

The Headbook Experiment

Headbook is an experiment in social media to try to solve some of the problems that current social media sites have. The following explains how we will attempt to deal with issues of privacy, unwanted content, harmful content and addiction to social media. We also very much hope to provide a place where constructive discussion can take place.

Privacy.

Social media companies' revenue source creates the privacy problem. They make money selling ads that target various selected attributes of the users. The users are the product and the advertisers are the customers. The more information they can gather about the users, the better job they can do targeting the recipients of the ads they sell. They also share or sell data to other companies. Do a Google search for some product you've never searched for before and then watch for ads for the product to show up on Facebook. This bothers some people so the social media companies have had to come up with elaborate privacy policies to explain what they do with your data. Laws have been passed such as the California Online Privacy Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation created by the EU that impose requirements on the companies' privacy policy.

The Headbook solution to this problem is to have the users be the customers. With no advertising, there is no need to collect all that information about you that is useful to advertisers. There is no need to share any data with other companies. For \$5 per month, users get the smallest privacy policy in social media.

Unwanted Content.

Some people just want to share their life with their friends and family but also get semi-hostile political or cultural posts from these same people. Headbook separates "friend stuff" from discussions of possibly contentious topics. Hopefully this will give people who just want friendly conversation a place to do that without being disturbed by the other stuff. More will be said about discussions below.

Harmful Content.

Social media sites have ended up hosting a lot of hate speech, plans for terrorism or sedition, lots of misinformation and many, many lies. Facebook has run TV ads basically asking the government to tell them what to do about it. At Headbook we are going to deal with this problem by being extremely intolerant of content that breaks the site rules. This isn't censorship. This is enforcing the

rules that allow Headbook to be a place for enjoyable interaction with your friends and civil, evidence based discussion on a large variety of topics.

Addiction to Social Media.

We have avoided user interface designs that are thought to encourage addiction to social media sites. We don't know how effective this will be. However, we also won't be constantly "engaging" you with ads and content "suggested for you". You will see your friends posts and posts to discussions you are watching and nothing else. Perhaps it will help to have no algorithm or ad provided content that shows you something new every time you look.

How it Works.

You will create an account using your email address as your login name and a password that we keep encrypted on the system. At least initially, you must be 18 or older and able to communicate in English in order to create an account. Your first month will be free and then after that it will cost \$5 per month to continue. You can come and go as you please. If your account is suspended for non payment, it will be there just as you left it when you come back.

When you login, you will have two separate "areas" of Headbook to interact with. One is for interaction with your friends. This interaction is meant to be "friends stuff". It is not the place to argue about politics, religion, etc. This is meant to be a place to share events in your life with your friends. It may be happy or sad but it is nice. This is not a place to be mean. Your friends can hide a post that they find objectionable. You won't know who has hidden it but you will know the number of people who have hidden it, so you can use that as feedback when submitting future posts. Users can allow themselves to be "followed" meaning that followers will get friend posts from them but they won't get any posts from the followers other than comments on their posts.

The other Headbook area is the discussion area. We will create a beginning set of topics for discussion but users are encouraged to propose additional topics. There will be only one discussion for each topic and each discussion will be about a single topic. There will be broad topics with sub-topics. So, for example, one initial broad topic will be "The Environment" with a sub-topic "Climate Change". That sub-topic will have further sub-topics for discussing the various solutions for addressing climate change.

We are going to do our best to try to keep the discussion section from becoming the typical social media "dumpster fire". Posts to discussions should be well thought out and not repetitious of previous posts. If you present facts, you should provide evidence such as a reference to a reputable source. Each discussion topic will have one or more moderators. These are volunteer positions similar to being an editor on Wikipedia. Moderators should be

knowledgeable in the topic and will help guide the conversation and take note of any rules violations. We will try to recruit people who “know stuff” to come participate in and help moderate discussions about their field of expertise. The hope is to provide a place for meaningful, constructive conversations and possibly find some solutions to problems.

Will It Work?

Will this work? We have no idea!

It will be up to the users to make it the kind of social media site that it is intended to be. We don't know if anyone will be interested in participating here at all. No disembodied voice in a corn field has told us “If you build it, they will come”. But we do know for sure that if we *don't* build it, they *won't* come.

Anybody who comes here to spread misinformation, attack people or just generally be mean will have their account suspended temporarily for the first few rules violations and permanently suspended if it looks like they intend to keep doing it. So anyone planning to do this should just not join the site. There are plenty of places to do that for free. We are depending on the users to use the site as intended in order to keep it a friendly, productive place to interact. By the way, if your account is permanently suspended, your last payment will be refunded.

A Few Words About Free Speech.

We are very much in favor of free speech. We don't believe in the banning of books and we don't believe in government interfering with the free press. This is what the First Amendment to the US Constitution is about. The First Amendment is not about being free to spread lies and misinformation on this site. We won't tolerate that. You are free to say anything that there is good reason to believe to be true and that you have evidence to support. You are not free to lie or attack people here.

About the \$5.

Since we aren't selling advertising, we must charge members to use the site. We *think* \$5 per month will be enough to support the site. Time will tell. We definitely don't expect to be able to hire a bunch of people to police members' posts. That is why it will be up to the members to keep the site the friendly and constructive place it is meant to be.

Headbook will never produce any billionaires. We don't want to go public and we don't want to sell the site. We just want to provide a more healthy social media experience.