

Facebook's controversial Portal video chat device gets browser, games: It may not matter

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It's been five weeks since Facebook brought its Portal to market—and, yes, another day with another privacy-related apology from the world's

largest social network.

Meanwhile, however, if you took a chance on the controversial video-calling device, Facebook is rewarding you with [new features](#).

Released Friday, such [features](#) start with a wider range of content, from ABC News, CNN and a CNN brand known as Great Big Story. A new custom web browser will let you watch YouTube videos, get cooking ideas from AllRecipes.com and stream Monday Night Football. A set of Facebook Instant Games, meanwhile, are also being made available, including versions of Battleship, Disney Tsum Tsum and Words With Friends.

You also gain manual control over the camera inside Portal that automatically pans and zooms to show everyone in a room. This top-requested feature, Facebook says, will let you focus on one person.

Facebook is also adding more Story Time titles for the kids and adding various augmented reality special effects for when you're on a call.

You can also now to listen to music from iHeartRadio while on a Portal call, something you've already been able to do with Spotify Premium and Pandora.

And finally, you call [family members](#) by their nickname, as in "Hey Portal, call Dad" or "Hey Portal, call my wife."

Portal buyers ought to be pleased that the product appears to have gotten significantly better. Though, it's hard to imagine that any of the new features will change the minds of consumers who have been dead set against buying Portal, with its very slick follow-me camera and always-listening microphone.

The Portal 10-inch, high-definition display (720p) costs \$199, and the 15-inch Portal + with 1080p screen goes for \$349.

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