Ask a Friend

**The idea**

The “Ask a friend” feature allows mobile users to instantly post a question accompanied by a photograph in order to get a relatively quick opinionated consensus. The power of having mobile access to many thousands of users at a click of a button is highly desirable and has many applications.

Whilst Facebook has the option to post a question from a PC it has many drawbacks. One such drawback is that the audience that the question is posted to is limited to the network that the user is a member of. This may be limited to 100’s of users and many of these users will probably not wish to participate. Another drawback to FaceBook’s Question posting feature is that it may take a number of hours or days in order for a reasonable number of people to answer the question.

Posting a question to actual friends also means that the user’s question will have no anonymity and this may be a problem for some users if they genuinely wish to ask a question on a personal matter (“Does my ass look big in these jeans?”). Finally, the purpose of asking a question is to poll results into a data set that can be useful. Yes and no answers do not always suffice and cannot always display a suitable dataset. For example a photo may wish to be rated from 1 – 10.

In summary, with Facebook

1. The number of responses is limited to the members number of friends
2. Questions may take hours or days to get a response for
3. There is no anonymity as the persons friends are being asked (this also creates biased results)
4. The questions cannot have different types of answers. (Yes/No, image select A/B/C, rate 1 - 10)

**Answering questions with the appropriate response**

By allowing users the following answering options they are able to appropriately gain a reasonable response.

* Option A or option B – where A & B are user set responses (Cat or Dog, left or right)
* Yes or No
* Ranking from 1 - 10
* Image select A, B or C – where up to 3 images can be submitted

**Scenarios**

The application of the “Ask a Friend” feature is based on following types of people

1. An indecisive person
2. Competitive & argumentative alpha males
3. People genuinely open to suggestion
4. Many more types

*Girls and their clothing*

2 girls go clothes shopping. They want to make sure that they have the perfect outfit for that evening. One of the girls has 3 outfits that she likes but she isn’t quite sure. She launches N2F on her mobile and selects the “Ask a Friend” option. She is then promoted to take up to 3 photos of herself. After she has snapped all 3 outfits she selects the option of “Image Select” and asks the question “Which outfit do I look the cutest in”.

After she has submitted the question she waits 5 minutes as the photo is submitted to N2F. This is where hundreds or even thousands of users are displayed the question and give their response. After 5 minutes she is displayed with a graph that tells her that the second outfit is by far the cutest. With 400 responses in total she feels that this is clearly a better idea that relying on her and her friends opinion alone.

This scenario is also easily adapted for the indecisive female who doesn’t know what to wear that evening.

*Christmas Shopping*

Its late afternoon on Christmas Eve and a family member isn’t quite sure what to buy his 8 year old nephew for Christmas. 3 photos are snapped of 3 different toys and they are submitted to N2F for a response.

*The parking spot*

A women is jokingly mocked by her husband for not being able to get the SUV into a car parking spot. The husband takes a photo of the spot and submits the question “Can you get a car into this spot?”. 5 minutes later the man shows the response to his wife which shows that 87% of 245 people thought that she could have easily got the car into the space. haha

*The haircut*

There is nothing worse than having your friends tell you a white lie that your new hair cut looks good when all you really want to do is look cool. The anonymity of the “Ask a friend” feature lets you honestly ask unbiased group of people “Honestly, does my haircut look shit?”.

*The friend argument*

Getting into ridiculous disputes with friends is common. Take the N2F “Ask a Friend” consensus and email your buddy the response URL with the question and results is the ultimate way to get the final say. Petty? Oh definitely.. but very funny.

Some more questions

* Is this dress suitable for a christening? **Yes/No**
* Me and my colleague are arguing. is this folder blue or green? **Blue/Green**
* Me and a buddy are at a restaurant, who’s meal looks tastier? **Image Select - A/B**
* Is my hair strawberry blonde or ginger? **strawberry** **blonde/ginger**
* Who is better looking out of us three? **Image Select - A/B/C**
* Which outfit should I buy? **Image Select - A/B/C**
* Which passport photo do you like? **Image Select - A/B/C**
* Do you think my cat looks like George Bush? **Yes/No**
* Does this cloud looks like a dog or an ant? **Dog/Ant**
* Is this paint colour disgusting? **Yes/No**
* What gift shall I buy for my 8 year old nephew? **Image Select - A/B/C**
* Honestly, does my hair look shit? **Yes/No**
* Who has the sexiest pose? **Image Select - A/B/C**
* Would it be fairly easy to get a car into this parking spot? **Yes/No**
* Does this chicken look cooked to you? **Yes/No**
* Which bracelet should I buy for my girlfriend’s birthday? **Image Select - A/B**
* Top 3 Fancy dress finalists. Who should be the winner? **Image Select - A/B/C**
* Is this dog cute or ugly? **Cute/Ugly**
* Out of us three guys, who should get a slap in the face? You decide. **Image Select - A/B/C**

**How it will work**

In order for this to work it is important that many people are sitting online answering questions. This means that the quality of questions must be of high value by being either entertaining or interesting. Whilst a 16 year old girl may be interested in fashion and giving her opinion to other females in the community, a 16 year old guy might not be so keen and his interests may lie in answering questions of a much difference nature. Therefore categories must be introduced where a user can submit a question to a category and someone who chooses to sit at their computer and answer a question should be able to filter their questions so only relevant questions are displayed.

Example questions:

* Women’s fashion
* Men’s fashion
* Funny
* Cultural
* Argumentative friends – settling a friendly dispute

Further to this it is important to have a level of quality control so that users are not bombarded with questions that are simply not fun to answer “Do you like this wallpaper for my living room?”. Therefore users can opt to skip a question or answer it. The more a question is skipped the less chance it will have of being displayed again to another user. Contrary to this, if a question is answered then it will have a higher chance of being displayed to other users. This not only ensures good quality questions are circulating around the system but forces question “askers” to think of interesting ways to ask to the question.

A user may choose a time frame that a question will live for. The longer the period the greater the results in terms of numbers. However, a shorter timeframe means that a high number of people will be displayed the question in a short burst.

A user can choose to have the question answered in the following timeframes before it eventually expires:

* 2 minutes – almost instant but maybe only 80 might answer
* 10 minutes – a short and reasonable time for most questions with possibly hundreds of answers
* 1 hour – a slightly less important time frame but a higher number of responses
* 1 day – a long period of answers but receives a high degree of responses.

Finally a ranking system will be introduced that rewards users for spending their time answering the questions. Primarily a user will answer questions for their own entertainment. Maybe they are relaxing at home and want a giggle, they are bored at work for a while or they genuinely want to check out the fashion opinion of other females to see what the guys as well as the girls. The additional reward to answering questions is that they can review the questions they have answered and view their response verses the response of many other thousands of users. Isn’t is great to be right all the time? The ranking system that will be incorporated into the system will show:

* How many questions that a user has asked
* The percentage of their accuracy compare the responses of other users
* Their overall result for all questions asked. For example 146,517 out of 11,156,456 (members)

This sort of ranking creates respect for the user and makes them credible (ego trip for their real world friends)

**Who is involved?**

* The question asker – Whoever posts the question
* Members answering the questions – people sitting online answering questions
* People viewing the funniest/best questions from the home page or N2F features + external links from Digg/Facebook/etc, N2F question URL can be emailed to friends.

**Advantages for Next2Friends**

* Additional Interesting user generated content
* Single pages that can be Digg’d/FaceBook’d (attract new users)
* A feature for delivering adverts on the mobile device
* A potential premium model where users get a faster response and higher exposure

**Additional sub-features**

* Auto photo face blurring for total anonymity
* Choose to ask only friends in network or only people outside of their network
* A premium service could allow a larger exposure and shorter response time