

Facebook Rolls Out Changes to Chat, Other Experiments, Leads to Problems

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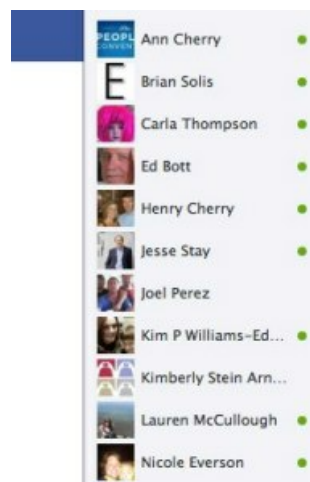
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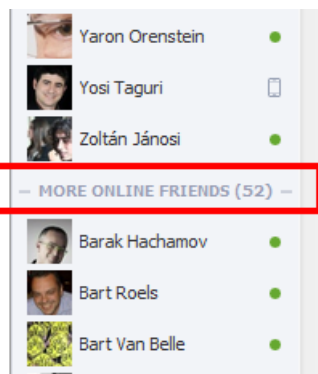
Facebook ⓘ made changes to the Facebook Chat sidebar feature, several users are reporting. Now, your favorite online friends appear in the top section of Chat, with a separate list titled “More Online Friends” underneath. This makes it easier to find the Facebook friends you chat with often.

However, we’ve also seen reports where select users are getting a mini News Feed in their Chat sidebar instead. In some cases, the News Feed appears above your contacts. This appears to be more of an experimental rollout.

Previously, the **Facebook Chat** ⓘ sidebar presented your friends to you as one big list, sorted alphabetically by name, not by relevance to you. For what it’s worth, this is the Chat sidebar I still have in my Facebook profile, which indicates that the update is still in the process of being deployed as we speak.

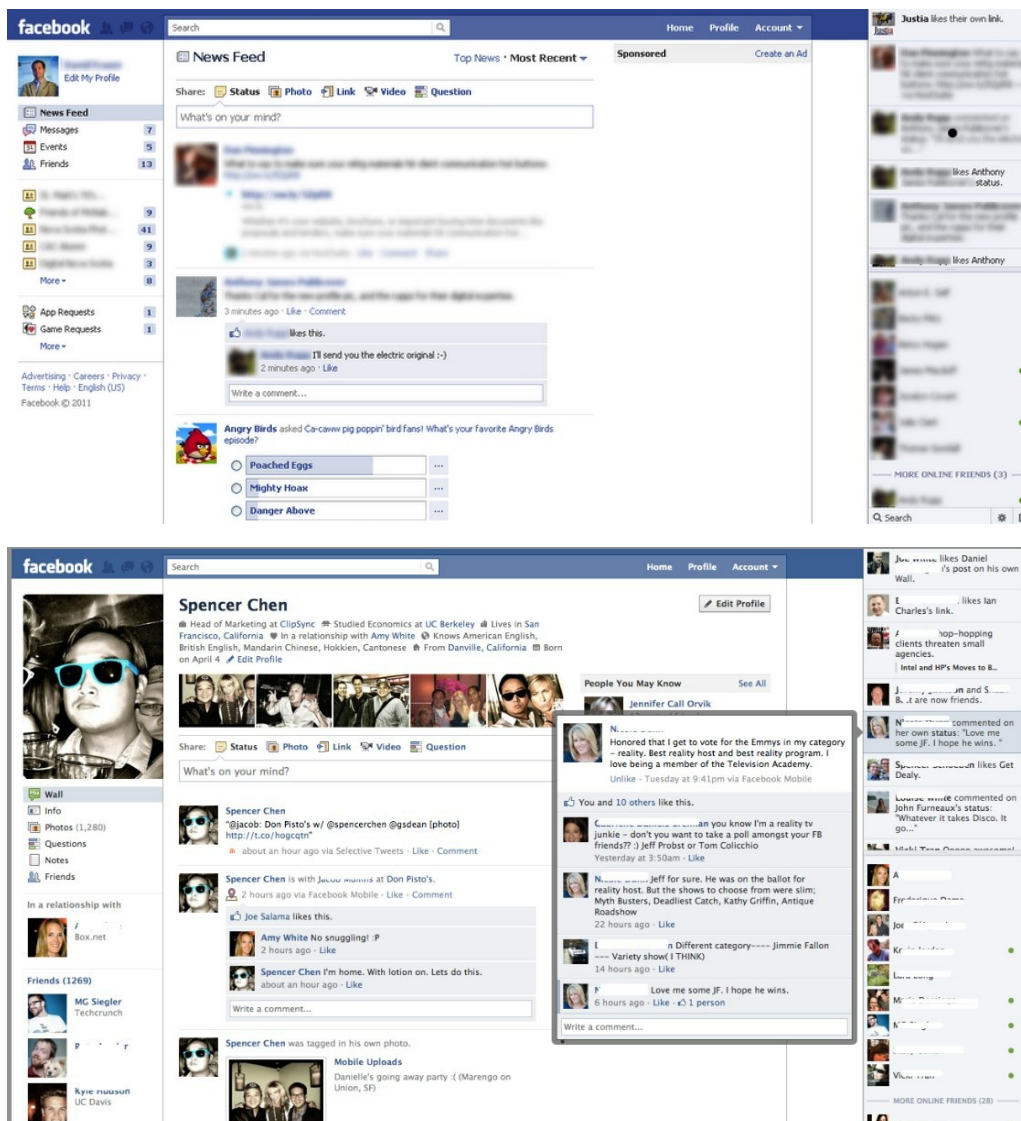


Those who have received the new Chat update are seeing the Chat sidebar split in two, with a section containing those friends you most recently chatted with at the top, then a split, followed by a “More Online Friends” section below where the rest of your online contacts are displayed.

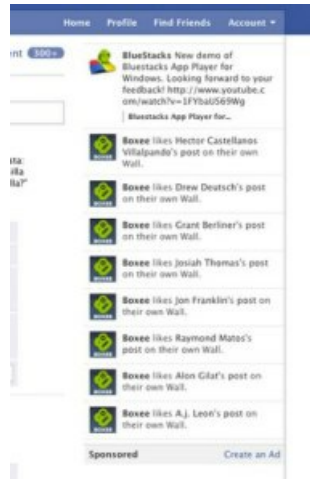


But that's not all!

Although there are fewer tips coming in about this one, it appears that **some users** are seeing a more experimental sidebar which includes a mini News Feed at the top. This News Feed shows recent updates from your friends and the Facebook Pages you follow.



This makes it seem like you have *two* News Feeds, which can feel a bit odd.



Others report seeing fixed Facebook headers (the blue bar at the top – it doesn't move when you scroll).

<http://twitter.com/#!/alvito/status/101641409198702592>

Causing Problems?

It seems that the majority of these more oddball updates may be the result of “bucket” tests, where Facebook rolls out new features to a subset of its users, before deciding if or when it will roll those out to the rest of the install base.

The updates may also be the cause of the issues [several people](#) seem to be experiencing with the site this morning, which so far, include the inability to sign in, trouble using Facebook Connect, problems “liking” things, the inability to write on friends’ walls and the inability to post status updates.

<http://twitter.com/#!/leiran/status/101646968568295427>

<http://twitter.com/#!/Gamylander87/status/101644697772105728>

<http://twitter.com/#!/cherrrrryBOMB/status/101645751398047745>

<http://twitter.com/#!/SpearsMarketing/status/101642695411380225>

<http://twitter.com/#!/jshallow01/status/101654322340823041>

We've reached out to Facebook PR for a comment and will update if we hear back.

Update, Facebook's Response:

After we changed the way that Facebook Chat worked a few weeks ago, we got a lot of feedback that people missed being able to see all of their online friends. Earlier today we made a change to re-enable that functionality; Facebook Chat now shows you the friends that you interact with the most as well as the rest of your friends that are currently online.

The "mini News Feed" you're referring to is a News Feed test we are running (and have been for some time) and are unrelated to the changes we made yesterday.

Update 2: *Facebook wanted us to know that the issues with slowness this morning were not related to the Chat changes and that the site is working normally now.*