

# Social Media Intelligence

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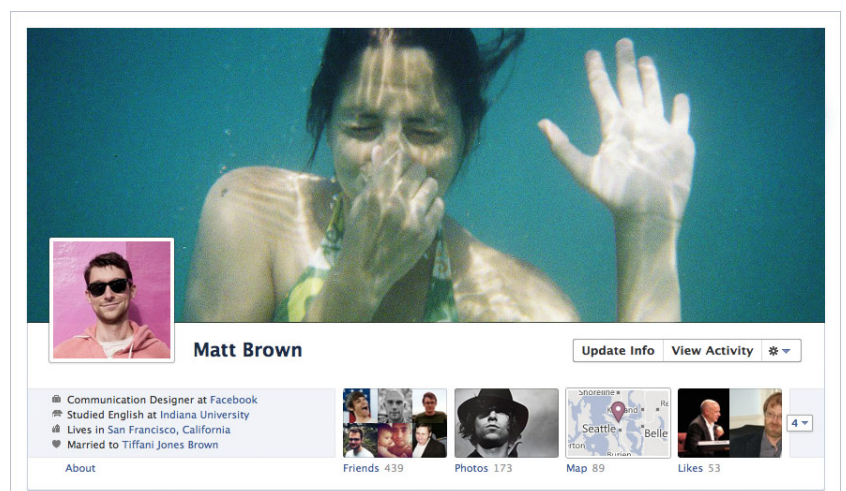
## Facebook changes – Timeline, Open Graph and the new News Feed

On Thursday 22nd September, Facebook announced some substantial changes to its platform, affecting both its users and the brands currently marketing through the social network. Punch has outlined the changes and potential consequences...

### What has changed?

**Facebook users' feeds will be replaced by a new "Timeline" on September 30<sup>th</sup>** – The new timeline will change Facebook users' feeds, currently visible on profiles, into a chronological "story" or "scrapbook" of that user's life.

**Facebook "gestures"** – Developers will now be able to create their own versions of the "like" button, in accordance with activities performed by the user within an app (e.g. reading, watching, needing, wanting etc), which may go a long way towards encouraging engagement.



**Changes to the news feed** – The weighting of content is now more important – more relevant/important content will appear within the top/recent news feeds, whereas less relevant/important content will appear in a rolling "ticker", located in the top right corner of each users' home page.

**Content** – Users now have more control over what they see in feeds – there are new options to remove the content that is considered as "top news", which Facebook will take into consideration when deducing what to place in that user's top news moving forwards.

**Apps and Open Graph** – Facebook has launched a new version of open graph that will allow its users to share whatever they are doing without overwhelming their friends.

There will be one permissions process right at the start of using applications, and sharing after that will be ongoing depending on the application's settings. The information shared through the user will be subject to the news feed changes above, with smaller actions being shown in the ticker and bigger actions in the news feed.

Also, there will be a renewed focus on the role of applications in Facebook, in line with the changes in terminology and addition of different actions. Applications that are part of a user's everyday activities will be integrated seamlessly into each Facebook user's timeline, making it easier for them to share that activity.



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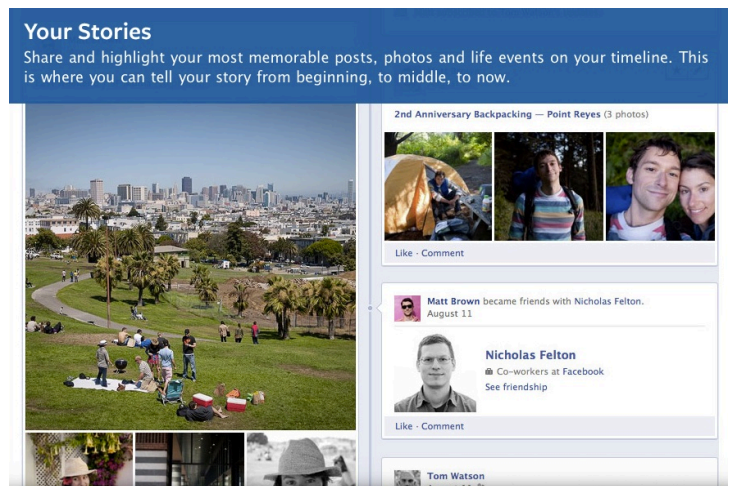
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### How does this affect brands?

**Reach** - In line with the changes to the news feed, there will be a continued requirement to optimise content for users, to ensure that content maintains its relevancy and achieves maximum reach vs the EdgeRank algorithm.

**Content** – The mantra that “content is king” is becoming increasingly relevant across Facebook. Facebook’s changes look set to alter the value of a ‘Like’ – brands must now place emphasis on high quality and relevant content to get the most from Facebook, as a means of generating more engagement. Liking branded content in Facebook will no longer generate a wall post (visible on user walls and in newsfeeds), but engagement will. In addition, a user doesn’t need to have “liked” a page in order to engage with a brand’s content anymore – meaning that brands must ensure that their content is of the quality that incentivises a user to interact and engage with content unprompted and thus subscribe to that content on a regular basis.



**Lifestyle** - As the lifestyle of users is represented more and more through Facebook, brands must now try and find relevancy within those lifestyles in order to achieve heightened visibility on Facebook. Since consumer activities will be much more integrated into their timelines, brands have an opportunity to achieve more visibility through becoming part of those activities – and a greater part of users lives.

### What do we do next?

**Quality of content** – in order to ensure any visitors to the page who engage with content click the “like” button to opt into receiving branded content, brands must ensure that all of the content on the Facebook wall is of the highest quality and is still optimised as much as possible for EdgeRank. Brands must reduce the risk of users removing brand Facebook posts from their news feeds by being careful not to push messages and other topics of content that don’t achieve very much engagement at too high a frequency (i.e. spam). Failure to do so could result in the audience decreasing through lack of interest. Brands should recognize the changes to the way that Facebook operates and become more personal to the users in order to fit in with the “story” that makes up their timeline. This could be done in the following ways:

- The creation of applications that aim to become part of the user’s lifestyle and thus maintain a brand presence for that individual
- Greater social content personalization through social CRM – delivering the most relevant content to the correct users

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