Drew Smith
Social Media Dashboard Final Report

Executive Summary

This month built directly on September's foundation as I used the posting strategy and platform tracking I established earlier. In September, I posed the question about optimal posting times. October's top posts (4–7 PM) followed this model and performed strongly. Metricool was able to link with Twitter, but there were some minor errors with impression tracking.

Data Overview

Followers
• Instagram: 848 (↑2.79% from Sept's 825)
• LinkedIn: 681 (↑4.61% from Sept's 651)
• Twitter: 358 (newly tracked)

Community Growth
• Instagram: +23 new followers (vs. +7 in Sept)
• LinkedIn: +37 new followers (vs. +11 in Sept)
• Twitter: steady (7 gained, 7 lost; net 0)

Impressions
• Instagram: Not tracked (Metricool shows impressions only for LinkedIn & Twitter)
• LinkedIn: 1,598 impressions (↑335.4% from 367 in Sept)
• Twitter: 0 impressions recorded (limited data tracking)

Interactions
• Instagram: 138 (↑253.85% from 39 in Sept)
  - Likes: 125
  - Comments: 13
  - Shares: 6
• LinkedIn: 0 (unchanged from Sept's 9 → inactive month)
• Twitter: 0 recorded interactions

Content Output
• Instagram: 3 posts (↑200% from 1 in Sept)
• LinkedIn: 0 posts (same as Sept)
• Twitter: 10 posts (new platform for October)

Top-Performing Post (Instagram)
• Post: "The other side" – October 22, 2025
  Reach: 315 | Likes: 45 | Engagement Rate: 15.87%

Other top posts:
• "Last night's Halloween pop-up was fun 🎃" — Reach 368, Likes 43, Engagement 12.5%
• "Let the good times roll 🎆📝" — Reach 320, Likes 37, Engagement 15.0%

These October posts performed 2–3x stronger than September's single post ("Back in the saddle", 314 reach, 39 likes, 12.4% engagement).

Demographics (Instagram)
• Top Countries: United States (95.05%), Nigeria (1.43%), Canada (0.91%)
• Top Cities: Phoenix (10.16%), Scottsdale (6.77%), Tempe (5.47%), Minneapolis (3.91%), Duluth (3.91%)
• Gender/Age: Majority of followers are in the 18–34 age range.

Average Reach
• Daily Reach: 170 (↑18.9% from Sept's 143)
• Average Reach per Post: 334 (↓3.7% from Sept's 314)

Key Insights
• Increased posting frequency led to sustained engagement gains and steady audience growth.
• The mix of content types resonated strongly with followers.
• Metricool is still unable to track Instagram Stories, so data reflects feed performance only.
• LinkedIn impressions rose sharply, showing improved visibility even without new posts.
• Followers consistently centered in Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Tempe.
• The 18–34 age group remained the dominant demographic, showing consistent audience alignment.

Strategic Recommendations

• Continue high volume Instagram posting: 2–3 posts per month is the ideal range.
• Leverage LinkedIn momentum: Although posts didn't pull through the API, growth here is valuable for professional branding and networking.
• Twitter: Engage more directly (likes/replies) to improve impressions beyond static posting.
• Test posting times: October's top posts performed best in the afternoon to evening range (4–7 PM); try morning posts for comparison.
• Continue experimenting with multi-photo layouts and carousel formats.

Innovation / Creativity

• Multi-photo posts proved effective, showing that more dynamic visual content drives higher engagement.
• Explore cross-promotion between Instagram and LinkedIn to increase audience overlap.
• Experiment with reels or short videos to expand reach and test new engagement formats.

Conclusion

Over the course of this project, my social media presence showed measurable and meaningful growth. In September, I researched and tested social media monitoring programs. I got funding for Metricool and identified my key platforms. By October, I posted more consistently, experimented with formats, and expanded to Twitter. These actions led to significant gains in engagement, impressions and follower growth across all platforms.

This progress shows engagement journalism: I took my social media platforms and monitored metrics. I learned what types of posts and posting times best resonated with my audience, allowing me to adapt my approach based on data rather than assumption. My followers remained centered in the Phoenix area, primarily aged 18–34, confirming that my work is with followers my age.

What My Social Media Dashboard Taught Me About Engagement Journalism

Drew Smith   3 min read   ·   Just now

A photo of me in Sedona, Ariz. on a Cronkite News trip. Photo by Kennedi Humble.

In today's day and age, adding a step-up to your social media game isn't a luxury, it's a necessity. According to the AP, 20% of Americans are getting their news through social media platforms. The folks that were included in this study have a high-volume of followers (over 100,000K) — which just happens to be way more than me.

As a journalist graduating from The Cronkite School, we must look at what our viewers want. The American Press Institute describes engaged journalism as an *"inclusive practice that prioritizes the information needs and wants of the community members it serves, creates collaborative space for the audience in all aspects of the journalistic process, and is dedicated to building and preserving trusting relationships between journalists and the public."*

I was challenged to create a capstone project that required me to step beyond daily content creation and experiment with using data as a storytelling tool. My goal was to create an innovative and analytics platform that strengthened my own understanding of audience engagement and offered insights that could help other journalists connect more meaningfully with their communities.

The first step of this project was recruiting a third-party to manage the data. While in-app dashboards do give good analytics, I landed on Metricool. This is an all-in-one tool to manage your social media accounts. I connected my personal Instagram, X (Twitter) and LinkedIn accounts. The software worked most of time, but I did have some glitches with Twitter at the start and LinkedIn in the end.

As an engagement journalist, I would recommend setting up this platform right away as it takes a

minimum of 30 days to create your full report. I was able to gather 60+ days of data.
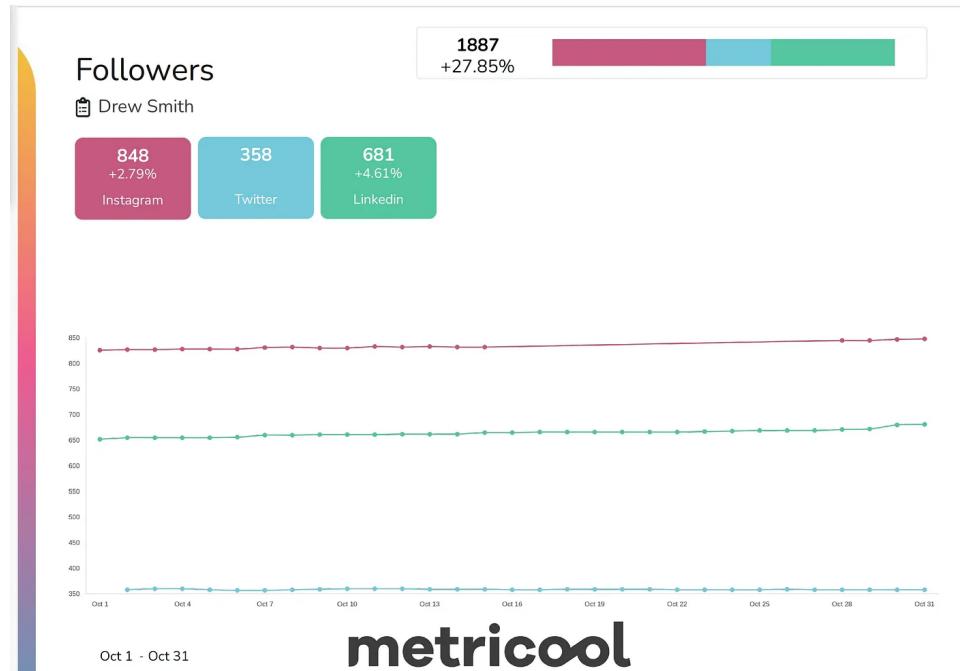
October 2025 follower growth across Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (Twitter). Photo from Metricool.

I learned that posting three times on Instagram in October (yes, it needs to be a post — stories don't count) made a huge difference in my growing my accounts. Using multi-photo posts also help drive engagement. Posting in the late afternoon (between 4 p.m. — 7 p.m. MST) had the biggest impact. To add, most of my followers live in the Phoenix area (roughly 20%) with my audience primarily being between 18–34 years old.

This project also showed me that each platform has a different purpose. Instagram is used for sharing personal photos, Twitter is used for sharing breaking

news and content and LinkedIn is for professional use and networking.

Finally, I also learned that analytics aren't the goal. They are the baseline showing you where you are at. It showed me where I was at on the various platforms in terms of engagement. And as a bonus, I added 30 new followers on my Instagram and 48 on my LinkedIn since I started this project.

In the newsroom setting, a bunch of journalists can all setup their accounts to a third-party service as they offer such as Metricool, Hootsuite or Sprout Social. This means an entire team can track all track engagement metrics in one shared dashboard.

This project reminded me that behind the numbers and accounts, these are real people. These are my friends, family and professional networks. It is important to show them what I am doing, whether it's to stay connected or grow and develop my career and my ideas.

Written by Drew Smith

0 followers · 1 following

I am a sports journalism graduate student at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Edit profile

No responses yet

Drew Smith he/him

What are your thoughts?

Social Media Insights

01 Oct 25 - 31 Oct 25

Drew Smith

Instagram drewryan08

X Drew Smith

LinkedIn Drew Smith

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Followers

📋 Drew Smith

848
+2.79%
Instagram

358
Twitter

681
+4.61%
Linkedin
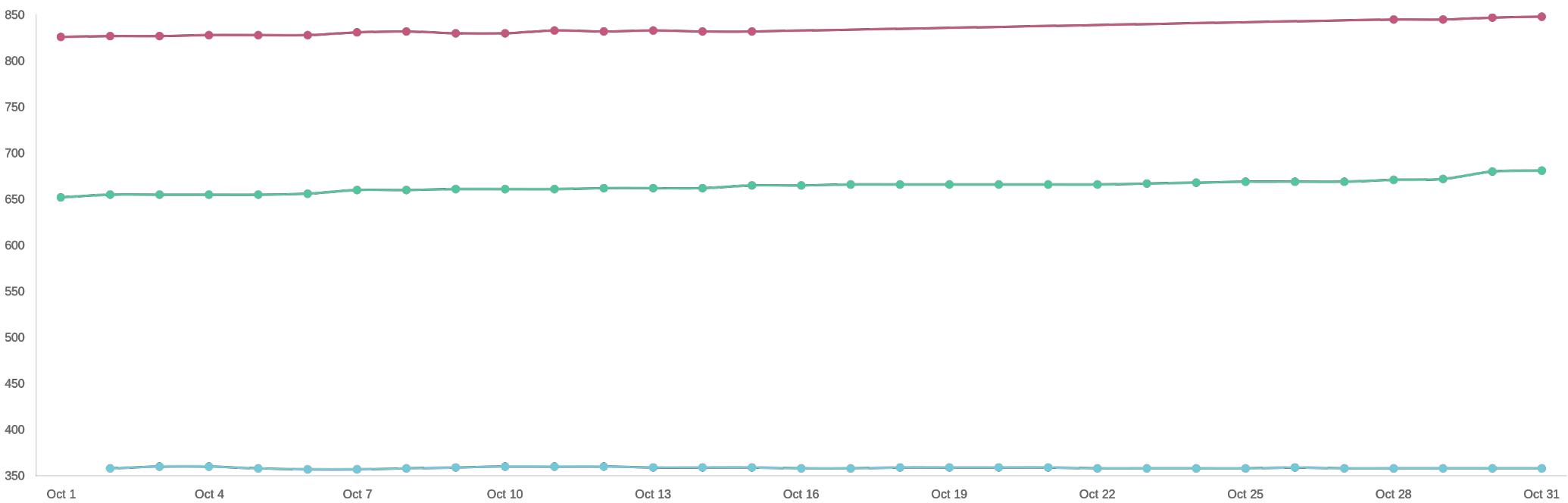
Oct 1 - Oct 31

metricool

Impressions

📋 Drew Smith

0	**1598**
	+335.42%
Twitter	Linkedin

1598
+335.42%
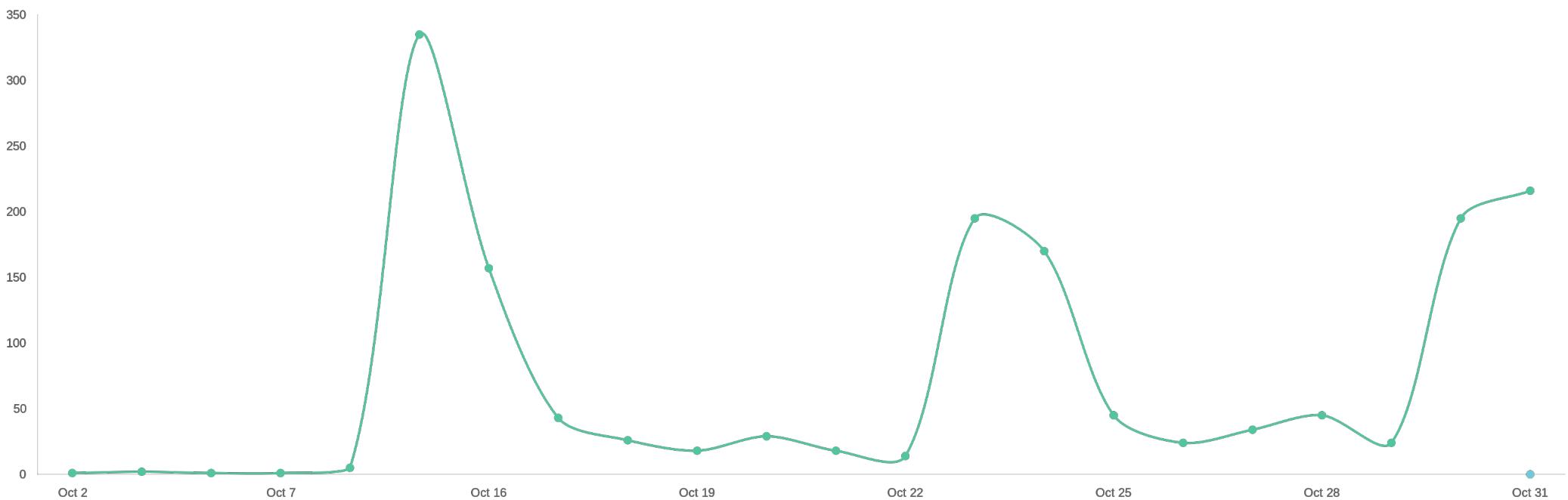
Oct 1 - Oct 31

metricool

Interactions

Drew Smith

138
+253.85%

| **138** +253.85% Instagram | **0** Twitter | **0** Linkedin |

50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0

Oct 22   Oct 30   Oct 31
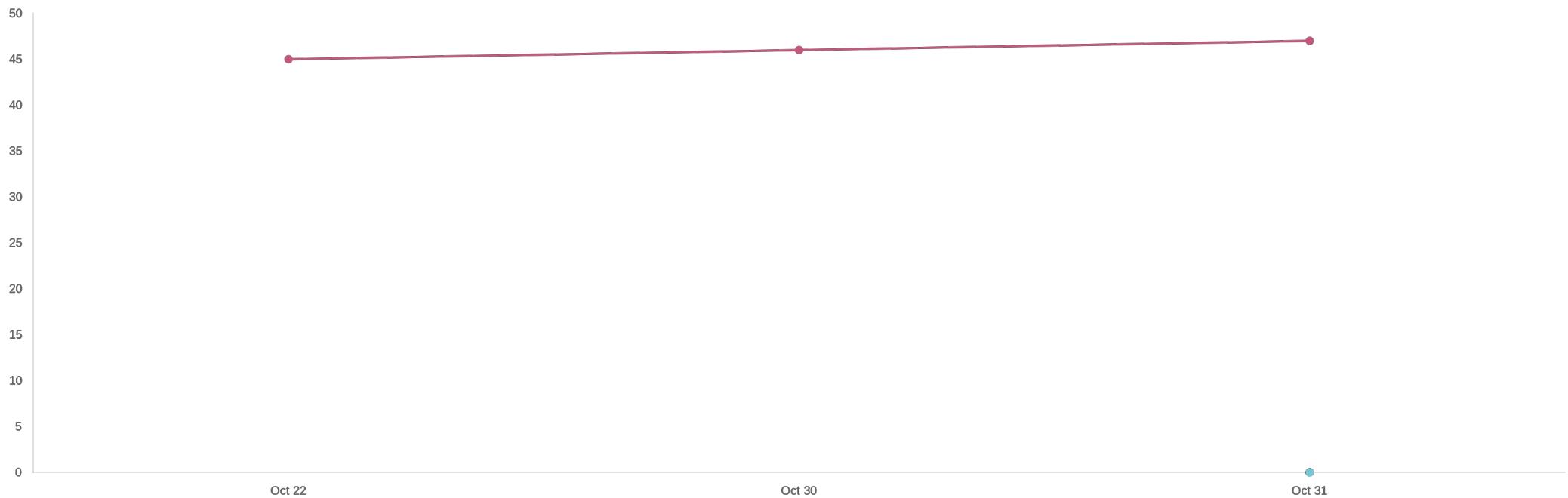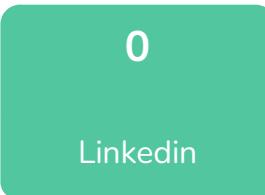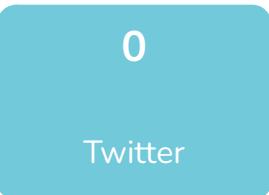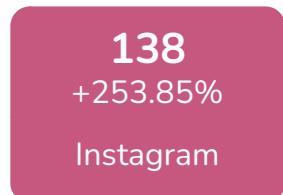
Oct 1 - Oct 31

metricool

Posts

📋 Drew Smith

| **3** +200.00% Instagram | **10** Twitter | **0** Linkedin |
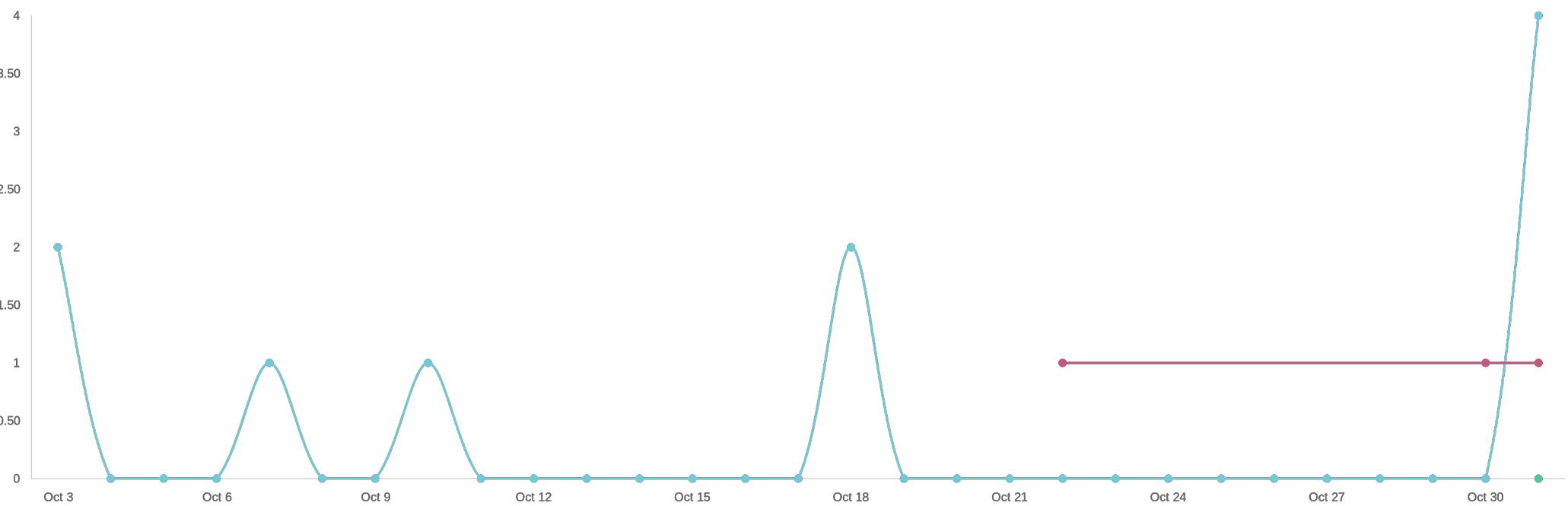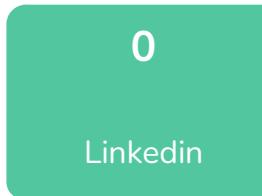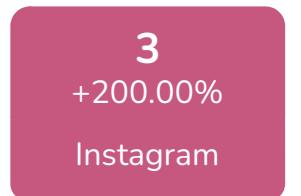
Oct 1 - Oct 31

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Ranking of posts

📋 Drew Smith

Showing 3 posts sorted by impressions

Published		Text			Impressions	Interactions
Oct 30, 2025 1:19 PM		Last night's Halloween pop-up was fun 🎃 Where are we going next? 👀 #scottsdale #house #openforma...	Go	📷	1217	46
Oct 22, 2025 6:07 PM		the other side	Go	📷	1198	50
Oct 31, 2025 3:10 PM		Let the good times roll 💀🖥️🎨	Go	📷	982	48

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Community growth

848 +2.79% Followers	23 Followers balance	3 +200.00% Total content

Last 12 months
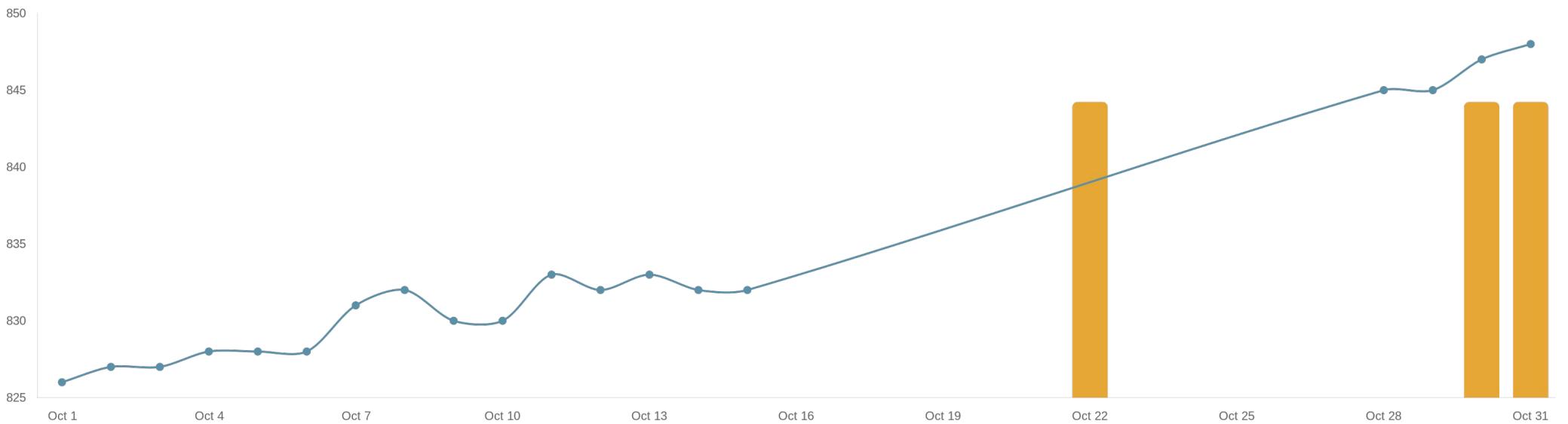
Oct 1 - Oct 31

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Demographics: gender and age

Instagram drewryan08

Gender

- Female (42.58%)
- Male (37.76%)
- Unknown (19.66%)
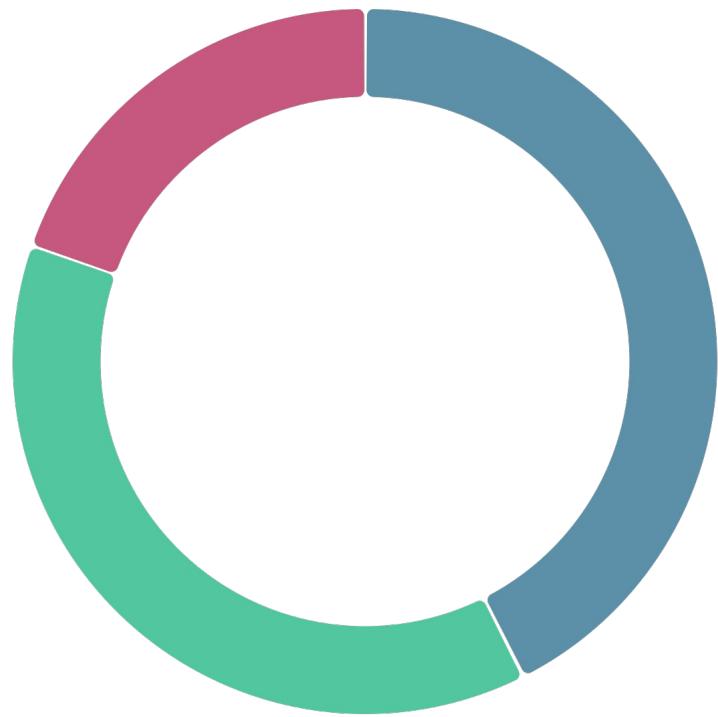
Ages
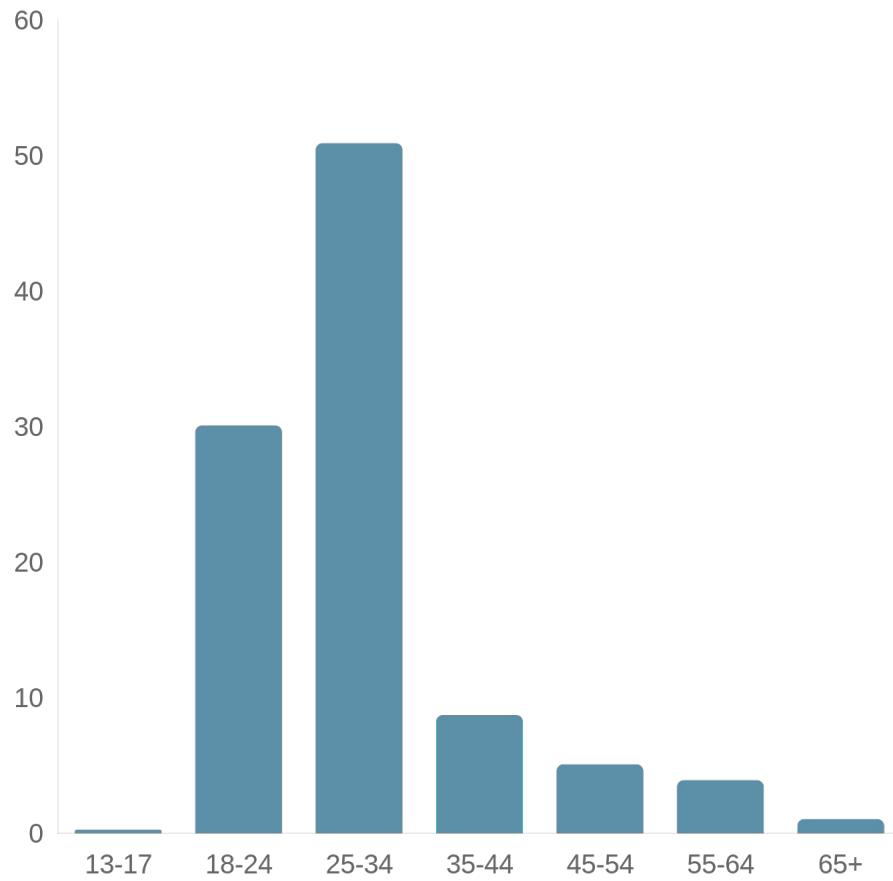
Oct 1 - Oct 31

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Demographics: countries and cities

Ⓘ drewryan08

Top 10 countries

United States	**95.05%**
Nigeria	**1.43%**
Canada	**0.91%**
Australia	**0.26%**
Indonesia	**0.26%**
Israel	**0.26%**
India	**0.26%**
Sweden	**0.26%**
Argentina	**0.13%**
Spain	**0.13%**

Top 10 cities

Phoenix, Arizona	**10.16%**
Scottsdale, Arizona	**6.77%**
Tempe, Arizona	**5.47%**
Duluth, Minnesota	**3.91%**
Minneapolis, Minnesota	**3.91%**
Plymouth, Minnesota	**3.78%**
Saint Paul, Minnesota	**2.34%**
Chicago, Illinois	**2.21%**
Flagstaff, Arizona	**2.08%**
Maple Grove, Minnesota	**2.08%**

Oct 1 - Oct 31

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Average reach per day

drewryan08

169.97 +18.86% Average reach per day	**3** +200.00% Total content
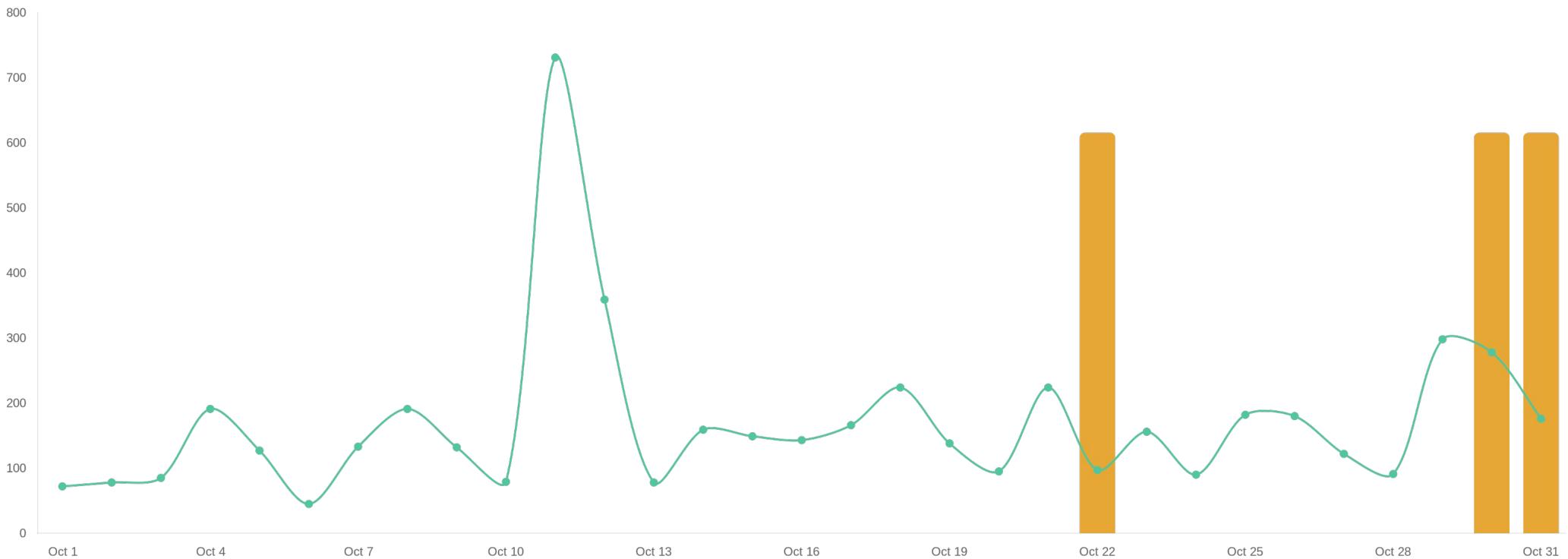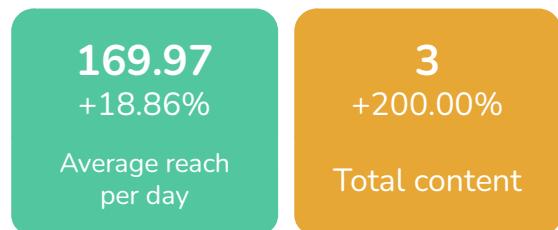
Oct 1 - Oct 31

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Posts published in period

13.76 +22.42% Engagement	3 +200.00% Posts

Last 12 months
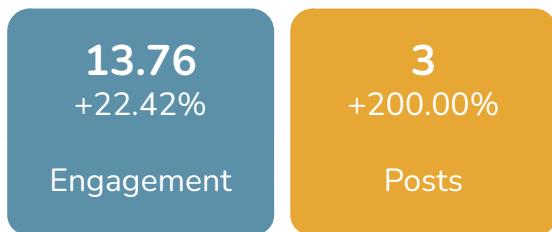
Oct 1 - Oct 31

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Reach of published posts

334.33
-3.65%

Avg reach per post

3
+200.00%

Posts

450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0

Nov   Dec   Jan   Feb   Mar   Apr   May   Jun   Jul   Aug   Sep   Oct

Last 12 months

370

360

350

340

330

320

310

Oct 1   Oct 4   Oct 7   Oct 10   Oct 13   Oct 16   Oct 19   Oct 22   Oct 25   Oct 28   Oct 31
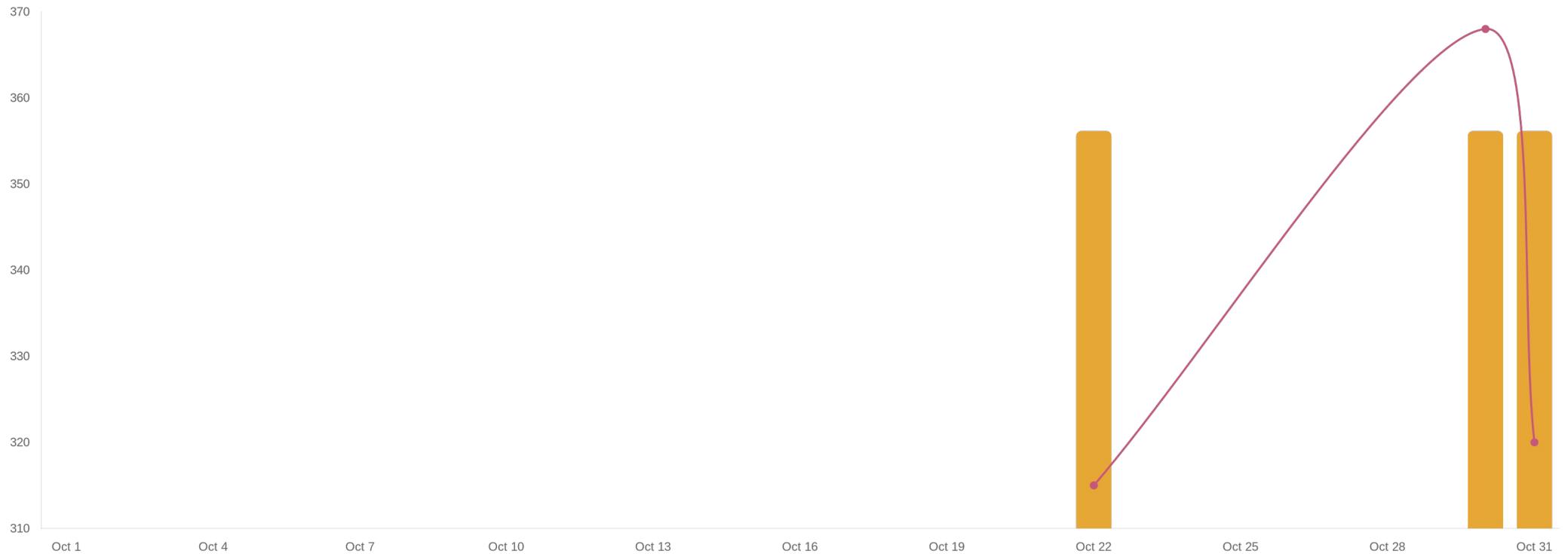
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Oct 1 - Oct 31

Interactions of published posts

125 +220.51% Likes	**13** Comments	**0** Saved	**6** Shares

138 +253.85% Interactions

Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct

Last 12 months
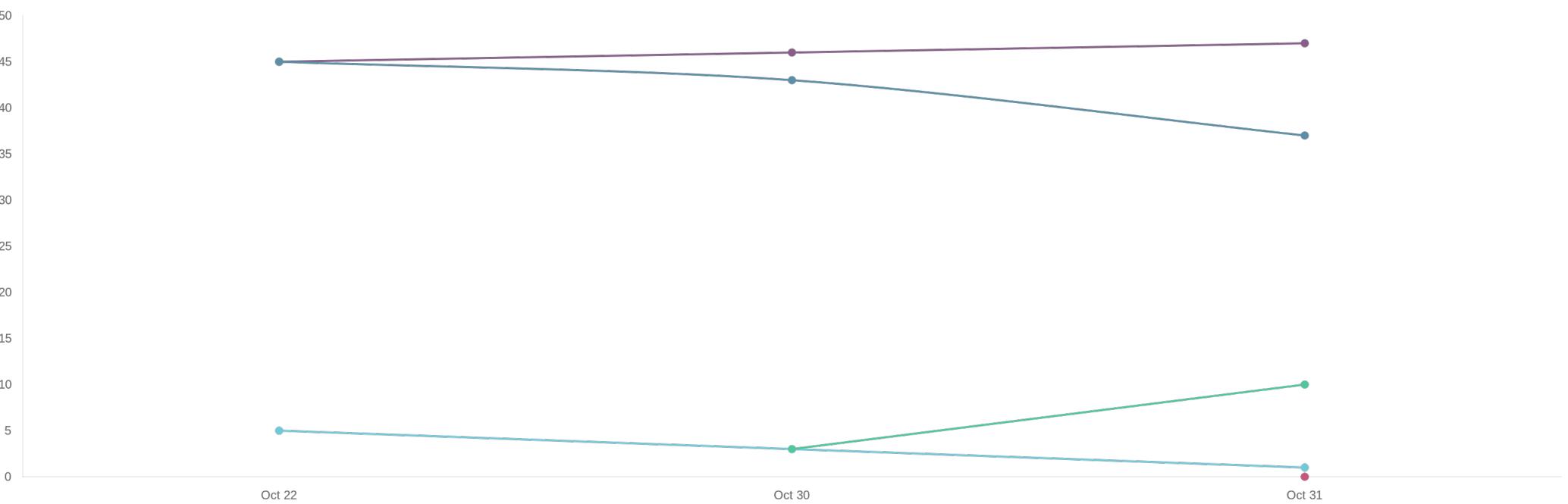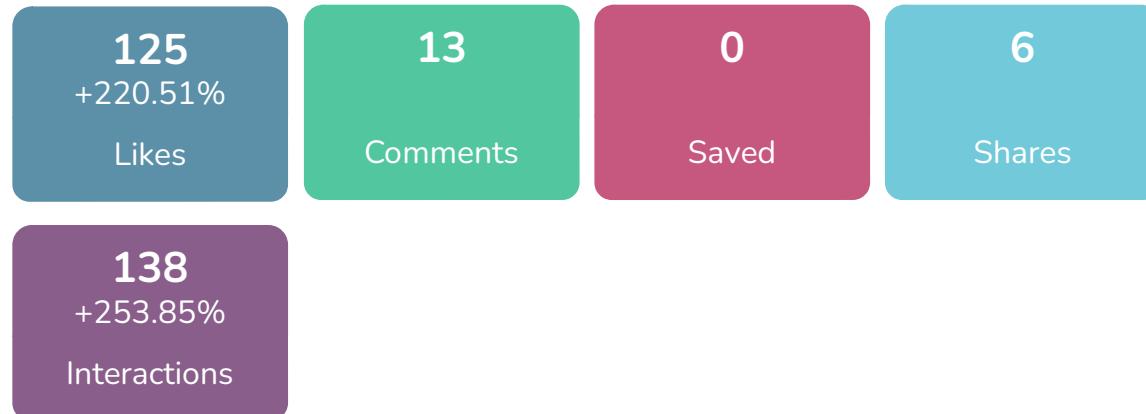
Oct 1 - Oct 31

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Ranking of posts

Showing 3 posts sorted by likes

Published		Type	Text		Views	Reach	Likes	Comments	Saved	Engagement
Oct 22, 2025 4:07 PM		🖼	the other side	Go	1198	315	45	0	0	15.87
Oct 30, 2025 12:19 PM		🖼	Last night's Halloween pop-up was fun 🎃 Where ar...	Go	1217	368	43	3	0	12.5
Oct 31, 2025 2:10 PM		🖼	Let the good times roll 💀🖥️🎨	Go	982	320	37	10	0	15

Oct 1 - Oct 31

metricool

Ranking of hashtags

drewryan08

Showing 3 hashtags sorted by likes

	Posts	Views	Likes	Comments
#openformat	1	1217	43	3
#scottsdale	1	1217	43	3
#house	1	1217	43	3

metricool

Oct 1 - Oct 31

Community growth

𝕏 Drew Smith

358	7	7	10
Followers	Acquired	Lost	Posts

Last 12 months

Oct 1 - Oct 31

metricool

Community growth

in Drew Smith

681 +4.61% Followers	37 Followers balance	0 Posts

Last 12 months
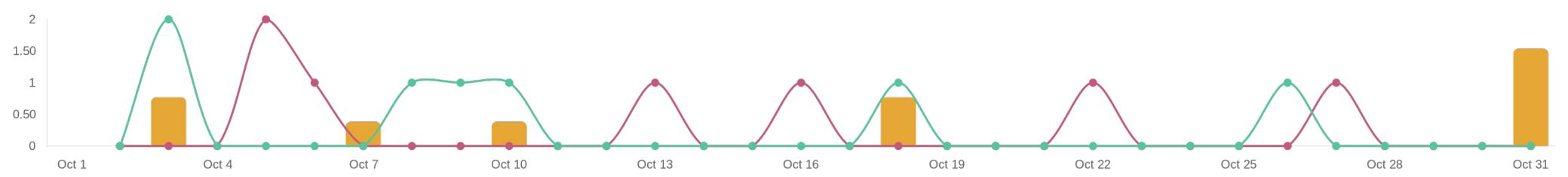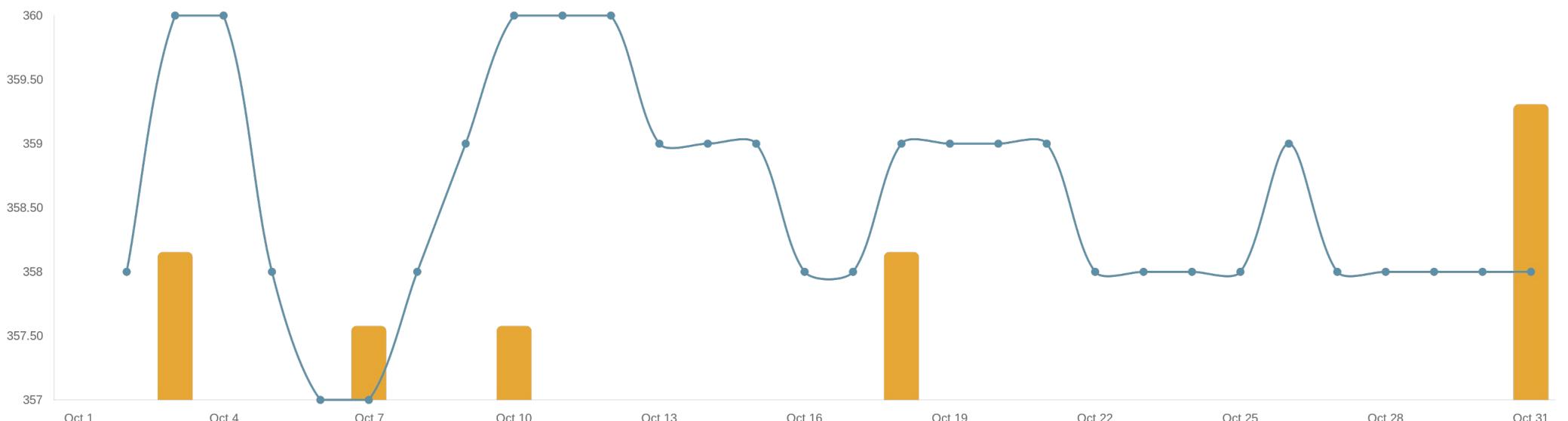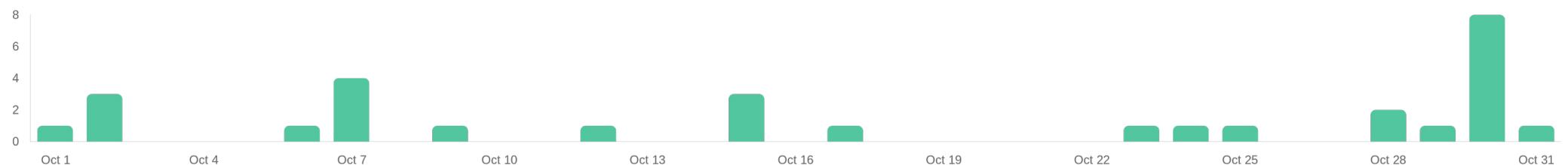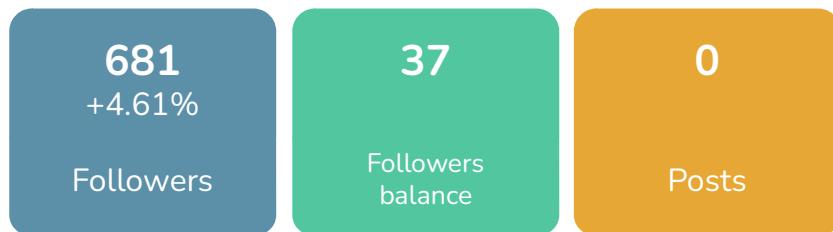
Oct 1 - Oct 31

metricool

Content viewed in the period

in Drew Smith

1598	51	2	1
+335.42%	+466.67%		
Impressions	Reactions	Comments	Shares

Last 12 months

Oct 1 - Oct 31

metricool