



AdSpark

CHRISTMAS
IN
OUR
HEARTS

Celebrating the
Filipino's Favorite Fiesta
in the Digital Age

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2019. The dawn of 5G. 76M people with internet access. A mobile-first mindset. 10/10, 11/11, 12/12 sales. Cashless modes of payment. Spotify playlists. And almost any food you want right at your doorstep.

As the Philippines marches onward in the digital age, how have the countless changes in the Filipino's way of life altered how they celebrate their favorite time of the year?

AdSpark found that no matter how they celebrate, and in the digital age or any other, the Filipinos will always have a special place for Christmas in their hearts.



IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS...

How does Christmas come around? Every Filipino knows it begins in September, but what are the other telltale signs? If before, it was your neighbor putting on their decor, what does the leadup to Christmas look like digitally?

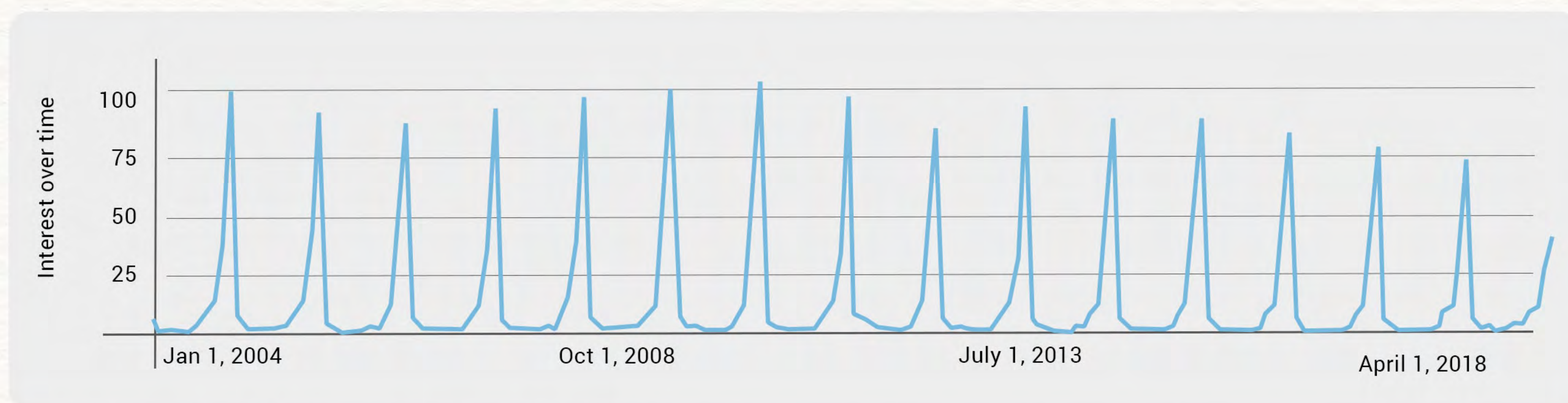
The Philippines remains one of the largest audiences for Christmas, ranking **7th in Google Search Trends** for the keyword "Christmas" and amassing **nearly 1.4M mentions in a day during Christmas 2018**.

In fact, the Philippines' months-long Christmas season -- starting in September and ending around the first week of January -- is a source of pride for many Filipinos.

But Filipinos aren't shy about talking about or reading up about Christmas outside of the -ber months, either. Scans show that **Christmas is being mentioned by Filipinos as early as February**, via a #manilaencounters tweet -- that's just how ingrained Christmas is in our culture.



Furthermore, content consumption reveals **continued interest in Christmas regardless of the month or season**, even outside of -ber months. In spite of this, a waning heed to the season is apparent in Filipinos over time -- at least in search trends.



Philippine interest in "Christmas" from 2004 - present

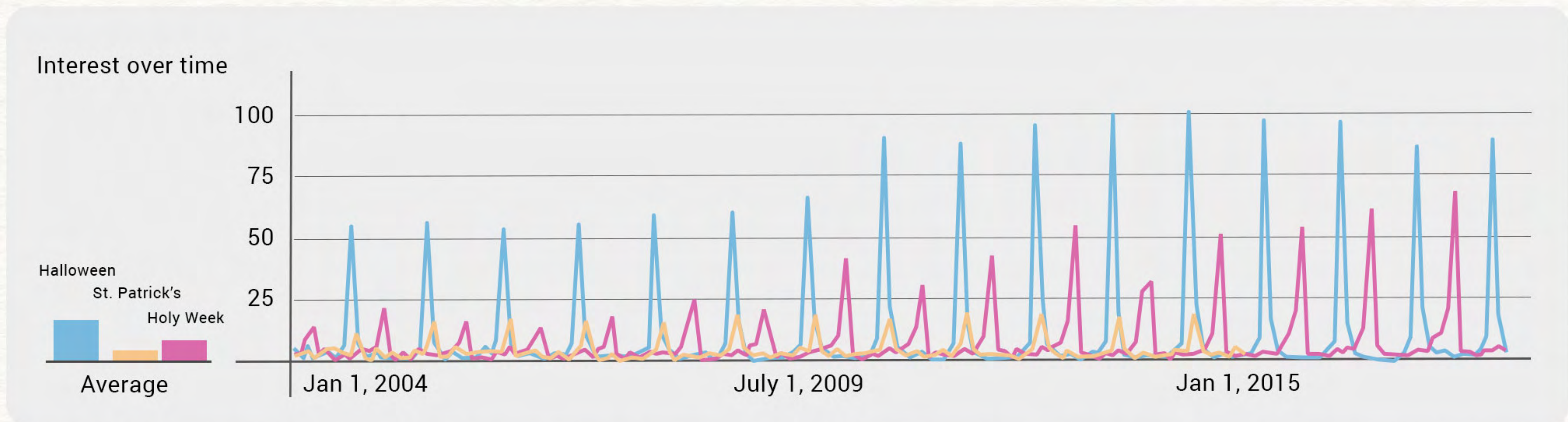
While some may suggest that this decrease in interest is due to the increasingly consumerist side of Christmas, content consumption suggests that **people are more concerned about upholding Christmas traditions**, meaning there is no need to consume or create any more content about Christmas -- they already know what they want to do.



Sample content consumed by Filipinos surrounding "Christmas" during May - November

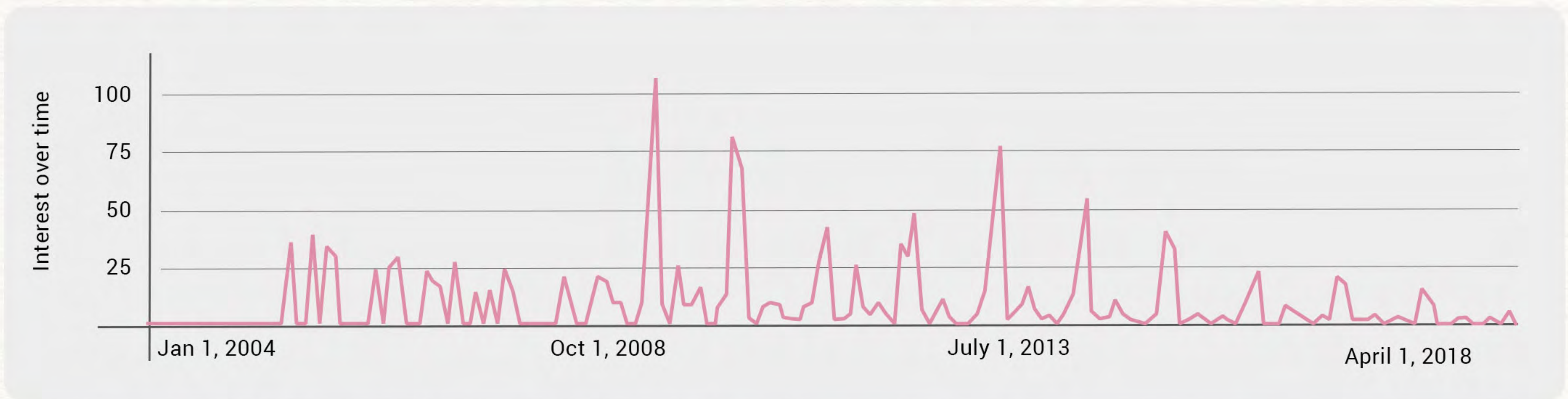
Indeed, the spirit of Christmas is not yet lost on us Filipinos -- it's just taking on other forms, such as **winning the Miss Universe crown for your country**, or **reuniting estranged celebrity families**.

It's also possible that the spirit of celebration has spread throughout **other holidays** such as Halloween, Holy Week, and Thanksgiving, all of which **have seen an increase in interest over the past few years**. Perhaps more than they love Christmas, Filipinos just really love any reason to see their loved ones and celebrate regardless of the occasion.



Philippine interest in "Halloween," "Saint Patrick's Day," "Thanksgiving," and "Holy Week" from 2004 - present

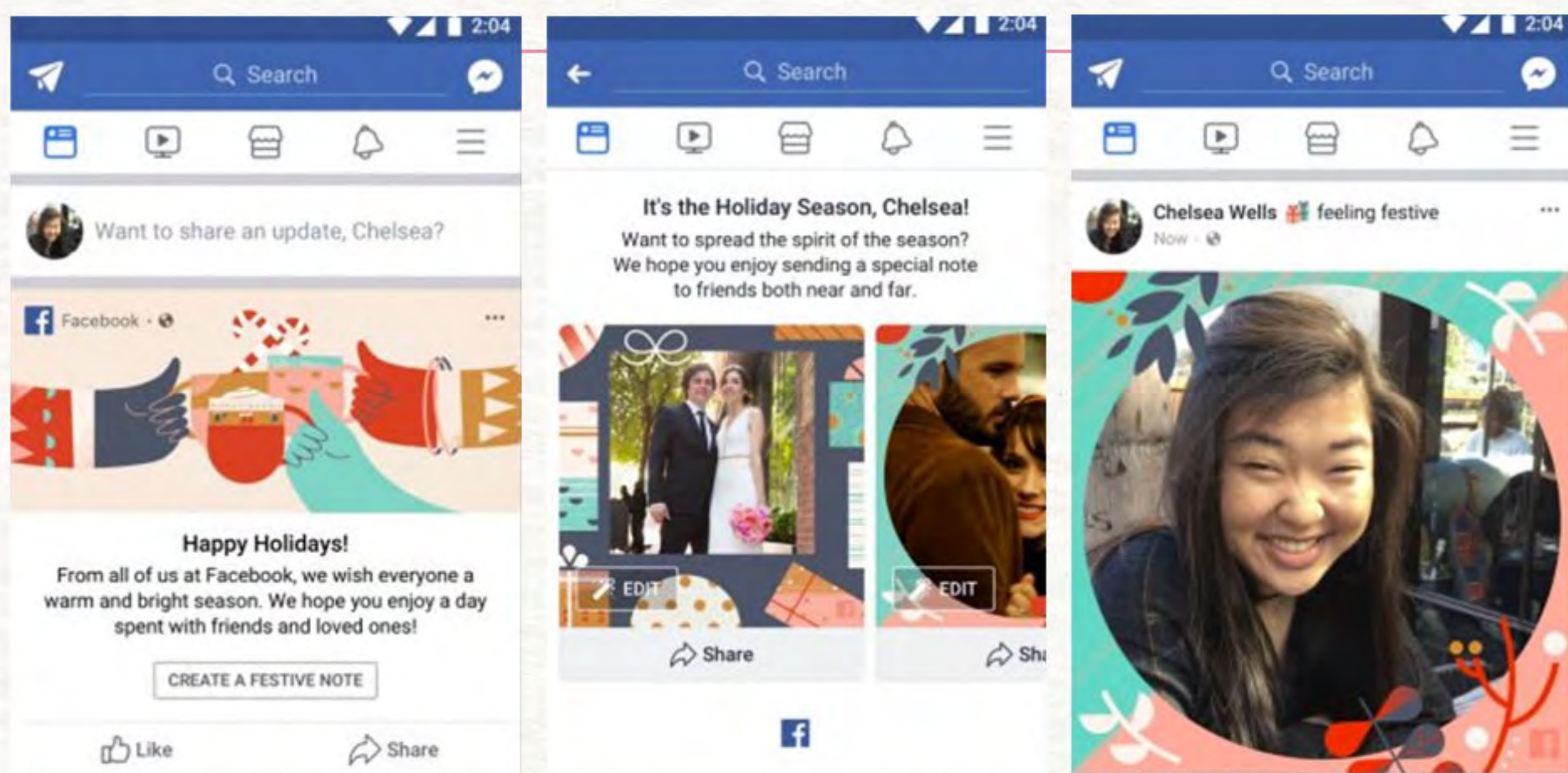
After all -- how else would you say Merry Christmas than with a Facebook post or a thoughtful gift? Or by sharing the anticipated yearly ABS-CBN Station ID?



Philippine interest in "ABS-CBN Station ID" from 2004 - present

Here's who else is winning Christmas online:

Facebook made holiday greetings easier and more personal by allowing its users to create a customized Christmas note to share with your loved ones as soon as you open the Facebook app during holiday season.



Year on year, **UNICEF** launches Basket of Hope, "an online campaign to give meaningful gifts this holiday season to help children in need." With just a few clicks of a button, Filipinos can donate P500, which goes to supplies for those in need.



Three years ago, **Jollibee** raised the bar for long-form video with #KwentongJollibee, which emphasized the fast food giant's role in every moment -- from Valentine's to heartbreak. In 2017, Jollibee tugged at our heartstrings once again with Pamasko, about an OFW couple and their Philippine-based child.





I DON'T WANT A LOT FOR CHRISTMAS...

Filipinos love Christmas because it allows them to express their love for family and friends. That's why even if traffic is at standstill levels, and even if budgeting becomes a challenge, they will go shopping for gifts. But how does the wishlist look like today? Now that they can express to the world what they feel about the gifts they receive and give, what do they say?

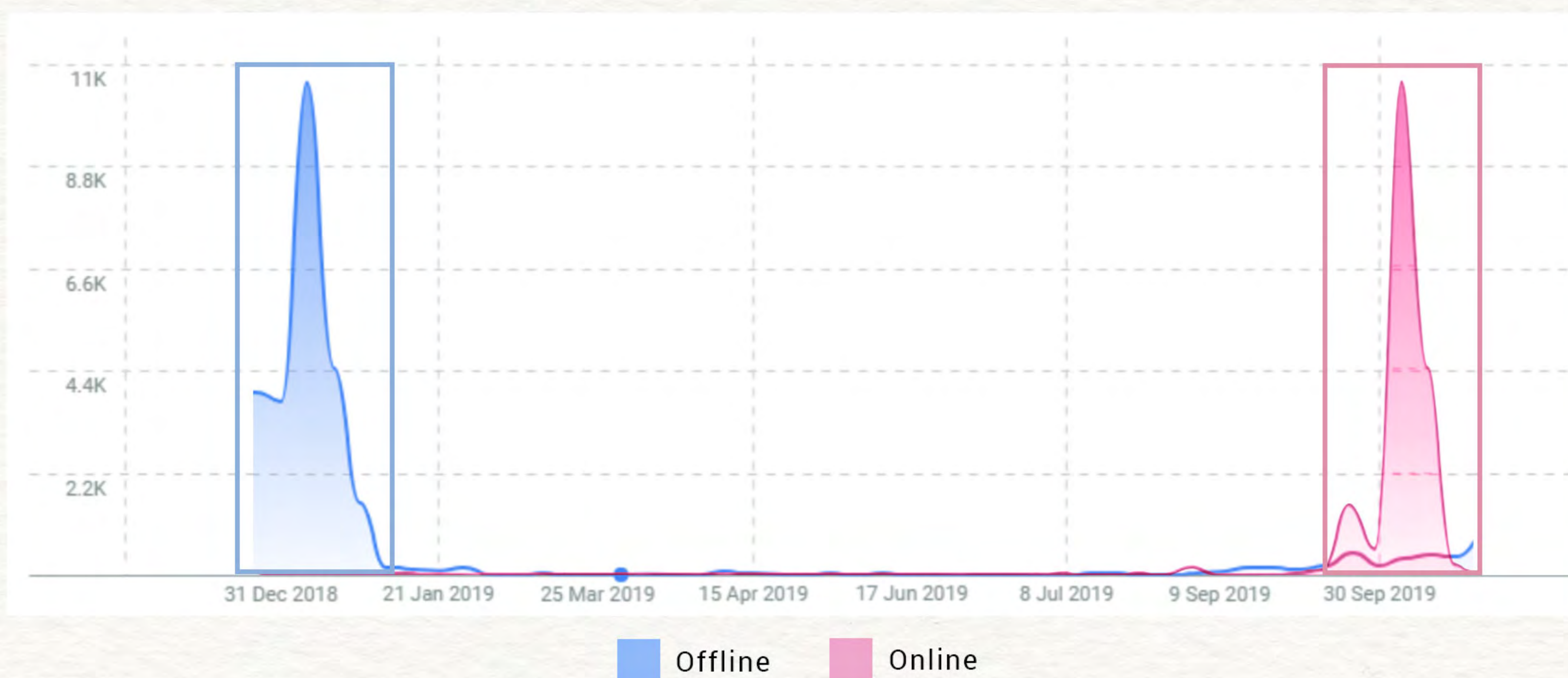
Christmas is a time for traditions, like Noche Buena or Simbang Gabi. But it's also a time for gifting, with relatively big-ticket items such as shoes and gadgets (phones, cameras), or even just money getting the most mentions.



Topics or keywords commonly mentioned alongside ("Christmas" OR "Pasko" OR "Xmas" OR "X-mas") AND ("gusto ko" OR "i want" OR "wish ko" OR "wishlist ko" OR "wish list ko" OR "my wishlist" OR "my wish list" OR "my wish" OR "sana bigyan ako" OR "sana bilhan ako" OR "sana may magbigay")

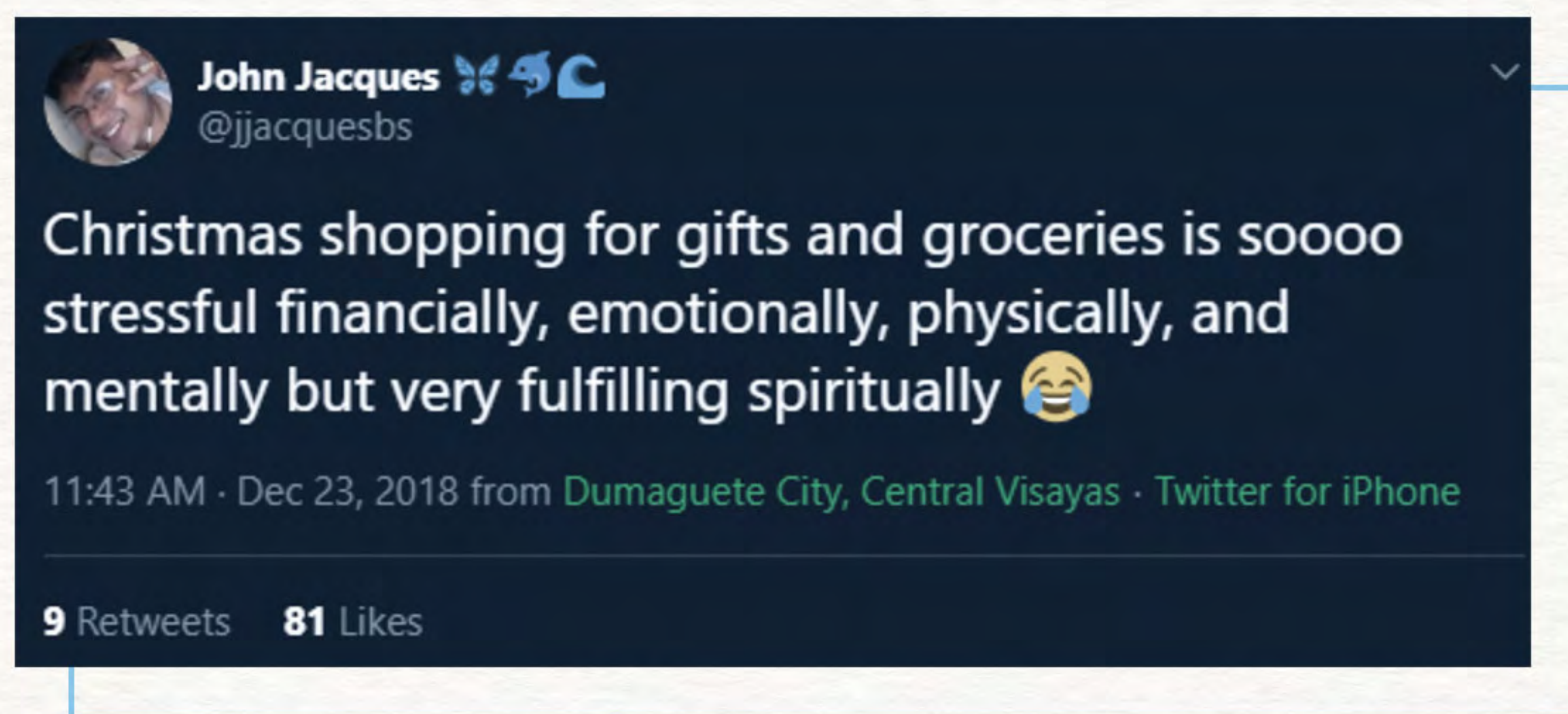
And it's not just the talking and the reading that's happening online -- according to Facebook, more and more Filipinos are discovering and buying products online, with 85% of online Filipinos using the internet to browse for gift inspiration and 73% finding mobile shopping easier in recent years.

Online chatter indicates the same -- **interest in offline shopping is significantly lower this time of the year than it was last year**, while the inverse is true for online shopping, due in part to the monthly Shopee and Lazada sales.



Philippine mentions surrounding shopping (online and offline)

But although online shopping gives the ease and accessibility of not joining the Christmas rush, Filipinos still find that there's still an important experience to be had through offline Christmas shopping.





HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING...

What would the Pinoy Christmas be without music? This music-loving culture reaches peak expression during this season with several remixes of traditional carols, Station ID songs, and of course Jose Mari Chan. We might be getting close to constructing the Pambansang Playlist.

A Pinoy Christmas won't be complete without music, whether it be through Jose Mari Chan's smooth baritone vocals, or the children outside your gates singing, "Sa aming bahay..." It's just one of those things Filipinos look forward to during the Christmas season.



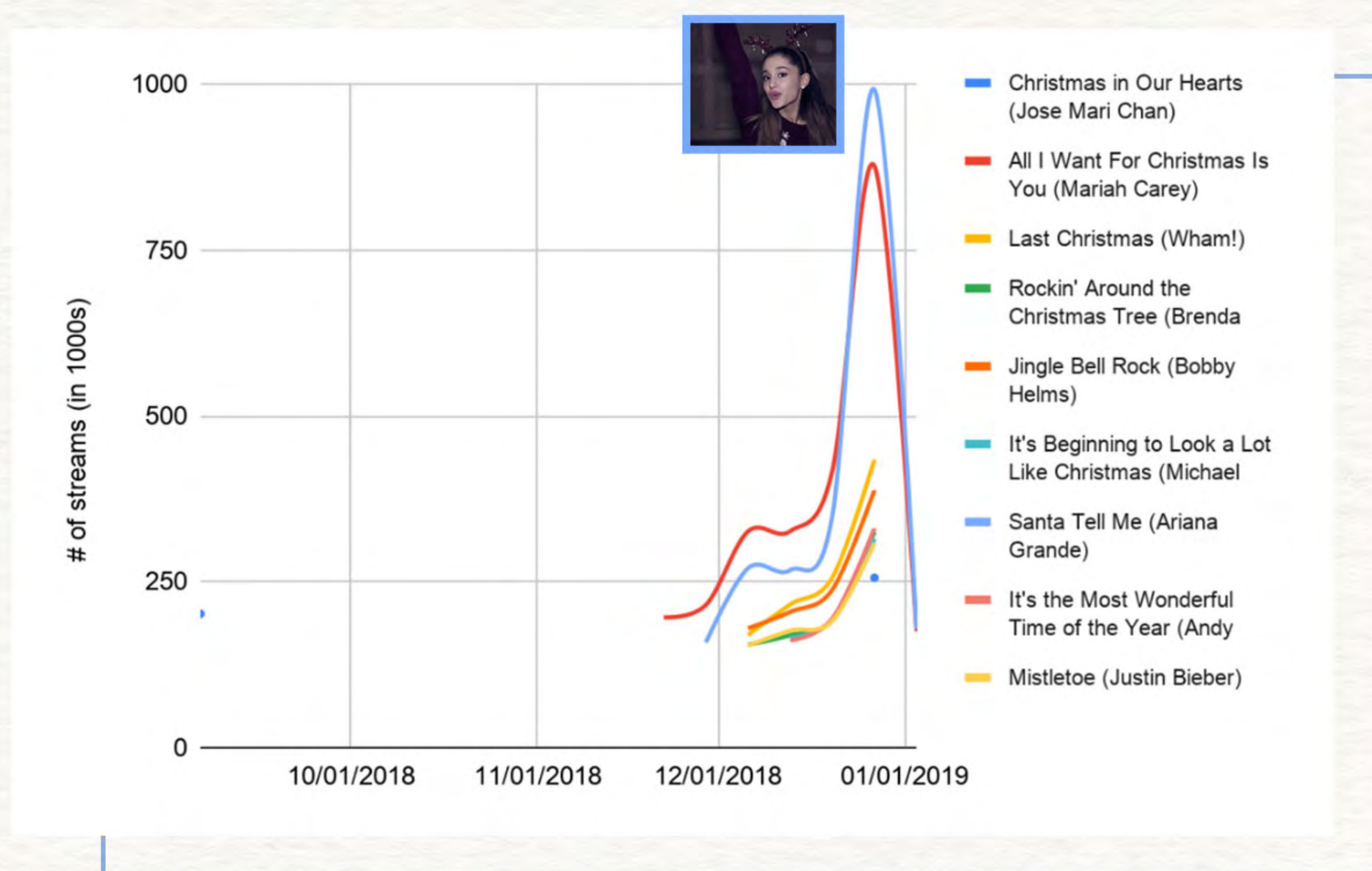
In fact, season-themed music tops the content trend around Christmas, and consumption kicks off as early as April and June.

And our very own Santa Claus himself, **Jose Mari Chan**, heralds the arrival of the season, and **has the only Christmas-themed song to enter the Top 200 streamed songs on Spotify as early as September** in 2018. No wonder internet users make memes about his return to the airwaves at the start of -ber months.



But Christmas isn't complete without a Christmas playlist, with a mix of classic songs like "Jingle Bells," or more contemporary ones like Wham!'s "Last Christmas." But who can forget -- or beat -- Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas is You?"

In fact, while Santa Claus is perhaps one of the most salient symbols of Christmas, up there with Christmas trees and parols, **Mariah Carey comes a close second to Saint Nick**. But a new challenger is set to arise, with **Ariana Grande's "Santa Tell Me" outperforming "All I Want For Christmas Is You"** on Christmas week 2018, and amassing double the streams last year versus 2017.



Spotify Charts Top 200 streamed songs from September - December 2018.

Classics are mostly out, and contemporary covers of classic songs (such as Michael Buble's "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas") are in -- but so are new classics like Justin Bieber's "Mistletoe", or even favorite local celebrities' Christmas covers.



Who really knows what the future holds for Christmas in the Philippines? Nobody, really, but one thing's for certain -- with the sustained interest in Pinoy Christmas traditions, the undying love for the offline shopping experience, and the growing number of holiday music streams -- the spirit of Christmas is still very much alive and well. In the words of APO Hiking Society, "Tuloy na tuloy pa rin ang Pasko!"

Merry Christmas to all,
And see you next year!

From AdSpark

