

Facebook Rebrand

By Eric Bollar '22

HEARTBEAT STAFF WRITER

Do you have a social media account? From Snapchat to TikTok, social media in our present day has a serious impact on society, especially the younger generations. Young people are becoming increasingly savvy and rooted in their technology, so SHP students should be aware of Facebook's major rebrand. Ultimately, this rebrand diverts attention from the company's infringement of user privacy.

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On October 28, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced his new social media company, Meta, "which brings together [Facebook's] apps and technologies under one new company brand" according to a Facebook press release. Now, what is the significance of this name change? On surface level, it may seem a bit superfluous. Zuckerberg's primary stance emphasizes the company's upcoming project, the metaverse, a virtual reality environment which will allow us-

ers "to do almost anything [they] can imagine — get together with friends and family, work, learn, play, shop, create". This massive, novel VR experience promises to revolutionize the way we interact with the technological world. As exciting or dystopian as you may view this prospective future, students should examine the other reasons for this name shift.

Facebook is notorious for breaching or even surpassing legal and ethical bounds. Many view this shift as a sign of something sinister, such as a major privacy breach. However, it is likely to draw attention away from Facebook's controversial past, which includes stealing data from users and lying to investors. Earlier this year in April, over 500 million users' data were publicly leaked and sold to either large-scale companies or hackers. This included information like phone numbers, addresses, and demographic information. This leak wasn't the only infringement for which Facebook faced legal trouble. In August of 2018, Facebook was fined \$5 billion by the Federal Trade Commission for its misleading statements about user privacy in the run-up to its 2012 initial public offering. Even more, Facebook was previously accused of undercounting metrics to advertisers in 2014—a huge deal for any business model. Plus, they've been known to drastically impact elections in countries like the USA and India, effectively threatening democracy. This re-

brand ultimately brings up legal concerns about a company escaping its past and if there should be ramifications involved.

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Personally, this rebrand indicates concerning behavior from the company. It does seem to be more of an escape to shift the company into a potential future that is free from its troubling past. Facebook has repeatedly disregarded individual privacy and rights in favor of profits or political influence on multiple occasions over the years. Changing the name to solely focus on a new product may be partially true, but it is a bit naive to take their statement at face value.

What does this mean for a Sacred Heart student? Examine your own social media accounts and consider your internet security. This rebranding may be the first step toward a change in social media standards, but it is likely just a way to divert attention. It is important to stay aware of how your data is being used and whether or not Facebook or any other social media company is still ethical enough for your trust. Remember, everything posted on the internet is practically permanent.