

## Facebook's Latest Updates: How They Affect Pharma

Over the past several weeks, Facebook has been making technology news headlines. In late July, the company introduced the ability to embed Facebook posts on third-party websites. In early August, it announced a change to the former EdgeRank algorithm that determines what appears in users' newsfeeds *and* it announced a trial of trending topics.

With these changes, it's more important than ever that Page owners—including our pharma clients—understand not only the functionality, but also the potential implications.

### EMBEDDED POSTS

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Embedded posts are standard functionality on Twitter and Instagram, but the functionality was only recently made available to Facebook posts.

Embeddable posts provide the ability to take content directly from any Page or profile on Facebook, and share it on third-party websites. Any post can be embedded—text-only, or with video or photo—as long as it's set to “public” viewing status. To embed a piece of Facebook content into a blog post, the author simply has to copy and paste a snippet of code into the appropriate place in their post.

Once embedded, the post will appear exactly as it does on Facebook. The embedded post will show any photos or video attached to it, as well as the number of likes, shares, and comments the post has at the moment.

Below is an example of how a CNN Facebook post appears when embedded into a third-party site. CNN is one of five news publishers that currently have access to the new

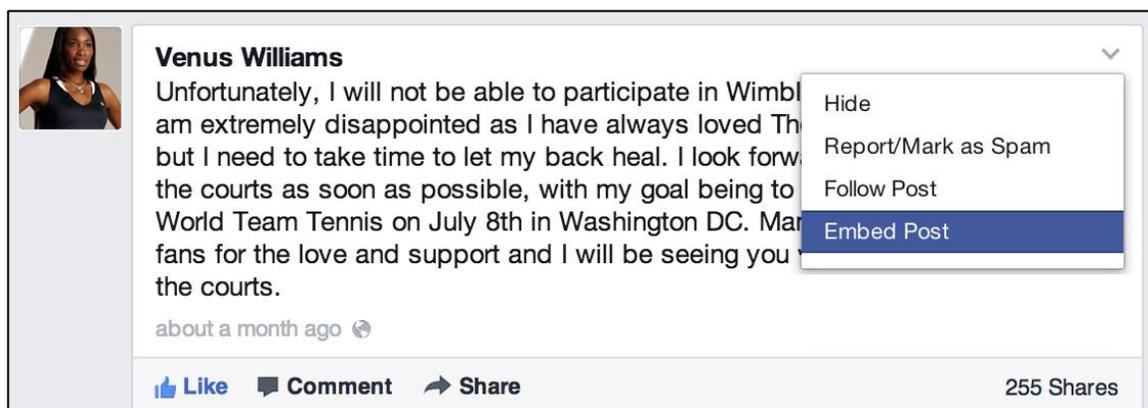
functionality. Others include the Bleacher Report, Huffington Post, Mashable and People.



Visitors to the third-party website with the embedded Facebook post will be able to like the post, like the Page, follow the author or share it with their own Facebook friends without visiting Facebook. Only two actions will take the visitor back to Facebook: clicking on hashtags within the post (if included) or clicking the link in the contact on the post.

Once your account is enabled with the new functionality, you will have the option to "Embed post" for any publicly shared post. [Facebook said broader availability will be coming](#) soon but did not elaborate on when that will be or whether any proactive steps will be required to enable this functionality.

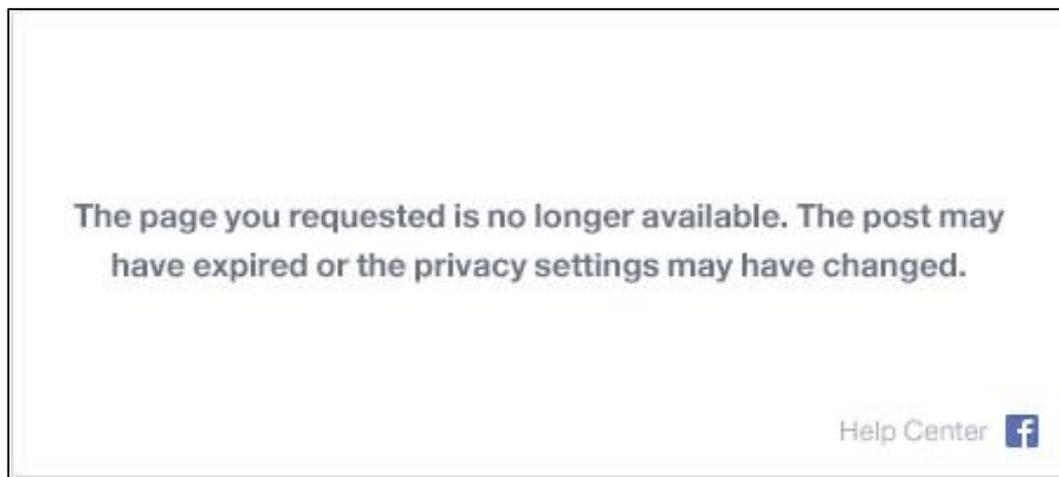
This will appear as a drop-down arrow on the News Feed and Timeline posts.



Next, Facebook provides a code snippet to cut and paste into a blog entry or HTML file. The post can then be shared exactly how it appears on Facebook.

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Embed this Post x
Copy and paste this code into your website. Learn More
<div id="fb-root"></div> <script>(function(d, s, id) { var js, fjs = d.getElementsByTagName(s)[0];
<fb:post href="https://www.facebook.com/VenusWilliams/posts/101516470073730"
```

**One important note:** If the embedded post is subsequently deleted by the author, or their privacy status is no longer set to “public,” the result will be an error message being displayed on the third-party site upon which the post is embedded. According to [a 2012 Consumer Reports article](#), 72 percent of Facebook users set their posts to private.



### How Will These Changes Impact Pharma Pages?

Embeddable posts provide an opportunity for pharma Pages to share positive fan comments on non-Facebook properties and gain traction in hashtag conversations. And, because interactions (likes, etc.) on third-party websites will be treated the same as interactions on Facebook itself, those interactions will appear on the visitor’s Facebook Timeline, increasing organic reach.

Facebook has not communicated whether Pages and users will need to opt in to embeddable post functionality, or whether it will be mandatory for all Page posts and public posts on profiles.

There are also several implications that Page owners should be aware of:

- Facebook has not announced any type of notification letting the post author know that their post has been embedded or where it has been embedded. This means Page posts can be published, in their original form, on competitor or other undesirable websites.

- You cannot customize how embedded posts are displayed on third-party sites. Size dimensions, colors and all aspects of the post appearance are set.
- Long posts will be truncated at a point, resulting in a “see more” option. Facebook has not announced the truncation point, but it could have implications for the purpose of required ISI.
- Websites that choose to embed Facebook posts will need to frequently confirm that the post has not been deleted or changed to a non-public privacy setting; otherwise, an error message will appear on the site.
- In a [2012 warning letter to PolyMVA](#), the FDA deemed the company’s act of “liking” Facebook comments or posts as akin to adopting or endorsing the underlying claim itself. Due to that, embedding any fan comment on a third-party website could be treated as an endorsement of the content of that post.

## EDGERANK CHANGES

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Facebook EdgeRank has been the algorithm governing what posts are displayed in fan’s News Feeds. It has been comprised of three factors: affinity, weight and time decay. Earlier this month, Facebook announced that EdgeRank has been retired. Moving forward, Facebook will refer to its content ranking system as the "algorithm for News Feed."



The new algorithm still takes into consideration affinity, weight and time decay; but it will also give an organic “bump” to posts on topics that the user has a history of interaction with, or by Pages or people that the user has recently interacted with. These two new factors are known as Story Bumping and Last Actor. Both features have already been automatically implemented for all Facebook users.

Story Bumping ensures that users see the most relevant content at the top of their News Feed when they log into Facebook. Instead of posts appearing in chronological order, older posts determined to be of higher relevancy will now appear higher in the News Feed—even above posts that are more recent in time. Relevancy will be based on each user’s engagement history, as well as on engagement by the user’s friends.

The Last Actor feature records the user’s 50 most recent interactions on Facebook. Friends or Pages will be placed higher in users' News Feeds if they are interacted with more often. Posts from those friends and Pages will be placed higher in the News Feed, even if they are older in time than other posts. So, now when Pages are making the

decision to post and how often to post, they must take into account that their content is much more likely to be seen if they are one of the last 50 interactions a user has had on Facebook.

[TechCrunch reports](#) that these changes mean an 8 percent boost in interactions for stories from Pages and public figures, and that people are seeing about 70 percent of all possible updates in their stream, as compared to just 57 percent in the past.

### How Will These Changes Impact Pharma Pages?

The "algorithm for News Feed" brings with it opportunity, but it means that engaging content is more important than ever. Post timing isn't as important as it was before, and there is a higher likelihood that your content will be seen... *as long as it is engaging.*

The new features also present a paid media opportunity. Story Bumping and Last Actor provide a way for advertisers on Facebook to extend and retain the reach of posts with lower initial views. For instance, if your page receives less reach on your posts containing photos, paid media can be used to engage more users with those posts. Then, because of Last Actor, interactions will result in the posts being brought up in organic ranking in the News Feed. This creates a situation where paid media can increase the reach for brand page posts and help retain that reach.

### TRENDING TOPICS

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On August 7, Facebook confirmed that it is testing a "trending topics" feature with a limited number of U.S. users who access the site through mobile (m.facebook.com). Facebook emphasized that this is a trial, and it has not decided whether this feature will be rolled out to all users.

Users who are part of the trial see, upon log-in, a banner at the top of their News Feed indicating trending keywords currently being discussed – hashtags are not included. But much like the functionality of hashtags, clicking a topic name will result in the user being shown posts on the subject by their friends and others whose privacy settings are set to "public." The topics will be ranked in a way that allows the user to see results from their friends before other public posts on the subject.

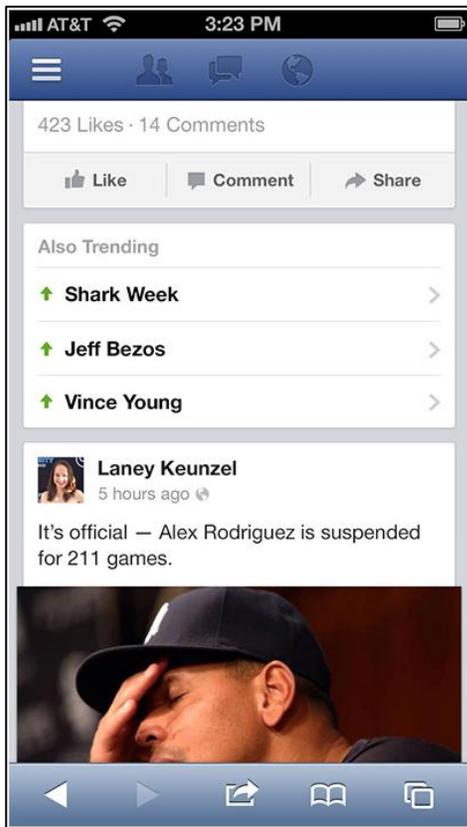
[AllThingsD reported](#) that Justin Osofsky, Director of Platform Partnerships and Operations for Facebook, said the new initiative will help Facebook "unlock and surface the conversation about shared interests that's already happening."

The "Trending Topics" feature closely resembles "Trends" on Twitter.

### How Will These Changes Impact Pharma Pages?

Trending Topics offer Pages a way to contribute to larger conversations around hot topics, which could include pop culture references or disease states (ex: World Diabetes Day). It also means that real-time content/updates are more important than ever to stay relevant within conversation themes.

Depending on how Facebook rolls this out, the functionality might also offer paid media opportunities where brands can pay for placement to ensure exposure in the News Feed, much like Twitter has done.



Intouch will continue to monitor the Facebook changes and will publish additional point of view papers as necessary. Please contact your Intouch representative for information about Facebook and the opportunities it presents.

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