



Boston University's Guide to Facebook Live

So, you're thinking of hosting a Facebook Live? Here's what you need to know:

But first, what is a Facebook Live?

Facebook Live is a live-streaming service built into Facebook and accessible via the mobile app and on your desktop. By selecting "go live" from the posting options, a user or page can automatically begin broadcasting a live video stream to their followers. Within this stream, viewers can like or react to content and comment in real-time as they would with other content on Facebook. Once the broadcast is complete, the video will be published to the page or profile that broadcasted it, where it lives in perpetuity for non-live viewers to watch or until the owner of the page removes it.

What's the value in participating?

Facebook Live provides you with direct access to a global community of people to connect with about your scholarship or research area. Additionally, Facebook's algorithm favors live videos, making them appear more frequently in your followers' news feeds. To maximize the reach of a high-profile initiative or piece of research on Facebook, a live broadcast is a great option. In addition, the nature of live video is unique content and many subjects lend themselves best to this format over a text article or photo. Finally, you leverage Facebook's user base of over two billion across the globe to increase awareness and engagement about the content you care most about. It's an opportunity to connect directly with targeted, engaged audiences guaranteed to be interested in what you have to say.

How do I set one up?

Broadcasting live is simple! While it can be done at any time, we recommend advance preparation for maximum impact. For a guide on how to go "live," see Facebook's overview [here](#).

How do I make sure people tune in?

Getting in touch with the PR office here at BU is a great start (pr@bu.edu, 617-353-2240). There are general best practices you can use to promote your Facebook Live:

- **Create a Facebook Event:** This can be done as far in advance as you like. The event description should include the subject matter expert(s) participating, the topic, a time/date, link to related information and should solicit questions in advance from interested parties who may not be able to make the live broadcast. Creating the Facebook event ensures viewers will be reminded closer to the "go live" time, increasing their odds of tuning in. You can also invite the schools,



associations, organizations and publications affiliated with the faculty members participating in the Facebook Live to co-host the Facebook event.

- **Cross Promote:** Use other communication channels to notify users that you're hosting a Facebook Live. You can connect with members of your school/college through newsletters, event calendars, and on social media ahead of time after creating the Facebook event. In addition, once you're "live" you can share a link to the broadcast on a Twitter account and encourage people to tune in. Lastly, tap into your network to get the word out. Professors who have worked with funding agencies before can see if those agencies have Facebook pages and if they will work with you to cross-promote. Ask them to share the post as soon as you go live, so that the folks that 'like' their page will also see the stream. Ask as many organizations or influencers as you'd like (the more followers, the better!) to increase your reach and draw more people to your broadcast.

Tips for Hosting:

Hosting a Facebook Live can be done by just about anyone who's not too camera-shy. It's important that the ground rules for communication between the camera operator and the on-screen experts are set in advance, with the camera operator usually opting to stay silent during the broadcast. The host should begin by introducing themselves, their role and what they plan to discuss. Because of the "live" aspect of the video, viewers will tune in sporadically throughout the broadcast. To ensure they aren't lost, it's important to reiterate your name, role and the topic several times throughout. The host should make sure to engage the questions and feedback that appears in the comments section. They can follow these questions on a nearby device of their own or, to prevent confusion, be selectively fed questions/comments from Facebook by another party who is off-camera. The PR team has used a white board or – more efficiently – typed the questions on their own laptops, which we then turn around to face the experts, who can read from it to give context and then provide their answer. This allows the camera operator to be selective, too. Experts should not feel pressured to address each and every question asked. Facebook users know that asking a question does not guarantee an answer.

The BU PR team has seen success organizing joint-Facebook Lives by pulling another high-profile expert or reporter into the conversation with the faculty member or researcher to enable an organic, informative and interesting Q&A that does not solely rely on real-time questions from Facebook users.

BU PR also recommends tying the conversation to timely events/news cycles to draw more attention to the conversation, and to extend the visibility and impact of the conversation by enabling the video to be repurposed/republished.



Checklist

Ahead of Time:

- Create a Facebook Event and solicit questions there in advance.
- Reach out to interested parties (your department, school/college, funding/research partners, publications) and ask for their help in promoting the Facebook Live.
- Create a list of pre-written questions (in case questions take a little bit longer than expected to roll in from your audience). This will keep the experts talking and could possibly inspire follow-up questions from the audience.
- Create a list of “off-limits” questions.
- Cross-promote on your own social media channels and those of your school/college.
- Craft a headline in advance that engages your audience that you can copy/paste into the Facebook Live text box when you eventually start streaming.

Day Of:

- Tweet out the link to your Facebook Live from your personal Twitter handle, if you have an active account. Also, if you’re active on other channels, post the link on your personal Facebook or LinkedIn.
- Email the link for your Live event to your school/college and other affiliates to have them share it from their social channels (as well as central PR).
- Make sure you have a stable and strong internet connection.
- Ensure all devices in the room are silenced and you have a controlled environment, free of ambient noise or interruptions. Pro tip: make sure the iPhone broadcasting the Facebook Live is on “Do Not Disturb” mode. This ensures no incoming calls can disrupt your broadcast.
- Post a comment reminding users that they can chime in on the comments section. Pin this to the top of the comments so it remains in plain view. Begin your broadcast at the designated time.

After:

- Answer any questions you were unable to get to in the live broadcast by replying directly to users’ comments.
- Update the headline and copy of the post accompanying the video to reflect the fact that you’re no longer live.



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- Unpin the comment soliciting live questions if you did so.