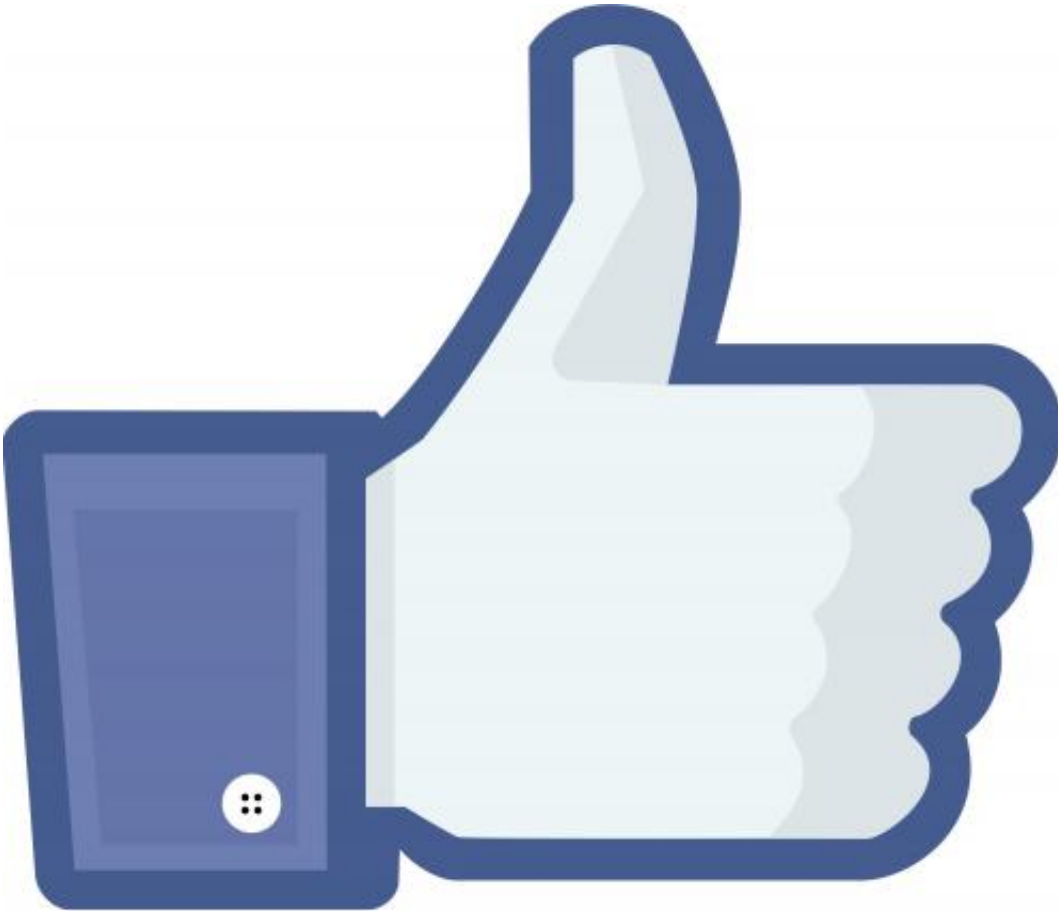


Facebook gets friendlier to adopted names

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Facebook on Tuesday modified a "real names" policy once protested by drag queen performers, the gay community, abuse victims and others.

New tools being tested in the United States were designed to reduce the

number of [people](#) asked to verify their [names](#) at Facebook and make it easier for them to do so when needed.

But, Facebook made clear that it is not backing off from its policy that people at the social network should use names that friends and family know them by, and not those intended to hide who they really are.

"When people use the names they are known by, their actions and words carry more weight because they are more accountable for what they say," said an online post by product manager Todd Gage and vice president of global operations Justin Osofsky.

"It also makes it harder for bullies to anonymously smear the reputations of others, or anyone else to use an anonymous name to harass, scam or engage in criminal behavior."

Drag queens who got word late last year that their accounts using stage names were at risk sparked a high-profile protest joined by activists, domestic violence victims and others who want to avoid having real names on social network profiles.

The list of people understandably interested in using assumed names at Facebook goes far beyond drag queens to judges, social workers, teachers, entertainers, [abuse victims](#) and others, according to activists.

In the past, people could get an account suspended by simply tagging a name as fake at the social network.

Room for reasons

Those reporting suspected fake names to Facebook must now provide more information, such as the reason for their concern.

"We're also testing a new tool that will let people provide more information about their circumstances if they are asked to verify their name," the online post said.

"People can let us know they have a special circumstance, and then give us more information about their unique situation."

Teams at Facebook use the additional information for context while reviewing reports of names being fake, according to Gage and Osofsky.

Other changes made by Facebook during the past year include expanding options for verifying names and letting people keep access to social network accounts while going through the process.

"Early in the new year, we will be looking at other ways we can reduce the number of people who have to go through an ID verification experience, while preserving the safety of other people on the site," Gage and Osofsky said.

Facebook late last year vowed to ease its "[real names](#)" policy after publicly apologizing to quell a simmering dispute over its enforcement of the policy.

Facebook executives and representatives of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities collaborated on a solution deemed acceptable to both sides, allowing people to use assumed names, subject to verification.

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