



DOUG THE PUG / INSTAGRAM

Doug The Pug Is Making The World A Happier Place, One Smile At A Time

BY [LILLI PETERSEN](#) | JUNE 14 2018 |

STRONG. PROUD. CONFIDENT.
SOUND FAMILIAR?

[LEARN MORE](#)



new series, [Life Behind The Likes](#), we speak with the people you know on the internet – from the people behind major Instagram accounts to the Daaaaamn Daniels of the world who went viral for one remarkable moment of their lives – to meet the people behind the screens.



Instantaneous global communication be damned, we all know what the internet was really made for: cute animal videos. If you're among the many (*many*) of us who spends at least 30 percent of our workdays watching animals be cute, then you definitely know about [Doug the Pug](#), the Nashville-based social media superstar with more than 3 million followers on Instagram alone. I talked to Doug – well OK, to his person, Leslie Mosier – to find out what it's really like to be one of the most celebrated dogs on the internet. And apparently, it's everything it's cracked up to be.

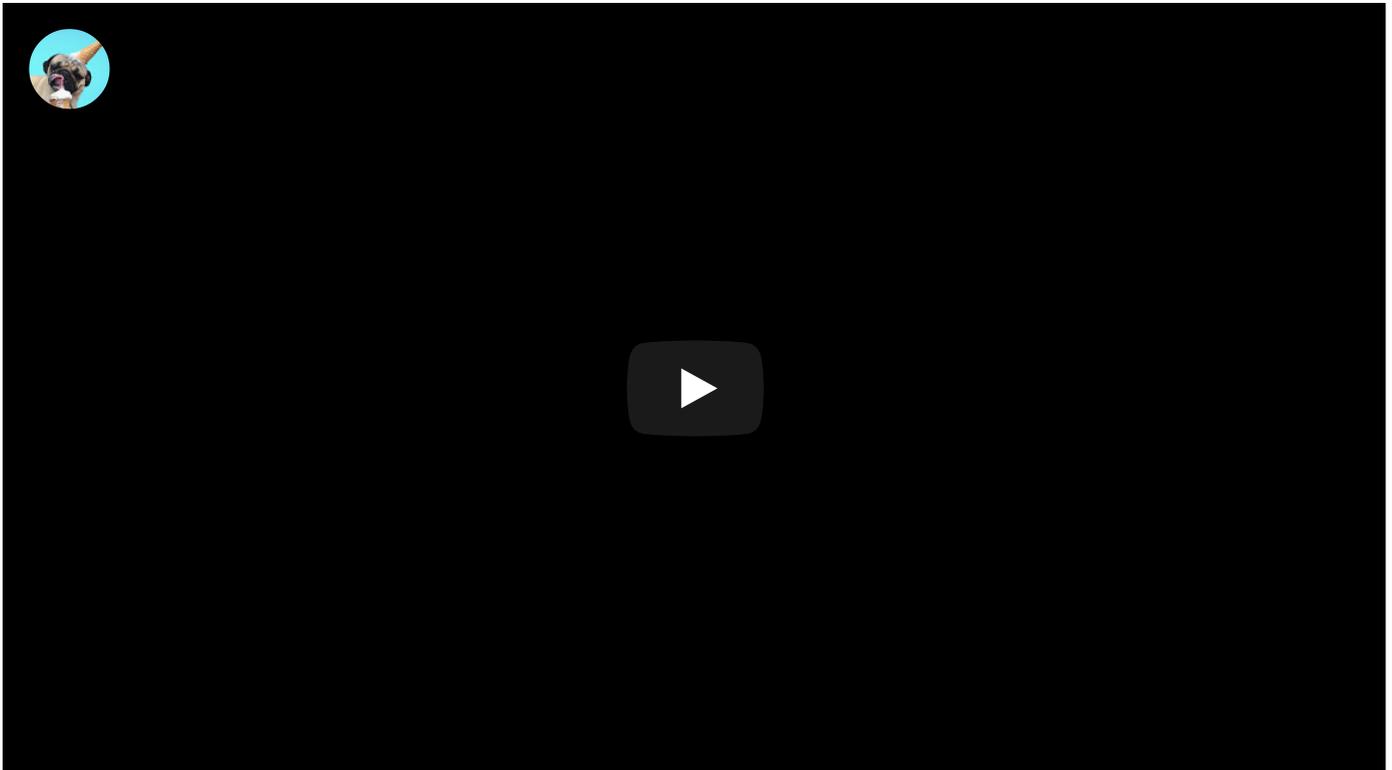


EVERYONE WHO WAS FOLLOWING ME STARTED ONLY WANTING
TO SEE DOUG.

Doug is more than just a pug: He's a *brand*. The 5-year-old pug boasts more than [12 million followers across platforms](#), which include not only Instagram, but Twitter, Facebook,

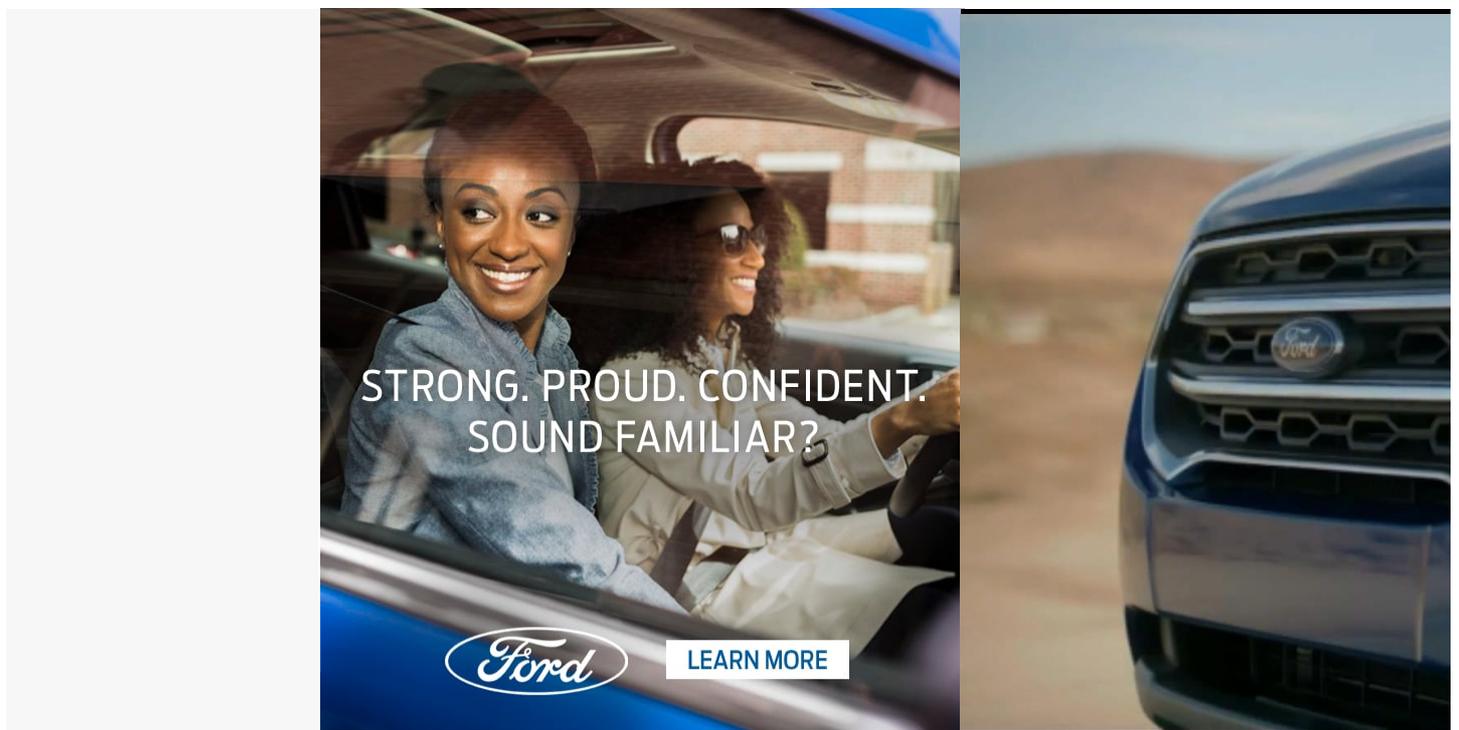


just *must* have a Doug of your own. He's a *New York Times* bestselling "author" and has a coloring book about him. Basically, this small brachycephalic dog has a level of fame that's Kardashian-esque. Watch out, Kim, Doug might be giving your selfie game a run for its money.





– but he was intended to be her new best friend, not a celebrity. "I actually didn't have any intention of making Doug his own Instagram in the beginning," Mosier says (as Doug makes adorable snarfling noises in the background of our phone call). Doug's first social media exposure was on her personal Instagram account – where he proved to be immensely popular. "It didn't take me long to realize that everyone who was following me started only wanting to see Doug," Mosier says. She built him his own account and brought her own skills as a music marketer to promote it until Doug had 100,000 followers.



Despite his fame on Instagram, it was, ironically, a March 2015 Facebook post that launched Doug as an internet celebrity. "We made a video of Doug running around a park with a pug balloon and posted that to Instagram one night, and pushed it to his Facebook ... and it went viral and got 20 million views overnight," Mosier recalls.

"The page went from 3,000 likes to over 100,000 likes in one night," she says.



Posted by **Doug The Pug**
21,160,807 Views



"Best friends know how weird you are, but still choose to be seen with you in public" -Doug
Tag your best friend below and watch the full version of this video on YouTube:

It wasn't long before Mosier made managing Doug's social media accounts her full-time job. And when I say "not long," I mean about a week.



"I actually put in my notice to quit my job about a week before he went viral, so I had no idea that was even going to happen," Mosier says — but she admits that somewhere in the back of her mind she knew something would happen with Doug. "I'm very intuitive, and I had a gut feeling that I needed to quit," she says. Although she told herself that she was leaving to start her own design business, once Doug took off, she became the momager to her viral dog.



THERE ARE DAYS WHEN I'M ON THE PHONE LITERALLY ALL DAY.

Running Doug's social media career is a full-time job. Mosier has a firm posting schedule and makes sure to upload at least two Doug pictures daily. "We've never missed a day," she says. When she and her fiancé travel abroad, she sets an alarm on her phone for the middle of the night to make sure that uploads still happen on a consistent schedule. Although Doug now has everything from a clothing line to a book under his name, Mosier still spends at least a few hours a day working on the social media platforms that made him famous. How long it takes to create a post can vary, with some of the costume posts taking several hours to assemble all the ingredients and get the shot. She notes that a recent [spoof of the popular show *Queer Eye*](#) only took 20 minutes to film, but at least an hour to edit and even more time to interact with the comments.





But considering Doug's popularity and cross-brand appeal, Instagram isn't all there is to it. "Social media, as big as it is, is really only one part. There are days when I'm on the phone literally all day, or we're traveling for an event," Mosier says. "There are some days when social media is all I do, during the day, or we're creating content all day, and then there's some days when we've pre-planned content and all I do is click 'upload.'"



IT'S CRAZY TO BE STANDING TWO FEET AWAY FROM SOMEONE THAT YOU'VE LISTENED TO SINCE YOU WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE, LIKE, 'OH, THIS IS REALLY HAPPENING!'

And then, of course, there's the work of taking care of Doug himself and making sure that he gets a normal doggy life amidst all his fame. Like any dog, he loves going for "walkies" and playtime, though Mosier says he enjoys his costumes and photoshoots, too. "He's the sweetest, happiest, funniest – he's our baby. He's so special," Mosier says. She stumbles



Doug has his own nutritionist and is on a raw food diet. "We cook Doug all of his meals," Mosier tells me. She calls herself and her fiancé Doug's "little servants" when it comes to food. Like any star, he eats a healthy diet of raw beef and vegetables – depending on what's in season – to keep him in peak form. "It's really made a difference, he looks and feels amazing and he's super healthy," Mosier says.



The hard work and training has paid off. In the years since he first went viral, Doug has become a *bona fide* (or is that *bona fido*?) celebrity, and has made appearances with celebrities including [Ed Sheeran](#), the teenage [stars of *Stranger Things*](#), [Joe Jonas](#), and [Demi Lovato](#). He's even been featured, with a name credit and everything, in Katy Perry's video for "Swish Swish" (Doug appears at about the [2:34 mark in the video](#)).

Mosier says that when Perry's team reached out about that one, she almost didn't believe it was a genuine offer. "It just didn't seem like it was real, you know?" she says. "It was just this guy saying, 'Hi, I'm a casting director for the video for "Swish Swish," we would love for Doug to be in it, it films on July 18, can he come?'" The video shoot took two days, and Mosier calls the experience "very intense."

"It's crazy to be standing two feet away from someone that you've listened to since you were in high school or college, like, 'oh, this is really happening!'" she says.



Fame has had a weird effect on Mosier's little family. Doug gets recognized everywhere they go, from the supermarket to the airport. "We'll be walking through the airport, and one person will recognize him and be taking a photo of him, and I'll turn around and there's a whole crowd of people taking photos of the person taking a photo with Doug, and waiting for their turn," she says. "You turn around and you're like, 'oh my gosh, what's happening?'"



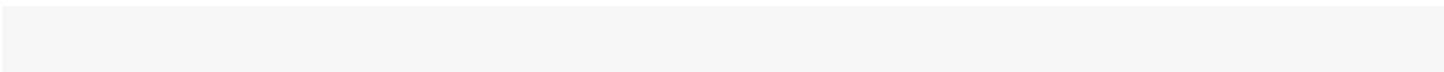
WHATEVER YOU CAN DO TO BE A LIGHT IN SOMEONE'S DAY, IT
REALLY DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

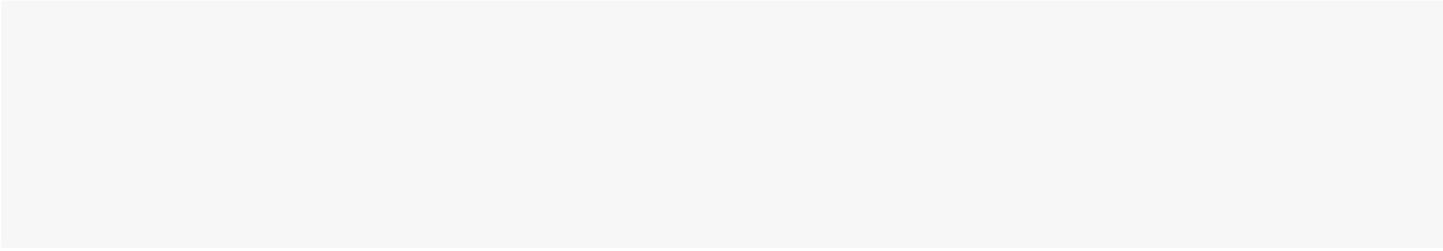
But with big power comes big responsibility, even for a very little dog. Mosier was inspired to use Doug's fame to help change the world by launching the Doug The Pug Foundation to raise money to fund childhood cancer research. Although the foundation is still in the works, Mosier intends to partner with St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital to work on the issue. "I knew that when we started a foundation that's what I really wanted to give back to," she says. Every few months, Doug visits sick children at the Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in Nashville to try to bring some smiles to the kids fighting major illnesses. "He's so incredible with the kids, and it just makes their whole day," Mosier says. She brings Doug plushies, as well as the real Doug, for the kids.



Because at the end of the day, that's what Doug the Pug is all about – bringing smiles to people's faces. "There's so much bad news, but whatever you can do to be a light in someone's day, it really does make a difference," Mosier says. "Doug has taught me that." She hopes that Doug's brand of happy smiles will become his legacy.

And there's at least one person who's guaranteed a smile. "My job is to hang out with Doug all day every day and give him the happiest life possible," Mosier says. "It just shows you that in today's day and age, literally anything is possible if you want to create it."





Caroline Wurtzel / Elite Daily