

Why some brands see Facebook as live-streaming's future

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Date : May 3, 2016



10 Big Reasons For Marketers To Like Facebook Live

Live streaming is suddenly one of the hottest **marketing** tickets in town. After a [slew of recent announcements](#), **Facebook** has joined the likes of **Periscope**, **YouTube**, Blab and more with its live stream feature, **Facebook Live**, which is [reportedly](#) one of the platform's highest priority initiatives – and a pet project of **Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg**.

Which of these services will ultimately reign supreme, however, remains to be seen.

“It’s an interesting horse race,” said **Greg Jarboe**, president of content **marketing** agency SEO-PR. “It started out with Meerkat and **Periscope** and early iterations of **Facebook Live**, later **Facebook Live** and now **YouTube**’s entry is out there, so just one piece of general advice: Whenever there are that many players in a space, it means it’s a good time to experiment, but probably too early to pick the winner.”

While **Jarboe** said he’d pick **Facebook** and Google as favorites if he was handicapping the race because they already have so many popular apps, he noted, “The races are left to be run.”

Here’s a closer look at how and why **Facebook Live** is such a strong live stream contender.

1.

Reach

Facebook’s clearest advantage is size with its 1.6 billion active monthly users.

“**Facebook** is aiming to create a one-stop shop environment for users,” said **Diana Gordon**, senior partner and group director of search and **social** at media agency Mindshare NA. “Think about it, you can connect with family and friends, learn and be informed in the News Feed, find entertainment through videos and shop – all within **Facebook**.”

However, **Jarboe** pointed out it's really only about 500 million users a month who have access to video on **Facebook** given bandwidth limitations in some parts of the world, as well as algorithm adjustments to accommodate users who haven't interacted with its videos.

"Nevertheless, half a billion people a month is huge and the ability to reach them is one benefit," he added.

2.

Engagement

Further, **Jarboe** said engagement rates on **Facebook** videos are higher than they are on **YouTube**.

"So, again, not only do you reach a big audience, but you are more likely to have your video content engaged with on **Facebook**," he added.

Facebook has high engagement rates with live content in particular, said Randy Mitchelson, vice president of sales and **marketing** at creative agency iPartnerMedia.

"We have noticed there is a significant increase in engagement with **Facebook** Live versus traditional posts, which is resulting in more audience being attracted organically rather than having to buy likes and views," he said.

3.

Targeting

What's more, marketers can pinpoint who their **Facebook** Live streams reach, said Sam Williamson, SEO executive at **digital** media agency Aims Media.

"So rather than blindly amplifying your stream throughout **Facebook**, you can use the 'Live' button to select who can see it, helping you to reach the right audience," he said.

In addition, **Facebook** knows a lot more about its users than **Periscope** and **YouTube** do, which allows **brands** to address their targets more directly, said Andreas Goeldi, CTO at video ad tech firm Pixability.

4.

Discovery

Another clear advantage is that it is easier to surface live content with **Facebook**, said Brian Shin, **CEO** of video performance analytics firm Visible Measures.

Plus, **Jarboe** noted, **Facebook** is [giving a boost to live video](#) in users' timelines.

Facebook Live has an added advantage: it is natively built into the News Feed.

"The worry I'd have if I was Twitter is that **Facebook** has a massive scaled distribution system – its News Feed – and anything in there does well for a short burst in the beginning," Shin said. "One thing Twitter could do is to make it easier for things to live in a historical or archival context."

However, even though tight integration with the News Feed UI and algorithm gives **Facebook** Live a great distribution opportunity, Shin noted the "good" content still has to rise to the top.

5.

Organic Boost

There's also the added benefit of helping counteract **Facebook**'s ongoing decrease in organic reach, said David Neuman, director of **social** media services at **digital marketing** agency Prime Visibility.

"It's no secret **Facebook** keeps decreasing organic reach, most recently to about 1 percent of your total likes. As of March 1, **Facebook** publicly stated that they are prioritizing **Facebook** Live posts over other content types because of the amount of engagement they have generated," Neuman said. "Not only do **Facebook** Live videos see an organic boost, but your likes get a notification when you start a broadcast."

6.

User Experience

Plus, 1.6 billion users already know how **Facebook** works.

Calling **Periscope** "still very much an early adopter product," Goeldi said the scale and visibility of **Facebook** Live is unprecedented.

"I think the user experience on **Facebook** is really well defined. I've found **Periscope** to be a bit clumsy and it has a certain degree of a learning curve, but **Facebook** really opts to be extremely mainstream," Goeldi said. "So I think if you want to reach the mass market, that's what you want as a marketer. If you want to watch a live stream on **Periscope**, you have to install the app and you have to learn how to use it, but **Facebook**...is the most popular app already and users know it extremely well."

7.

Sharing

The popularity and familiarity of **Facebook** increases the likelihood of sharing live content with other users, Goeldi added.

“That’s a pretty good starting point for virality if there is such a thing for live video – it’s much more obvious about how to share content,” he said. “If marketers are looking for a robust live stream to reach a large audience with a high degree of shareability and a very clean, simple user experience...**Facebook** is the only game in town.”

8.

Breadth Of Features

While other live stream services offer some of the same features, **Jarboe** noted, “When the **Facebook** Live product **design** team got together, they tried to steal from everyone and picked lots of different features that make it interesting.”

Those features include:

- **Archiving:** **Brands** can archive a live event on their timeline, so users who weren’t watching live can still see it later. “A lot of people are seeing bigger audiences from those who aren’t live, but find it later, so that’s useful,” **Jarboe**
- **Editing:** When **brands** post a live video to their timelines, they have the option of editing it first. “So you can shoot it live and then you...can create the highlight reel if you want to, which is a very nifty feature,” **Jarboe**
- **Thumbnails:** **Brands** can choose a thumbnail, which is old hat for traditional videos, but an interesting add-on for one-time live content, **Jarboe**
- **Calls to Action:** **Brands** can add a call to action, like “shop now,” “learn more,” or “sign up,” at the end of their videos, which turns them into more valuable assets, **Jarboe**

9.

Monetization

Facebook is [reportedly](#) paying some media companies to produce high-quality live content, which has led to [buzz](#) it plans to eventually monetize **Facebook** Live via mid-broadcast ads such as those seen on TV. That opens up even more opportunities for advertisers to use live video, Goeldi said

“They can buy ad space in a live stream, which can be very compelling,” Goeldi said. “Like sporting events, it’s easy to see an audience that could be very large...and [advertisers] could reach an individual during a commercial break in the live stream, which is unprecedented in live video content.”

10.

Open API

Goeldi also points to **Facebook** [opening its API](#) so manufacturers of cameras and video editing equipment can easily integrate their products with **Facebook** Live.

“**Facebook**’s sheer size and **marketing** power really enables them to integrate with its API and offer a wide range of different gear to produce live content, which is fundamentally different from **Periscope**. It is a bit comparable to **YouTube** live streaming, which already integrates with solutions as well, but it doesn’t have the same exact potential,” he said.

That’s in part because **YouTube** live streaming is more limited to sectors like gaming, politics and sports, Goeldi added.

The open API means **Facebook** Live users could theoretically air footage from, say, a drone, **Jarboe** said.

“This is sort of inside baseball, but one of the other parts of the API is that you can combine **Facebook** Live with **Facebook**’s graph API, so, again, down the road, my hope is that people will create apps that let you combine more visually interesting things than you could on Day 1,” **Jarboe** said. “Coming soon. Watch this space.”

Luke Watson, platforms expert at live streaming network Roker Media, agreed there are surely exciting things on the horizon for **Facebook** Live.

“If you look at a product like **Periscope**, it has remained virtually unchanged since its debut over a year ago. Sure, embedding it in a Twitter feed is a big deal, but the fundamental features of the product have been stagnant,” Watson said. “By opening up **Facebook** Live to the world’s creative and technical geniuses, they guarantee that their product will continue to improve to meet the needs of this fast-moving and fast-changing medium, particularly as the creative evolves and new, unforeseeable needs are revealed.”

This, in turn, means **Facebook** Live will not just be the platform with the largest audience, but the platform with the best product, he added.

“Any **brand** that wants to bet big on **Facebook** Live has the odds in its favor, but they need to be prepared to keep pace with the constant changes in technology, product features and capabilities, which will impact the creative in the early days of this exciting new medium,” Watson added.

What's your take on the state of the live stream industry and its implications for marketers?

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