

One mission a day

From 17 May the Game issued a numbered transmission almost every day. Day one drew 57,936 comments. A typical May day drew 3,600. A typical August day drew 280. The feed does not keep a daily audience; it re-decides every morning.

THIS IS PAPER 017 · A FINDING	PART OF THE GAME · DAILY TRANSMIS- SIONS 001 TO 038	STATUS FILED · V1 · 31 AUG 2026
SOURCE	PLATFORM COUNT · 31 AUG 2026	
38	171	8.3M 588,000
TRANSMISSIONS	POSTS	VIEWS COMMENTS

IN PLAIN WORDS

After Level 2 closed, the Game changed shape. Instead of a round every week or two, it issued a numbered transmission almost every day, each with one mission: comment MISSION, do the task, come back. Transmission 001 went out on 17 May 2026. Transmission 038 went out on 30 August, the day before this paper was written.

Counted from the platform, the series has a shape. Day one drew 57,936 comments. Days two to thirteen settled at a few thousand a day, with two exceptions the feed carried: Transmission 012 to 17,530 and Transmission 013 to 63,441. On 1 June the Game reopened entry with comment IN and comment PLAY, and those posts drew 302,000 comments on four million views, the largest participation event in the series. Then the daily floor fell: a typical June day 5,400, July 3,000, August 280, while single days still spiked, Transmission 031 to 24,801.

This paper is about that curve. A daily series on a recommendation feed does not retain an audience the way a subscription does. Each day is decided again by the feed, and most days it decides small.

THE QUESTION WE ASKED

What happens to participation when a game asks for something every day? The rounds measured a crowd on one instruction. The daily series measures the same crowd on thirty-eight, and the question is whether the number holds, decays, or does something else.

WHAT WE DID

- **Source:** the Instagram Graph API snapshot of 31 August 2026, every post from 17 May onward whose caption carries a transmission number. 171 posts: 153 across the 38 numbered transmissions, most of them two to five posts (the mission, a task board, a check), and 18 for the June re-entry.
- **Transmission day:** all posts carrying the same number, summed. Views, reach and comments are the platform's counts.
- **The June re-entry:** the posts captioned TRANSMISSION 001 // ENTRY CHECK on 1 and 2 June (comment IN, comment PLAY) restarted the numbering for new players. They are counted as one event and kept out of the day-by-day curve so they do not masquerade as a day.
- **Typical day:** the median transmission in each month. Medians are used because the spikes are the feed, not the routine.
- **Accumulation:** May posts have had three months to gather comments; the last August posts have had a day. Comments arrive mostly in the first day (the Do Not Comment paper measured 78 percent within 24 hours), views keep arriving longer. The August floor is therefore firmer for comments than for views.

WHAT HAPPENED

TABLE 1. The series by month: transmissions issued, and the typical (median) day.

MONTH	TRANSMISSIONS · POSTS	TYPICAL DAY, COMMENTS · VIEWS
May (from the 17th)	13 · 42	3,584 · 55,074
June	6 · 23	5,379 · 73,584
July	6 · 30	3,048 · 70,550
August	13 · 58	284 · 13,555
Four months	38 · 153	plus the June re-entry, 18 posts: 302,359 comments on 4,070,579 views

TABLE 2. The days the feed carried.

TRANSMISSION	DATE	VIEWS · COMMENTS
001, the launch	17 May	752,583 · 57,936
002	18 May	256,565 · 34,051
012, current state check	30 May	320,101 · 17,530
013, room check	31 May	764,686 · 63,441
The June re-entry, IN and PLAY	1 to 2 June	4,070,579 · 302,359
031, blind test	16 Aug	380,166 · 24,801
All 38 numbered days plus the re-entry		8,272,026 views · 587,840 comments

Six events account for four fifths of the series' comments. The other thirty-two transmissions share the rest, and their share of the day-to-day is what falls: from a few thousand comments on a normal May day

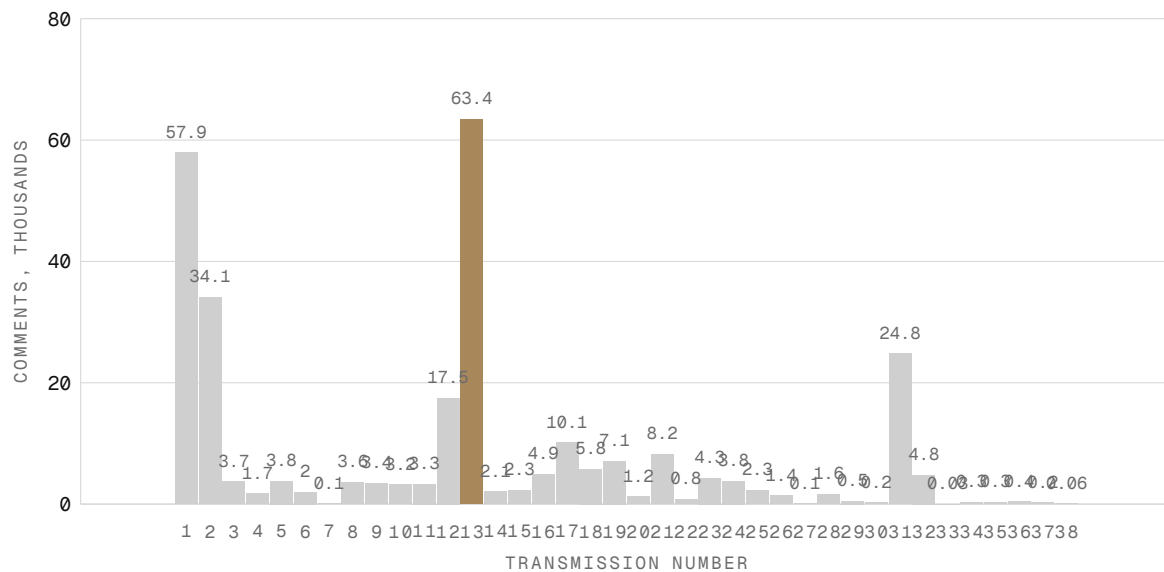


FIGURE 1. Comments per transmission, 001 to 038, in thousands. The accented bar is the largest day the feed carried, Transmission 013. The June re-entry is not a numbered day and is not drawn.

to a few hundred on a normal August day.

WHAT IT MEANS

A daily series on a recommendation feed does not hold its audience; it re-earns it each day, and most days it earns a fraction of the first. Over three and a half months the typical day fell from thousands of comments to hundreds, while the feed still lifted single days to tens of thousands on its own schedule.

Two curves are in the data and they are different things. The floor is the routine: the people who came back for the mission because they had made a habit of it, and that number decayed, from about 3,600 in May to about 280 in August. The spikes are the feed: a transmission the recommendation system decided to carry to strangers, and those arrived without warning at 17,000, 25,000, 63,000, and, on the re-entry, 302,000. The routine is the Game's. The spikes are the platform's.

The re-entry is the clearest single lesson. When the series stopped asking for a mission and asked instead for a one-word declaration, IN or PLAY, it drew more comments in two days than the other thirty-seven transmissions combined. The exactness papers already explain why: a token is cheap and a task is not. Entry is where the crowd is largest; the mission is where it thins.

For the design of the next series the reading is practical. Do not measure a daily game by its launch day or its spikes; measure the floor, and expect it to fall by an order of magnitude over a season unless something re-earns it. The record shows what re-earns it: an entry post, and a transmission the feed chooses to carry.

WHAT THIS DOES NOT SHOW

- **Accumulation is uneven.** The last transmissions have had days to gather counts; the first had months. The comment floor is firmer than the view floor for the reason in the method, but the August numbers

will rise.

- **Posts per transmission vary.** Some days had one post and some five; the day totals sum whatever was posted. A day with more posts had more chances to be carried.
- **Retention is inferred, not measured.** The platform does not say which commenters came back. The floor is read as returning players; it could include new arrivals on quiet days.
- **Numbering is the Game's.** Transmission numbers were assigned by the operation and one number (013) was reused on 30 August; the reuse is counted with the original.

WHAT WE WOULD RUN NEXT

The same snapshot taken again in a month, so the August floor can be read once its posts have aged, and a per-commenter view of the series, which the archive can supply for the days it holds: how many of the people commenting on Transmission 030 had commented on 001.

IN THE RECORD

The daily series is filed on The Game as the Daily missions tab. Its first transmission followed the close of Level 2; its Chronicle entries begin with THE DAILY SIGNAL, ◇036.

METHOD NOTE

- **Source of truth:** the Instagram Graph API snapshot of 31 August 2026 (scripts/papers/analysis/ig-media-snapshot.py), grouped by transmission number by scripts/papers/analysis/missions.py. The daily-missions ledger on The Game records one post per day and is not the source here.
- **No outside baseline is cited.** The curve is compared with itself.

WHERE THE NUMBERS COME FROM

POST-LEVEL COUNTS

Views, reach, comments, likes, shares and saves per post come from the Instagram Graph API (Meta), read with the operation's own access token for its own business account. Each paper states the date of the snapshot it uses. These are the platform's counts of events, not of people: one person can view a reel twice and comment ten times, and the counts keep growing after a round closes.

COMMENT TEXT

The comment archive is the operation's own database of public comments on its own posts, pulled through the Instagram Graph API comments endpoint and stored with the comment id, username, text, like count, timestamp and whether it is a reply. Ingestion is selective: the most engaged posts were backfilled and recent posts are pulled daily, so some posts are held whole and others only in part. Every paper states how much of each post the archive holds. Every count that reads text (exact matches, categories, keyword themes) is run as a read-only script against this archive, and the scripts are in the repository beside the

paper data.

THE ROUND LEDGER

For Act II rounds, the counts filed on The Game's round record at the time each round closed. Where a paper uses a ledger figure it says so, and where the archive re-count differs from the ledger both numbers are shown.

RECEIPTS

Every comment and post shown as evidence is a native capture from the operation's own signed-in Instagram session, taken by opening the exact permalink, with the source URL, a description, the rights basis and a file hash recorded in a manifest that is checked on every build of the site. Nothing shown is recreated, retyped or edited beyond cropping to the post header and the comment.

STATISTICS

Shares carry Wilson 95 percent intervals: the range the share would land in 19 times out of 20 if the same count were taken on a fresh crowd of the same size. Differences between two shares carry a Wald interval. Where a study is cited as a baseline, its own reported figure and sample size are used.

WHAT NONE OF THIS CAN SEE

No demographics beyond what people typed. No view durations. No private messages. No comments that were deleted before the archive pulled them. No way to verify that a self-report is true. Every paper's limits section names the specific things its count cannot show.