

# Business

ATHENS BANNER-HERALD



Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks as he prepares for the Facebook Communities Summit in Chicago. Facebook is once again tweaking the formula it uses to decide what people see in their news feed to focus more on personal connections and take the spotlight off brands and news articles. Associated Press

## 4 things to know about Facebook's new friend-based algorithm plan

**Sara Freeland**  
University of Georgia

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg announced recently that the behemoth social media platform will change its algorithm to promote posts from friends and family over public content.

With the company's recent earnings announcement, the University of Georgia asked two faculty experts what these changes mean and how this change could affect Facebook's bottom line.

Joe Phua is an associate professor in the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. His research examines the impact of new and emerging communication technologies, including social media.

Dave Chatterjee is an associate professor at the Terry College of Business. He is a business strategist and specializes in technology management.

### FACEBOOK'S NEW CHANGES ARE GOOD FOR THEIR BOTTOM LINE

Chatterjee: "The decision to the

change the Facebook news feed algorithm to prioritize friends and family content is consistent with the fundamental mission and goal of Facebook. If this change is able to enhance quality of time spent on Facebook it will attract more loyal users to Facebook and advertisers will find value in pitching to a larger audience. In summary, the changes bode well for Facebook's bottom line."

### BUSINESSES AND BRANDS WILL HAVE TO RE-ESTABLISH THEIR PRESENCE

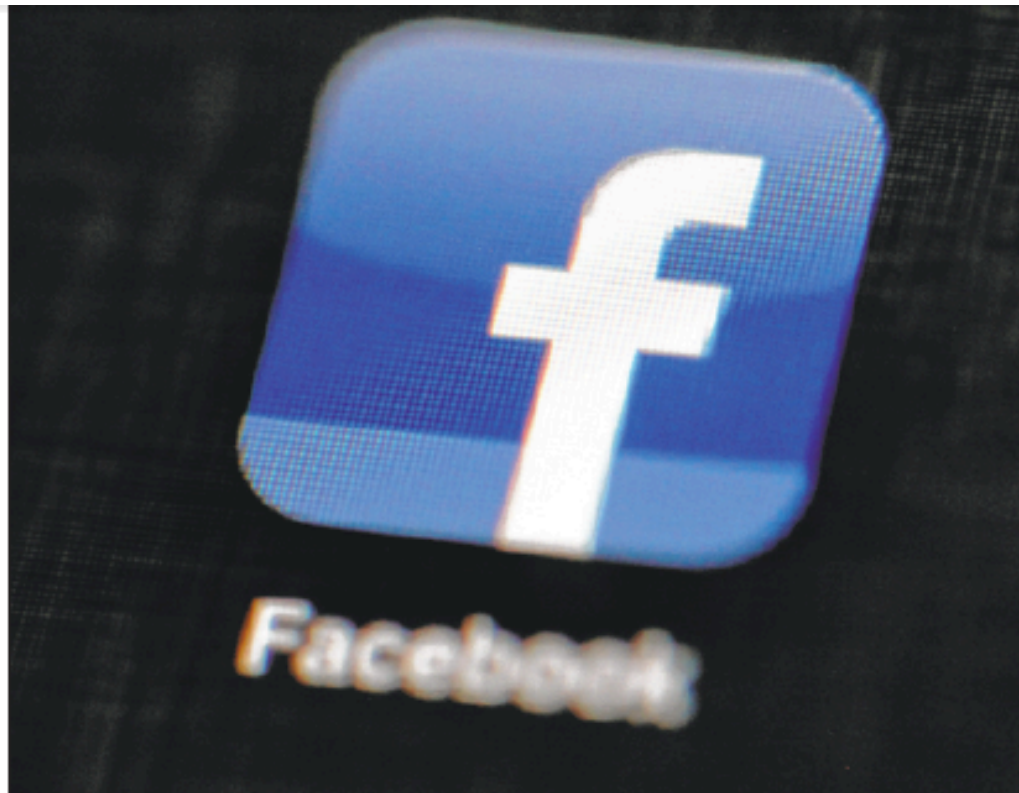
Phua: "It will now become harder for businesses and brands to appear at the top of newsfeeds unless individual Facebook users specifically allow them to appear there through liking or opting-in to their posts. As such, businesses will have to become more proactive in coming up with interesting, engaging content on their posts. This may also be a strategy by Facebook to sell more paid ads with advanced audience targeting capabilities to businesses."

Chatterjee: "This is a great opportunity for businesses to come up with creative and innovative ways to establish a presence without being a nuisance and coming in the way of people trying to build and enjoy quality relationships. Facebook is leveraging machine-learning capabilities to filter out various forms of engagement baiting - vote baiting, react baiting, share baiting, tag baiting, and comment baiting - and spammy business ads."

### FACEBOOK HAS STAYING POWER, BUT IT MIGHT NOT BE THE ONLY PLATFORM FOR USERS

Phua: "I believe it is unhealthy to rely too much on one particular site for one's news and information, especially if all our friends and family share our own beliefs on important social and political issues, which means we are essentially living in a news bubble whereby everything we read is already aligned with our own beliefs."

**FACEBOOK** continues on C5



File/Associated Press

Amino Apps, Raftr, Lego Life and Musical.ly are some examples of social media platforms that could take eyeballs away from Facebook.

## FACEBOOK

Continued from C4

"I think it will be prudent to use more than one method of social communication online. A combination of two or more social media sites, along with other online and also offline activities, will help someone have a more balanced life. It might also be good to detox from social media altogether once in a while if one finds that he or she is spending too much time online or is becoming addicted to a particular site or activity."

Chatterjee: "The integration with Instagram and Whatsapp gives Facebook greater staying power. However, with many social networking options coming available, the heavy reliance on Facebook could be short-lived. So, Zuckerberg's efforts to enhance Facebook user experience make perfect sense."

### AUGMENTED SOCIAL MEDIA OR NICHE SOCIAL MEDIA MAY BE NEXT BIG THING

Phua: "I believe the next big thing will

be an interface or series of interfaces that allows users to combine many of the features of currently popular social media sites and mobile apps into a more interactive and immersive package that includes live streaming, AR/VR experiences, gaming, AI/machine learning, online e-commerce, entertainment programming, streaming music, news, and intelligent personal assistants. It is possible a multi-faceted interface like that will be offered through Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, or AT&T in the future or by startups we haven't heard of yet."

Chatterjee: "While Facebook has early mover advantage, there are several up-and-coming alternative social media platforms that could take eyeballs away — Amino Apps, Raftr, Lego Life and Musical.ly are some examples.

"The ability to connect seamlessly, post all types of content easily, integrate with other networking platforms, have an enjoyable interaction experience, and maintain privacy are some key factors for the long-term sustainability of a social media platform."