**Paper...The Birth of the New Facebook**
**February 7, 2014**

It was inevitable that after a decade online, 1.2 billion users, and over $7.8 billion in revenue, a powerhouse like Facebook would release a new app that has people giddy to click "download." It is their 10th birthday after all, so I guess now would be the perfect time. Following the increasingly popular, object-based nomenclature of products such as Glass, Square, Coin, and Tile, to name a few, Facebook has aptly decided to name this new app…wait for it…Paper.
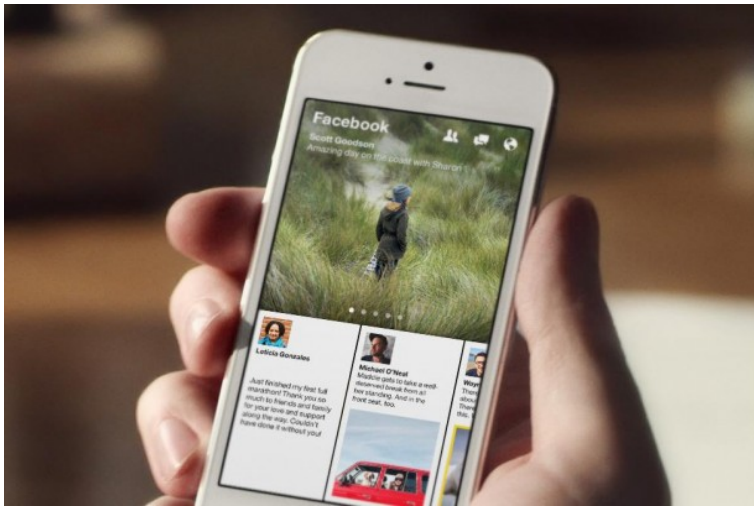


Launched this past week and currently only available for the iPhone platform (no set release dates for Android or Windows), Paper was easy enough to find in the app store considering it was the very first featured app under "best new apps." The fun begins with entering your Facebook login allowing your profile, friends, and feed to populate the app. Populating… populating… popu… done! My initial reaction is, "Did my fat fingers hit the 'Flipboard' app by accident?" Whether the designers at Facebook intentionally drew inspiration from the popular social news app or it was mere coincidence, there's no denying that the layout looks curiously familiar, albeit still pretty good. It should be noted that within the first day of its release there has already been a flood of bloggers and techies crying out the similarities and contrasts of both apps, so evidently my feelings are not merely my own.

Unpretentious, fluid, and minimalistic; there's a certain flow to this app that entices your fingers to stay glued to the screen. The top half is now a scrolling banner of all things "News Feed." It's filled with stories, posts, and updates against the backdrop of their corresponding images. I'm not sure why, but for some reason posts seem more alluring when done this way (another tip of the hat to Flipboard). In the upper corner sits the trifecta of the "friend requests", "messages", and "notifications" buttons for easy access. The bottom portion also contains newsfeed posts with a little more detail, not popular enough to make it to the top, but still worthy of mention. Clicking on them expands the posts and allows you to like, comment, and share each one. Seems pretty standard so far, but now comes the fun stuff.

Swiping up on a visual element from there takes you through a fun animated motion of unfolding a piece of paper (ahh…now I get it) to reach the link. The same goes for pictures, which can be zoomed, pinched, and tossed around in an aesthetically pleasing manner. If you reach a full screen picture, the physical motion of turning your phone left or right pans through the panoramic image the same way.

When you swipe down from the main screen you arrive at a menu from which you can reach your profile, edit settings, and create a post. Perhaps the most important feature allows you to add categories to your home screen based on your interests. I quickly added the "pop life" section and BAM! Now I can see who wore "it" better on the red carpet, all on my news feed, all with the swipe of a finger.
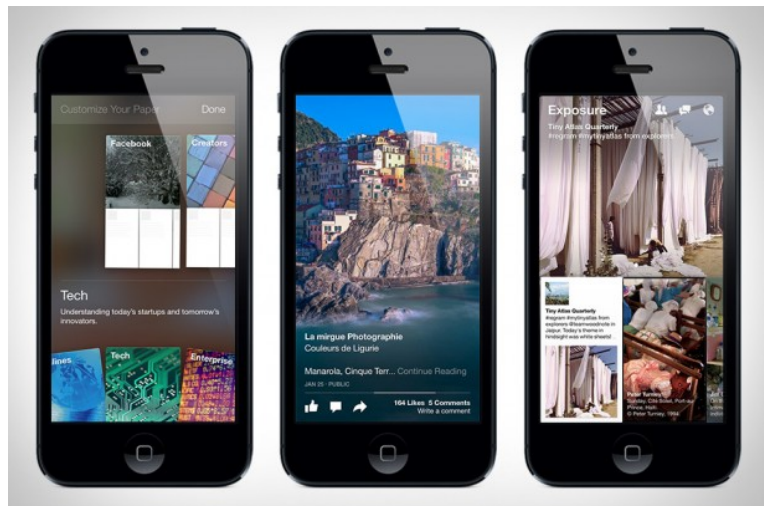


All right, so let's get serious for a minute. All of this means absolutely nothing if it doesn't cause a commotion in somebody's world, and in our case it's the world of business and marketing. If you're not already privy to the information, I'll let you in on the secret of all secrets…ready? The analog world is dead…finished…kaput; it got kicked out by the bully that is digital. Not to say that magazines and newspapers aren't around anymore, but honestly when was the last time you saw one of those without a big bad website you could scroll through as well? Now, if you were in the know about it then you are probably also aware that the digital world has (in the words of Tony Stark) a bouncing, badass, baby brother named "mobile."

I read a quote earlier today, "If Facebook had been invented today, this is what it would be." I think it's a testament to the age of smartphones and mobile gadgets. They are here to stay and if you don't believe it, you're going to struggle in your business endeavors. For marketers, it's always been about reaching the audience on whatever screen they happen to be starring at, and I don't think that's going to change any time soon. More recently, it has been about website optimization and responsiveness across different platforms. This is to ensure that your website looks just as suave on an 18 inch screen as it does on a 4 inch one. Yes it's effective, but hold on, look at what this billion dollar company named Facebook is doing, It hasn't just wiggled and squeezed itself into a prettier mobile version of itself, it's manifested into a completely new beast. It's moved passed calling itself a "mobile version" of anything and instead created its own identity. Now let's see how people react to it.

Does this mean we're moving past the age of "mobile versions" and climbing onto a different stage altogether? – let's call it "mobile identities". Then again, it could all just be a passing fad doomed to fail and fade into obscurity. At this point it's hard to tell and I would just be speculating, but I do want a royalty every time someone hash-tag's *#MobileIdentity* in the future. Until then, I'll be busy playing with this paper behind this glass.

Learn more at [Facebook.com/Paper](Facebook.com/Paper)