

The new road for branded content

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Facebook to Allow Media Companies, Marketers to Post Sponsored Content

For the past few years, as advertisers spent more money on sponsored content across the Web, it was [technically against the rules to post that content to Facebook unless part of a paid ad placement on the social network](#).

But the site is changing its tune. **Facebook** will now allow **branded** content to appear in all forms, as long as media companies and marketers go through a simple verification process, said Dan Rose, **Facebook**'s vice president of partnerships.

Advertisers and Web publishers will be able to post articles, videos and images that marketers have paid for to their **Facebook** pages; to date, they have only been able post such content within ad units. The new policy for so-called "organic content" applies to **Facebook** Instant Articles, video and even the new **Facebook** Live product.

"For a long time, for media companies, **Facebook** has been primarily about distribution. But we're increasingly trying to help partners make money," said Mr. Rose. "And this is something they've been asking for a lot."

This change should be welcome news to publishers like BuzzFeed and Forbes, which have made sponsored content a staple of their ad offerings. And for **Facebook**, the new policy should theoretically bring in more revenue. Marketers and their media partners will likely run ads on **Facebook** to make sure that more people can see this sponsored content in their news feeds.

Branded content on the site will be required to feature a new icon **designed** to make it clear to consumers that the content comes from a paying advertiser.

It's worth noting that the [Federal Trade Commission issued guidelines on native advertising late last year](#) and has [been vocal in urging publishers and advertisers to be more clear](#) in labeling sponsored content. **Facebook** said its effort wasn't aimed at addressing any FTC concerns, saying that responsibly lies with publishers and marketers.

Facebook's policy used to explicitly state that "third-party advertisements on

Pages are [prohibited, without our prior permission](#).”

But now, Clare Rubin, **Facebook**’s product manager, wrote in a blog post that “**branded** content is a growing and evolving part of the media landscape.”

“People will now be connected to more of the content they care most about on **Facebook** as publishers and influencers gain an incentive to share more quality content, of all kinds, with their fans,” she wrote.

Facebook is also introducing a new tool to help **brands** better track when media partners, or even paid celebrities, post content featuring their products. Mr. Rose said this tool will help companies identify which sponsored posts are resonating with users, and they can pay to run more ads promoting this content.

There are some restrictions. While a **brand** like **Pepsi** could post a video featuring a **social** media star holding a can of soda, or a company like BuzzFeed could post a list produced on behalf of a big movie advertiser, this content can’t feature blatant ad formats such as pre-roll video ads or banner ads.

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