

Facebook 'gifts' launch, users can send presents

September 27 2012, by Barbara Ortutay



This undated image provided by Facebook shows a new service called Gifts which, as its name suggests, lets users send chocolate, coffee, socks and other real-life presents to one another. Facebook Gifts will be available Thursday, Sept. 27, 2012, to a subset of users in the U.S. and will roll out to more over the coming months as people begin to send gifts to each other. (AP Photo/Facebook)

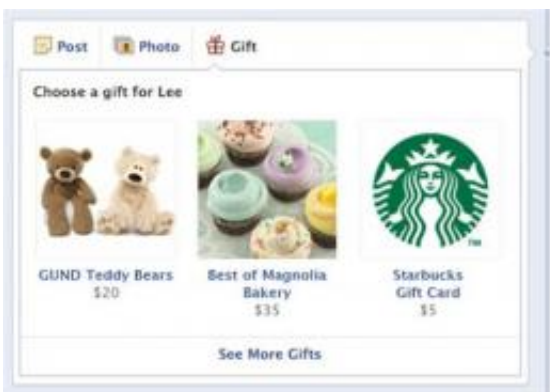
Facebook is rolling out a service called Gifts which, as its name suggests, lets users send chocolate, coffee, socks and other real-life presents to one another.

Facebook Gifts launched Thursday to a subset of users in the U.S. and will roll out to more over the coming months as people begin to send

gifts to each other.

Users will be able to click on a "gifts" icon on their Facebook friends' pages on Facebook's website or on Android mobile phones. (iPhone and iPad versions are coming soon.)

The icon will also show up on the right side of users' Facebook pages with the notifications for friends' birthdays, weddings and other life events. For example, if your friend's birthday is coming up in two days, you'll now see a "give her a gift" link and the gift icon next to her name and photo.

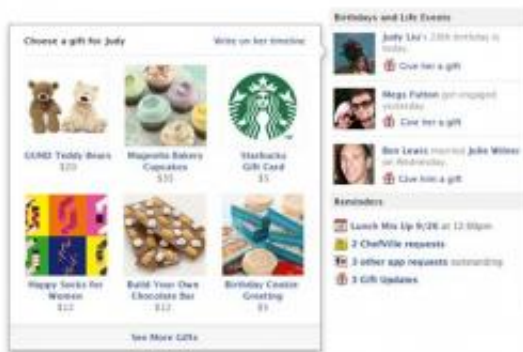


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Clicking the icon will display presents users can buy, such as a Starbucks gift card, cupcakes or a teddy bear.

The recipient will be notified through Facebook to enter a shipping

address for the presents. In some cases, they'll be able to select their own cupcake flavors or size and style of socks. They can also exchange gifts for other items if they don't like chocolate or don't wear socks.



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The move represents Facebook Inc.'s first real foray into e-commerce. The company will take an unspecified cut from each item sold. On Thursday, possible gifts included gourmet ice cream, Andy Warhol prints, flowers, organic dog toys and spa packages.

Facebook Gifts is the result of Facebook's acquisition of Karma, a 16-person startup based in San Francisco. Facebook bought the company on May 18, the day of its rocky initial public offering. Karma's mobile app let people send gifts to their friends on the go.



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Lee Linden, the former head of Karma, is now head product manager for Facebook Gifts, which he says incorporates "the heart and soul of the Karma experience."

"We think gifting is a form of communication," he said.

More information: Online: www.facebook.com/about/gifts

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