

# Social Media Policy and Strategy Analysis

regarding

**AP**



**The Associated Press**

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# Introduction

"No one in the world does more to advance the power of facts"

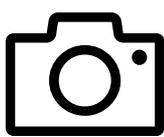
The Associated Press was founded in 1846, and since then has functioned as an independent and global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. According to their [about page](#), they are the "most trusted source of fast, accurate, unbiased news in all formats and the essential provider of technology and services vital to news business."

As a global institution, they have 250 locations worldwide, and [claim to reach](#) an audience the size of half the world's population every day. As they employ journalists worldwide, they have set up an emergency relief fund in order to help colleagues who have been affected by local conflict and disasters.

The Associated Press uses a combination of expertise and cross format storytelling in order to engage their audiences. Two thirds of their staff are journalists, ensuring that their company remains focused on journalistic integrity. Their content is not limited to text-based news articles, and they use a multitude of tools to deliver news.



video



photo



text



audio



data

With their advertised use of cross-format storytelling, the AP states it can expand and engage anyone's audience, and [encourages companies](#) to reach out to a sales representative to work with them. With their hands-on engagement method, the AP has won 56 pulitzer prize awards since the creation of the award in 1917.

# Current Situation

## Staff

Julia Pananon Weeks - Social Media Strategist

Brian Barth - Global Director of Digital Strategy

Maria Artemas - Account and Project Manager, Content Services

Eric Dodds - Digital Media, Strategy & Business Development

Lauren Easton - Vice President of Corporate Communications

Nicole Meir - Media Relations Manager

## Use of Social



### Facebook

As one of four platforms the Associated Press uses, they post frequently with an assortment of breaking news. Their posts follow the usual template of a news organization; a short description of the article followed by a link embedded into a photo and headline. They have a following of 1 million and their posts average about 100 reactions ('likes' or otherwise), with the highest amount of reactions in one 24-hour cycle being 1.4k on an article about a Georgian judge overturning a ban on abortion. The lowest amount of engagement in the same 24 hours was 8 reactions on an article announcing that an imprisoned Egyptian activist had ended his hunger strike.



### Twitter

The AP advertises two twitter accounts on its website: @AP and @AP\_CorpComm. The former is the official account, while the latter is presented with a simple "stay connected with our media team." For the purposes of this report, we will focus mainly on the official Twitter account as opposed to the corporate communications account.

@AP supports a following of 16 million users, making Twitter its largest platform. Due to its larger following, Twitter posts regarding news articles get more engagement than Facebook, with some posts reaching over four thousand likes. Most posts maintain an average of about 100 likes, but this comes with the knowledge that despite engagement, the articles are reaching a much larger audience. The Associated Press uses the 'thread' feature prominently on Twitter by adding more to a story beyond the headline and article link. This allows them to follow a story as it develops.



As part of their commitment to cross-format journalism, videos are prioritized at the Associated Press. Their YouTube channel has just over 2 million followers, and they post upwards of 30 videos a day. Most of their videos are under 2 minutes, with the occasional interview or investigative piece garnering a longer timestamp. They post news from all over the world, and include pieces in Spanish. Everyday, they post one video that encapsulates the news of the day in a minute, as well as a video detailing the historical importance of whatever date it is. These pieces are titled, "AP Top News" and "Today in History," respectively.



Despite being the Associated Press' smallest platform with just 267k followers, their LinkedIn posts maintain the same level of engagement as Facebook and Twitter. Their posts still average about 100 reactions, with topical articles garnering more. However, they post much less frequently on this platform, posting about once every week or so for a total of just a few posts a month.

# Analysis of Situation

The Associated Press has a concentrated presence on social media, with their focus spread only across four platforms. Facebook and Twitter are used to promote specific articles, while YouTube focuses on a video format that allows viewers access to interviews on topics. LinkedIn allows a space for those who are interested in journalism, and the platform therefore hosts only their best stories, as well as stories that highlight the journalism involved.

Since Twitter is by far their largest audience, it could be argued that it is the most successful platform. However, with Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter, it might be time to consider some other options. Especially since the AP is known for its nonpartisan reporting that focuses on facts above all else. As Musk fires content moderators, its future as a fact checking platform is in question.

Although AP's Facebook page has the second smallest audience out of the four platforms, the content that's posted is largely the same as what is on Twitter. According to a Nieman Lab article, wire stories from the AP do better than stories from individual publications. The AP beat out HuffPost and the Daily Mail for monthly engagements on Facebook this Summer, suggesting that Facebook may provide some refuge during the Twitter turmoil.

The AP Global News Manager Mark Davies stated that the company doesn't look at analytics the way other organizations might. With a mission statement based strongly in fact, they take care not to optimize articles for clicks. Since social media platforms have traditionally thrived off clickbait and misinformation, sharing news stories that refuse to indulge in attention-grabbing tactics can become an obstacle to growth on social media.

# Recommendation

With Twitter's uncertain future and Facebook's smaller audience, the Associated Press may benefit from a platform that allows for the traditional headline, image, summary post that they're used to while also introducing some versatility into these posts. Since Instagram is one of only two social media platforms that are growing as American news sources this year, I propose that the AP expand onto Instagram.

Other major news organizations such as The New York Times and The Washington Post are already on Instagram with millions of followers.

As the platform is photo (and now also video) based, it supports the use of cross-format content that the associated press produces. With no character limit, fuller summaries of posts can be inserted into the caption, while the headline and accompanying photo or video can act as the main draw. Since most of the AP's videos exist only on YouTube, this is a great opportunity to expand the video audience by posting the already easily-digestible clips onto Instagram.

Instagram also allows for infographics and more than one image to be posted. With the carousel feature and the use of Instagram stories, important information can be made more digestible to the audience. The New York Times is already experimenting with the use of Instagram stories in order to get vital information to more people, and it seems to be working.

Since many Americans get news from social media, it has become increasingly important that news organizations ensure their news is using a mobile-first tactic and adapting with their audiences. Facts are important, especially during times of turmoil. Instagram will help the Associated Press truly advance the power of facts by reaching the audience where they reside and speaking to them in an accessible, visible and efficient manner.

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