

Poked: The difference between Facebook's News Feed and Live Feed

November 11 2009, By Bridget Carey and Niala Boodhoo



First off, I'd like to thank Facebook for confusing its users yet again with a new feature that is hard to decipher and makes users grumpy. It really makes my job of picking a column topic so easy when they baffle folks with a new layout every couple months.

Recently, [Facebook](#) introduced a new home page that shows users a "News Feed" and a "[Live Feed](#)." Before, it used to be just one big feed that showed the updates of all your friends and fan pages.

Now, your News Feed is put together by a Facebook formula that calculates what it thinks you would like to see. It will include posts that got a lot of comments and how likely you are to interact with that post.

That means your News Feed can show things that are several days old up

at the top if it's really popular -- it's not in chronological order. It also means you're not seeing every friend's update.

That's where Live Feed comes in. Live Feed is everything happening right now, in real time ... well, almost everything.

Here's how Facebook spokeswoman Meredith Chin described it to me: "Live Feed defaults to showing you updates from your top 250 friends and connections (including Pages). We algorithmically determine those 250 based on who and what you interact with most frequently."

I just became a fan of the Florida Marlins page, but the updates are not showing on my Live Feed because Facebook doesn't have a history of me interacting with that page.

So basically you have to teach Facebook what you like by throwing a few comments or hit "like" on posts on new pages you follow.

I have nearly 600 "friends," I'm a fan of 94 pages and a member of 88 groups. There's no way I'll be seeing every update on my feed.

If you want to see all of your Fan Pages, use the left hand navigation menu of your home page to click on the Pages filter -- then you'll see every update.

And for those of you out there running a fan page, keep in mind that there's a chance your posts won't be seen on every fan's feed.

For a really important post that you want everyone to see, it might be good to send out an Update that will show up in every fan's message inbox. But don't abuse your power! You'll quickly annoy your fans if you send messages too often. Use it sparingly and only for big news items.

You can't do much to change your Live Feed, but if you click the "Edit Options" link on the bottom of the page, you can change what people or groups are hidden from your News Feed.

The two sets of update feeds were created to help the nonobsessed Facebook user. Niala and I check our Facebook multiple times a day, so the [News Feed](#) is pointless and stale for us. But it would be helpful for someone who only checks Facebook once every few days, so they don't feel like they're missing out on something.

For the addicted user, it's probably best to just leave it showing the Live Feed, since it's the most accurate real-time list of updates, even if it isn't showing everything.

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