

Facebook's latest e-commerce development exposes the maturity of the social market space

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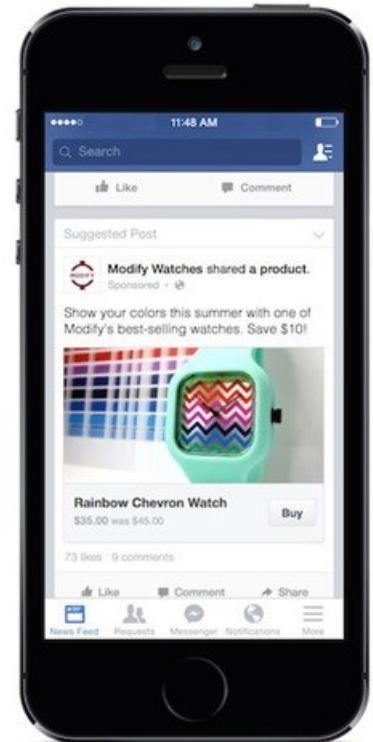
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This month [Facebook announced](#) that they are testing a new way for users to discover and buy products from within their newsfeed without ever having to leave the site. Essentially this allows businesses to sell directly to consumers from Facebook Ads and page posts. While this is not the first time Facebook has engaged in e-commerce experiments, it is unique in its scale.

The question on everybody's mind is; will Facebook successfully break into the e-commerce market, or will the lack of readiness of businesses and users lead to this ventures early demise?

While most users trust Facebook enough with their email address and birth names, they may find it hard to hand over their credit card details as well. Concerns about security and data manipulation could be the biggest challenge of the Facebook 'buy' button. Many users will admit to having little trust where social media network privacy standards are concerned. Despite stating that "[They've] built this feature with privacy in mind, and have taken steps to help make the payment experience safe and secure", it may still not be enough for the user.

However, there is substantial support of this development by brands and technology leaders, citing it was a necessary and, indeed, predictable development. In an interview with [The Associated Press](#), eMarketer analyst Debra Aho stated that "With this step, Facebook is becoming even more firmly established as a major player in direct response advertising, and though this test is still only a test, it's a definite sign that Facebook wants to restart its efforts to become an e-commerce company as well."



Simon Bestbier, Account Director of [Digital.co.za/ Realm Digital](#), leaders in e-commerce, commented that "People are 71% more likely to purchase based on social media referrals; Facebook has the ingredients to put together a solid ecommerce offering. The deciding factor of the 'buy button' will come down to how safe and comfortable Facebook can make the users feel while purchasing."

Even though the Facebook "buy" button is still very much in 'beta', having only been implemented for a limited number of small and medium-sized businesses in the US, it is still a clear indication of the maturation of the social market and could represent a real budding competitor to existing e-commerce businesses.

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