

Chapter 15

Reaching out Further with Facebook Connect

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 - ▶ Adding Facebook Connect to your Web site
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 - ▶ Using the Facebook Connect Bug Tracker
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Facebook is all about connecting with friends and, in the case of Facebook Pages for business, fans. Although Facebook has previously focused on containing the experience within the Facebook community, the company has recently launched Facebook Connect to bring many of the viral marketing benefits of Facebook to third-party Web sites, devices, and applications (apps). Facebook Connect represents the evolution of data portability, allowing a site owner to bring many of the same features that fans are familiar with on Facebook to your Web site.

In this chapter, we show you how Facebook Connect can expand your customer base by drawing fans from your Facebook Page to your Web site and attracting other Facebook members.

Introducing Facebook Connect

Since launching in December 2008, more than 15,000 Web sites, devices, and apps have implemented Facebook Connect — and the list is growing. Facebook Connect is a new feature that extends Facebook Platform to other Web sites and offers members the ability to connect their Facebook identity, friends, and privacy settings to a Facebook Connect-enabled Web site. There is no charge for Web site owners to integrate Facebook Connect, although there is rumor of a Facebook ad network in the works serving ads across these sites.

For now, one thing is for sure, savvy marketers are using Facebook Connect in unique, compelling, and engaging ways by providing members with a way of sharing with their friends and fostering community. Figure 15-1 shows a Facebook Connect implementation on the Web guide Citysearch, which allows you to publish reviews to your Facebook profile.

Figure 15-1:
A Facebook
Connect
implemen-
tation on
local Web
guide
Citysearch.



The screenshot shows a 'WRITE A REVIEW' form for the restaurant 'Kefi' at 505 Columbus Ave, New York, NY 10023. The form includes a 'Headline' field with the text 'Affordable Greek has Finally Arrived on the UWS', a 'Rating' field with five stars, a 'Pros' field with the text 'Everything is dependable and reasonably priced', and a 'Cons' field with the text 'Tables are packed a little tight. Need a reservation.' The 'Details' field contains a paragraph of text: 'Kefi has been one of our favorite restaurants since it opened. It moved from its humble space on 79th St., to a very large space on Columbus, but maintained the same menu, and more importantly, the very reasonable prices. My favorite dish is the hanger steak. It's probably the best steak for under \$15 anywhere in NYC. Other notable dishes include the calamari, pork sub/maki, bronzino and lamb chops special. The kids menu is terrific too.' At the bottom of the form, there is a checkbox labeled 'Publish this review to Facebook' which is checked, and two buttons: 'PREVIEW' and 'PUBLISH!'.

Facebook Connect allows Facebook to extend its influence on the Web at large. By turning its social network outside in, it's empowering tens-of-thousands of Web sites and blogs, both big and small, to make use of many of the same features that have made Facebook the fastest growing social network on the planet. And it's proving to be a successful strategy.

The main point to adding Facebook Connect is to encourage members to interact with your Web site in ways that generate stories in Facebook. It's this seamless integration between Facebook Connect partner sites and Facebook News Feed stories that can help make your site viral, that is, spread very quickly within a specific group of friends or to a larger demographic.

Here are four more reasons your organization should add Facebook Connect to its Web site:

- ✓ Allows your visitors to effortlessly connect their Facebook account and profile information with your Web site.
- ✓ Offers site owners access to fans Facebook profiling data, such as name, location, age, and so on, to provide deeper insights into your site visitors.

- ✔ Provides your visitors with an easy way to find and interact with other Facebook friends who also visit your Web site.
- ✔ Leverages Facebook News Feeds as a way to share and promote your other members' actions on your site with their Facebook friends, increasing word-of-mouth buzz and the likelihood of more Facebook visitors.



Like all platform extensions, Facebook Connect does require some sophistication on the part of the Web site owner. Although a number of tutorials are available, via Facebook and third-party Web sites, we recommend that an experienced Web developer integrate the code that's necessary to connect Facebook Connect to your Web site.

Flashing your Facebook badge

One of the advantages of integrating Facebook Connect with your Web site is that it eliminates the need for a Facebook member to have to go through a new registration process to access your site. A simple Facebook ID and password is sufficient for access.



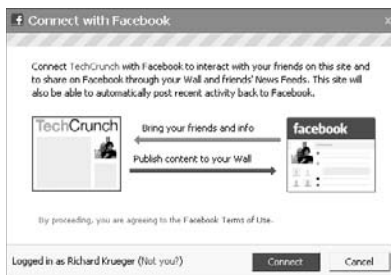
Members are able to connect to your Web site using their Facebook ID and password via a trusted authentication process. This ensures the member that your Web site is a trusted environment, one in which the member maintains total control over the permissions granted. This layer of authentication guarantees the user that no more information will be shared than is allowed according to their Facebook settings, providing a comfort level necessary to engage with the site.

Confirming a member's identity

When you create a Facebook account, you use your real name and profile information. Facebook Connect allows members to bring their real identities with them when visiting a Facebook Connect partner Web site. This includes basic contact information, a profile picture, name, network(s), friends, photos, events, groups, and other relevant information included in your profile. Blogs don't typically sport a log in, but the popular tech blog TechCrunch (see Figure 15-2) was one of the first to integrate Facebook Connect as a way to get readers to do just that by using their Facebook account info.

Figure 15-2:

Popular tech blog TechCrunch was one of the first to integrate Facebook Connect.



Keeping connected with friends

Facebook is enjoying tremendous growth for one central reason — it satisfies peoples' need to stay connected with their friends and family. Facebook Connect extends that capability to partner Web sites so users can continue to stay connected, even when they're not on Facebook. In this way, Facebook Connect allows users to take their friends with them. This identity portability is what Facebook Connect is all about.

Developers are adding a wide range of rich social experiences to their sites via Facebook Connect. From alerting visitors about Facebook friends who already have accounts to distributing stories, status updates, comments, and profile pictures to location-aware content, Facebook Connect partners are building better Web sites by tapping into their site visitors' social graphs and extending many of the same activities they've come to rely on within Facebook.

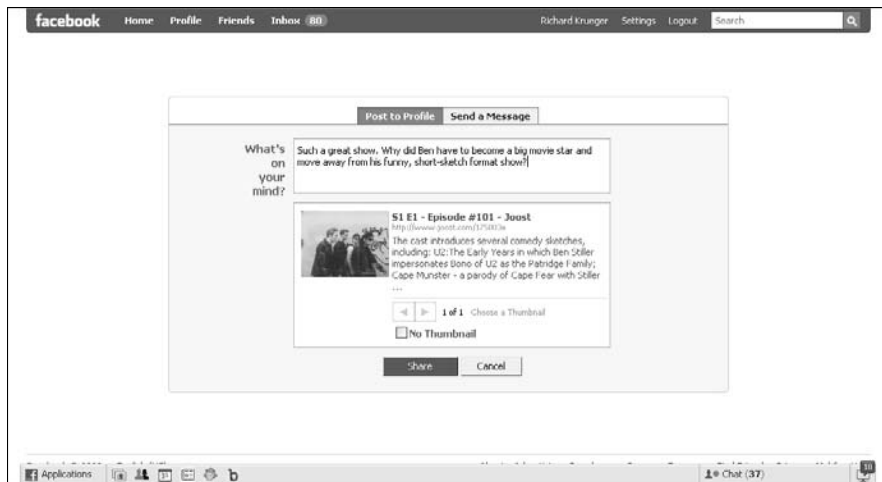
Increasing your Web site's visibility

One of the biggest benefits for Web site owners of adding Facebook Connect is the increased visibility among Facebook members. When Facebook members sign in to your site, their actions generate News Feed stories that have the potential of driving more visitors to you. With News Feeds, Facebook creates a highly viral environment in which your Facebook visitors serve as a viral agent, or an online evangelist, influencing their friends' actions. Video sharing site Joost allows you to share what you're watching with Facebook friends via the Facebook Connect implementation (see Figure 15-3).



Anytime a member interacts with a Facebook Connect partner site, a news story is generated (depending upon that user's privacy settings), which can appear in their friends' News Feed. Marketers need to encourage users to engage in social acts through clever prompts, such as, "Write a review and let everyone know what you think."

Figure 15-3:
Video sharing site Joost and its Facebook Connect implementation.



Getting Started with Facebook Connect

In its simplest form, Facebook Connect can be added to most existing sites with just a few lines of code, and plug-ins are available for many content management systems and blogging platforms, such as Drupal, TypePad, and WordPress. By adding Facebook Connect to your Web site, any Facebook member can use their Facebook account log-in information (that is, e-mail and password) to seamlessly log in to your Web site (or any other Facebook Connect-enabled Web site).

Connecting Facebook to your Web site

Facebook Connect behaves a lot like a Facebook app. Web site owners have access to your Facebook profile data, who sees it and what actions are turned into news stories and published on your Facebook Wall. In this way, it serves as a bridge between users' interaction with your Web site and their Facebook network.

To integrate Facebook Connect with your Web site, you must register and receive an API (Application Programming Interface) key via the Facebook Developer App page. An API is a set of common code standards that allow third-party developers to build software that can interoperate with the Facebook Platform. It is free to register for a Facebook API key and to implement Facebook Connect on your Web site.



Once you have your API key, you can create a new Facebook app and configure it to point to your Web address. This is done through the Callback URL field (see Figure 15-4).

You must already be a Facebook member to register for a Facebook Developer API key.

Registering for an API key

Following are the steps that you can take to register for an API key, if you are not already a Facebook app developer:

1. Scroll to the bottom of your screen and click the Developers link.

You see the Facebook Developers page.

2. Near the top of your screen, click the Start Now button.

The Get Started page appears.

3. In the middle of your screen, click the Go to the Facebook Developer App link.

The Facebook Developer app begins the install process. You'll need to click Allow access the first time you click the link to get to the Developer page.

4. At the top of the Developer page, click the Set Up New Application button.

The Create Application page appears.

5. Type the name of your app.

Note: You must create an app within Facebook in order to receive an API key that allows you to integrate Facebook Connect on your Web site.

To read the Facebook Terms of Agreement, you can click the link.

6. Click Agree, and then click the Save Changes button.

Please note, if you disagree to the terms, you receive a Validation Failed alert and won't be able to proceed.

Congratulations, you are now officially a registered Facebook app developer and have a unique API key. In addition to developing Facebook apps, you can now integrate Facebook Connect within your Web site or iPhone app.

Setting up a new Facebook Connect app

After receiving your API key (or if you already are already a registered Facebook developer), click the Edit settings link from the My Application page. Here, you can edit your other app developer information (see Figure 15-4).

- **Essential Information:** You are assigned an application ID, an API key, and a secret code. Do not share your API key with anyone (except your trusted Web developer).
- **Basic Information:** You can type a description, upload an icon or logo, select your language, and add or remove developers to the project.
- **Contact Information:** You can enter the developer's contact e-mail, which is where Facebook can most easily contact you. There's also a field for user support e-mail, which is more of a customer support function.
- **User-facing URLs:** Here, you are asked to add links to display a help URL, a privacy URL, and a terms of service URL. You can link to your Web site pages or internally to your Facebook Page and user support e-mail (they can be the same person, or could route to two entirely different departments.)

Click Save to store your Application Settings information. You'll be taken to the My Applications page.



You can also choose to leave these fields blank, but it's always a good idea for a business Web site (or Facebook Page for that matter) to provide a Help page, a Privacy page, and a Terms of Service statement. It serves to protect the organization from a legal standpoint, and provides users with an upfront perspective of their rights.

The screenshot shows the Facebook application settings interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'facebook', 'Home', 'Profile', 'Friends', 'Inbox (0)', and a search bar. Below that, the page title is 'Edit Dummies Connect Test' with a 'Back to My Applications' link. The main content area is divided into sections: 'Basic' (selected), 'Authentication', 'Profiles', 'Canvas', 'Connect', 'Widgets', and 'Advanced'. Under 'Basic', there's a sub-section 'Essential Information' with fields for 'Application Name' (Dummies Connect Test), 'Application ID' (119520072064), 'API Key' (b3c471c5c8c15f7bb5e41c15a9e757b), and 'Secret' (574ba5d7de4074c4852fabf434dc240). To the right of these fields are warnings: 'Cannot contain Facebook trademarks or have a name that can be confused with an application built by Facebook.' and 'Your public API key. Do not share your secret key with anyone.' Below this is a 'Basic Information' section with a 'Description' field, an 'Icon' field with a 'Change your icon' link, and a 'Logo' field with a 'Change your logo' link. To the right of these fields are descriptions: 'The plainest description of your application.', 'The image that appears next to your application name throughout Facebook. Limit: 36x36 px.', and 'The image that appears in the Application Directory and with your requests. Limit: 75x75 px.'

Figure 15-4: Facebook provides developers with a unique API key.



Add a Fan Box to your Facebook Connected site and drive more Facebook fans. Just cut-and-paste a line of code. It's that simple.

Finding developer support and resources

Facebook provides comprehensive online support for their devoted developer community. On the Facebook Connect page, you find documentation to get started, as well as sample apps, source code, and iPhone support.



This material is intended for technical geeks; marketers need not read!

You can get to the Facebook Connect resources in three easy steps:

- 1. Scroll to the bottom of your screen, and then click the Developers link.**

The Facebook Developers page appears.

- 2. At the top of your page, choose Resources → Facebook Connect.**

The Facebook Connect page provides you with detailed information about Facebook Connect APIs and the way members can share content and actions with Facebook friends.

- 3. Click the blue Connect With Facebook button to go to the Facebook Connect Developer Community/Resources page.**

Here, you'll find plenty of information to get you started in your Facebook Connect implementation. You'll also find links to discussion, view source, history, and Watch, which adds Facebook Connect to your watch list. You'll also find links to a more technical overview on the right side.

Facebook Developers info

A *wiki* (think Wikipedia, for example) is a collaborative Web site that is powered by a developer community. In Facebook's case, developers contribute in discussion forums, and add and edit a growing knowledge database that is easily searchable and accessible to all community members. (To view the main page of the Facebook Developer wiki, click the Documentation link at the top of any Facebook Developers page.)



For the technically astute, the tutorials, sample apps, script libraries, and best practices featured within the Facebook Developers pages should provide you with everything you need to integrate Facebook Connect with your Web

site. And, for the rest of us, it's best to enlist the help of a knowledgeable Web developer who can offer recommendations on the best ways to engage users via Facebook Connect.

With the Facebook API, it's best for programmers to jump in and begin developing and testing new Facebook Connect implementations. This helps familiarize them with Facebook Platform and gives an idea of its possibilities and limitations. (See Figure 15-5.)

Finding Facebook Connect communities

From the Facebook Developer wiki page (click the Documentation link at the top of any Facebook Developers page), you can view a host of official and unofficial libraries and developer communities centered around developing apps for the Facebook Platform as well as implementing Facebook Connect. In the left column of the Facebook Developer wiki page, click the Client Libraries link. The company lists a number of developer libraries, along with links to both internal and external resources. The wiki also allows its community members to edit the list, keeping it fresh and up-to-date through people power.

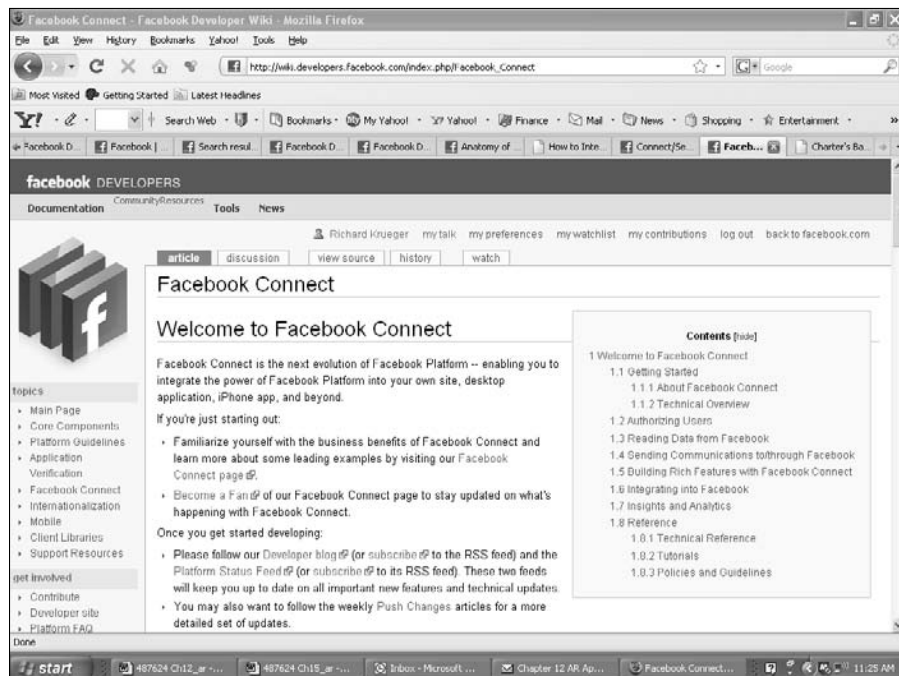


Figure 15-5: Facebook provides ample resources for developers.

Tracking bugs in Facebook apps and Facebook Connect

From the Client Libraries page, you can use the Bug Tracker for developers to document bugs and review related issues (even issues tracked by other developers). To register for a Bug Tracker account, at the top of any Facebook Developers page, choose Resources → Bug Tracker. The Facebook Platform bug tracking system displays (see Figure 15-6), where you can create an account, browse existing bug reports, enter a new bug or feature request, and view the most popular bugs. You'll find easy navigation within the Bug Tracker via tabs at the top of the Bug Tracker page that link to the Bug Main, New Bug, Search, Browse, and Help pages.

Facebook Connect news resources

Because Facebook is continuously adding new capabilities to its Facebook Platform API and Facebook Connect extension, it's a good idea to check the Facebook Developers News section often. You find the News tab on the top menu of any Facebook Developers page. Click the News tab to view the News page with the menu tabs Blog, Press (guidelines regarding partner press releases), and Platform Updates. The Platform Updates page provides a stream of developer-related updates. The brief news stories keep developers informed of changes, bug issues, and beta programs.

The screenshot shows the Facebook Bug Tracker interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Bugs Main, New Bug, Search, Browse, and Help. Below the tabs, it says "Bug List: (1 of 56) First Last Prev Next Show last search results".

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Details:**
 - Summary: FB.Connect.showShareDialog - flawed implementation - remo...
 - Bug#: 5385
 - Product: Facebook Connect
 - Component: Connect API methods
 - Status: UNCONFIRMED Priority: P5
 - Resolution: Severity: enhancement
- URL:**
 - beta or live site?: Live site (www.facebook.com)
 - Depends on:
 - locks:
 - Show dependency tree - Show dependency graph
- Attachments:**
 - Add an attachment (proposed patch, testcase, etc.)
- People:**
 - Reporter: Alex Chang
 - Assigned To: Luke Shepard
 - CC: mtrainer@fb, nbiswas@fb, wzhu@fb
- Related actions:**
 - View Bug Activity
 - Format For Printing
 - XML
 - Clone This Bug
 - Votes: 0
 - Vote for this bug
- Note:**
 - You need to log in before you can comment on or make changes to this bug.
- Description:**
 - Opened: 2009-05-20 11:23
 - <NS>[Glock_Coma] i'm going to smack you guys for what you guys did to the fb connect share function
 - <NS>[Glock_Coma] you guys have Share this story? - with the fb icon next to it - then you add a HUGE FB header at the top

Figure 15-6: Facebook provides a bug tracker to help developers document software bugs.

Ben & Jerry's serves up a tasty Facebook Connect treat

Known as an environmentally-conscience purveyor of quality ice cream with a penchant for outrageous flavors, Vermont's own Ben & Jerry's has a loyal fan base that feel a powerful connection to the brand. The company wanted to translate that connection into social engagement via a compelling Facebook Connect implementation.

They decided to offer a social experience around their flavors (63 in all). Visitors who log in using Facebook Connect on the Ben & Jerry's Flavors page (go to www.benjerry.com and click the Flavors link on the top menu) can declare themselves a fan of a particular flavor,

leave a comment, and post to their Facebook profile for all their friends to see. Another element of viral marketing is the ease in which you can invite up to eight of your Facebook friends.

While few companies attain a brand following enjoyed by Ben & Jerry's, we can all learn from respected marketers who take risks and stand on the leading edge of technology. Obviously, the company's strategy is working, as Ben & Jerry's has amassed over 930,000 fans to its Facebook Page. By the way, Rich's favorite flavor is Karamel Sutra and he's proud to be a fan.