

Facebook 'Live' Doesn't Have to Be Live

Author : Jack Marshall

Date : May 12, 2016



Media companies are 'broadcasting' pre-recorded clips use the social network's new feature

[Facebook](#) Live doesn't necessarily have to be live after all.

Despite its name, the **social** network's new video tool is allowing media companies and video creators to stream pre-recorded content, leading some to wonder if they should "broadcast" every video through the feature.

Sound familiar? It's a model that has worked for decades for TV networks, which typically air previously-taped shows on a "linear" schedule.

As **Facebook** ramps up its live-video efforts, some media companies wonder if airing pre-recorded content in this fashion may give it greater exposure in users' feeds compared with simply uploading content through the **social** network's non-live video posting feature.

NowThis, a news company that publishes entirely on **social** platforms, experimented with the option in late April, for example, streaming a 38-minute compilation of its "favorite" viral videos via **Facebook** Live. The stream received over 20,000 views and over 500 comments, according to **Facebook**'s counters.

"It's still early days with live video on **Facebook** so this was a test and an experiment", said **Athan Stephanopoulos**, president at NowThis. "We decided to take a bunch of viral videos and run them live. Then we were getting involved in the comments."

A **Facebook** spokesman said the **social** network doesn't have policies stating that video streamed via **Facebook** Live actually has to be recorded live. The company does not recommend streaming pre-recorded content, the spokesman added, because a strength of the feature is the ability for on-camera hosts to interact with viewers in real time.

Mr. Stephanopoulos said NowThis is not currently planning to consistently stream pre-recorded footage, but added that his company thinks it's important to experiment with new video features on **Facebook**.

The pre-recorded feature is encouraging some media companies to promote their Web series to “air” on **Facebook** Live at a certain time, in a similar manner to a linear television show. After they are streamed, **Facebook** Live videos function as normal **Facebook** videos. Some publishers believe videos may perform better if they begin as live ones.

“What is the downside? I can’t imagine that there is one. We will see when we try it. **Facebook** is prioritizing live. They are prioritizing video,” said **Cory Haik**, chief strategy officer at self-professed “millennial” news site Mic, which is considering uploading its Web series “The Movement” as a live video. “We would just upload that video natively anyway. It’s effectively the same thing.”

Media companies and publishers are increasingly experimenting with **Facebook**’s emerging live-streaming platform, which is bringing in huge viewership numbers for some. In recent weeks, the company has introduced an “API” that allows media organizations to step up their **Facebook** Live production value in a variety of different ways, like overlaying captions on the screen.

This week, Mic will interview Massachusetts Sen. **Elizabeth Warren** and “roll tape” from the interview within a later live show that discusses politics, giving the show a cable news-like feel. Ms. **Haik** said **Facebook** Live allows for commenters to feel engaged with a real-time event.

Live video technology company **Telestream** was one of **Facebook**’s first live video API partners, and says it’s currently working with a range of media companies and publishers to help power their **Facebook** Live efforts.

Barbara DeHart, **Telestream**’s vice president of desktop and cloud business, said the company has not yet noticed a large amount of pre-recorded video being broadcast via **Facebook** Live, but added that the **social** network has not indicated any restrictions around what can and can’t be streamed to the feature.

“**Facebook** has been very forthcoming and helpful around what it thinks would be most helpful to users,” Ms. **DeHart** said. “At the moment that’s really been around high production value.”

ABOVE PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

//