

APPS

The Wall Street Journal Gets Social With Launch of Facebook App

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By Anna Sanders 9/20 11:03am



The Wall Street Journal announced Sept. 20 the beta launch of WSJ Social, a Facebook news application that allows users to read, share and comment on content within Facebook.

“It’s an app that will live on Facebook,” said Daniel Bernard, digital product chief of the *Journal’s* digital network, at a launch party Sept. 19. “Instead of taking the old paradigm of driving traffic to our website and having people go back and fourth, why not create a great useable product and usable experience for someone right inside of Facebook? So that’s the direction we’re heading... it’s fantastic.”

The Facebook app will include a grid-like stream of content from articles and blogs on WSJ.com. Similar to linked materials on Facebook news streams, users can “like,” re-share and comment on articles through WSJ Social. But in addition to these traditional Facebook features, WSJ Social users can also read entire articles without getting linked to the original article.

WSJ Social does have advertisements but will be available for free for the first month. After that, Mr. Bernard explained to the *Observer*, users must pay for access to app’s content that’s behind a paywall on WSJ.com. While he said the details for paying for WSJ Social access directly on Facebook haven’t been arranged, readers will be able to use the app with an online subscription after the first month.

In addition to WSJ.com content, other features will be added to the app in the coming days and weeks as part of the beta release.

One such feature treats users as “editors” of their own customizable content stream where they

can share their favorite stories and follow other “editors.” Users with the most followers are recognized as “top editors” on the left-hand side letter board of the app.

“Basically every user of the app is an ‘editor,’” explained Maya Baratz, head of new products at the *Journal*, at the launch party. She said top editors are going to receive rewards for their activity on WSJ Social.

“We’re very excited for all of you to add the app to your Facebook, start using it and to start that competitive set to become one of our top editors,” Mr. Bernard said.

After the announcement, Mr. Bernard and Ms. Baratz joked that they’d become pretty competitive vying for a top editor position on WSJ Social.

“It’s really fun,” Ms. Baratz said

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