The Headbook Experiment:
Civilized Social Media

Headbook is an experiment in a different kind of social media to try to overcome the negative aspects of current social media sites and foster more meaningful and constructive communication. Headbook addresses privacy issues, harmful content, addiction to social media and social media depression. Its general goal is to provide a more "civilized" social media site where there is no bullying or promotion of disinformation. It is also intended to facilitate more substantive and organized communication than is found on current social media sites.

Privacy.

Headbook eliminates the privacy problems of other social media sites by not having any advertising. This removes the need to collect information about users for ad targeting. We only collect the information you provide in your profile and posts. We don't share your information with any other company and we don't receive any information about you from other companies. This is the easiest problem to completely solve by simply charging a modest fee and having no advertising. For $7 per month, users get the smallest privacy policy in social media.

Unwanted, Harmful Content and Disinformation.

Headbook addresses the problems of unwanted content, harmful content and misinformation in three ways.

First there is no algorithm that can be manipulated to promote posts to users. Headbook has two parts. One is friend interaction. In that part you only see the posts of your friends and people or organizations that you follow. Nothing else can be "promoted" to you in the friends part of Headbook. The other part of Headbook is the discussion section. In this part every user on the system is able to view and participate in discussions on a variety of topics. These discussions are meant to be civil and evidence based. Disinformation will be quickly challenged by other users and discredited before it can be influential. Since there is no algorithm to promote discussion posts, there is no way to "juice" disinformation.

The second way that Headbook addresses harmful content and disinformation is by asking the users to help. Users are provided with a way to flag any posts or comments that they think are inappropriate. In the friends part of the site, users can issue a "caution" on a post or comment. These are anonymous but everyone including the person making the objectionable post can see how many people have cautioned the post. In the discussion part, users can vote to agree or disagree with a post and they can also issue a "red flag" for a post that they think is inappropriate.

Finally, the third way we address unwanted content is by being fairly intolerant of content that breaks the site rules. This isn't censorship. This is enforcing the rules that allow Headbook to be a place for enjoyable interaction with your friends and

civil, evidence based discussion on a large variety of topics. We will also use AI to search for objectionable content. Humans review anything that is flagged by AI.

Addiction to Social Media.

We have avoided user interface designs that are thought to encourage addiction to social media sites. We don't know how effective this will be. However, we also won't be constantly "engaging" you with ads and content "suggested for you". You will see your friends and followed posts and posts to discussions you are watching and nothing else. Perhaps it will help it be less addictive to have no algorithm or ad provided content that shows you something new every time you look.

Social Media Depression.

This is a trickier problem to address and it will mostly depend on encouraging users to provide a less competitive environment for interaction with their friends. Since users who use social media more (4 hours a day) experience more depression than those who use it less, the efforts to prevent addiction will probably help here as well. To reduce competitiveness, the site will not show you how many friends another user has. We are also getting rid of friend "Likes" that are counted. If you like something that a friend posts, invest a few seconds and say something. Or perhaps invest a minute or two on a more thoughtful comment. We believe that the "Like click" sort of cheapens the friendship interaction as opposed to giving enough thought to say something. We also encourage those users with wonderful lives and beautiful bodies to show a little consideration for their friends who don't have these things. We're happy for you and you can tell us about it but just moderate it some!

Facilitating More Meaningful Conversations.

Besides removing the negative aspects of social media, we hope to foster more meaningful conversations with your friends and more organized discussions of whatever topics users want to discuss.

With the ability to define groups of friends, you can direct more substantive posts that relate to that group and have a more in-depth conversation that wouldn't relate to the rest of your friends. There are no "like" buttons and users are encouraged to say something instead.

The discussion part of Headbook is meant to promote civil, evidence based discussions of specific topics. This creates a thread of discussion all in one place for each topic. Users are encouraged to agree or disagree with posts when they have nothing new to add. It is hoped that experts in each topic can inform those of us who are not and that a productive discussion can take place. These discussions are meant to be civil and productive and therefore the site rules prohibit attacking people here.

How it Works.

You create an account using your email address as your login name and a password that we keep encrypted on the system. At least initially, you must be 18 or older and able to communicate in English in order to create an account. Your first month will be free and then after that it will cost $7 per month to continue. You can come and go as you please. If your account is suspended for non payment, it will be there just as you left it when you come back including all the friend and discussion posts you missed while you were away.

The first time you login, you will be put on the profile editing screen so that you can enter some information about yourself. After you save your information, you can proceed to the Friends area or Discussion area. The computer/tablet interface has buttons to make these choices and the phone interface has a menu to select them.

For the Friends area you will want to get some friends! You can search for people by their name, location or interests or a combination of these such as searching for people in Dallas with an interest in gardening. You can also connect a circle of friends using "friend codes". One user can define a friend code and then every other user who applies the friend code will be made a friend with everyone else who has applied the same friend code. You can create different friend codes for different circles of friends. Friend codes are created and applied on the profile editing screen. You can check the box on the profile editing screen for allowing followers if you want. If you allow followers, other people can follow you but can't send you a friend request. They can only follow you. However, you can still send friend requests to other users, so you can have both friends and followers. Businesses and organizations will probably want to allow followers.

In the Friends area you will interact with your friends by posting messages, pictures and videos – just like you are used to doing on other social media sites. These posts are put on your and your friends' "timelines". When you write a post, it will be sent to all your friends and followers unless you restrict the distribution. You can send a post to one or more selected people, exclude people or send to a group that you can define on the profile editing screen. If a post has a restricted distribution, then it won't be shareable. Using groups to restrict your posts can be useful in having a more in-depth conversation about things relevant to that group. So you can talk about books with your book club group and about bowling with your bowling team group. You can also select whose posts you want to view at the moment so that you have just selected users' posts displayed on your timeline. By default all of your friends posts are displayed on your timeline.

We hope that the friends part of the site will encourage more actual friend interaction rather than just sharing things that an algorithm sends you.

The other Headbook area is the discussion area. We have created a beginning set of topics for discussion but users are encouraged to propose additional topics. There will be only one discussion for each topic and each discussion will be about a single topic. There will be broad topics with sub-topics. So, for example, one initial broad topic will be "The Environment" with a sub-topic "Climate Change". That sub-

topic will have further sub-topics for discussing the various solutions for addressing climate change.

You are able to view the posts and comments for any discussion and add new posts and make comments on existing posts. You can also follow discussions. The posts and comments from followed discussions will be consolidated in your discussion feed.

We are going to do our best to keep the discussion section from becoming the typical social media "dumpster fire". Posts to discussions should be researched and well thought out and not repetitious of previous posts. If you present facts, you should provide evidence such as a reference to a reputable source. In the discussion area you can vote to agree or disagree with a post or comment. You can also issue a "red flag" if you think the post or comment violates the site rules. Here, the vote tallies will be shown along with your vote if you have voted. This is different from the friends section where there are no "Like" buttons with tallies that can become competitive. Therefore, in the friends area we encourage you to talk while in the discussion area we encourage you to just vote if you don't have anything significant to add. We consider the vote tallies in the discussion area to be a good thing since it is a competition of ideas.

We will try to recruit people who "know stuff" to come participate in and help moderate discussions about their field of expertise. The hope is to provide a place for meaningful, constructive conversations and possibly find some solutions to problems.

Will It Work?

Will this work? We have no idea! That's why we consider it an experiment and will adjust it as we learn more.

It will be up to the users to make it the kind of social media site that it is intended to be. We don't know if anyone will be interested in participating here at all. No disembodied voice in a corn field has told us "If you build it, they will come". But we do know for sure that if we *don't* build it, they *won't* come. This is an experiment. If you have and idea to make it better, there is a Suggestion button.

Anybody who comes here to spread misinformation, attack people or just generally be mean will have their account suspended temporarily for the first few rules violations and permanently suspended if it looks like they intend to keep doing it. So anyone planning to do this should just not join the site. There are plenty of places to do that for free. We are depending on the users to use the site as intended in order to keep it a friendly, productive place to interact. If your account is permanently suspended, your last payment will be refunded.

A Few Words About Free Speech.

We are very much in favor of free speech. We don't believe in the banning of books and we don't believe in government interfering with the free press. This is what the

First Amendment to the US Constitution is about. The First Amendment is not about being free to spread lies and misinformation on this site. We won't tolerate that. You are free to say anything that there is good reason to believe to be true and that you have evidence to support. You are not free to lie or attack people here.

About the $7.

Since we aren't selling advertising, we must charge members to use the site. We *think* $7 per month will be enough to support the site. Time will tell. It is estimated that Meta collects about $220 per Facebook user per year. So, we will be collecting $136 less. We definitely don't expect to be able to hire a bunch of people to police members' posts. That is why it will be up to the members to keep Headbook the friendly and constructive place it is meant to be. If it turns out we can support the site with a smaller fee, we can lower the price. It is always easier to lower the price than raise it. However, the reality is that the site will become more expensive to run as time goes on because of the accumulation of everyone's images and videos using up more and more space (which of course must be paid for!). So, we can't rule out a price increase some time in the future but we will do our best to avoid that.