

Facebook opens core to outside developers

April 27 2009, by Glenn Chapman



The logo of social networking website 'Facebook' is displayed on a computer screen. Facebook cleared the way for outside developers to craft software applications that do clever, creative or useful things with data streamed as updates at the social-networking service.

Facebook on Monday cleared the way for outside developers to craft software applications that do clever, creative or useful things with data streamed as updates at the social-networking service.

A new Open Stream API allows third-party developers to design programs providing people innovative ways to interact with pictures, videos, text or other digitized information shared at Facebook.

"We are excited to announce an unprecedented step toward greater openness through Facebook Platform," Ray He wrote in an official Facebook blog posting.

"For the first time, we're opening the core Facebook product experience -- the stream."

New application programming interfaces (APIs) provide developers direct access to data streamed as updates at the world's most popular online social-networking service.

"With these new methods, you can access the stream on behalf of a user and then filter, remix, and display the stream back to that user however you choose, wherever you choose, in the manner most relevant," He wrote.

Streams on Facebook home pages are designed to enable users to stay perpetually informed of what is happening with friends and in the news.

Third-party developers can now offer Facebook users [applications](#) that present or organize streamed updates as feeds to other websites and let videos or other data be posted back to the social-networking community.

"The stream tells you what is going on in the world around you in real time, and that is something that happened only on the home page," said Facebook senior platform manager Dave Morin.

"Now, third-party developers can make desktop applications on Macintosh or Windows, or [mobile applications](#) ... We think of it as expanding the Facebook experience to other websites."

Facebook Open Stream is available to any developer that wants to give it a try, according to Morin.

For example, Internet giant Google is free to create a mini-application that would let Facebook members stream updates from the social-networking website to iGoogle home pages.

Video blogging service Seesmic founded in California by French entrepreneur Loic Le Meur worked with Facebook as a "beta partner" for the Monday unveiling. Facebook updates can now stream in real time to Seesmic Desktop pages.

"It is the first time ever they can get the whole of Facebook experience outside of Facebook, not just text status updates," Le Meur said of what the change offers members of the social-networking community.

To safeguard privacy, [Facebook](#) is requiring outside applications to get permission from users before getting access to update streams.

No streamed information can be captured or stored by third-party applications, according to Morin.

"We want the user to be in full control," Morin said. "They could have a choice to consume their stream on iGoogle, Seesmic, any mobile device ... but everyone has to abide by the same terms of use we've always had in place."

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Citation: Facebook opens core to outside developers (2009, April 27) retrieved 17 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-04-facebook-core.html>

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