Facebook revamps comments platform for websites

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The Palo Alto, California, social networking giant unveiled an updated Comments Box plug-in on Tuesday that websites can use to replace the system they currently use to display comments from readers.

Online publishers have long debated how to bring a measure of civility to their comments forums, which are frequently populated by insults and off-topic ramblings by readers cloaked in anonymity.

Facebook insists that its more than 500 million members use real names

and its comments platform shows the Facebook profile picture and name of a reader making a comment.

A user of the Facebook comments platform on a particular website has the option of posting a comment to the site alone.

Or they can choose to have the comment also posted on their Facebook page, which means it will also appear in the News Feed of their Facebook friends with a link to the article being commented on.

Among the websites testing Facebook's updated Comments Box tool is TechCrunch, which said the platform may spell "bad news for you trolls and spammers" who haunt the comments section of the popular technology blog.

Facebook said the Comments Box platform includes moderation tools that allow administrators of a website to blacklist certain words or ban offensive users.

Comments from a user's Facebook friends are highlighted in the comments discussion thread and comments considered spam will be hidden from view.

Users can also serve as moderators by clicking a box against a comment viewed as spam or abusive.

Facebook said readers who don't have Facebook accounts or are not logged into Facebook can comment using other accounts to be announced soon.

Facebook said websites interested in using the revamped Comments Box platform can integrate it into their site with one line of code.

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