

# The State Of Social Embeds

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A study of the prevalence and impact of social media embeds in news reporting, based on the analysis of a million news articles.



# Intro

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The world of newsgathering has forever changed with the rapid growth of social media. Social media makes it easy for newsrooms to be on the ground within seconds of any breaking story, with real-time eyewitness content and information. It's impossible to compete with the scale of citizen journalists, and hard to say no to highly visual and engaging content.

What is lesser known is just how prevalent social is in news reporting and storytelling. We set out to quantify the use of social media

embeds in news articles, and how each social network contributes to this undeniable trend.

To quantify the state of social embeds, SAM created a web crawler that detects social media content directly embedded in news articles. Leveraging our unique social asset monitoring technology, we then analyzed the health of each individual embed.

We've also made this [tool](#) open and free to all.

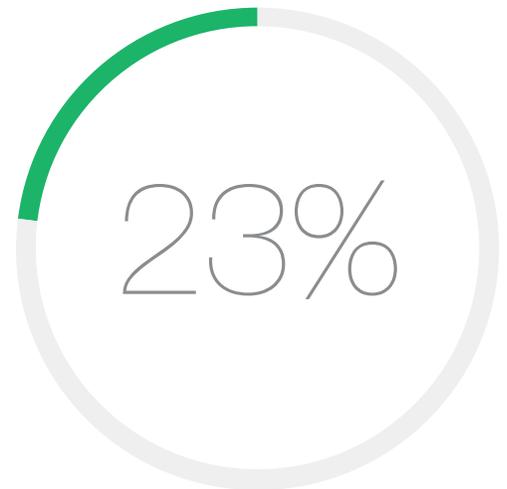
# We Analyzed Over

# 1,000,000

## News Articles & Pages

After analyzing over 1 million pages from the most prominent news sites around the world, we found an astonishing 23% of these pages contained social embeds.

23% of news articles contain social media embeds



# Social Breakdown

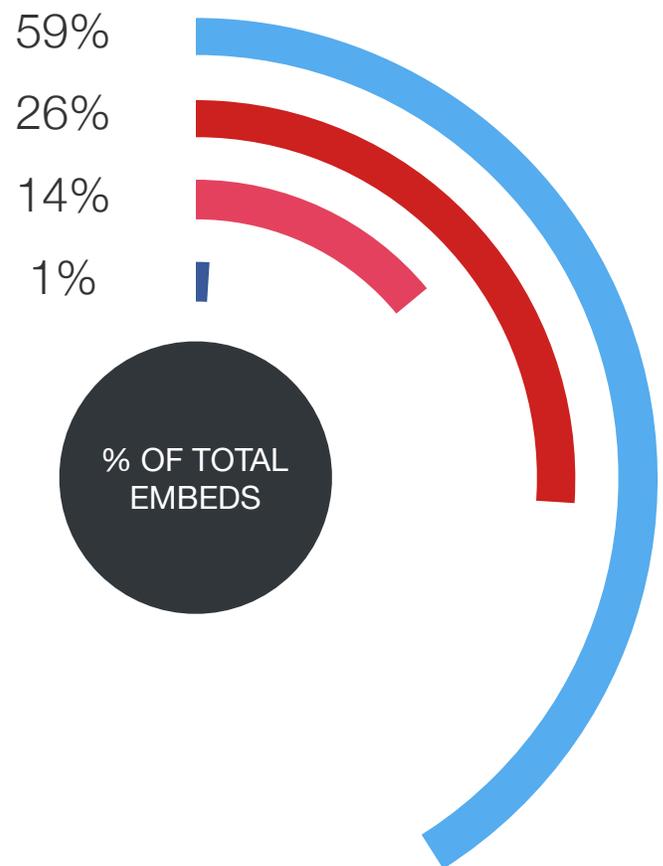
Across the million news articles analyzed, this is how each social network adds up.

**Twitter** ranks first, firmly established above all other social networks, claiming 59% of all embeds.

**Youtube** ranks second, relying on its dominance as a video platform, and claims 26% of total embeds.

**Instagram** ranks third, making up 14% of total embeds and is quickly climbing.

**Facebook** ranks a distant fourth, with only 1% of total embeds.



Twitter is the embed king but Instagram is quickly gaining traction

# Social Breakdown

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Why do the social media embeds stack up the way they do?



Twitter has long supported embeds and encourages publishers to embed content freely. Twitter is also the easiest platform to search, so in the end we're not surprised to see them at the top of the embed food chain.



Youtube is another great example of a platform that has long embraced embeds. When you think of online video you think Youtube. Even with newcomers growing, Youtube continues to show its strength as a platform for valuable news content.



Instagram is quickly becoming a platform newsrooms cannot ignore. In fact, we think Instagram has a real shot at overcoming Youtube in the next year for total number of embeds. Offering diversity and briefness with it's content, Instagram has set a standard for short, high value media.

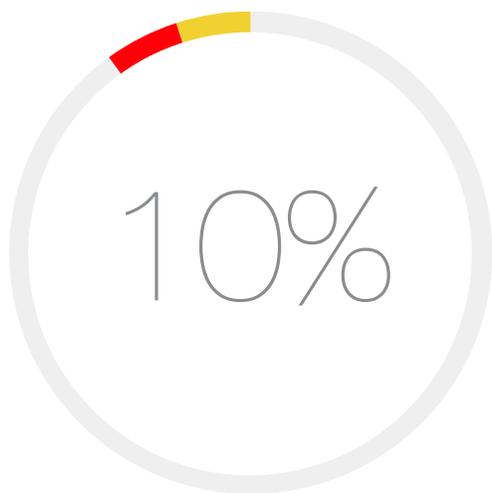


Facebook struggles to get traction with off-site embeds. Despite being the largest social network (*and dwarfing all others in terms of UGC*), it's strategy around 3rd party tools and APIs is focused on keeping readers on Facebook and vs embedding content on other platforms.

# Social Embed Decay

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While social media can be a powerful tool to bolster news stories, there can also be unforeseen and often delayed consequences. One such consequence is the decay of these social media embeds over time.



10% of embeds have decayed

5% of all embeds are broken and an additional 5% have been changed after being used in reporting – by the uploader deleting, removing or altering their content on the original platform.

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*Just how does embed decay impact a published news story?*

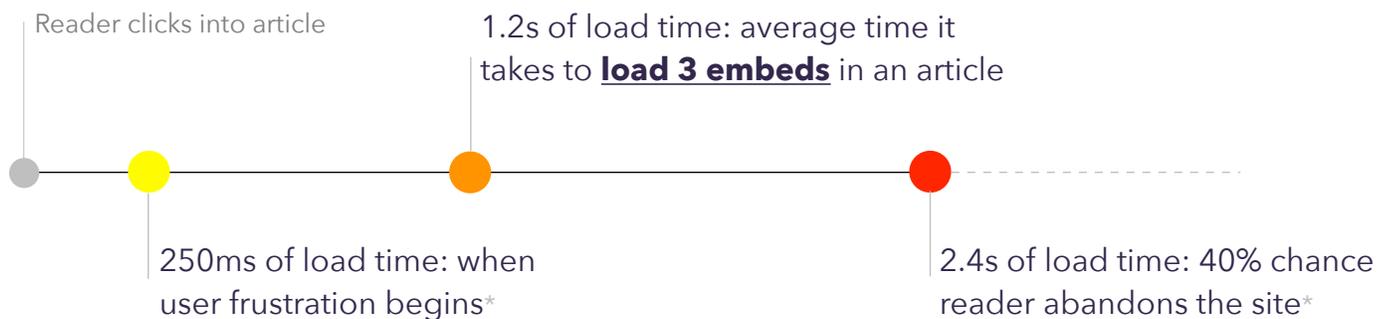
*[Read here](#) for our full thoughts on how the @POTUS Twitter account could seriously affect news stories and their meanings, if not handled carefully.*

# Load Times

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With increasing pressure for publishers to lower load times, social embeds can contribute negatively towards reader abandonment.

Our study found articles featuring social content contain an **average of 3 embeds per page**



Unlike most 3rd party scripts, social embeds are part of the core story and thus should be the first to load.

# Key Takeaways

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Social storytelling and **embeds are here to stay**. Modern reporting will continue to adopt these means as a way to access and deliver a wide breadth of content.

The **increasing decay rate** of older embeds cannot be ignored. Processes are required to combat the issues of broken embeds and changing content post-publication.

Reducing **load times** remains a continuous effort for online newsrooms trying to reduce reader abandonment. Publishers need to prioritize load times of core content scripts over non-editorial scripts, such as trackers and adverts.

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SAM is the world's leading social media CMS powering publisher newsgathering and storytelling. Find out how you can leverage SAM to scale your social embeds: [sales@samdesk.io](mailto:sales@samdesk.io)

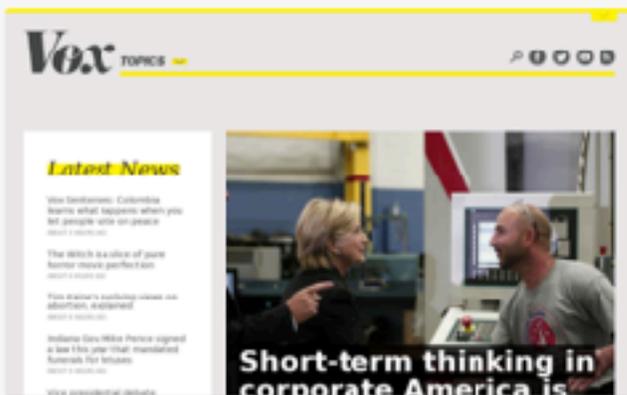


# Get Your Report Card

We've made our analysis tool completely free and open for everyone! Want to see your own embed data, social breakdown, and health check? Head over to our free report card tool and see how your site stacks up.

[ANALYZE MY SITE](#)

\*sample report



**13563**  
pages analyzed

We checked your site for social media embeds. Here is what we found.



**20.7%**  
OF YOUR PAGES  
HAVE EMBEDS

**i** Having a lot of embeds encourages social interaction, however it can impact the speed of your site's load times. SAM can help you grow your audience and dramatically speed up pages.