

Facebook Users Interact With Brand Content Over Ads

Contributed by eMarketer

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Will users click Facebook's Sponsored Stories?

Facebook is now a public company, and its revenue and advertising plans are under significant scrutiny. However, users are more likely to interact with branded content on the site, not advertising, which may be an obstacle for the social network down the road.

In January 2012, 44% of internet users worldwide said they never clicked on ads or sponsored listings on Facebook, according to the "Search and Social Media Survey (2011-2012)" report from search engine marketing company Greenlight. An additional 31% said they rarely clicked on advertisements.

However, only 17% said they never "liked" brands and companies on Facebook, according to the same study. A quarter of users (26%) said they did so often and 9% said regularly.

"Pick your favorites," in which users can choose a certain number of items from a list as their favorites, was the most popular type of branded content users shared, at 39%, according to an April 2012 study from Wildfire. An additional 32% shared quizzes, 29% shared trivia contests and 26% shared sweepstakes. Wildfire also found that 82% of users who clicked on a friend's post about a quiz went on to also take that quiz.

While this interaction and sharing of branded content is good for companies, it doesn't require them to pay Facebook for the exposure. In February, Facebook reported that each week, only 16% of a company's fans will see a brand post in either their news feed or on the right-hand side of their homepage.

In order to increase that percentage, Facebook launched Reach Generator, which guarantees that 50% of fans will see a branded post each week. Reach Generator is just one way Facebook is encouraging companies to spend money with the site, rather than relying on unpaid brand content reaching users.

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1 June 2012