

Institute for Public Relations Top Three Paper of Practical Significance Award

**From #mcdonaldsfail to #dominossucks:
An analysis of Instagram images about the 10 largest fast food companies**

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Abstract

The mobile app Instagram has emerged as one of the most popular social media networks with 150 million users that post millions of photos and videos every day. This study analyzed Instagram as a new emerging crisis information form. In two content analyses, more than 700 posts by Instagram users about the 10 largest fast food companies and posts by the companies themselves were evaluated for post tonalities, topics and origins over a constructed two-week period. It was found that negative content about these companies is posted by customers and employees alike and that the negative tonality primarily stems from issues with service and the work environment. The study also showed that the companies are just starting to discover Instagram and have very little engagement with users. None of the companies responded to the negative posts of customers and employees. The results of the study are a call-to-action for public relations professionals to engage with their publics on Instagram and actively use the app as a pre-crisis monitoring and crisis response tool in their social media plans.

Keywords

Instagram, social media, crisis communication, public relations, reputation, images, fast food