

"Like" button alternative could be a challenge for brands

Author : Garrett Sloane

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Relax, brands, Facebook's 'dislike' button won't be hatemaggedon

Rest easy, **McDonald's**, **Walmart**, **Comcast** and any other **brand** that has armies of haters. Despite the Internet frenzy over **Mark Zuckerberg** saying **Facebook** is working on a "dislike" button, there's little chance this will turn **Facebook** into Lord of the Flies.

Critically, the **CEO** said that there will be a feature that allows people to express sympathy — likely more of a frowny face than a middle finger. Think when someone dies or other tragedy strikes, **Facebook** users can share their condolences without having to hit "like." **Zuckerberg** said the new button would allow people to empathize not criticize. He was speaking during one of his routine town hall-style Q&As.

"People have asked about the 'dislike' button for many years, and probably hundreds of people have asked about this, and today is a special day because today is the day that I actually get to say we are working on it, and are very close to shipping a test of it," **Zuckerberg** said today. "Not every moment is a good moment if you share something that's sad like a refugee crisis that touches you or a family member passes away, it may not be comfortable to like that post ... I do think it's important to give people more options than liking it."

That's a relief for say a **brand** like **McDonald's** that regularly gets an earful from grumpy people who type on the Internet. There won't be any "hate" button for, say, the next time it decides to relaunch the Hamburglar as a creepy stalker.

The reason: It isn't in **Facebook's** interest to allow the platform to turn into a pit of vituperation. Back in 2012, a **Facebook** engineer [explained why on Quora](#): the specter of negative feedback would keep people from sharing, and **Facebook** is all about more sharing. There's also the matter that as an ad-funded business **Facebook** has not a lot of reasons to let people put its paying customers on blast.

"Right now if someone wants to really dislike something they have to comment to express negative sentiment," said **Nikhil Sethi**, who runs the **digital marketing** platform Adaptly. "A 'Dislike' button on posts would be awesome for consumers, but a whole other challenge for **brands**."

There has been an outsized response to **Zuckerberg**'s announcement today. People have been waiting for any new button from the **social** network that lets people take an action other than like.

Of course, most people are assuming it will function more like a downvote, which again is not the case.

For instance, the Nightly Show with **Larry Wilmore** tweeted this joke: "**Facebook** announces that the 'dislike' button is coming, giving you a **brand** new way to communicate with your racist uncle."

Facebook did not immediately return a request for comment on the details of the new button.

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