timeframe to use

IDENTIFY KEY METRICS: WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

Metrics for competitors are **limited to what's publicly available**:

Available

- Follower Count
- Engagement / Engagement Rate
- Video Views

Not Available

- Reach
- Clicks

SELECTING KEY METRICS TO USE

Metrics you select = **Goals & objectives** of your channel

- *Engagement*: Generate Interaction
- *Video Views*: Increase consumption of video content
- *Followers*: Increase Audience Size

IDENTIFY KEY METRICS: PERFORMANCE

When comparing your Engagement to competitors, best practice is to use **Engagement Rate**

Average Engagement

$$\frac{(\text{Likes/Reactions} + \text{Shares} + \text{Comments})}{\# \text{ of Posts}}$$

Differences in performance of competitors *often* driven by

Size of Audience

Engagement Rate

$$\frac{\left(\frac{(\text{Likes/Reactions} + \text{Shares} + \text{Comments})}{\# \text{ of Posts}} \right)}{\text{Account Followers}}$$

Differences in performance of competitors driven by

Effectiveness of Content (Per User)

IDENTIFY KEY METRICS: PERFORMANCE

Engagement vs Engagement Rate Example:

Clemson University
IG Followers: 253K

7,817
Average Engagements

% 253K
Followers

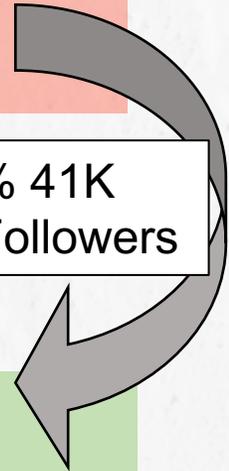
3.1%
Engagement Rate

Utah State University
IG Followers: 41K

3,108
Average Engagements

% 41K
Followers

7.6%
Engagement Rate



COLLECT DATA: QUANTIFIABLE BEHAVIOR

Quantifiable: Ability to measure

Examples:

- Post frequency
- Post Type (ex. Frequency of Reels vs Photos, Carousels, Videos)
- What platforms are they on?
- Most frequent keywords and hashtags used
- Any category you want to manually tag:
 - Content types
 - Source (ex. UGC vs Professional photography)
 - Athletics content
 - Etc..

Useful for:

- Draw numerical comparisons between competitors
- Examining cause & effect relationships between behaviors & outcomes

COLLECT DATA: NON-NUMERICAL INFORMATION

Examples:

- Voice
- Tone
- Content used in highest & lowest performing posts
- Use of content creators or influencers
- Trends used
- Customizable based on individual needs

AUTOMATIC VS. MANUAL COLLECTION

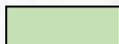
Automatic

Use of a competitive analysis software to collect data

Manual

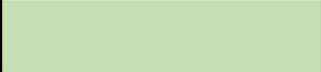
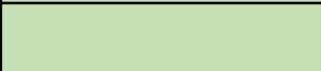
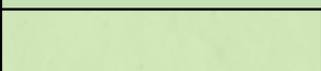
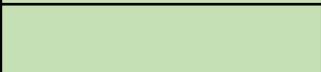
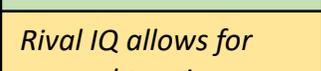
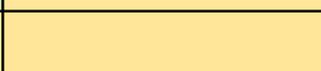
Requires manual logging of data in a spreadsheet

Legend

 = Data automatically available

 = Requires manual entry

 = Not available

| | Information | Automatic | Manual |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Metrics | Follower Count |  |  |
| | Engagement |  |  |
| | Video Views |  |  |
| | Reach |  |  |
| | Clicks |  |  |
| Quantifiable Behavior | Post Frequency |  |  |
| | Post Type (Photo, Video, etc.) |  |  |
| | Platforms |  |  |
| | Top keywords and hashtags used |  |  |
| | Manually tagged categories | <i>Rival IQ allows for manual tagging within the platform</i> |  |
| Non-Numerical Information | Ex. Voice, Tone, Trends they use |  |  |

AUTOMATIC: PAID COMPETITIVE SOFTWARES

Paid Tools

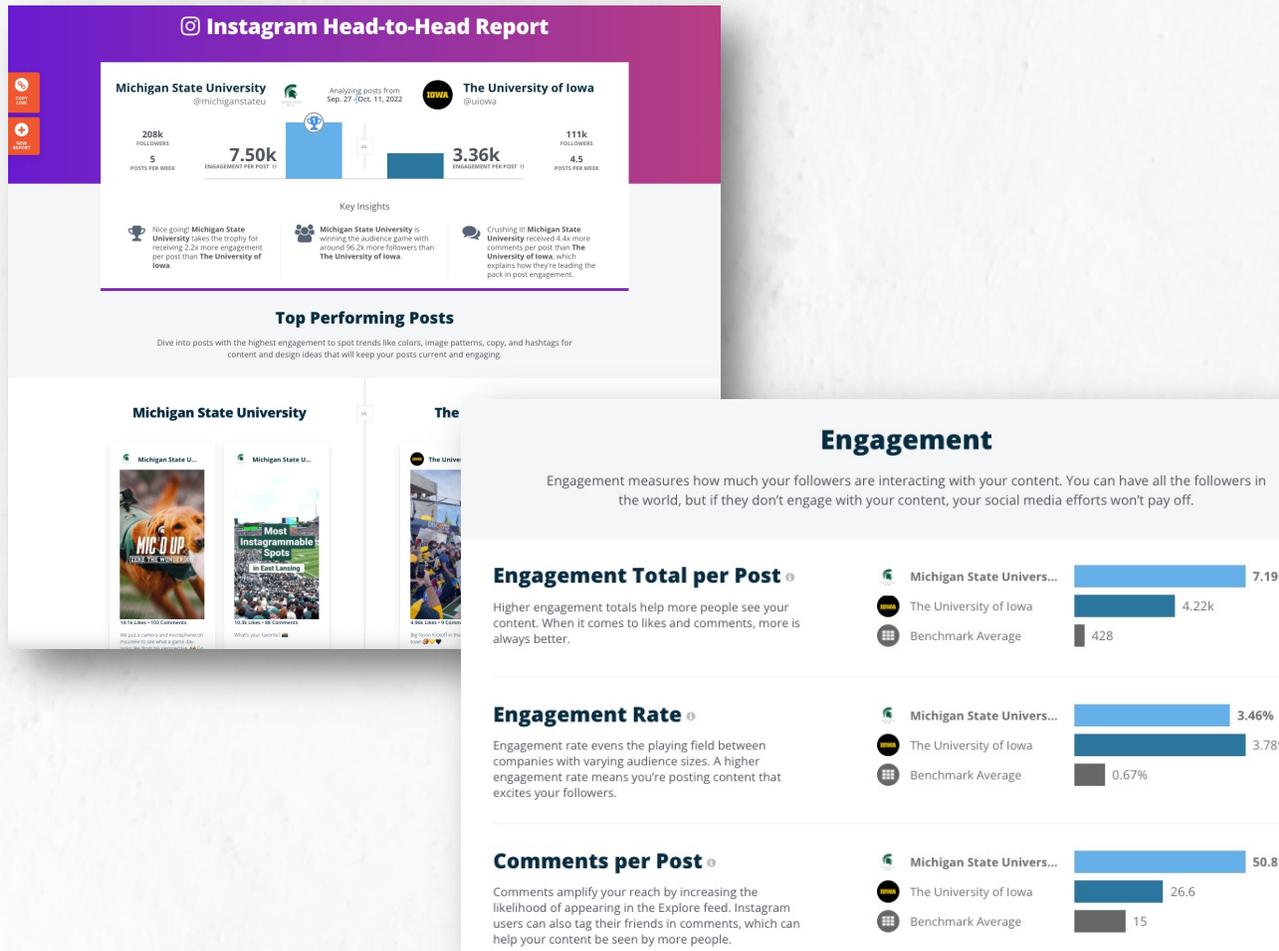
- [Rival IQ](#)
- [BuzzSumo](#)
- [Hootsuite Streams](#)
- [Sociality.io](#)
- [Socialbakers](#)
- [Sprout Social](#)



sproutsocial

AUTOMATIC: FREE COMPETITIVE SOFTWARES

Rival IQ



Head-to-Head Reports

- Compare 2 accounts
- Date range: Last 2 weeks
- Comparison of metrics:
 - Average engagement
 - Engagement rate
 - Comments per post
 - Followers
- Behavior Activity:
 - Posts per day
 - Use of hashtags
- Top performing posts

AUTOMATIC: FREE COMPETITIVE SOFTWARES

Rival IQ

Live Social Media Benchmarks for Higher Ed

Live Higher Ed industry benchmarks and social media analytics from universities included in our latest Social Media Industry Benchmark Report. See how your university compares.

In the Past 30 Days...

| POSTS PER UNIVERSITY PER WEEK | ENGAGEMENTS PER POST | ENGAGEMENT RATE PER POST |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 23.9 | 462.4 | 0.48% |

In the last 30 days, the average university in this landscape has grown their audience by 0.5%. Santa Clara University grew faster than everyone else, with 1.1% growth! On average, each post in this landscape earns more than 462.4 engagements. University of Iowa is topping the charts with more than 1.15k engagements per post on their 152 posts in the last 30 days.

Popular Hashtags

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| #CollegeLife 2 Universities Using | #collegecampus 2 Universities Using | #hispanicheritagemonth 2 Universities Using |
| #homecoming2022 2 Universities Using | | |

Key Trends for Higher Ed

| | |
|---|--|
|  Glamour Shots Colleges and universities aren't shy about using UGC to show off their stunning campuses to great acclaim from students, parents, and alumni alike. Read the full report > |  #Winning Nothing excites Higher Ed fans on social quite like topping the charts. From big sports wins to high marks in rankings against other schools, universities loved to show off their big wins. See more Higher Ed trends > |
|---|--|

Live Industry benchmarks

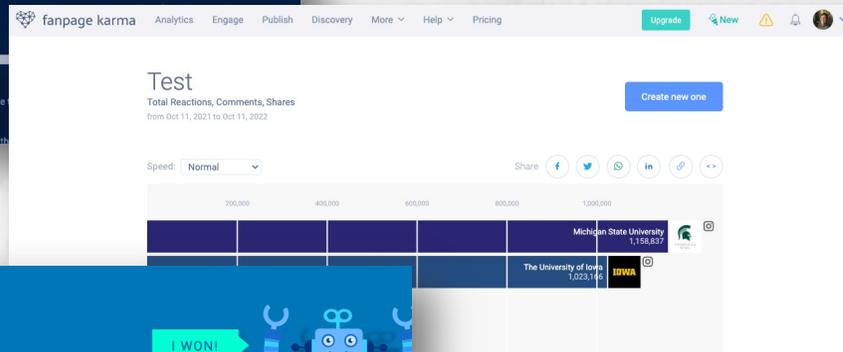
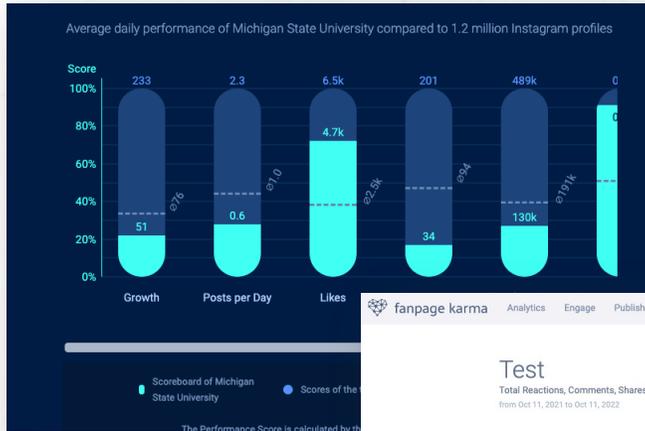
- Cross-network industry benchmarks
- Popular hashtags
- Key industry trends
- Top performing posts
- Average post type distribution

Top-Performing Posts

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-----------------------------------|--|
|  <p>University of Iowa 7.65k Likes + 46 Comments Let's Rehearse for a second... it's great to be a Hawkeye.</p> |  <p>University of Iowa Kid Captains have had the opportunity to pick the song of their choice!</p> |  <p>Smith College 2.43k Likes + 11 Comments End of the Found it. Photo by Brooke Teasdale</p> | <table><tbody><tr><td>ENGAGEMENT TOTAL</td><td>ENGAGEMENT RATE</td></tr><tr><td>2.35k</td><td>9.30%</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">VIEW ON INSTAGRAM</td></tr></tbody></table> | ENGAGEMENT TOTAL | ENGAGEMENT RATE | 2.35k | 9.30% | VIEW ON INSTAGRAM | |
| ENGAGEMENT TOTAL | ENGAGEMENT RATE | | | | | | | | |
| 2.35k | 9.30% | | | | | | | | |
| VIEW ON INSTAGRAM | | | | | | | | | |

AUTOMATIC: FREE COMPETITIVE SOFTWARES

Fanpage Karma



Performance Score

- Network-wide benchmarks

Head to Head Engagement Comparisons:

- Bar Chart Race
- Competitive Duel

AUTOMATIC: FREE COMPETITIVE SOFTWARES

Social Blade

Utah State University @usuaggielife

MEDIA UPLOADS: 838 | FOLLOWERS: 41,592 | FOLLOWING: 1,369 | ENGAGEMENT RATE: 8.26% | AVG LIKES: 3,416.31 | AVG COMMENTS: 18.44

User Summary | Detailed Statistics

INSTAGRAM STATS SUMMARY / USER STATISTICS FOR USUAGGIELIFE (2022-09-20 - 2022-10-19)

| DATE | FOLLOWERS | FOLLOWING | MEDIA |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| 2022-09-20 Tue | 41,212 | 1,357 | 828 |
| 2022-09-21 Wed | -2 | +2 | +1 |
| 2022-09-22 Thu | +12 | -1 | 829 |
| 2022-09-23 Fri | +4 | 1,358 | +1 |
| 2022-09-24 Sat | +9 | 1,358 | +1 |
| 2022-09-25 Sun | +19 | 1,359 | 831 |
| 2022-09-26 Mon | +3 | 1,358 | 831 |
| 2022-09-27 Tue | +5 | 1,359 | +1 |

Data Available

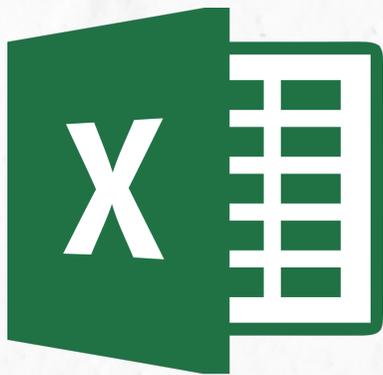
- Review 1 account at a time
- Date range: Last 2 weeks
- Aggregated metrics:
 - Engagement Rate
 - Average likes
 - Average comments
 - Followers
- Metrics broken out by day:
 - Followers (Gained / Lost)
 - Posts published

MANUAL

Process involves entering data to either **Microsoft Excel** or **Google Sheets**

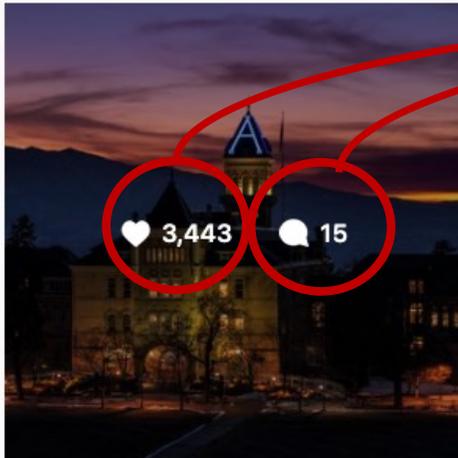
Reminders:

- Log **consistent date** ranges for each account
- Manual entry can be tedious, but be mindful of collecting **adequate sample sizes**
 - At least 1 month of data for each competitor

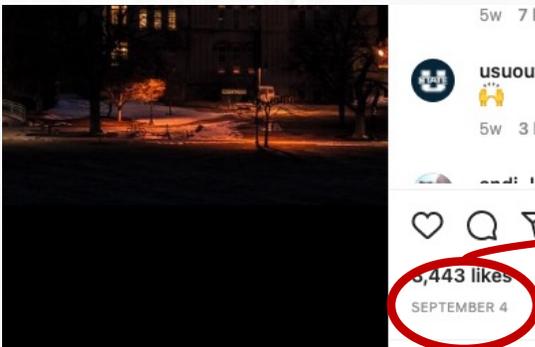


MANUAL: PROCESS

Step 2: Visit competitor's account & log data in spreadsheet



| A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|------------|-----------|------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Competitor | Network | Date | Post Type | Reactions | Comments | Shares |
| Utah State | Instagram | | | 3443 | 15 | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |



| A | B | C | D |
|------------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| Competitor | Network | Date | Post Type |
| Utah State | Instagram | 9/4/22 | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

MANUAL: PROCESS

Step 3:

Tag remaining fields

| B | C | D | E |
|-----------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Network | Date | Post Type | Reactions |
| Instagram | 9/4/22 | Photo | 3443 |

Create formula for Engagement
(Reactions + Comments + Shares)

| E | F | G | H |
|-----------|----------|--------|-------------|
| Reactions | Comments | Shares | Engagement |
| 3443 | 15 | | =sum(E2:G2) |

Drag Down Engagement
Formula

MANUAL: PROCESS

Step 5: Divide by Followers to Calculate Engagement Rate

| Engagement | Followers | Engagement Rate |
|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 3458 | 41,526 | =H2/I2 |
| 3920 | 41,526 | |
| 4982 | 41,526 | |
| 2606 | 41,526 | |

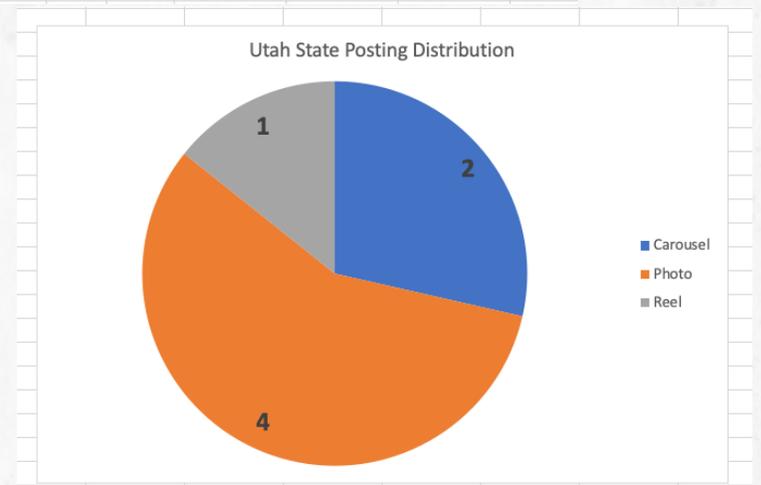
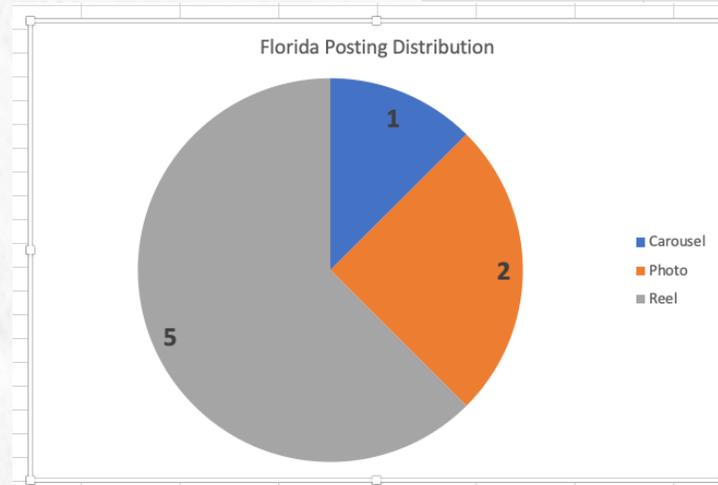
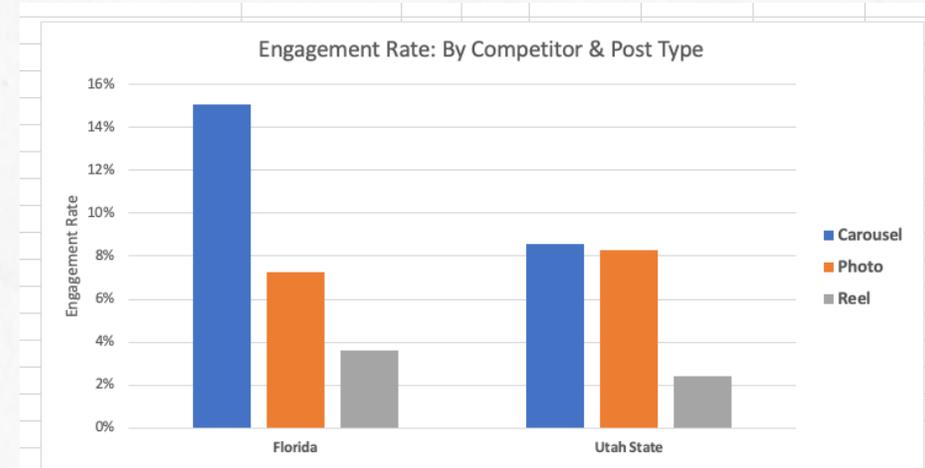
Drag Down Engagement Rate Formula

| Competitor | Network | Date | Post Type | Reactions | Comments | Shares | Engagement | Followers | Engagement Rate |
|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Utah State | Instagram | 9/4/22 | Photo | 3443 | 15 | | 3458 | 41,526 | 8.33% |
| Utah State | Instagram | 9/10/22 | Carousel | 3874 | 46 | | 3920 | 41,526 | 9.44% |
| Utah State | Instagram | 9/18/22 | Photo | 4967 | 15 | | 4982 | 41,526 | 12.00% |
| Utah State | Instagram | 9/20/22 | Photo | 2576 | 30 | | 2606 | 41,526 | 6.28% |
| Utah State | Instagram | 9/22/22 | Reel | 998 | 7 | | 1005 | 41,526 | 2.42% |
| Utah State | Instagram | 9/23/22 | Carousel | 3162 | 15 | | 3177 | 41,526 | 7.65% |
| Utah State | Instagram | 9/26/22 | Photo | 2701 | 15 | | 2716 | 41,526 | 6.54% |
| Florida | Instagram | 9/2/22 | Reel | 13598 | 90 | | 13688 | 236,810 | 5.78% |
| Florida | Instagram | 9/2/22 | Reel | 8817 | 74 | | 8891 | 236,810 | 3.75% |
| Florida | Instagram | 9/4/22 | Carousel | 35497 | 145 | | 35642 | 236,810 | 15.05% |
| Florida | Instagram | 9/12/22 | Photo | 21471 | 148 | | 21619 | 236,810 | 9.13% |
| Florida | Instagram | 9/12/22 | Reel | 8792 | 47 | | 8839 | 236,810 | 3.73% |
| Florida | Instagram | 9/13/22 | Reel | 8820 | 82 | | 8902 | 236,810 | 3.76% |
| Florida | Instagram | 9/22/22 | Photo | 12744 | 102 | | 12846 | 236,810 | 5.42% |
| Florida | Instagram | 9/29/22 | Reel | 2087 | 16 | | 2103 | 236,810 | 0.89% |

MANUAL: PROCESS

Step 6: Create Pivot Table or Pivot Chart to Summarize

| Average of Engagement Rate | Column Labels | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------------|
| Row Labels | Carousel | Photo | Reel | Grand Total |
| Florida | 15.05% | 7.28% | 3.58% | 5.94% |
| Utah State | 8.55% | 8.29% | 2.42% | 7.52% |
| Grand Total | 10.71% | 7.95% | 3.39% | 6.68% |

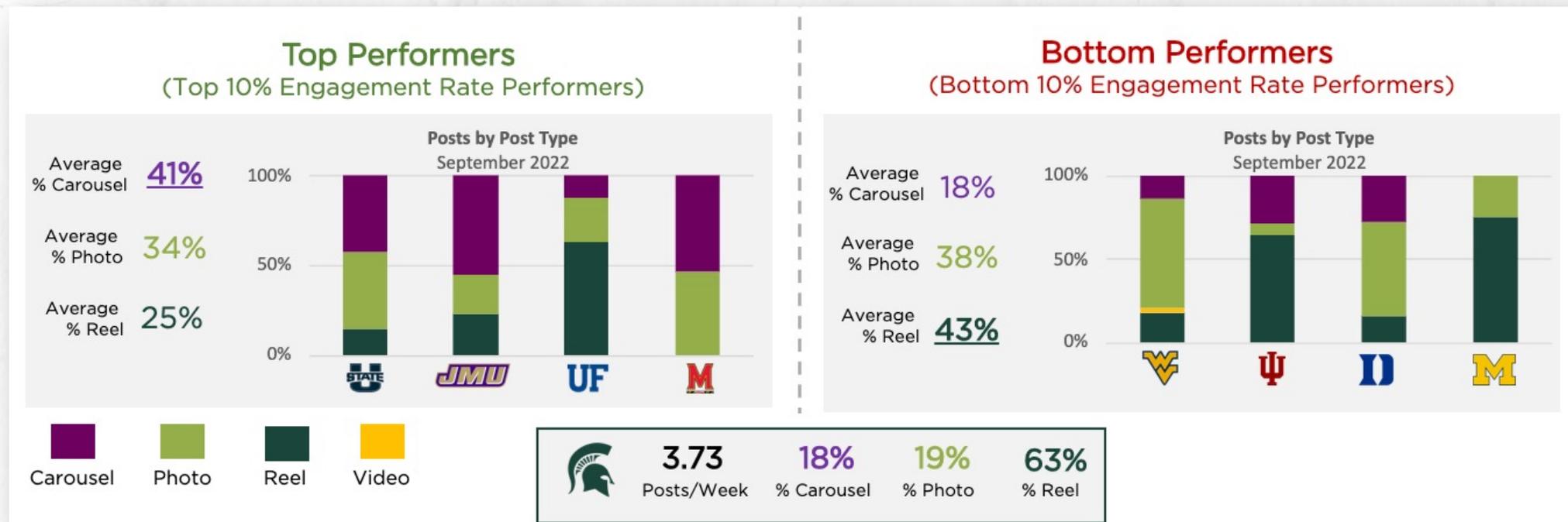


ANALYZE IT

- What questions did you start out with? How can this data help answer those?
- What are the common themes and trends?
- Use this information to perform a SWOT analysis on your own profiles
- Identify actionable tactics and key takeaways

HOW WE ANALYZE — INSTAGRAM

- Question: Which types of content performed well for top competitors? For both top and bottom?



HOW WE ANALYZE — INSTAGRAM



Top Performer: Utah State



12.1% Engagement Rate



9.5% Engagement Rate



8.4% Engagement Rate



7.7% Engagement Rate



6.6% Engagement Rate

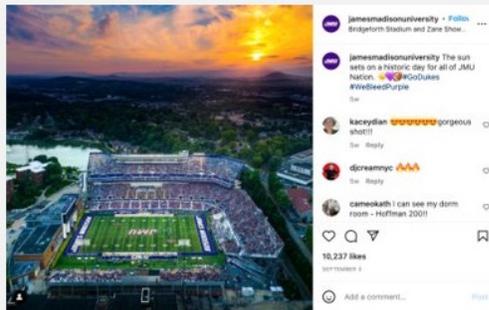
Common Themes:

- Campus sunset photos
- Athletics
- Recognition of facilities team

HOW WE ANALYZE — INSTAGRAM



Top Performer: James Madison



12.9% Engagement Rate



12.7% Engagement Rate



12.5% Engagement Rate



10.9% Engagement Rate



10.3% Engagement Rate



8.1% Engagement Rate

- ## Common Themes:
- Football (before game and celebrating outcome)
 - Sunset photos
 - Branded colors included

HOW WE ANALYZE — INSTAGRAM



Bottom Performer: Duke

Top 2



3.96% Engagement Rate



3.08% Engagement Rate

Bottom 2



0.5% Engagement Rate



0.42% Engagement Rate

Common Themes:

- Top: Student & alumni achievement
- Bottom: Campus photo, faculty profile

HOW WE ANALYZE — INSTAGRAM

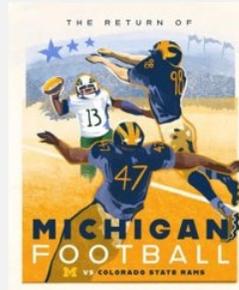


Bottom Performer: Michigan

Top 2



2.12% Engagement Rate



2.04% Engagement Rate

Bottom 2



0.015% Engagement Rate



0.013% Engagement Rate

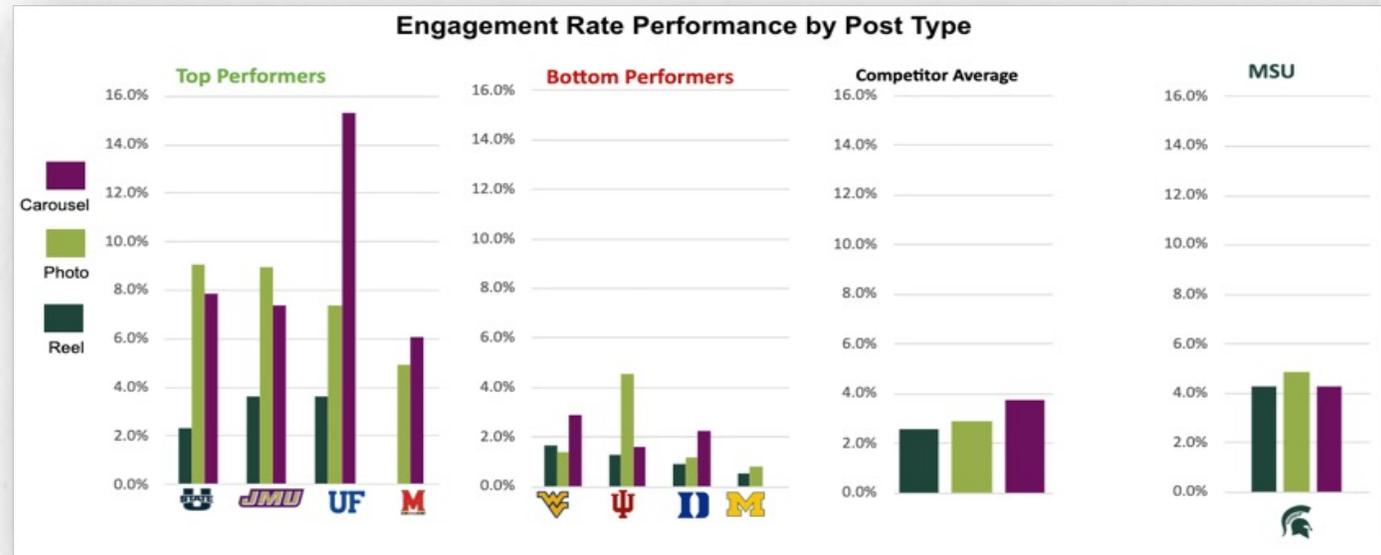
Common Themes:

- Top: Reel (Act of kindness), Football
- Bottom: Reels recapping events

HOW WE ANALYZE — INSTAGRAM

Original Question: Which types of content performed well for top competitors? For both top and bottom?

- Observations:
 - Top performers tended to post Carousels most frequently, and Reels least frequently
 - Bottom performers tended to post Reels most frequent, and Carousels least frequently



- MSU's posting frequency was closer to average activity of top performers; Mix of Post Types more closely resembled bottom performers

HOW WE ANALYZE — INSTAGRAM

- Takeaways:
 - Given the high performance of MSU's Reels, the current posting mix is preferred. If this changes, the content strategy will need to be tweaked.
 - Sunsets, campus photos, athletics were among the top performing common themes.



NEXT STEPS

- **Don't quit!**
 - Follow brands and accounts that you like for inspiration
 - Browse competitor's accounts at least once a month
 - Monitoring competitors proactively