

To "Thread" or not to "Thread"?

 By [Tara Turkington](#)

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Threads - Meta's new challenge to Twitter - has exploded onto the social media scene, quickly sewing up over 30 million users within three days of launching.



Image supplied. Tara Turkington CEO of Flow Communications asks to "Thread" or not to "Thread"?...

Launched on Wednesday, 5 July by Meta in 100 countries (notably not yet in the European Union, where Meta says it is awaiting clarity from regulators about privacy considerations), by the end of the first day, it had signed up 10 million users and over 30-million within the first three.

At this rate, it's set to surpass ChatGPT's record of attracting 100 million users in its first two months. (In comparison, it took Twitter, launched in 2006, two years to reach 30 million users. Of course, Twitter has paved the way for Threads.)

So what is Threads, exactly, and why should you care?

Threads is like a mixture between Twitter and Instagram. It's Twitteresque in the sense that you post one message at a time, of up to 500 characters (compared with only 280 characters on Twitter), and you can include links, photos and videos up to five minutes in length (compared with two minutes and 20 seconds on Twitter).

It's Instagram-like in that the photos and video are hero content over text, though, like Twitter, you can post text without visuals.

And its integration with Instagram is flawless. You can easily set up an account on your phone (there is no desktop version yet, much like Instagram when it began in 2010; it took three years before it released one).

You can import your bio, profile image and followers seamlessly from Instagram, inviting them to follow you easily when they join Threads.



Meta takes on Twitter with Threads and wins in the market

Lindsey Schutters 6 Jul 2023



Tapping into the feel-good hormone

This is one thing Threads really has going for it – by helping ordinary people gain followers quicker than on any platform in history, it is tapping into rewarding and addictive releases of dopamine, a feel-good hormone long documented as being associated with social media consumption.

Zuckerberg vs Musk: In the Hexagon?

Behind the juggernauts of Meta (comprising Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and now Threads) and Twitter are the larger-than-life personalities of Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk, respectively, who are as unlikeable as each other.

In the hype before the launch of Threads, Musk tweeted, “I’m sure Earth can’t wait to be exclusively under Zuck’s thumb”, then added, “I’m up for a cage match if he is lol”.

While there’s been much talk about the two actually fighting, possibly at the Colosseum in Rome, the true fight is over eyeballs and advertising revenues.

And love him or hate him, Musk has a point: if Twitter implodes under the pressure, Meta’s power will be more unchecked than ever, giving it a looser rein to charge higher prices and make its platforms more pay-to-play than ever.

Though no doubt LinkedIn and its owner, Microsoft, and TikTok, mostly owned by a range of global investors through ByteDance, are going to be front-row spectators, hoping both will inflict maximum damage on the other.

The fight is unlikely to be a slam-dunk either way. Musk has threatened to sue Meta for stealing trade secrets from Twitter. We might all just need to settle in for a long fight.



8 considerations brands need to take note of when looking at Threads

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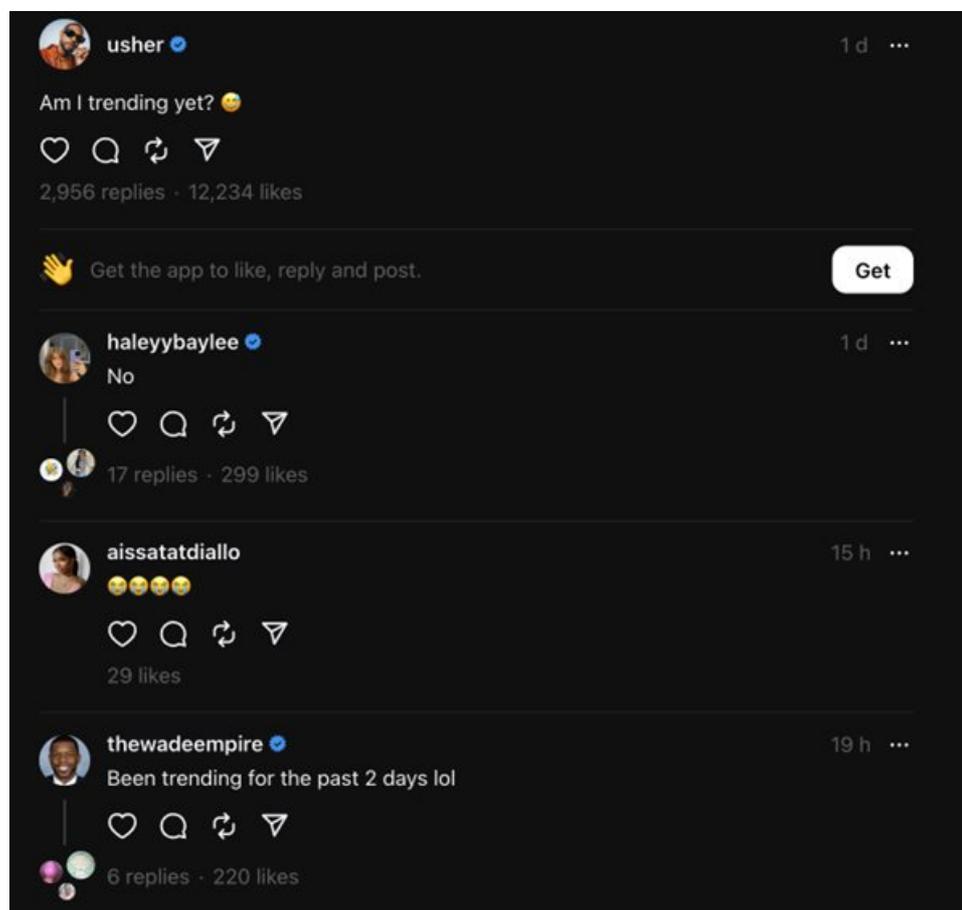
Limitations of Threads

While it’s the coolest new thing, Threads is seriously limited in functionality.

There’s no way to search Threads yet, so hashtags aren’t yet a thing.

For now, you have to have an Instagram account to start a Threads account. And although you can deactivate a Threads account, you cannot delete it without deleting your Instagram account.

Another big limitation, highlighted by megastar Usher, is that content can't trend (yet). Last week, actress Keke Palmer's outfit was criticised on Twitter by her boyfriend, Darius Jackson, while at an Usher concert. Usher, who serenaded Palmer, asked on his new Threads account if he was trending.



Not yet, Usher, but Meta is working on it. On the Meta news site on 5 July, it says, "In addition to working toward making Threads compatible with the ActivityPub protocol, soon we'll be adding a number of new features to help you continue to discover threads and creators you're interested in, including improved recommendations in feed and a more robust search function that makes it easier to follow topics and trends in real time".

Sew what?

For me, joining Threads feels like stepping into a poker game.

At first glance, participants may appear quiet and cute, engaging in polite banter. But beneath this seemingly tranquil surface lies a complex web of thoughts, opinions and hidden motivations. It feels refreshing to step into territory that none of us are aware of.

I love the seamless integration with Instagram and how everything just gets pulled from one app to the other. It's easy to use and navigate. No frills, no wahala.

For me, Threads holds a sense of excitement, and the potential for new connections, unexpected alliances and the discovery of new ideas.

But Twitter is powerful and compelling, not least because it is the preferred platform of journalists. So I'm not deleting my Twitter account any time soon, and will toggle between the two platforms for now.



Why Meta's Threads app is the biggest threat to Twitter yet

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What about marketers?

That said, joining Threads is going to be unavoidable for marketers, influencers and any brand that already has an audience on Twitter or Instagram.

My advice is to get on as quickly as possible, because there is early-mover advantage – as we saw when Facebook, Twitter and Instagram launched – and you are likely to attract exponentially more followers (and therefore ultimately wield more clout on the platform) than if you join in a month or two's time.

ABOUT TARA TURKINGTON

Tara Turkington is the CEO of Flow Communications (www.flow.sa.com), one of the country's top communications companies. Follow her on Twitter at [@taraturk1](https://twitter.com/@taraturk1).

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