

FACEBOOK LETS MESSENGER 'BOTS' TAP ANALYTIC SMARTS

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook yesterday began letting interactive "bots" inside its Messenger service tap into analytic capabilities once reserved for the social network, ramping up the potential to earn money from e-commerce. The move comes as Facebook is under pressure to profit from services such as Messenger, WhatsApp and Instagram, having recently told investors it is hitting a limit on the number of ads it can pack into the online social network.

Facebook last week rolled out news feed ads that open into Messenger exchanges, and began letting businesses send "sponsored messages" to users who have interacted with them before. "Driving people to a Messenger conversation isn't enough," Facebook vice president of messaging products David Marcus said in an online post. "This is

where sponsored messages come in."

Facebook shares took a hit early this month after the huge social network delivered a blockbuster earnings report but warned that its stunning growth pace was set to slow. Although the California group reported a surge in profit and revenue, it also said it was unlikely to sustain that kind of growth in the near future. Facebook executives on an earnings call said the social network can no longer keep boosting the number of ads delivered without harming the user experience.

Bet on Bots

Since they were first announced at Facebook's annual developer conference in April, more than 30,000 chatbots have been built with artificial intelligence to act as virtual agents for businesses in text

exchanges with customers. The bots can answer questions, offer goods and services, send receipts or confirm reservations. Data gathered and provided by the social network would include how often people are transferred to humans at businesses or click through to websites to make purchases.

Analytics tools can also provide demographic insights on users based on what people share publicly at the leading social network. "These bots are providing new ways for businesses to interact with their customers," Facebook product manager Josh Twist told AFP. "Because we own the Messenger platform, we can help get analytics without any effort." Twist stressed that data being made available to businesses came only from interactions in their own bots, and that any broad insights such as behavior

breakdowns by demographics was aggregated and made anonymous.

Boosting Business

Last year, Facebook made analytics tools available for apps synced to the social network. Providing the insights to bots at Facebook-owned Messenger moves them outside the social network for the first time. The company could then make money from the messaging service by acting as an intermediary between businesses and customers. Analytics may reveal reasons people add items to virtual carts but don't complete purchases, or which marketing approaches work better with women or men. "This is about understanding user behavior and identity," Twist said.

User demographics derived from analytics potentially include information

openly shared at Facebook including gender, country, language, education levels and relationship status. That data is aggregated and made anonymous, according to Facebook. "You could never snoop on a particular individual," Twist said. Twist said the company's goal is to help businesses using bots discern what makes people buy rather than browse.

Bots do not receive analytic data in real time, so artificial intelligence cannot learn along the way or detect if it is chatting with a man or a woman, according to Twist. He said developers currently build artificial intelligence for bots, and Facebook handles the analytics. The company also announced it will begin accepting developers of bots for Messenger into a Facebook-sponsored program that provides free tools, services, and other resources to those who qualify. — AFP

HUAWEI LAUNCHES NOVA SMARTPHONE SERIES IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: The Huawei Consumer Business Group in Kuwait launched the Huawei nova and Huawei nova plus, the first smartphones in the new series designed to meet the needs of today's most dynamic consumers. The nova smartphones are available at local retailers.

The new nova series features a stunning multi-curve design, camera advances for more vivid photography and performance updates for enhanced usability. Every fea-

ture of the Huawei nova series is powered by the Snapdragon 625 processor, which uses advanced 14nm technology to increase performance and reduce power consumption. The Huawei nova's 3020 mAh battery with Smart Power 4.0 can power longer sessions for users to easily navigate between different apps. With a next-generation 3D fingerprint sensor, the Huawei nova supports faster and more accurate 360-degree unlocking for improved security, convenience and single hand selfies.

Ergonomic Design

The Huawei nova smartphone's curved surfaces and 5-inch screen connect seamlessly to create an ergonomic, compact design that fits perfectly in the user's hands, enabling single-handed functionality. The nova plus smartphone has a 5.5-inch screen.

Outstanding Photography Experience

The nova smartphone sports a 12-megapixel rear camera which allows users to capture photos in low-light conditions, while the nova plus features an outstanding 16-megapixel rear camera, enabling it to capture more light for sharper, clear and richly refined photos in any environment. In addition, the Huawei nova series supports fast autofocus for amazing accuracy, helping consumers to capture wonderful moments in their life.

The smartphone is equipped with an 8-megapixel front-facing camera, enabling users to take and share better selfies in any lighting condition. Additional features include the proprietary Beauty Makeup 2.0 and Beautiful Skin 3.0 applications, which apply cosmetic effects and skin smoothing filters to create more flattering images.

Real-world Performance

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ture of the Huawei nova and Huawei nova plus is designed to support consumers' fast-paced lifestyles and express their unique personalities, whether that means capturing the perfect selfie or taking thousands of shots on a single charge. The Huawei nova series delivers brilliant usability features combined with stunning looks, powerful performance and fantastic camera which continues Huawei's commitment

GIGAMON TO SHOWCASE INNOVATIVE VISIBILITY FABRIC SOLUTIONS AT RSA

DUBAI: Gigamon, the leader in traffic visibility solutions, announced its participation as Silver Sponsor at the second edition of RSA Conference 2016 Abu Dhabi, being held from November 15-16, 2016 at the Emirates Palace Hotel, Abu Dhabi. The company will showcase its innovative Visibility Fabric solutions and the industry's first security delivery platform - GigaSECURE at the niche IT security conference.

"Globally enterprises are getting increasingly stretched with the challenges of managing sophisticated and versatile security threats on a daily basis as well keeping the lights on for IT security operations. Cybercriminals are continuously attempting to breach every major corporation and government department around the world with varying degrees of success. As organisations grow, data is getting dispersed across the infrastructure, and IT organisations are struggling to manage, analyse, and secure their networks. Gigamon's Visibility Fabric can provide an overview as well as granular visibility into the network," said Trevor Dearing, EMEA Marketing Director at Gigamon.

Gigamon has been designing and building traffic visibility products since 2004. Its solutions are deployed globally across vertical markets including over half of the Fortune 100 companies and many government and federal agencies. The company will showcase its GigaVUE portfolio of high availability and high-density products that intelligently deliver network traffic using management, compliance and security tools.

Gigamon will also place the spotlight on GigaSECURE, the industry's first security delivery platform that provides visibility of network traffic, users, applications and suspicious activity, and delivers to multiple security devices without impacting network availability. The direct result is that third party security appliances are more effective at protection and remediation, and cost and complexity of security infra-



Trevor Dearing

structure is reduced. "Gigamon understands the importance of critical data and we have solutions available today, from standalone visibility-in-a-box to distributed offerings extending visibility to remote locations. At the RSA Conference 2016 Abu Dhabi, we are looking forward to highlighting the importance of visibility in the security strategy of regional enterprises. We are showcasing GigaSECURE as an innovation that makes the world's most effective security tools even stronger," Dearing explained. Globally, RSA Conferences are the world's largest IT security conferences, which play a crucial role in providing a learning platform for IT leaders, security vendors, policy makers to meet, network and share the latest security trends and technologies. The RSA Conference 2016 Abu Dhabi will bring together leading IT security experts from around the world to discuss the most critical challenges facing organizations. Gigamon has been participating in RSA Conferences globally and is continuing its presence at the Abu Dhabi edition of the event in November 2016.

NEW MACS, LENOVO LAPTOP MAKE KEYBOARDS TOUCHY

NEW YORK: Can the venerable laptop keyboard get more touchy-feely - and in a good way? We're about to find out. Higher-end models of Apple's MacBook Pro now come with a narrow touch screen above the regular keyboard for quick access to common settings and tasks, while Lenovo's Yoga Book laptop loses the physical keyboard entirely. The traditional keyboard has never struck me as needing much improvement, although people who've grown up on touch screens might well feel differently. These touch innovations, in fact, may mostly be aimed at luring such users to laptops. So how do the new touch features improve typing and computing?

Touch Screens, Not Keyboards

Many Windows laptops and tablets with physical keyboard accessories have long had touch screens. You still type primarily on a traditional keyboard, but you can poke screen icons and menus directly with your finger instead of navigating with a mouse or trackpad. This can be useful for basic tasks such as opening apps, moving the cursor to the search bar and rebooting the machine. But when fixing typos in documents, selecting email to delete and even editing photos, my trackpad is generally more precise than my fat fingers on the screen. A stylus helps, but I'm prone to misplacing it. It's also generally faster to just keep your fingers on the keys.

Touch Keys

Largely for these reasons, Apple has shunned touch screens on its notebooks. But its high-end MacBooks are getting a separate, narrow strip that replaces the top row of function keys you'll find on most keyboards. This Touch Bar offers the same functions, but instead of hitting F11 or F12 to change volume, for instance, you tap the speaker icon to bring up a volume slider. You can fix up to four icons in place; the initial defaults are brightness, volume, mute and the Siri voice assistant. The rest of the strip changes based on context.

When you're using the Safari browser, for instance, you typically get thumbnails of individual tabs for easy switching between websites. But that changes to play and pause if you're watching Netflix, while your name and address pop up as choices when filling out online forms. Apple's Maps app offers one-touch access to nearby businesses or directions. Mail and Messages offer auto-complete suggestions as you type, plus a button for emojis, similar to what you'd find on iPhones and iPads. You get touch access to system controls, such as "cancel" and "save," so you don't have to move your cursor. Third-party apps can add their own functionality, too, though the ones I use regularly have yet to do so.

Habits and Discoveries

The new volume and brightness sliders are much easier to use than tapping the appropriate function key multiple times to get the level I want. In Photos, I can scroll through my library more quickly than using arrow keys. And the Touch Bar does make it easy to include emojis in messages. Because I use it frequently, I made the screenshot function a default icon. No more opening Grab, navigating a menu and returning to the window I'm trying to preserve. I've also discovered functions I never knew existed, such as the ability to highlight text in Preview with different colors. This may matter less if, like me,



CUPERTINO, California: This Oct 27, 2016 photo shows MacBook computers in a demo room following the announcement of new products at Apple headquarters. —AP

you're a pretty good typist with a command of keyboard shortcuts. The Touch Bar will be more useful for those who look down at the keys when typing. One suggestion: The mute icon stays the same regardless of whether the Mac is already on mute. How about a distinct icon to unmute, now that the options are dynamic?

Fingerprints

The Mac now turns on automatically when you open the lid. In place of a power button is a fingerprint scanner, similar to what's found on mobile devices. You still have to type in my password occasionally as a security measure, but you can avoid doing so most of the time when resuming a session or installing new software. People sharing a computer can instantly switch profiles with their own fingerprints.

What Else

The MacBook Pro has a larger trackpad and is lighter and thinner than previous models, thanks in part to shorter keys that don't feel awkward. You no longer get regular USB ports or an SD memory card slot for photos. That means buying adapters to connect older printers, scanners and your iPhone to the new USB-C ports. On the plus side, you can now connect the power charger on either side, depending on where the outlet is.

And the MacBook retains a headphone jack, something the latest iPhones dropped. If you don't need the Touch Bar or the fingerprint scanner, you can save \$300 with an entry-level

MacBook Pro, but it is slower and has ports only on one side. The Touch Bar models start at about \$1,800 for a 13-inch screen and \$2,400 for 15 inches.

Disappearing Keyboard

Meanwhile, the 10-inch Yoga Book (about \$500 for Android, \$600 for Windows) retains the clamshell design of a laptop but has a second touch screen where the keyboard normally goes. Unlike pop-up touch keyboard in tablets, this one doesn't block the main display as you type. Without physical keys, the device is just 0.38 inch thick, or about two-thirds the thickness of the new MacBooks.

The Yoga provides both tactile and audio feedback when you hit the keys, although it's still easy to miss the ones you're aiming for. It takes longer to type because of all the typos, which gets annoying very quickly. You would think that with a touch keyboard, the Yoga could reconfigure the keys to toggle between upper and lower cases and switch languages, much the way a touch keyboard on a phone or tablet does on the screen. But the keys themselves always appear in standard English and in upper case, even when you're typing in Thai. Call it a missed opportunity. An Australian startup called Sonder is already planning to ship such a keyboard for \$199 this year, but who wants to carry around an extra accessory? If it makes it onto a future laptop, it could mark a true revolution that goes well beyond the minor changes the Touch Bar and the second touch screen offer. — AP

CISCO TRANSFORMS SECURITY WITH AMP FOR ENDPOINTS

DUBAI: At the annual Partner Summit in San Francisco, Cisco unveiled a new approach to endpoint security that is transforming the market. Cisco AMP for Endpoints combines prevention, detection and response to simplify endpoint security, allowing customers to ditch ineffective prevention-only strategies. By leveraging the scale and power of the cloud and Cisco's threat-centric security architecture, AMP for Endpoints allows customers to see and stop more threats, faster.

"Cisco continues the relentless evolution of our security architecture from the network to the endpoint to the cloud. The AMP for Endpoints launch is a critical milestone. Customers now have the opportunity to simplify their endpoint security strategy, securing mobile users, servers and desktops by leveraging Cisco's threat-centric security architecture," said Scott Manson, Cyber Security Leader for Middle East and Turkey at Cisco.

Shadi Salama, Channel Leader - Middle East Theatre, Cisco added, "Cisco's global partners are playing a strategic role in helping customers build and manage their

security architecture. With a new endpoint security solution, partners have the opportunity to tap into a market that is growing rapidly at 48 percent per year. Through Cisco's differentiated approach to endpoint security and new security software consumption models, Cisco partners can create additional service opportunities and unlock recurring revenue streams."

A New Approach to Endpoint Security

A secure foundation is essential for today's digital business models.



Scott Manson



Shadi Salama

Yet organizations are struggling to protect mobile users, desktops, laptops and servers against advanced malware attacks. Why? Most organizations focus on a prevention-only strategy based on legacy solutions that are not effective in defending against modern malware. Some organizations then layer additional products onto the endpoint to gain visibility and respond to threats that have evaded these legacy solutions. This creates significant operational complexity and inefficiency. With the fact that it takes enterprises, on average, over 100 days to detect a

threat in their own environment, it is clear that organizations need a new approach to endpoint security.

AMP for Endpoints offers a path to simpler, more effective endpoint security. By combining prevention, detection and response in one SaaS-deployed, cloud-managed solution, it reduces complexity and stops more threats. Through this cloud-based approach, AMP for Endpoints gets actionable intelligence into the hands of organizations faster, giving them an edge against today's attackers.

From the network to the endpoint to the cloud, Cisco's threat-centric security architecture ensures that customers get more from existing security investments, increasing capability while decreasing complexity. Like other Cisco security products, AMP for Endpoints shares and correlates threat information across the entire architecture, both the AMP ecosystem and other Cisco security platforms. This architectural approach to security means Cisco customers can see more threats, faster. In recent testing by NSS labs, Cisco achieved the fastest TTD with 91.8 percent of threats detected in under three minutes.