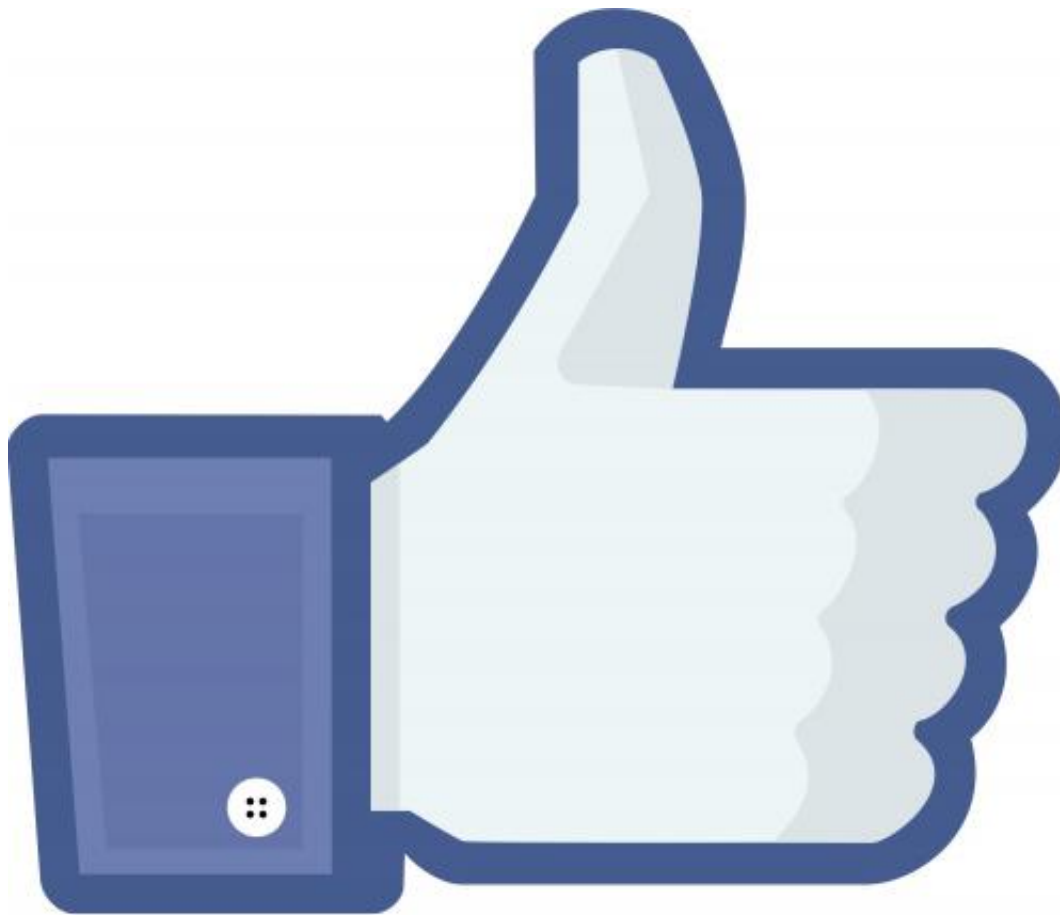


Facebook expands sharing options to include live video

December 3 2015, by Michael Liedtke



Get ready to start watching live video of your friends and family doing something fun, boring or even dumb on Facebook.

The world's largest social network is testing a new feature that will enable its 1.5 billion users to use their smartphones to shoot video so other people can see what they are doing as it happens.

Facebook began testing the live video option Thursday among a sliver of its U.S. audience with iPhones. The Menlo Park, California, company didn't specify when everyone with a Facebook account and a smartphone will have an opportunity to broadcast live.

The feature represents Facebook's latest challenge to online messaging service Twitter, which introduced a live video application called Periscope earlier this year. Another popular app called Meerkat also can be used to share live video in social circles.

This isn't the first time that Facebook Inc. has copied others' ideas in an attempt to ensure its social network remains the leading digital hangout.

In recent years, Facebook also has embraced the hashtag symbol, a Twitter technique for flagging major events and topics of conversation, and cloned an option to check into specific places that was popularized by Foursquare.

In another move of mimicry, Facebook is introducing another feature called "Collage" that will automatically bundle photos and video taken in the same place or at the same event into a slideshow. The concept mirrors a feature that Google introduced in its Plus social network years ago and imported into its Photo app six months ago.

The Collage option initially will be available on Facebook's iPhone app before expanding on to its version for Android phones early next year.

Facebook is touting live video and Collage as a leap forward in its attempt to bring its users closer together even though they may be

located thousands of miles apart. The idea is to allow people to feel as if they are on the same beach on a Hawaiian vacation, in the same kitchen while testing out a new recipe, in the same living room unwrapping Christmas gifts, or in the same row singing together during the concert of a favorite band.

Eventually, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg hopes to deploy the [virtual reality technology](#) that the company acquired last year in a \$2 billion purchase of Oculus to transform video into an even more-lifelike encounter.

The live video option also could create legal headaches for Facebook and copyright owners, based on what has happened with Periscope. That's because some people have used [live video](#) to share shots of movies and pay-per-view sporting events that are protected by copyright. The practice has forced copyright owners to monitor Periscope for violations of their rights and notify Twitter so it can block or take down the videos.

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