

Instagram Live as a Promotional Media for Inacraft Exhibitions

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Inacraft; Instagram; New Media; Promotion; Social Media	In an era of rapid social media development, Instagram continues to innovate to maintain its position as a leading platform. The platform is widely used by event organizers—such as music festivals, seminars, and exhibitions—to remain competitive and keep pace with technological advancements. Event organizers require creative and innovative approaches in disseminating information, conveying messages, and conducting promotions, one of which is through the use of Instagram. This research aims to analyze the use of Instagram’s live feature on the <i>@weareinacraft</i> account in promoting the <i>Inacraft</i> exhibition. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, with findings indicating that Instagram’s live feature can expand audience reach, build closer and more sustainable relationships with followers, and create more personalized and dynamic interactions. With careful planning and production, Instagram Live has great potential as an effective and engaging promotional tool for events such as the <i>Inacraft</i> exhibition. These findings were analyzed using new media theory—which includes social interaction and social integration—and are associated with the concept of the 4Cs in social media use: context, communication, collaboration, and connection.

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INTRODUCTION

Developments in the current technological era are inseparable from social media, and similarly, social media cannot be separated from technological advancements. Both share a close relationship, creating a sense of dependence and mutual necessity (Hajar Halili, 2019; Mondoni et al., 2022; Pandiyan et al., 2023; Pulumati et al., 2023; Twining et al., 2021). The important role of social media in people’s lives is utilized by various parties as a means to disseminate news, socialize, and promote events to a wide audience.

With the advancement of technology, many agencies and entrepreneurs now promote their products or services through social media. More than 55% of Indonesians are literate in internet and social media usage. Due to the advantages of social media—such as the ability to respond directly to users—it has become a new promotional tool. The high percentage of social media usage demonstrates that it is an effective medium for helping agencies introduce their businesses to a broader community (Dantas et al., 2022; Lau, 2017; Mohammed et al., 2021; Seo et al., 2020; Susanto et al., 2023; Tajudeen et al., 2018). Moreover, compared to promotion via television, the costs associated with social media promotion are significantly lower.

The availability of increasingly sophisticated and high-quality information facilities and media has influenced people’s behavior in obtaining access to information. A survey by the

Katadata Insight Center (KIC) together with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (*Kominfo*) on the status of digital literacy in 2022 showed that 73% of respondents used social media as their primary access to information, followed by television and online media. The report stated that the three most widely used social media platforms in Indonesia were YouTube, Facebook, and *Instagram*. According to data from the survey agency *We Are Social* reported by *Databoxes* (2023), as of October 2023 Indonesia ranked fourth in terms of the most active *Instagram* users. *Instagram* is a type of social networking platform that gathers individuals or groups to communicate in cyberspace.

As one of the most popular social media platforms, *Instagram* has become a lifestyle trend, particularly among young people who integrate it into their daily lives. *Instagram* is a photo-sharing application that enables users to take photos, apply digital filters, and share them. Founded in 2010 by Mike Krieger and Kevin Systrom—both computer programmers and internet entrepreneurs—the name *Instagram* is derived from “insta,” meaning instant, and “gram,” taken from the word telegram (Kartini, 2022). One of the most effective ways for entrepreneurs to promote products and services online is through the *Instagram* network. Social media has given rise to social marketing platforms that are effective in persuading consumers and enabling businesses to market their products with greater ease.

For business owners, *Instagram*'s popularity makes it a strategic platform for marketing their products. The process is simple: upload an image with a product description, and within minutes, the content can be seen by *Instagram* users worldwide without incurring high costs (Dewi & Dita, 2022). The *Inacraft* exhibition—one of the largest craft exhibitions in Southeast Asia—has used social media as a promotional tool to increase visitor attendance during its events. Leveraging several platforms such as *Instagram*, websites, Facebook, and YouTube, *Inacraft* has successfully integrated social media into its promotional strategy. To boost visitor numbers, *Inacraft* has adopted a proactive and effective approach with a focus on *Instagram*.

In the digital era, *Instagram* has become a critical foundation for businesses to build their brands and increase visibility. By converting a personal account into a business account, account owners gain access to analytics tools that provide deeper insights into follower behavior. The official @weareinacraft account utilizes various *Instagram* features and strategies to create strong engagement with audiences. Through engaging, high-quality, and relevant content, *Inacraft* consistently strengthens its presence, appealing to users across diverse demographics.

Instagram offers several features for distributing information, including the *feed*, *reels*, and *story*, each with unique benefits. The *story* feature allows businesses to share temporary content for 24 hours and generally yields higher interaction rates due to its more dynamic nature. The *post feed* feature is essential for building brand awareness, enabling account owners to share visually appealing, relevant content with captions that provide context or invite audience interaction. Adding relevant *hashtags* can also help expand content reach.

Currently, *Instagram* strongly encourages users to maximize the *reels* feature, as short videos tend to achieve higher reach than photo content. Features such as music and sound further enhance the appeal, making *reels* a valuable choice for increasing visibility. Another significant feature is *Instagram Live*, which allows real-time interaction with audiences through live broadcasts. This format is often used for Q&A sessions, discussions, or collaborations with influencers and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs). Inviting influencers to participate in a live session can expand audience reach and improve credibility.

Collaboration can also be achieved through the *Collab Post* feature, enabling content to appear on both the business and influencer accounts simultaneously, thereby reaching both audiences. For *Inacraft*, *Instagram* is both a promotional and engagement tool. They actively respond to comments, questions, and feedback to foster a closer relationship with their

audience. This not only increases engagement but also establishes *Inacraft* as a responsive and visitor-oriented event.

With an integrated approach and content-focused strategy, *Inacraft* has positioned its *Instagram* account as a key asset for expanding its reach in the craft exhibition industry. The impact of promotion through social media is significant, particularly in business. As a platform, *Instagram* has evolved from being merely a photo-sharing service into one of the most promising promotional tools in Indonesia. Promotion, according to Kotler & Keller (in Rifat, 2020), “means activities that communicate the merits of the product and persuade target customers to buy it.” As part of the marketing mix, promotion plays a key role in product communication and shaping consumer preferences. The type of promotional mix used varies depending on the company’s conditions.

This research focuses on the use of social media as a medium for both promotion and information. In the past, promotional media were limited to print and electronic forms, but today, internet-based promotional media dominate. The accessibility of digital platforms has encouraged a shift from conventional media to new media, making social media not only a source of entertainment but also an efficient channel for delivering information (Avriani, 2020).

Research by Chirila et al. (2019) shows that *Instagram Live* can be an effective promotional tool for large events such as exhibitions, concerts, and conferences, as it offers audiences a hands-on experience. During the *Inacraft* exhibition, one such activity was the “virtual walk,” in which live viewers were guided by a host to explore the *Inacraft* exhibition area. The host also conducted interviews with exhibitors about their products, while viewers interacted via the comment section during the broadcast.

Based on this background, the author is interested in analyzing the extent to which the *Instagram Live* feature on the @weareinacraft account supports the promotion of the *Inacraft* exhibition. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of *Instagram Live* as a promotional tool for *Inacraft*, with specific objectives to: (1) examine how *Instagram Live* increases audience engagement and reach, (2) evaluate the impact of real-time interactions on visitor participation, and (3) identify strategies to optimize the use of *Instagram Live* for future promotions. The findings will provide valuable insights for event organizers, marketers, and social media practitioners and contribute to a broader understanding of new media’s role in contemporary marketing strategies.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method to describe how *Instagram Live* is used as a promotional medium for the *Inacraft* 2024 event. The subject of this study is the *Instagram* account @weareinacraft, which plays an active role in promoting the event through various content, particularly *Instagram Live*. The object of this research is a detailed description of the use of *Instagram Live* as a promotional tool for the *Inacraft* 2024 exhibition.

The data collection process was carried out using two main techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with the organizers of the *Inacraft* exhibition and the managers of the @weareinacraft *Instagram* account to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the strategies, experiences, and purposes behind using *Instagram Live* as a promotional medium. Second, online observations were conducted on the @weareinacraft *Instagram* account to directly observe how *Instagram Live* was utilized during the promotional period for the *Inacraft* 2024 event.

Data validation in this study was performed using the data triangulation method. In addition to interviews with account managers, the researcher also interviewed social media practitioners experienced in using the *Instagram* platform for event promotion. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with several followers of the @weareinacraft account to gain their

perspectives on the effectiveness of *Instagram Live* in attracting their interest and participation in the *Inacraft* 2024 event. This triangulation approach is expected to enhance the reliability and credibility of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research discusses the use of the Instagram live feature on @weareinacraft account as a promotional medium for the Inacraft 2024 exhibition. The data was obtained through an in-depth interview with the General Manager of PT Mediatama Binakreasi (Event Organizer of the Inacraft exhibition), the Social Media Coordinator of Instagram @weareinacraft, and several followers of the account. The following are the results and discussion of this research:

In 2024, the Inacraft exhibition will use the Instagram live feature on @weareinacraft account with the theme of virtual tours or virtual walks at the Inacraft exhibition. The goal is to invite the audience to see the atmosphere of the exhibition in person, thus attracting their interest to attend, and providing an opportunity for those who cannot attend to enjoy the exhibition experience virtually. General Manager of PT Mediatama Binakreasi said that this virtual walking program was first held at the Inacraft 2022 exhibition, after being stopped for two years due to the pandemic. In that year, many people were hesitant to attend due to health and safety concerns, so this program was initiated to facilitate these needs.

The concept of this virtual walk is guided by a host who takes the audience around the entire exhibition area, providing information about attendees, products sold, the time and facilities of the exhibition. This live session also held talks with exhibitors to discuss the products sold. Each live session lasts 45-60 minutes and is held daily during the exhibition with varying times to suit the conditions of the busy exhibition area at certain hours.

@weareinacraft account insight data shows that live performances of virtual walks have been watched up to 11,400 times. Audiences actively interact through the comment section by responding, asking questions about the exhibit, and asking for information about the exhibit areas and products. One of the followers expressed his interest in watching live because he wanted to know the atmosphere and conditions of the exhibition and sought information about the products sold. This live broadcast helps the audience decide to physically attend the exhibition.

The relationship between New Media Theory and the use of Instagram live as a promotional medium for the Inacraft exhibition.

Pierre Levy stated that there are two views in the theory of new media, namely social interaction and social integration. According to Bonner, social interaction is a relationship between two or more people, in which the actions of an individual can affect or change the lives of another individual. In this context, the Instagram live used by the Inacraft exhibition on the Instagram account @weareinacraft serves as a medium to communicate with the audience. Through Instagram live, Inacraft exhibitions can provide complete information about the exhibition, participants, products on display, existing facilities, and the atmosphere of the exhibition. This information is conveyed easily and communication with the audience or followers can occur directly, creating a real and direct interaction between the exhibitor and his audience.

Gillin argues that social integration is a social phenomenon that occurs due to social processes, especially those related to differences in elements such as emotions, behaviors, cultures, and desires. In this context, the media is ritualized because it has become a habit. Posted on Instagram It is customary for visitors to the Inacraft exhibition who follow the @weareinacraft account to get the latest information about the exhibition through Posted on Instagram. Visitors who follow this account become part of the community Virtual Inacraft exhibition. Accounts @weareinacraft create this community by going live The exhibition is in

the afternoon or evening during the exhibition. After impressions Live done, the video is saved in the Feed so that it can be re-witnessed by followers.

Feature utilization Posted on Instagram based on the 4C component (Context, Communications, Collaborations & Connections)

According to Chris Heuer, founder Social Media Club and new media innovators as stated in Solis (2010) that there are 4Cs in using Social Media, namely: (1) Background is how one frames a story through the use of language and the content of the message. This can be attractive graphics, colors and designs; (2) Communication is a way of conveying and sharing that makes someone listen, respond, and comfortable to share messages with the audience; (3) Collaboration is the cooperation between the giver and receiver of the message, between the account and the followers, so that the message can be conveyed effectively and efficiently; (4) Connection is how to establish a sustainable relationship.

1. Context

The first category in Instagram social media usage is Context. Context is how social media can shape a story or message containing information, such as the form of the message conveyed, the use of language and the content of the message.

In an effort to increase attendance and participation at the Inacraft 2024 exhibition, @weareinacraft Instagram account took advantage of Live Features to invite The audience attended the exhibition virtually. Through activities Live Ini Audience can see the atmosphere of the crowd and activities that occur in the exhibition area without having to be present in person. This provides an opportunity for those who are out of town or have limitations to still enjoy and feel the atmosphere of the Inacraft exhibition from anywhere.

2. Communications

The second category in Instagram usage is Communications. Communication, namely social media, can share stories or messages in the form of information, just like when we hear, respond and develop in various ways that make users feel comfortable and make the message will be conveyed well.

Communication in this live session is delivered audio-visually, displaying attractive images and supported by clear voice. Information related to the Inacraft exhibition is conveyed by the host in a neutral language style and is easily accepted by all groups. The host plays an active role in providing explanations about the products on display, the event schedule, and the highlights of the exhibition, so that the audience gets complete and accurate information.

3. Collaborations

The third category of the concept of using Instagram social media is collaboration. Collaboration, namely in social media, can collaborate with an account or company with its users on social media to make things more effective and efficient.

Although the collaboration has not been carried out to its maximum, @weareinacraft account has started a collaboration with exhibitors. This collaboration includes talk sessions and providing information related to the products on display. In the future, collaboration can be improved by inviting influencers or public figures to participate in live sessions, as well as working with media partners to expand the reach of the audience.

4. Connection

The fourth category of the concept of using Instagram social media is connection. Connection is by maintaining a good relationship that has been established with the user, this can be done by doing activities or something that is sustainable so that it can make users feel closer to the company.

Build an ongoing relationship with Audience is one of the focuses of the session Live Ini. Interaction with Audience It is done through the comment column, where the audience can participate by providing comments and questions. Hosted will reply to the comment directly

during the session Live implemented, creating an active two-way interaction. In addition, the host also greets and mentions the name of the account Instagram audiences who joined to witness Live, thus providing a more personalized sense of involvement and attention.

CONCLUSION

The use of the *Instagram Live* feature by the @weareinacraft account as a promotional medium for the *Inacraft* 2024 exhibition has successfully increased the event's visibility and participation. *Instagram Live* enables the *Inacraft* exhibition to reach a wider audience, including those unable to attend in person. Through live broadcasts, audiences can experience the atmosphere of the exhibition, obtain information about the products on display, and interact directly with organizers and exhibitors.

One of the main advantages of using *Instagram Live* is its ability to build closer and more sustainable relationships with followers. The interactions that occur during a live session—such as comments and questions from the audience answered directly by the host—create a personalized sense of engagement and care. This plays an important role in fostering audience loyalty and ensuring they remain informed about future exhibitions.

However, while the effectiveness of *Instagram Live* has been proven, there are several recommendations the *Inacraft* organizers could consider to enhance the quality and impact of these promotions. First, hosting giveaways during live sessions can increase audience participation and enthusiasm, as giveaways provide incentives for viewers to join and interact, thereby boosting engagement. Second, incorporating a diverse set of hosts can make live sessions more engaging and dynamic. Variations in hosting styles and personalities can attract a broader audience and prevent viewer fatigue from seeing the same host repeatedly. Third, inviting influencers or public figures to participate in live sessions can significantly expand the promotional reach. Influencers and public figures have large and loyal follower bases that can be directed to engage with the *Inacraft* exhibition. Their involvement can also add credibility and appeal to the live sessions.

Although promotion through *Instagram Live* is not yet the primary method in digital marketing, this study shows that, with careful planning and production, *Instagram Live* has strong potential as an effective and engaging promotional tool. A more structured and strategic approach—such as implementing the suggestions above—can further increase its effectiveness and maximize the impact of future *Inacraft* exhibition promotions. Overall, the use of *Instagram Live* by the @weareinacraft account has proven to be an effective promotional medium for the *Inacraft* 2024 exhibition. By adopting the recommended improvements, organizers can optimize *Instagram Live* to achieve better results and strengthen their relationship with audiences.

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