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that opens up new creative possibilities for content creators. This update to Instagram Reels demonstrates the platform's commitment to competing with other video-focused social media platforms. One of our favourite new features is the introduction of trial reels. This innovative approach allows Instagram users to test their content with a random audience before sharing it with their Instagram followers. Here's how it works:1. Create your reel as usual2. Mark it as a trial3. Instagram shows it to random other users4. Review the engagement5. Decide whether to publish it to your profileThis feature is particularly useful for business accounts looking to test content with their target audience before committing to a full post. Enhanced DM Experience Direct messages (Instagram DM) have received significant updates, making chat interactions more personalised and engaging. The new features in DM chats include:- Customisable chat themes- Nicknames for conversation participants (perfect for an inside joke or group chats)- The ability to pin important chats- Message editing for up to 15 minutes after sendingThese updates make Instagram's messaging system more robust and user-friendly, especially for those who use direct messages frequently for business or personal communication. Instagram's latest update introduces a dedicated tab for story highlights, moving them away from their traditional spot above the profile grid. This change aims to declutter Instagram profiles while maintaining easy access to this important feature. To access your story highlights:1. Visit any Instagram profile2. Look for the heart-shaped icon3. Tap to view all story highlightsThis new organisation makes Instagram profiles cleaner while ensuring that story highlights remain easily accessible. New Interactive Features Notes and Group Profiles Instagram takes community engagement to the next level with new features like note prompts and group profiles. Notes allow users to share short thoughts or updates with close friends or mutual followers, while group profiles enable community building around shared interests. AI-Powered Creative Tools We're particularly excited about the new AI stickers feature, which allows users to generate custom stickers for Instagram Stories. This creative tool adds a new dimension to story creation and engagement. Instagram continues to prioritise safety, particularly for younger users and teen accounts. New features include:- Enhanced content filtering- Better control over sensitive content- Default private settings for new accounts- Limited interactions with unknown accounts Business Features and Professional Tools Meta-Verified Benefits For business accounts, the new Instagram update introduces tiered pricing for Meta-verified users, offering benefits like:- Clickable links in reels- Enhanced visibility- Priority support- Additional creative tools Professional Dashboard Updates The professional dashboard now offers more comprehensive Instagram insights, helping businesses and creators better understand their performance and audience engagement. Broadcast Channels and Community Engagement A significant addition is the introduction of broadcast channels, allowing creators to communicate with their followers in new ways. This feature facilitates a better connection with your audience and can significantly boost engagement. Changes to Following Hashtags In a surprising move, Instagram takes away the option to follow hashtags. While this might seem limiting, it's part of the platform's effort to reduce spam and improve feed quality. Users can still use hashtags in their posts and search for them, but they won't appear automatically in feeds anymore. Tips for Adapting to the New Updates For Personal Users 1. Experiment with the new rectangular profile grid format2. Try out longer reels for more in-depth content3. Use trial reels to test content4. Explore the new story highlights tab5. Take advantage of enhanced DM features For Business Accounts 1. Adapt content strategy for the new grid layout2. Utilise Meta-verified features if applicable3. Leverage the professional dashboard4. Experiment with broadcast channels5. Focus on creating engaging content that encourages follows Troubleshooting Common Issues As with any major update, some users might experience issues. Here are some quick fixes:1. If features aren't appearing, check if your Instagram app is updated to the latest version2. For grid display issues, try to adjust preview settings by tapping the three dots on posts3. Clear cache and restart the app if experiencing performance issues4. Check your account settings if new features aren't accessible Looking Ahead These updates show that Instagram continues to evolve, focusing on video content, community engagement, and user experience. While some changes might take getting used to, they offer exciting opportunities for both personal and business users to create more engaging and dynamic content. What This Means for Third-Party Apps For those using third-party apps for Instagram management, most of these updates are compatible with existing tools. However, some features like AI stickers and trial reels might only be available through the native Instagram app. Our Verdict We believe these updates represent a significant step forward for Instagram. While the removal of some features (like hashtag following) might take adjustment, the new creative tools and enhanced business features offer exciting opportunities for growth and engagement.The shift towards longer video content and more interactive features shows Instagram's commitment to evolving with user preferences while maintaining its position as a leading social media platform. Stay Updated with Social Media Time Want to stay informed about the latest Instagram updates and social media developments? Follow our blog for regular updates, tips, and insights. We're here to help you navigate the ever-changing world of social media and make the most of new features as they roll out.Remember, adapting to platform changes is key to maintaining and growing your Instagram presence. Whether you're managing personal or business accounts, these updates offer new opportunities to create engaging content and connect with your audience in meaningful ways. Frequently Asked Questions Instagram's shift to a rectangular profile grid reflects how most users now create and consume vertical content, particularly through Reels and Stories. The new format provides a more visually appealing way to showcase photos and videos while aligning with current content consumption trends. Users can still adjust their post previews by tapping the three dots and selecting 'Adjust Preview' if they want to customise how their content appears in the grid.Trial reels are shown only to random Instagram users who don't follow you. Your followers won't see these test posts, and they won't appear on your profile or in your reels tab. This allows you to gauge how your content might perform with a wider audience before deciding whether to publish it officially. After reviewing the engagement metrics, you can choose to either post the reel to your profile or refine it further.Your existing story highlights will automatically move to the new dedicated tab, marked by a heart-shaped icon on your profile. All your carefully curated highlights remain intact they're just housed in a new, more organised location. This change helps declutter profiles while maintaining easy access to this popular feature.While the removal of hashtag following might seem limiting, Instagram has introduced other ways to discover content and reach your target audience. Focus on creating engaging content that encourages direct followers, use broadcast channels for community engagement, and leverage features like trial reels to expand your reach. Hashtags can still be used in posts and searched for manually.To view posts from only followers, tap 'Instagram' in the top right corner of your feed and select 'Following'. This filters out sponsored posts and suggested content, showing you only posts from accounts you've chosen to follow. Note that this feature currently works only for feed posts and doesn't affect Instagram Stories or Reels.

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