

**PROXIMITY
BRIEFING:**

**Facebook launches
clickable hashtags**

JUNE, 2013

↗ **HASHTAGS** have been a growing trend in social media and advertising, with the popular pound signs finding their way into daily conversation and advertising campaigns alike. Until today, Facebook was one of the only social platforms that did not support clickable hashtag functionality.

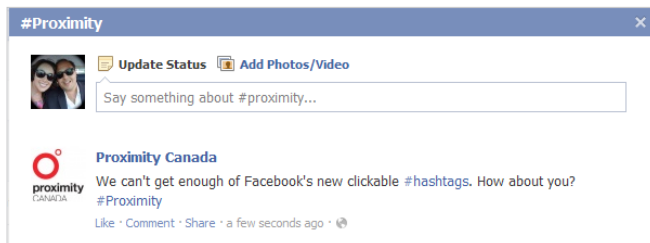
Playing to existing user behaviour on both the network and social media at large, Facebook has announced that it will roll out clickable hashtags with all users expected to have the feature available in the coming weeks.

Proximity has developed a Snapshot briefing to provide brand leaders with all they need to know about this new feature. We recommend that brands work the new Facebook hashtag functionality into their digital strategies so they can integrate campaigns even deeper and capture the conversations that are already happening.

➤ WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Facebook users frequently include hashtags in their posts, but they were effectively just text – the hashtags did not click through as on other social networks. New hashtags now work as follows:

- When users click on a hashtag in Facebook, they will see a feed of what other people and pages are saying about that event or topic
- Users can search for a specific hashtag from the search bar. For example, #StanleyCup
- Posts imported from other services (such as pins from Pinterest or photos from Instagram) will now have clickable hashtags
- Users will be able to compose posts directly from the new hashtag feed and search results

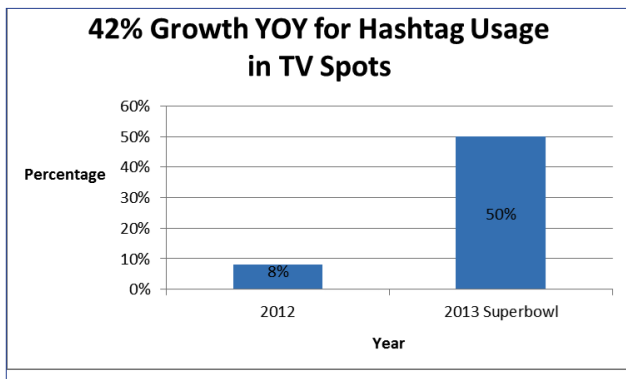


↗ WHAT WILL THIS FEATURE MEAN FOR BRANDS?

This feature improves the Facebook user experience for both individuals and brands. Brands will now be able to easily facilitate cross-platform campaigns that center on social conversation, driving to a single, measurable hashtag. It will also be easier to monitor public conversation across the entire Facebook platform.

MORE AND MORE BRANDS ARE USING HASHTAGS TO LINK COMMUNICATIONS

The popularity and effectiveness of hashtags in TV commercials as a call to action is growing. During the 2012 Super Bowl, only 8% of the ads featured a social media CTA. In 2013, over 50% of the ads featured a hashtag.



<http://socialmediatoday.com/anitaloomba/1229061/twitter-hashtags-tv-commercials>

TWITTER IS ALSO IMPLEMENTING NEW HASHTAG FEATURES FOR BRANDS

A hashtag used to be seen on television and would organically work its way to social media, but Twitter has recently come up with a way of accelerating the process. Twitter will listen carefully to which shows users are watching, analyze which ads they have seen and brands will then be able to target promoted tweets to the users who have just seen their ads.

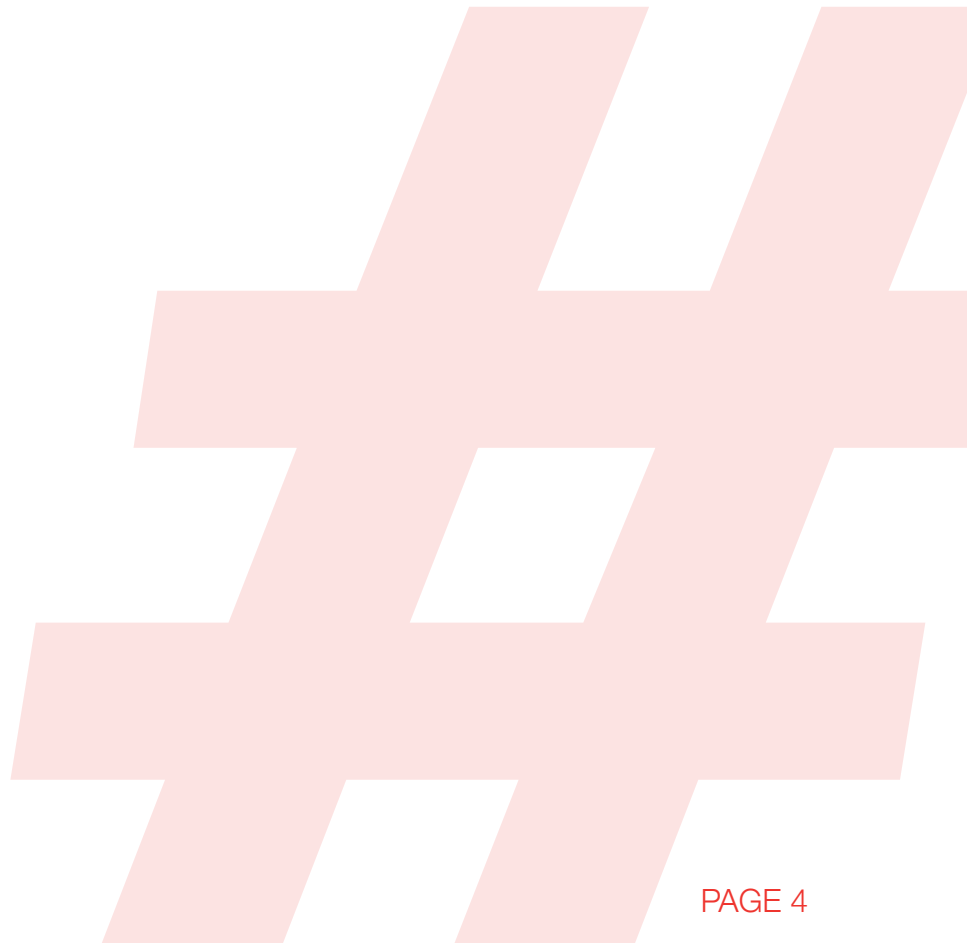
(<http://allthingsd.com/20130523/like-that-tv-ad-you-just-saw-twitter-wants-to-show-you-another-one/>)

NOW WITH FACEBOOK HASHTAG FUNCTIONALITY, BRANDS HAVE AN EVEN GREATER OPPORTUNITY TO SPARK CONVERSATIONS ON ONE PLATFORM AND CAPTURE THEM ON ANOTHER. WE ARE NO LONGER RESTRICTED TO TWITTER OR INSTAGRAM AND WE CAN NOW TRACK THE CONVERSATION HAPPENING ON OUR AUDIENCE'S NETWORK OF CHOICE.

↗ AREAS TO CONSIDER

Will brands be able to engage in hashtagged public conversation in a meaningful, organic way?

- Now that hashtagged conversations are visible across the entire Facebook network, will it feel natural when brands jump into conversations across the network? This is the norm on Twitter and Instagram, but Facebook is inherently more private, even on public posts. Brands are not currently able to comment on public posts on individual user pages.
- People are currently using hashtags more colloquially and often ironically on Facebook. Will the implementation of the clickable hashtag change their behaviour to use hashtags in a more functional manner that will be beneficial to brands?



IN SUMMARY

The introduction of Facebook hashtags will enrich the user and brand experience on the social network. Hashtags are another step towards Facebook's goal of being the ultimate hub for online social content. For brands, hashtags will allow for digital campaigns to be truly integrated across all mediums and platforms. A hashtag shown on TV will now translate across Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook, with opportunities for advertising continually appearing. Brands will be able to see the cadence of brand and campaign-related conversation across multiple platforms with one defining, measurable driving force: hashtags.

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