

# Investigating the Digital Divide Affecting Nigerian Women Entrepreneurs on Instagram

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### INTRODUCTION:

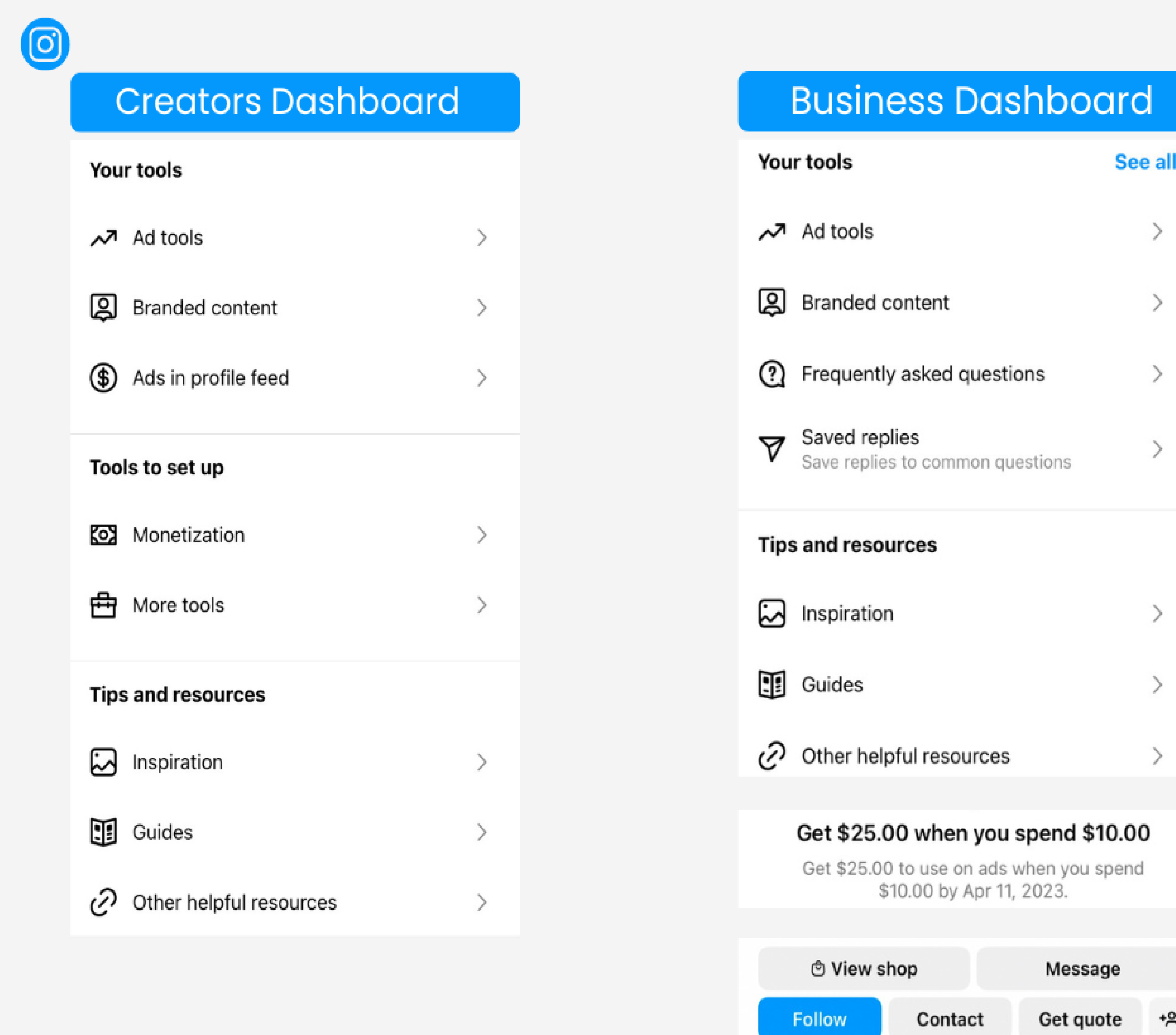
Significant studies have shown that one in four women in sub-Saharan Africa are involved in entrepreneurial activities. Despite these headways, African women face obstacles that impede their entrepreneurial growth. One of which is the digital divide that translates into social inequalities and unequal access to technology. This project investigates the impact of the digital divide on Nigerian women entrepreneurs through their use of Instagram. It employs digital ethnographic methods to understand how women entrepreneurs in Nigeria contend with patterns of technological inequalities on Instagram.

Specifically, this project aims to answer the following questions: How does the intersection of race, gender, culture, and location impact the social media presence of Nigerian women entrepreneurs on Instagram? How do algorithmic biases like content distribution, shadow banning, and other related issues affect Nigerian women entrepreneurs?

The project, which sheds light on the unique experiences of Nigerian women entrepreneurs on Instagram, contributes to the broader understanding of how technology shapes entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa. The findings also inform policies and programs aimed at reducing the digital divide and promoting gender equality in entrepreneurship.

### METHOD:

I employed ethnographic methods, including interviews with participants who walked me through the challenges they faced while using Instagram for their businesses. I collected data via surveys, interviews, and screen recordings of users' experiences on the platform.



### FINDINGS:

1. Discrepancy in User Experience between Android and iPhone Users, which speaks to both a gender and class issue.
2. Gender biases in the Instagram algorithm
3. Feature abuse resulting in online harassment and abuse of women entrepreneurs.
4. Limited access to features, such as live shopping, storefront, branded content tags, and collaborator tools.
5. Shadow banning certain businesses like lingerie.
6. Challenge with payment and transaction integration.
7. Cybersecurity issues, unexplained loss of business accounts, and lack of customer support. This has led to the emergence of third-party recovery account support services.
8. Cultural and gender stereotypes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Instagram should partner with local financial institutions to expand payment and transaction integration.
2. Address gender biases on the platform, such as conducting regular audits and increasing diverse voices while developing and testing their algorithm.
3. Provide access to inclusive design and user interface.
4. Improve their cybersecurity features and find ways to protect women entrepreneurs.
5. Implementing better security measures to promote a safe environment for women entrepreneurs in Nigeria.
6. The Nigerian government needs to invest in capacity-building initiatives for women entrepreneurs to leverage opportunities in the digital economy.

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