



# Facebook Explore Feed: Perception and Consequences of the Experiment

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## Abstract

Facebook is the most used social network in the world. It dedicates a lot of energy and resources to developing and fine-tuning its algorithms, thus enabling it to serve accurate content to eligible users and to fulfill the expectations of every entity that utilizes the platform. These algorithms need to evolve in time to adapt to the changing preferences of Facebook and its users. The evolution of the adjustments in the algorithms is a demanding process, mainly (but not only) because of the enormous number of its users. Changes need to be tested first, and this approach has been applied to the Explore Feed, which divides the Facebook News Feed into two sections. One section is for friends' content only and the second is dedicated solely to the content of media and organizations. Slovakia represents one of the six countries where the test was executed. The aim of this article is to identify and summarize perceptions and feedback on the Explore Feed and to determine the consequences of similar tests for global firms. This paper presents the results of a survey devoted to an examination of the perceptions of the Facebook Explore Feed. Survey questions, collected answers, and an evaluation of the answers were conducted in cooperation (and consultation) with an independent local media publishing company and its website. This website was selected because of the demographic profile of its users who represent the target group who most frequently use the Facebook platform.

**Keywords** Digital environment · Explore Feed · Facebook · Facebook algorithm · Online survey · Social networks

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## 1 Introduction

Social networking—the way of building communities which bring people together, has become a phenomenon nowadays. The use of social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram has quickly become ubiquitous in recent years. Their use, in particular amongst adolescents and young adults, can be excessive or maladaptive [1]. Social media have become one of the biggest industries in the modern world. Due to their constant updates, social media platforms continue to grow in popularity. They are no longer limited to younger generations but have become popular across all demographics. Consumers search for today's latest digital tools and channels and direct shopping opportunities through visual social networks including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat [2]. Social networks have become a part of users' everyday lives. Facebook, as the biggest social media network on the Slovak market, offers everyday content for users, new monetization models for digital agencies, effective content streamline for digital content publishers and a new form of presentation for firms.

Expansion in the development of information technologies has dramatically changed the ways people communicate, collaborate, and search for news. Based on the study conducted in August 2017 by “We are social”, from the 7.5 billion global population, 3.8 billion are Internet users and 3 billion are active social media users [3]. This represents a 4% growth—121 million more active social media users (August 2017 compared to April 2017). Based on analyses of monthly active users, Facebook is the most used social network with two billion users, with 59% of them using the platform daily [4].

Facebook has become not only a platform for connection, collaboration, and interaction with friends or relatives but also a platform where users search for news, tips, and references, for example, The wide-spread proliferation of the Internet has revolutionized the ways that individuals obtain, interpret, and respond to information [5]. “Changes in consumer environments require companies to reconsider marketing communication strategies within the world of social media. Companies now strive for more proactive engagement and struggle to reach a goal of creating a highly engaged consumer base through social media marketing” [6].

Most of the social media networks allow users to share created content, upload and update statuses or create posts, which are subsequently sent out to friends and/or followers. Facebook utilizes this concept by allowing users to post text status updates as well as to share links, photos, and videos. Once posted, the content is sent to the News Feeds of friends, where it is presented in chronological order. However, most people only see less than a tenth of the posts they could potentially see each day in their News Feed [7]. To select the most important News Feed posts, Facebook uses a system of algorithms for distinguishing the more important or more interesting content (known as News Feed) from the stream of all content (known as Live Feed). The algorithm is crucial in delivering users the demanded content and increasing consumption of the platform [8]. The platform uses over 150,000 factors called Edge Rank with the aim of anticipating what users like to see, what they are more or less interested in, and what their preferences are.

As per the official statement from Facebook about the Explore Feed test, Facebook decided to focus on posts which might be the most important for users and not to overwhelm them with irrelevant content. In this research, the authors identify and summarize the perception and experience of Facebook users in Slovakia during the Explore Feed test as well as the consequences of the feedback for Facebook and its platform.

## 2 The Facebook Phenomenon

Facebook, the most widespread social network site in the world, has been connecting users for 14 years, currently featuring over 1.4 billion daily active and 2.3 billion monthly active users [9]. The Facebook platform allows users to build communities with user-generated content. The platform allows users to broaden their network of connections based on the “who knows who” approach, which facilitates introductions between people. Facebook has promoted itself in countless ways, from building communities of friends, through building professional communities, or communities based on similar interests, to developing communities for business and marketing purposes. Moreover, Facebook allows its users to connect with friends, who would be difficult to meet in the real world by getting in touch with them in cyberspace where it is easy to transcend geographical boundaries. Facebook users stay connected with their families and friends, discover world news, and express and share what matters to them.

The purpose of Facebook is to create a social network in cyberspace. It allows registered users to create their profile with detailed information about who they are, what they like, and what their interests are, for example. With an established profile, users proceed to create a network of friends who they already know, or friends of friends, who they might know based on the same friends, studies, and interests. Facebook was created for college students in 2004 and in 2005 it was launched as a university portal. It is important to point out that Facebook profiles are combined into a very powerful database, with every entry field being searchable. This feature is used by marketers, recruiters, and employers, for example. There are countless ways how to explore the profile pages and use them for many different purposes. After 2 years of existence. Facebook allowed users to also create business profiles which enabled interaction between firms and consumers. International firms are pressured by media consumption trends to focus on communication on Facebook because of possible instant negative feedback from users. Thus, firms want their users to be active, interesting, humble, professional, and honest in their social media communications with the public on Facebook [10]. Firms are also able to utilize Facebook social network principles for target group analyses via various methods. In a recently introduced study of social media content analyses the authors of this paper stated that Facebook can be used as a method for companies to follow their content as it spreads from one user to another (citation needed). This allows for a better prediction of the direction and scale of content diffusion. Moreover, it is shown that this diffusion creates lasting network connections with significant potential for achieving marketing insights [11]. However, easy to spread content can be

dangerous because of purposely shared fake information, which can have significant reach and viral potential and can disparage the reputation of firms and lead into user disinformation [12]. Data mining possibilities from social networks can prevent this disinformation and also offer great marketing power. “The advent of online content-sharing social networks makes it easy to collect audience information on a larger scale. This situation provides an opportunity to explore whether multiple materials uploaded by an author have audiences with similar properties and whether the properties of early audiences are consistent with the later ones” [13]. Content placed on the social network seems to be very trustworthy to users and has positive influence on purchase decisions of customers [14].

Facebook as the first and most famous interactive social network has built its brand on its exclusivity. Millions of active users keep track of their profile on a daily basis due to the constant development of new features. The main page of the profile is constantly changing and being updated with news that keeps active users returning on a regular basis. Although Facebook is very popular all around the world, this paper focuses on the Slovak market, where the primary research has been conducted. Based on analyses done in January 2017, Slovakia has 4.6 million active internet users out of a 5.4 million population, out of whom 2.5 million are active social media users [15]. Statistics show a 9% growth rate in the social media user base, which is more than 200,000 compared to the previous year. Analyses reflect the fact that 2.5 million Slovaks are Facebook monthly active users, with 72% using this social network daily.

## 2.1 Facebook Explore Feed

Facebook is constantly testing new features to increase user experience. One of these experiments was the launch of the Explore Feed in October 2017, which tested a new content distribution approach. The test took place in six countries: (1) Slovakia, (2) Bolivia, (3) Cambodia, (4) Guatemala, (5) Serbia, and (6) Sri Lanka. The main aim of the test was to create two different News Feeds with similar, but different purposes:

- The first News Feed was created as a dedicated place for news from friends and family’,
- The second News Feed was created as a dedicated place for content from media and firms that followed the Facebook News Feed.

The first News Feed was dedicated only to news from family and sponsored content from the commercial Facebook profiles. In the second News Feed, users could find content from media and firms and to this News Feed was assigned the name Explore Feed. It represented a new version of content visibility, accessible during the tested period. As per an official statement from Facebook, they were trying to improve News Feed as per requests from users, who preferred an easier way to see posts from friends. The official goal was to discover if users preferred having separate places for personal and public content [16]. As per other statements from

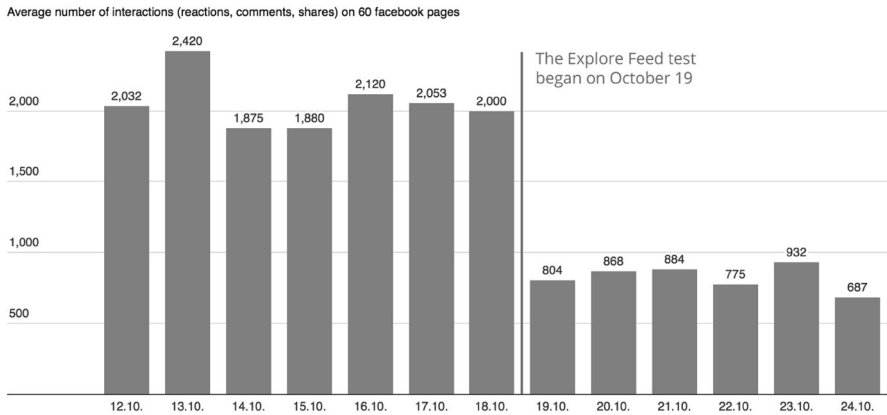
Facebook, the changes were intended to maximize the amount of meaningful interaction and to reduce passive content that users consume on the page. Thus, the idea behind the new Explore Feed was to push users to discover new content across the network beyond posts from friends and Facebook profiles which they already knew. Previously, users could see all content in their main News Feed, however, during the test period, only posts from friends and sponsored posts were visible in the main News Feed. During the test version, it was necessary to click on the Explore Feed to see posts from pages users followed. The selection of recommended posts during the tested period was not completely random. Posts similar to ones which users already liked, searched for, or followed before, were included there. Recommended posts were selected based on the preferences of user's friends. The ultimate goal which Facebook was trying to reach by implementing the Explore Feed was to increase the time users spent on the Facebook website or in the Facebook application. This new version of content distribution and organization also allowed Facebook to distribute more advertisements in between preferred posts. Recently there have been a small number of studies that have specifically examined the content and features of a firm's or user's feed posts and the impact of those features on engagement; however, these studies were conducted mostly by third parties and the research conclusions did not have a big impact on the user experience in the Facebook environment [17].

## 2.2 The Explore Feed Impact

As mentioned previously, during the test period and only within the countries where the test was in operation, users could see only posts from friends, and sponsored posts in the News Feed. The rest of posts were removed from the main News Feed and moved to the Explore Feed. This was in comparison to the rest of the world, where users could see Explore Feed in their bookmarks, where they could search for new content.

The test not only affected individual users but also firms and especially media, which utilized Facebook as the main streamline for content distribution towards their readers. According to the report from Filip Struharik, a journalist of Dennik N, media pages experienced massive drops in organic traffic from Facebook. The reach of several Facebook profiles dropped by over 30% straight after the implementation of the test. The biggest media profiles experienced 4× less interactions such as comments, likes, or shares after the test took the place [18]. The reason behind this is because the change was too radical and it caused posts which might have been interesting for users to become hidden in a separate tab. This basically meant that unless the user was searching for particular news updates from a specific page, s/he would not see them. The overall impact of the change in the News Feed was that it broke down the lines of communication and the website traffic of media from Facebook dramatically dropped. Figure 1 shows the impact of the test on engagement with Facebook posts.

The average engagement (number of interactions) for the 6 days before the test was 2058. Right after implementation of the test, the average daily engagement decreased to 825 (6-day mean average). This massive drop in organic reach and



**Fig. 1** Average number of interactions on the 60 biggest Slovak media Facebook profiles. Source: F. Struharik, “Biggest drop in Facebook organic reach we have ever seen,” 2017 (Online). Available: [https://medium.com/@filip\\_struharik/biggest-drop-in-organic-reach-weve-ever-seen-b2239323413](https://medium.com/@filip_struharik/biggest-drop-in-organic-reach-weve-ever-seen-b2239323413)

engagement had a negative impact on commercial Facebook profiles by media, who utilized Facebook as a source of traffic for their websites, or e-shops, using the social network as a sales channel, too.

### 3 Research and Objectives

Social networks are now significantly popular and represent part of our everyday lives. There is immense pressure on the algorithms in terms of providing an expected level of user experience. Facebook as the most widespread social network that recently tested a new feature called Explore Feed. The purpose of the test was to strengthen the connection between people using the social network and to deliver more relevant and personalized content to Facebook users. A literature overview (citation needed) revealed that the Facebook Explore Feed feature was tested in six countries. Thus, only a few researchers had the opportunity to collect and analyze data regarding the experiment. Based on geographically restricted research options, a research gap was identified. Possible positive or negative perceptions of users on the new Facebook feature had significant impact on a number of regular users, average time spent on the social network, engagement rate, and many other key performance indicators. The literature overview had already revealed a massive decrease in organic reach and engagement. However, these statistics were published by media companies. Therefore, the following question arises: What has caused the negative change? Is it the decreased activity of Facebook users the results of these users not liking the News Feed or the inability of users to find content

The main aim of this article is to identify and summarize perceptions and feedback on the Explore Feed and to determine the consequences of tests like this for global firms in the bigger picture. In this paper, the authors present the results of a survey devoted to the examination of the perception of Facebook Explore Feed. The

authors have addressed three research questions whose answers will help to fulfill the main aim of this article. The questions are as follows:

1. How many people on the Slovak market were affected by the Explore Feed test?
2. How did the affected users perceive the new feature?
3. What changes in content distribution did users experience during the test?

Quantitative research in the form of a survey was conducted to find answers to these research questions. The survey took place from October 2017, when the Explore feed was launched by Facebook in Slovakia as one of the testing countries, up to January 2018, and contained 13 questions. The quantitative research has been conducted in cooperation with Ringier Axel Springer a.s., which is the largest independent media house in Slovakia. The survey was placed on the website Noizz.sk. The website was selected because of the matching user demographics with one of Facebook's core users. Questions in the survey were developed with the intent to cover all three identified research questions. Analysis of the collected responses offered answers to research questions and provided a sufficient amount of information to fulfill the main goal of the study. As part of the collaboration with a commercial entity, every question was considered in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief of the website Noizz.sk, which was used as the vehicle for the survey. Most of the questions were modified into the tone of voice of this website with the purpose of adjusting the language to the preferences of its users. Even though the survey was developed and conducted for the purpose of this research, the questions needed to be adjusted to blend with the editorial content. Despite these necessary modifications, the essence of the questions was preserved in every single case. Closed questions were chosen because of the limited technical possibilities of the website, which, at the time of the research, did not offer any other type of questions. On average, there were 938 answers for one question, with some questions having slightly more than 1000 answers. The evaluation of the demographics of the respondents was performed using Google Analytics tool. The web page containing the survey reached 2884 page views. 56% of the respondents were 18 years old or younger, 15% were aged 18–24, 18% were aged 25–34 and rest of the respondents were 35+ years. 60% of the respondents were male, 40% female. Most of the respondents lived in big cities such as Bratislava, Kosice, Banska Bystrica, Nitra, or Presov. Google Analytics was not able to locate 27% of respondents. 71% of the respondents filled out the survey on a smartphone or tablet, and the rest of them on a desktop computer or notebook. Results obtained from the examined sample are generalized and applied to the whole population of Slovakia.

#### 4 Perceptions of the Facebook Explore Feed

The authors of this paper have developed the research, which monitored users' perception of the Explore Feed. The quantitative research was created in cooperation with media house Ringier Axel Springer, specifically with the website Noizz.

sk. Due to Google Analytics statistics, the website focused on mostly 15–35 year-old users, who created the essential target group of Facebook. The website also utilized the Facebook environment as one of the most important streamlines for the produced content. The survey contained 13 questions about the Explore Feed and the consequences of the test as reflected in users' behavior. Questions in the survey were adjusted to the language of the target group of the website and the questions were written in an informal tone (Table 1).

The Facebook Explore Feed test was not launched on all profiles. The first question showed how many of the respondents had Explore Feed on their Facebook. Almost 90% declared they were part of the test and their News Feed was divided into two categories (Table 2).

In the second question, authors asked users if they thought the Explore Feed was a useful feature when it was launched. The second and third questions shown that users did not like Explore Feed only because they did not use it or did not know how to use it. In the second question, 70% of the respondents answered that they did not like it and they preferred the previous settings. The rest of the respondents liked it or did not care about it (Table 3).

On the question of whether users liked the Explore Feed now or not, 64% answered they did not like it even when they were used to it. Only 6% of the users changed their mind after 3–4 months of seeing Explore Feed (Table 4).

In the fourth survey question respondents clearly expressed that they thought the launch of the Explore Feed was a bad decision, thus depreciating the initial purpose of the social network. 14% of the respondents appreciated receiving only useful information in their News Feed and they did not see posts by firms initially after Log In. The rest of the users did not express an opinion on the question.

The modified Facebook algorithm could have also changed the content type distribution. Table 5 examined what type of content users see in their News Feed. The most significant share (36%) had photos and statuses of friends, 26% did not know how to answer the question because of lack of interest, 20% declared they can see mostly links for the articles and videos shared by their friends, and 18% of the respondents declared they can see mostly events, which were marked "going" or "interested" by their friends. Answers confirmed that change in the News Feed algorithm did not change Facebook's focus on visual content (Table 6).

There were many complaints in media articles and in users' comments that the algorithm had changed causing the appearance of outdated posts in the News

**Table 1** First survey question

Question	1	Do you have Explore Feed in your Facebook profile?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	Yes	89%	577
	B	No	9%	58
	C	What is Explore Feed?	2%	13
Votes				<b>648</b>

Source: Authors' research



**Table 2** Second survey question

Question	2	Did you consider Facebook Explore Feed a useful feature when it was launched?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	No, I like to have everything in one place	70%	844
	B	Yes, I considered Explore Feed a good idea	18%	217
	C	I did not care	12%	145
Votes				<b>1206</b>

Source: Authors' research

**Table 3** Third survey question

Question	3	Do you like Facebook Explore Feed now?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	I do not like it	64	755
	B	I like it	20	236
	C	I still do not care	16	189
Votes				<b>1179</b>

Source: Authors' research

**Table 4** Fourth survey question

Question	4	Do you consider Facebook a more useful platform since Explore Feed?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	No, Facebook is losing its initial purpose	73	847
	B	Yes, I perceive only useful information	14	162
	C	I do not have an opinion on this	13	151
Votes				<b>1160</b>

Source: Authors' research

**Table 5** Fifth survey question

Question	5	What type of posts did you see the most in the primary feed?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	Photos and statuses of friends	36	390
	B	I cannot specify, I do not watch the posts so closely	26	282
	C	Links for articles and videos shared by my friends	20	217
	D	Events, which were marked "going" or "interested" by my friends	18	195
Votes				<b>1084</b>

Source: Authors' research

Feed. Answers in the sixth question confirmed this assumption and 76% of the respondents declared they could see outdated posts, which were several hours old to even days old. Only 6% of the respondents declared they could see the newest posts first (Table 7).

Before what the test users could see only posts of friends or firms' profiles they recently liked. The Explore Feed began to show to users even content from subjects they had no interest in or liked. The initial intention of Facebook was to show users new content based on their behavior and to provide an enhanced user experience. The answers show that Facebook also tested this feature. Almost half of the respondents answered that they could also see content from random profiles, 44% declared they could see only content from Facebook profiles they have recently liked and 7% declared they could see content only from subjects they never liked (Table 8).

After logging into Facebook, users initially saw the content of their friends mixed with the sponsored content of firms. Users had to click on the Explore Feed icon to switch to content of the media and companies. 38% of the users declared they switched every time they visited Facebook, and the rest of the respondents used Explore Feed less frequently. Some users never clicked on Explore Feed; thus they only saw content from friends (Table 9).

The ninth question was crucial to evaluating the consequences of the test. 57% of respondents declared they used Facebook less than before the test; 39% declared that they used it the same amount as before and only 4% declared they used it more often. Overall, the answers indicate a negative impact in terms of Facebook visits, because of the test.

Answers in Table 10 indicate that users tended to use Facebook less frequently. The logical assumption is that they started to use other social networks more frequently. However, 62% declared they did not start to use other social networks more frequently. However, 38% did begin to use other social networks (Table 11).

Most users switched to Instagram and to other not defined social networks. Instagram is a social network owned by Facebook so the visits remained on the firm's platform. Slightly increased visits were also noted locally on Pokec, Twitter, and Snapchat (Table 12).

The 12th question asked if respondents would like to cancel the Explore Feed and use only one News Feed as before the test. The unambiguous answer for 77% of

**Table 6** Sixth survey question

Question	6	At what frequency did posts on your primary feed change?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	I frequently saw posts hours or even days old	76	798
	B	I can see something new approximately every hour	9	95
	C	I am not watching it	9	95
	D	I didn't notice any change; I can still see the newest posts	6	63
Votes				<b>1050</b>

Source: Authors' research

**Table 7** Seventh survey question

Question	7	What can you see in Explore Feed?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	Posts from pages I recently liked, but also posts from pages I did not like	49	280
	B	Only posts from pages I recently liked	44	251
	C	Only posts from Facebook profiles I did not like	7	40
Votes				<b>571</b>

Source: Authors' research

**Table 8** Eighth survey question

Question	8	How often do you click on Explore Feed?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	Always, every time I visit Facebook—maybe even every hour	38	399
	B	A few times a day	28	294
	C	Once a day	18	189
	D	I have never visited Explore Feed	16	168
Votes				<b>1051</b>

Source: Authors' research

**Table 9** Ninth survey question

Question	9	Did you use Facebook more or less after Facebook included Explore Feed?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	Less	57	599
	B	The same as before	39	410
	C	More	4	42
Votes				<b>1051</b>

Source: Authors' research

**Table 10** Tenth survey question

Question	10	Did you start to use other social networks more frequently after Explore Feed was included?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	No	62	642
	B	Yes	38	393
Votes				<b>1035</b>

Source: Authors' research

respondents was, “Yes, I do not like Explore Feed”. 13% of users would like Explore Feed to remain and 10% expressed the opinion that they did not care (Table 13).

During the test, there were several approaches as to how to move between friends’ posts and firms’ posts. Most users’ approaches were to mark a Facebook profile as preferred and its posts would appear mixed with friends’ posts. 50% of the users answered they did not use this feature; 27% did not even know something like this was possible, and 23% answered that they have created such a list with preferred profiles.

**Table 11** Eleventh survey question

Question	11	If you answered yes to the tenth survey question, which other social networks did you use?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	Instagram	55	303
	B	Other	29	160
	C	Pokec	9	50
	D	Twitter	6	33
	E	Snapchat	1	6
Votes				<b>551</b>

Source: Authors’ research

**Table 12** Twelfth survey question

Question	12	Would like Explore Feed to be canceled and Facebook functionality to continue without it?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	Yes, I do not like Explore Feed	77	796
	B	No, I like Explore Feed	13	134
	C	I do not care	10	103
Votes				<b>1034</b>

Source: Authors’ research

**Table 13** Thirteenth survey question

Question	13	If you could create your own list of Facebook profiles, would you like to see these profiles in the original feed mixed with your friends’ posts?	Visualization	
			Percentage	Amount
Answers	A	No	50	285
	B	Is it possible?	27	154
	C	Yes	23	131
Votes				<b>570</b>

Source: Authors’ research

## 5 Discussion and Conclusions

In October 2017, Facebook launched the Explore Feed experiment which divided the News Feeds into two sections. In the first section, users saw only content from their friends and sponsored posts of firms, and in the second section content of commercial Facebook profiles was placed. The test was launched in six countries and Slovakia was one of them. The main purpose of the test was to deliver more relevant content to users and to affirm the position of the social network as a platform which connects people. The test had a significant impact on all market subjects utilizing the platform. The main aim of the conducted quantitative research in this article was to unveil perceptions of the Facebook Explore Feed from the users' point of view. The survey we developed included 13 questions about users' perceptions of the Explore Feed. The answers to these questions included almost all of the users on the Slovak market. Users were confused after the launch of the test and most of them did not like the new feature. Even after 3 months, users did not get used to the Explore Feed and did not like the feature. Most of the respondents were young people (56% were 18 years old or younger, 15% were aged 18–24, 18% were aged 25–34 and the rest were 35+ years) from big cities with more than 50,000 residents. Young people are generally more technologically educated and flexible when it comes to new digital platforms and changes within them. The composition of the utilized sample and the answers in the survey mean that the negative impact of Facebook Explore Feed is even more significant when all users are considered. If younger generations were not satisfied with the changes on the platform and were not able to get used to them after 3 months of their release, the rest of the Facebook users might also react the same way because they might have an even lower flexibility in terms of technological adaptability. The test caused the perception that Facebook lost its initial purpose. This finding is the opposite of what Facebook wanted to accomplish by the test. Respondents declared that they could still see visual content; however, the displayed content was often outdated by as much as a few days and little as a few hours. The Explore Feed test on Facebook also tested at least two types of Explore Feed. The findings showed that almost half of the respondents could see content from firms and subjects they did not like. In these cases, content was distributed on behalf of users' behavior profiles. Users were forced to switch to another feed to receive the information they wanted and more than half of the respondents did so at least once per day. The test caused more than half of the users to use Facebook less frequently and less than a half of them started to use another social network instead of Facebook. Most users started to use Instagram. The assumption of the authors is that mostly younger people switched to other social networks and mostly older target groups started to utilize Facebook less frequently. This idea is based on the assumption that younger users are more technologically adept; they also tend to switch to other social networks more often. Older users might quit using a social network rather than look for alternatives. Almost 80% of the respondents answered 'yes' to the question about whether users would prefer the cancellation of Explore Feed. During the test there were some options about

how to perceive content as in previous settings; however, most of the respondents did not utilize the opportunity or did not even know about the option. The overall result is that the Explore Feed test was not successful and it caused a lot of criticism and negative action toward Facebook. Because of the test, Facebook even lost some regular users and these users had a negative influence on the names of the companies, and also on the average time spent on the platform. On top of the negative experience of the users, other market subjects also raised criticism toward the test because of Facebook's inadequate preparation of market subjects for the test, lack of clarification of the reasons for selection of the countries included in the test, and because of the absence of arguments for employing such a test. Recommendation for future experiments and changes in algorithms should employ a test on a smaller, more adequate sample and focus on better communication with the public.

The research in this article examined users' perception of the Facebook Explore Feed test in the Slovak market. Further research might focus on the perception of the firms, website traffic consequences of the test, the impact of the test on the digital marketing costs of the firms and on an investigation of the Explore Feed situation on other countries of relevance.

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