

STAGE 2: TEMPLATE & GUIDELINES

Introduction

Status updates, video calls, reels, lives, and a marketplace – Facebook has a lot to offer. Available on the web and on mobile, this platform is the world's most popular social networking site, allowing users to share anything they'd like. But do these outdo its issues? As this platform is beneficial for online connections, it also has introduced multiple controversies throughout the years, which then sparks the debate on if Facebook is *good*.

My Claim

Facebook is a complicated platform that harms its users' privacy and knowledge.

Importance

The status of Facebook is important to discuss because it deals with users' safety on the internet. It is a social networking site that is meant for easy online connection with family and friends, but it can be more complicated than that. Users should be aware of how apps like Facebook handle their information and affect their online identity. This is not only beneficial for users, but also for Facebook itself to improve on any deficiencies. As citizens, it is also important to refer to reliable sources for crucial topics such as politics and health, and as a dominant online resource, Facebook should be more responsible in distributing the correct information.

Reason 1

Facebook's settings and general interface are hard to understand and navigate, which may lead to unwanted publicity.

Details

A lot of people think that Facebook's layout is *really* bad to the point that they want to quit using the app. The Facebook design is confusing, which is proven when users state that they don't even know how to create a status post anymore (Montti, 2020). The navigation icons do not accurately represent what page it leads to, and someone even almost reported a post when trying to react to it. The cluttered design has the tendency to make it harder for less tech-savvy users to use the app. With that said, they may not be able to properly navigate the app's settings to make their profile private, which leads to personal posts unwantedly available to the public.

Counter-arguments to my reason

Facebook users should be responsible for learning its settings.

Rebuttal

As Facebook is accessible to a wide age range of users, it should be made easy to navigate, which results in a fair and smooth user experience.

Reason 2

Facebook steals its users' (and nonusers') data.

Details

Facebook observes any and every user activity on and off the app. Of course, it takes what users input on their profiles, such as age, relationship status, birthday, and likes,

to target ads, but that's not all of it. Facebook tracks users and even nonusers on *and* off the site. From photos and videos, it uses a facial recognition system to collect biometric data *without* explicit consent from users, and this can violate a user's preference to stay anonymous online. A man diagnosed with an illness sued Facebook for tracking his activities on sites about his condition, which he says invades his privacy (Singer, 2018). These points suggest that Facebook is growing to manipulate its users.

Counter-arguments to my reason

Users signed up for this/did not fully understand Facebook's terms of agreement and privacy.

Rebuttal

Although users may agree to terms and conditions, Facebook does not disclose which third parties obtain user data.

Reason 3

It allows the release of false information.

Details

Studies argue that Facebook's algorithm tends to boost the spread of misinformation instead of factual posts. During the 2020 election, a study by researchers from New York University and the Universite Grenoble Alpes in France found that misleading posts gained more attention, likes, and comments than more credible sources like CNN or WHO (Dwoskin, 2021). Although Facebook proposes to work on this issue, it is still difficult to discern false from factual information and there's just too much of it.

Counter-arguments to my reason

It is up to the user's discretion to believe what they see on their feed or not.

Rebuttal

Facebook should already be aware of these misinformations, setting alerts or warnings for vulnerable audiences. It should advocate for releasing accurate information.

Connections

The current status of Facebook is not focused on its users; it is more advantageous for people behind the scenes, scammers, and hackers. Its confusing features do not secure the privacy for users, so some people may find it too difficult to figure out how to turn on their privacy settings. Although users may agree for their data to be collected, Facebook does not state where this information goes. The spread of misinformation is also so common on Facebook because users are allowed to post anything they want, which can be good for freedom of expression, but the platform can still work on implementing better ways of containing misinformation. This includes alerts, warnings, and verification of authorized accounts.

Conclusion

As great as Facebook is in connecting people on the internet, it is a very complicated platform. Again, its interface is not the best as it is hard to navigate, its elements are confusing, and some features look out of date. It is also known for stealing its users data and it harms people's privacy on the internet by using confidential information. Facebook is also not the

best resource since it is proven that misleading posts are getting more attention than trustworthy sources.

People should be mindful when choosing which sites to use; it's best to use those that allow productivity and are user-centered.

Citations

Dwoskin, E. (2021, September 10). *Misinformation on facebook got six times more clicks than factual news during the 2020 election, study says*. The Washington Post. Retrieved May 8, 2022, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/09/03/facebook-misinformation-nyu-study/>

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Singer, N. (2018, April 11). *What you don't know about how Facebook uses your data*. The New York Times. Retrieved May 8, 2022, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/11/technology/facebook-privacy-hearings.html>