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Facebook is Beating Google in Referral Traffic: What Does This Mean For Marketers?

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We all know that Facebook is growing at amazing speed and is becoming the Swiss Army knife of social media platforms for users and advertisers alike. Our partner Statista recently released some game-changing stats that reveal Facebook is dominating over Google in search and referrals.

The significance of referrals on Facebook is HUGE because it's going to attract even more marketers for reaching various communities - and it will likely take away potential searches from Google. In the numbers that [Socialbakers data partner Statista released](#), you can see how referral traffic is predominantly divided between Google and Facebook.

It's no surprise, as people are spending more time on social media and the words "Google" and "search" have become interchangeable. According to Mediakix, people are spending an average of [35 minutes per day on Facebook](#).

Both tech giants are competing for users; we've seen it with Google+, the launch of [Facebook's new Jobs feature](#), and [Google for Jobs](#) which was announced at Google I/O earlier this year. These head-to-head referral initiatives are strategic because Facebook is taking advantage of its active user base and Google with being the world's destination for search.

What does that mean for marketers?

Facebook has monopolized the user's free time, while Google has positioned itself as a go-to tool for actively seeking out information. Marketers cannot ignore this distinction. The more users spend their time on Facebook, the more brands will need to build the type of content that their audiences want to consume on their free time. Brands need to start focusing on creating stories of their brand, product or service.

Start Creating Content That Works

See How

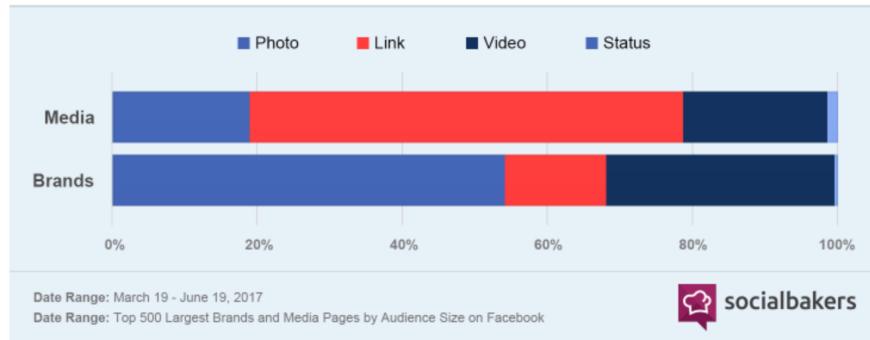
When we think of media publishers, referral traffic plays a critical role - it's the cornerstone of their social media content strategy. We found that 60% of top media publishers' posts on Facebook are



Links, compared with just 15% of brands using links.

60% of Facebook Posts From Media Publishers Are Links

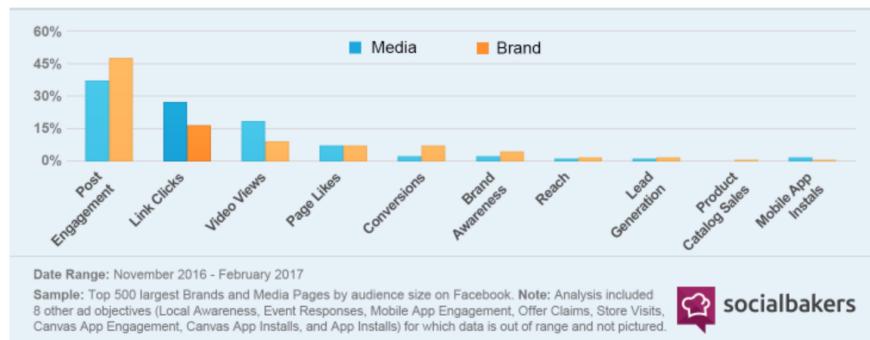
Media vs. Brands Content Distribution on Facebook



The key role referral traffic plays on Facebook is further reflected in the distribution of ads objectives. Second most common ad objective on Facebook are Link Clicks. This ad objective is more significant for media publishers than it is for brands, and the probability that brands focus more on Post Engagement for brand awareness seems likely.

Link Clicks Is The 2nd Most Common Facebook Ads Objective

Average Distribution of Facebook Ads Objectives



Media publishers are driving users to their websites through Facebook and they're reaping the benefits. A study from [Pew Research Center](#) found that 62% of adults get their news on social media, and 18% are doing so very often.

That's also why Facebook experienced immense controversy during the 2016 US Presidential elections when fake news became a heated topic of discussion. According to Statista, 59 percent of referrals around this topic in 2016 were circulated on the social network. And we found that [87% of fake news content consisted of links](#), 10% were photos and 3% were videos.

The Takeaway

Google and Facebook are changing the way people search for information and are trying to develop the best platforms and technologies to attract users and user attention. This has huge implications for society, from providing access to credible information from finding the best jobs to making well-informed voting decisions. When it comes to businesses and advertisers, they're going to spend money on content and ads to reach their audiences where they are spending their time. And it seems further developments in contextual searching on Facebook and referral traffic is going to bring ad spend and earn even more revenue for the platform.

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