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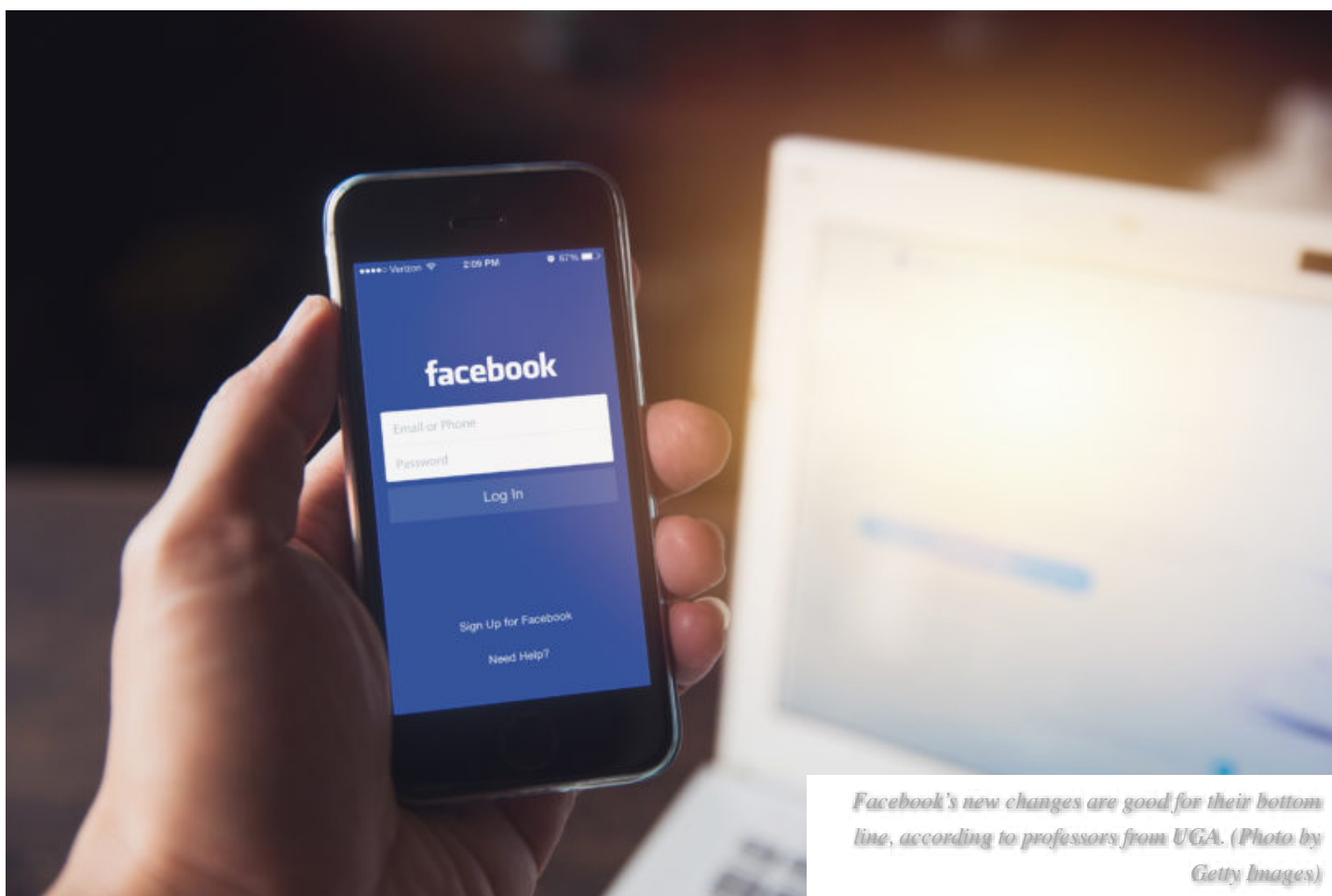
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Business & Economy

Four things to know about Facebook's new algorithm

3 days ago • by Sara Freeland



Facebook's new changes are good for their bottom line, according to professors from UGA. (Photo by Getty Images)

Mark Zuckerberg announced recently that Facebook will change its algorithm to promote posts from friends and family over public content. With the company's earnings announcement set for Jan. 31, the University of Georgia asked two faculty experts, one in communications and the other in business, what these changes mean and how this change could affect Facebook's bottom line.



Joe Phua

Joe Phua is an associate professor in the **Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication**. His research examines the impact of new and emerging communication technologies, including social media.
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1. Facebook’s new changes are good for their bottom line.



Dave Chatterjee

Chatterjee: “The decision to the change the Facebook news feed algorithm to prioritize friends and family content is consistent with the fundamental mission and goal of Facebook. If this change is able to enhance quality of time spent on Facebook it will attract more loyal users to Facebook and advertisers will find value in pitching to a larger audience. In summary, the changes bode well for Facebook’s bottom line.”

2. Businesses and brands will have to re-establish their presence.

Phua: “It will now become harder for businesses and brands to appear at the top of newsfeeds unless individual

Facebook users specifically allow them to appear there through liking or opting-in to their posts. As such, businesses will have to become more proactive in coming up with interesting, engaging content on their posts. This may also be a strategy by Facebook to sell more paid ads with advanced audience targeting capabilities to businesses.”

Chatterjee: “This is a great opportunity for businesses to come up with creative and innovative ways to establish a presence without being a nuisance and coming in the way of people trying to build and enjoy quality relationships. Facebook is leveraging machine-learning capabilities to filter out various forms of engagement baiting—vote baiting, react baiting, share baiting, tag baiting, and comment baiting—and spammy business ads.”

3. Facebook has staying power, but it might not be the only platform for users.

Phua: “I believe it is unhealthy to rely too much on one particular site for one’s news and information, especially if all our friends and family share our own beliefs on important social and political issues, which means we are essentially living in a news bubble whereby everything we read is already aligned with our own beliefs.”

“I think it will be prudent to use more than one method of social communication online. A combination of two or more social media sites, along with other online and also offline activities, will help someone have a more balanced life. It might also be good to detox from social media altogether once in a while if one finds that he or she is spending too much time online or is becoming addicted to a particular site or activity.”

Chatterjee: “The integration with Instagram and Whatsapp gives Facebook greater staying power. However, with many social networking options coming available, the heavy reliance on Facebook could be short-lived. So, Zuckerberg’s efforts to enhance Facebook user experience make perfect sense.”

4. Augmented social media or niche social media may be the next big thing.

Phua: “I believe the next big thing will be an interface or series of interfaces that allows users to combine many of the features of currently popular social media sites and mobile apps into a more interactive and immersive package that includes live streaming, AR/VR experiences, gaming, AI/machine learning, online e-commerce, entertainment programming, streaming music, news, and intelligent personal assistants. It is possible a multi-faceted interface like that will be offered through Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, or AT&T in the future or by startups we haven’t heard of yet.”

Chatterjee: “While Facebook has early mover advantage, there are several up-and-coming alternative social media platforms that could take eyeballs away—Amino Apps, Raft, Lego Life, and Musical.ly are some examples.”

“The ability to connect seamlessly, post all types of content easily, integrate with other networking platforms, have an enjoyable interaction experience, and maintain privacy are some key factors for the long-term sustainability of a social media platform.

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*Mary Frances Early
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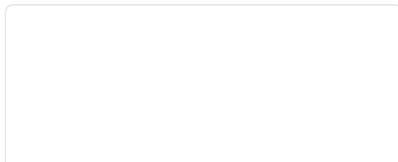
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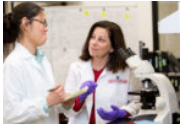
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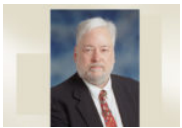
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UGA President Jere W. Morehead, joined by fellow university leaders, dedicated the newly renovated Clark Howell Hall, which offers greater accessibility for the more than 27,500 people who benefit from the Career Center, the Disability Resource Center and University Testing Services each year.

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