

# Is Facebook actually making communication about products and brands more interesting?

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Communication channels such as Facebook may be leading consumers to discuss more interesting products, according to a new study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*.

"Whereas oral communication tends to be instantaneous (one person says something and then another responds almost immediately), written conversations tend to have longer gaps ([consumers](#) respond to e-mails, texts, or Facebook messages hours or days later). Rather than saying whatever comes to mind, consumers can take the time to think about what to say or edit their communication until it is polished," write authors Jonah Berger and Raghuram Iyengar (both Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania).

New technologies have dramatically changed how we communicate. Instead of talking face-to-face or over the phone, consumers can now e-mail, text, [tweet](#), or message back and forth on Facebook.

In one study, asking consumers to communicate via written rather than oral communication (or merely asking consumers to pause before speaking) led them to talk about more interesting products and brands. The authors also analyzed data from tens of thousands of conversations and found that more interesting products and brands (Apple) are discussed more than mundane products (Windex) in online communication.

Written communication gives consumers more time to construct and

refine what they say. As a result, consumers mention more interesting products and brands (Google Glass rather than Colgate toothpaste) compared to oral communication.

"Consumers have a natural tendency to talk about things that make them look good. But selecting the right thing to say requires time. In oral communication, consumers talk about whatever is top-of-mind (the weather), but written communication gives them the opportunity to select more interesting things to say," the authors conclude.

Provided by University of Chicago

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