STRATEGY

AUDIENCE

USER EXPERIENCE
AND DESIGN

PEOPLE CONNECTIONS

DEVELOPMENT

DATA

TRACKING

THE FUTURE

Making the transition to mobile: what we can learn from Facebook

With one billion mobile users and 60% of its revenues from mobile, Facebook is the poster child for mobile transformation. ZenithOptimedia asked Facebook how it managed the transition to mobile and looked at how the learnings can be applied to a brand's owned marketing strategy and assets.
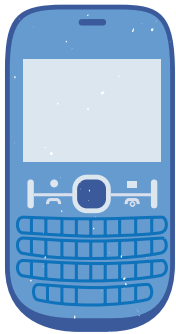
STRATEGY
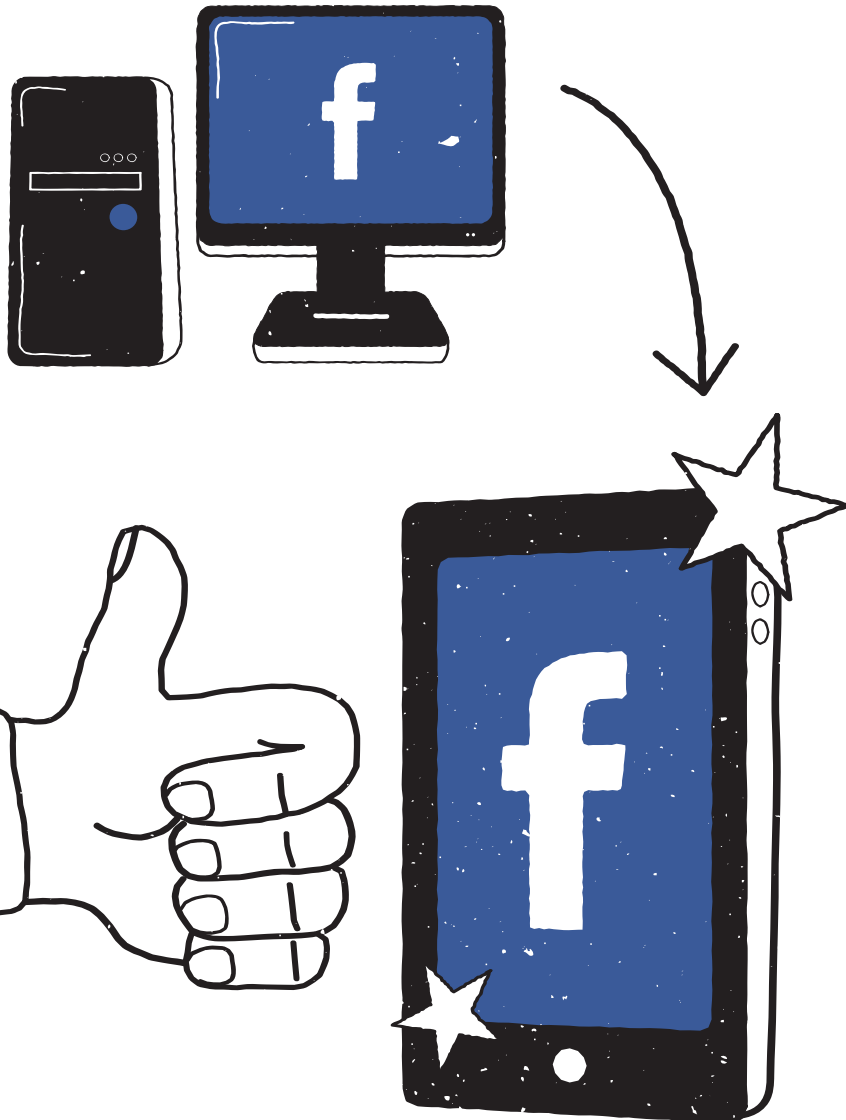
Facebook's transition from a desktop to a mobile business: the hard facts

The fact that we're living in a mobile dominated world was not a surprise. But the speed of mobile adoption surprised everyone. In 2008 the iPhone was tracking at about 10m units globally. Predictions from analysts were that by 2020 there would be 1bn smart phone subscriptions globally. We have already surpassed that with global subscriptions currently totaling 1.75bn. This meant that Facebook had to pivot from being a desktop driven company to a mobile one. Mobile became the priority – from the core user experience to ad products. And the figures now speak for themselves. Globally, Facebook now has 609m daily active users on mobile. On average, people check their Facebook 14 times a day (in Indonesia 25% of mobile minutes are spent on Facebook).
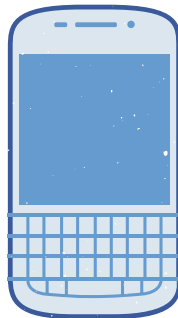
GET SMART ABOUT FEATURE PHONES

Globally, two-thirds of mobile phones are feature phones

This means that in high-growth markets across the world today, 20-70% of people using Facebook on mobile are using features phones[2]. Which is why we make sure that Facebook is accessible to anybody, on any device.

Whether they use the most basic low-cost device or the newest smartphone, you can reach all of the people who matter to you with Facebook ads on features phones.

Here's a glance into how people around the world use Facebook, and how you can reach them today.

South Africa
Nokia Asha 201

Indonesia
Cross C1

Nigeria
Blackberry Q10

Turkey
Samsung S5610
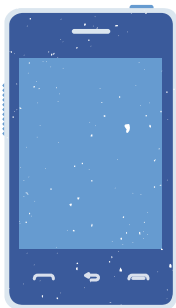
Brazil
LG T375

Argentina
Nokia 100

Mexico
Samsung E1205

India
Samsung c3312 Duos

South Africa
11 million
Monthly active users

68%
access Facebook on feature phones

That's 22x the seating capacity of all 2010 World Cup venues combined

Indonesia
69 million
Monthly active users

71%
access Facebook on feature phones

Indonesians spend as much time on Facebook as radio and newspapers combined.

Nigeria
10 million
Nigerians use Facebook on features phones

That's the equivalent of 10x the population of Abuja, the capital city

Turkey
35 million
Monthly active users

32%
access Facebook on feature phones

That's 4.4x the number of fixed broadband subscribers

Brazil
87 million
Monthly active users

29%
access Facebook on feature phones

That's greater than 1.4x the entire Pay TV audience in Brazil

Argentina
23 million
Monthly active users

39%
access Facebook on feature phones

That's 15x the daily circulation of all major newspapers in Argentina

Mexico
51 million
Monthly active users

33%
access Facebook on feature phones

That's the equivalent of all Pay TV subscribers in Mexico
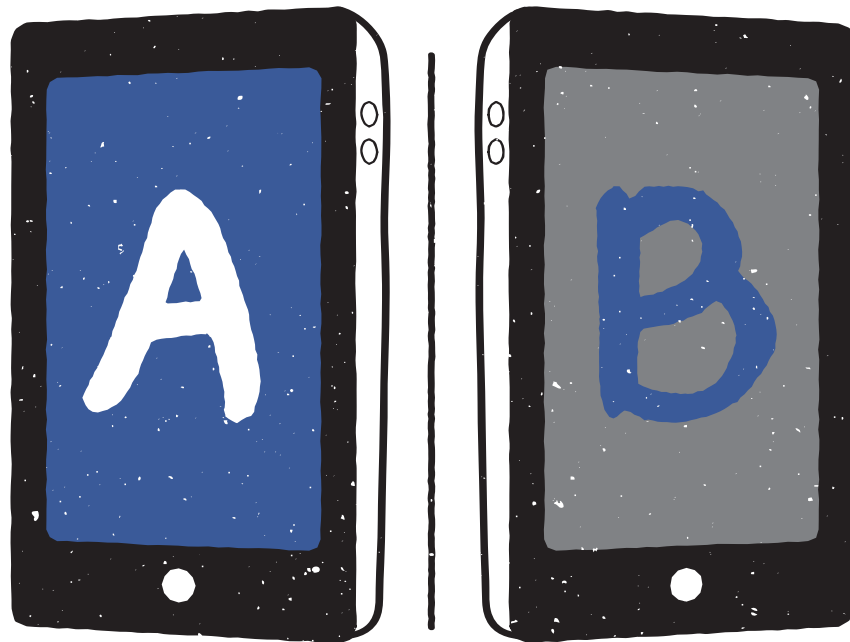
India
100 million
Monthly active users

66%
access Facebook on feature phones

That's comparable to 7x the combined readership of the top 10 magazines in India

Understanding the Facebook audience for mobile: testing and development

Facebook has learned that by making rapid, measureable changes to the product, we're able to make big shifts over time. A 5% increase at scale can mean 50m new people.

This focus is reflected in the infrastructure and tools Facebook has built. We're constantly evolving our core technologies: everything from our JavaScript framework React, to the hardware design of our servers. We force our teams to constantly evolve, because we know even small changes over time add up to massive success.

We constantly test and update our mobile apps and measure the results. We start with small groups of people and then roll out to wider and wider populations as we get a clearer picture. We might run tests for a few days or a few months (depending on how long it takes to get conclusive data) to see if the feature is indeed an improvement and that it is not negatively impacting other KPIs.

Sometimes these changes confirm a hypothesis, other times we learn something unexpected. Importantly, we don't treat failure punitively, but rather as a chance to learn. If people are in fear of failing, they will never try.

Mobile Apps require lead-times and are not as easy to update on a daily basis as a website, so we have been building our own internal infrastructure to keep 'moving fast'.

USER EXPERIENCE AND DESIGN

Mobile vs desktop experience: what people want from Facebook on mobile

From a product experience perspective mobile requires you to think about constraints and context more. On the one hand you have limited screen real estate and a less precise input mechanism i.e. big clumsy fingers. But you also have new capabilities that are only available on mobile. Gestural interfaces such as pinching, swiping and tapping change the interaction models. Location and proximity bring a sense of place and change the way people experience the real world. Cameras, sensors and networks allow people to see, hear and share the world around themselves in a much more intimate way.

So we look at mobile not just from a technical and user interaction standpoint, but instead from an experiential and contextual point of view. That leads us to ask how are people experiencing the world around them? How can mobile help them connect with each other and the world around them? What experiences can we build to bring more value, utility and wonder to their lives? Desktop is a portal in to the world, where mobile connects you with the world around you.

So Facebook is prioritising location awareness and photos as part of its product offering. We want to become part of our people's world rather than just be a view of it.

PEOPLE CONNECTIONS
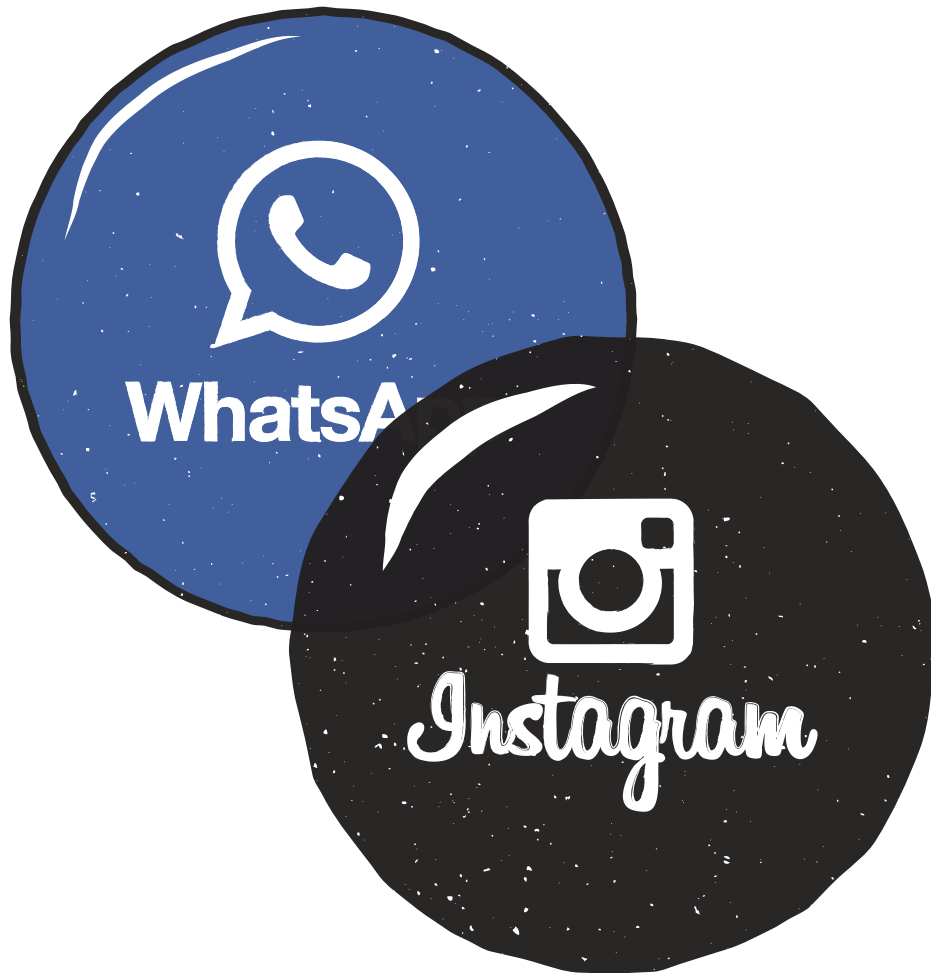
Acquiring Instagram and WhatsApp*: Facebook creates multiple destinations for mobile

Facebook's strategy has been to think about the connections people are building and the content they are sharing and/or experiencing. Are these mobile connections one-to-many, one-to-a-few, group-to-group, one-to-one, or even purely individual?

We also look at what is being shared, such as moments (photos and videos), information, reviews, etc. Then we think about the mechanic that would make that content and social interaction more interesting. The Facebook platform is great at connecting an individual to a group of friends through common interests. For Messenger the connections are more one-to-one or one-to-a-few. As Facebook continues to develop new apps, we'll be differentiating are offerings according to the different types of connection needs.

Note that the WhatsApp acquisition hasn't closed yet

DEVELOPMENT

HTML

5

VS

APP

Mobile web vs apps: the role they play and the services they support

Both the mobile web and apps are vital to the ecosystem. We are still heavily investing in HTML5 to support our main .com and m. sites. But we are not using HTML5 as unified technology that supports our leading product experiences across all platforms.

We learned that we needed to bite the bullet and invest in native platforms (iOS, Windows and Android) to provide people the best experience possible. When we made the pivot to mobile it wasn't just technical. We had to develop expertise in mobile across marketing, product and product design. Mark Zuckerberg forced everyone to think exclusively in mobile and would refuse to consider proposals that did not lead with mobile. The whole company "dog-fooded" the Android platform.

This focus presented a lot of possibilities, but also forced us to be more rigorous in how we think about what we build. Each platform (Apple, Google, Microsoft) comes with its own benefits and drawbacks. Some platforms have better developer support, others are more popular in growth regions, while others are more open to partnering with us.

At the same time we also think mobile web is still an important piece of the landscape. One of the advantages of mobile web is you can build rich experiences that link out of News Feed without requiring a download. This leverages media on News Feed to drive rich experiences and utility that is unique and own-able to the brand without a download.
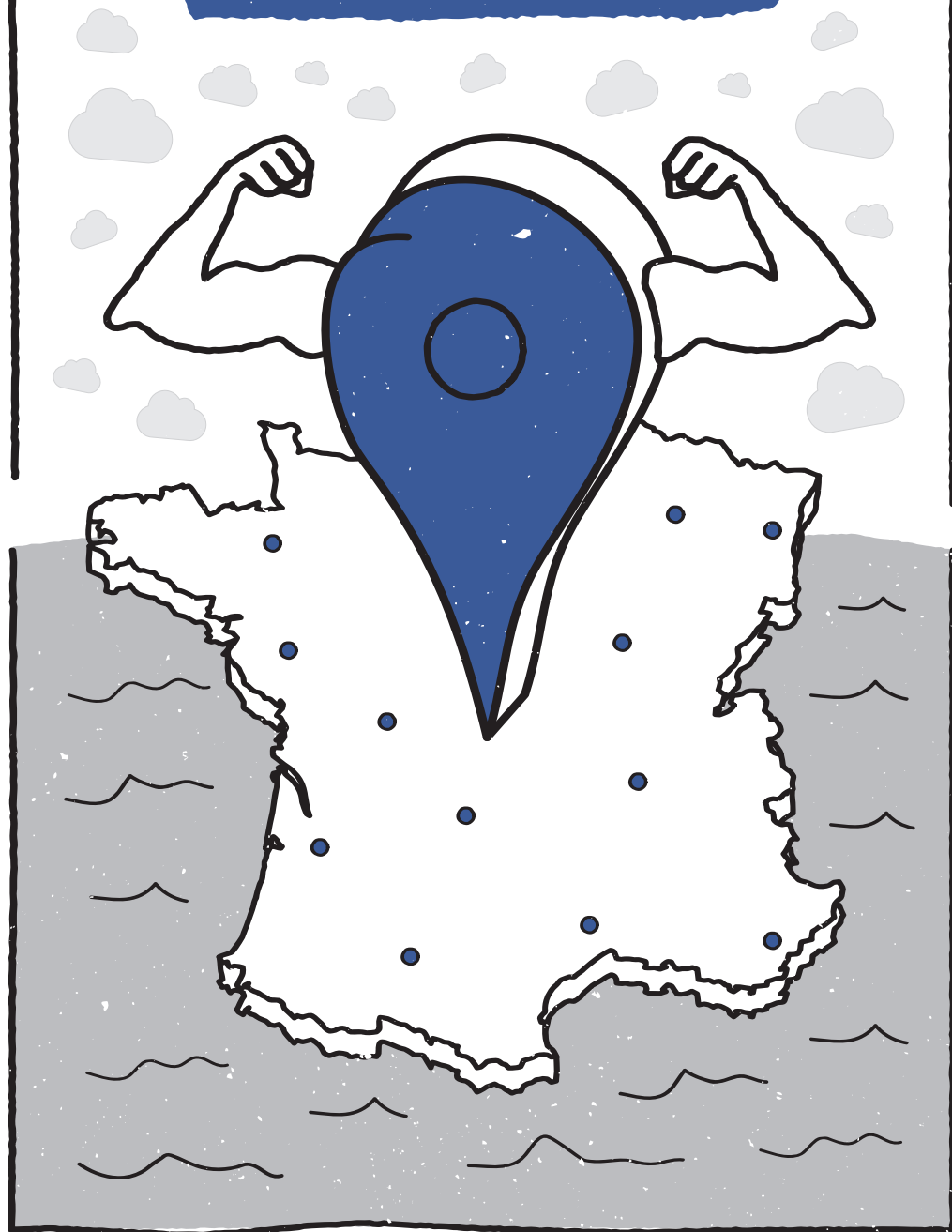
Location data is an important by-product of mobile

We're constantly looking at ways to deliver relevancy. A person's location is a huge influence on the things that are relevant to them. For example, we have a frequent traveler cluster that you can target and we are exploring ways to reach those who are on the move. You can also work with partners to experiment with weather-based posts, such as reaching people during cold weather with reminders about the coziness of beer, or reaching people during hot weather highlighting how refreshing and cool beer is. In Canada, Molson Coors and PMD AdParlor tapped into weather data to trigger mobile ads when the temperature in eight Canadian cities rose above 23 degrees.

TRACKING
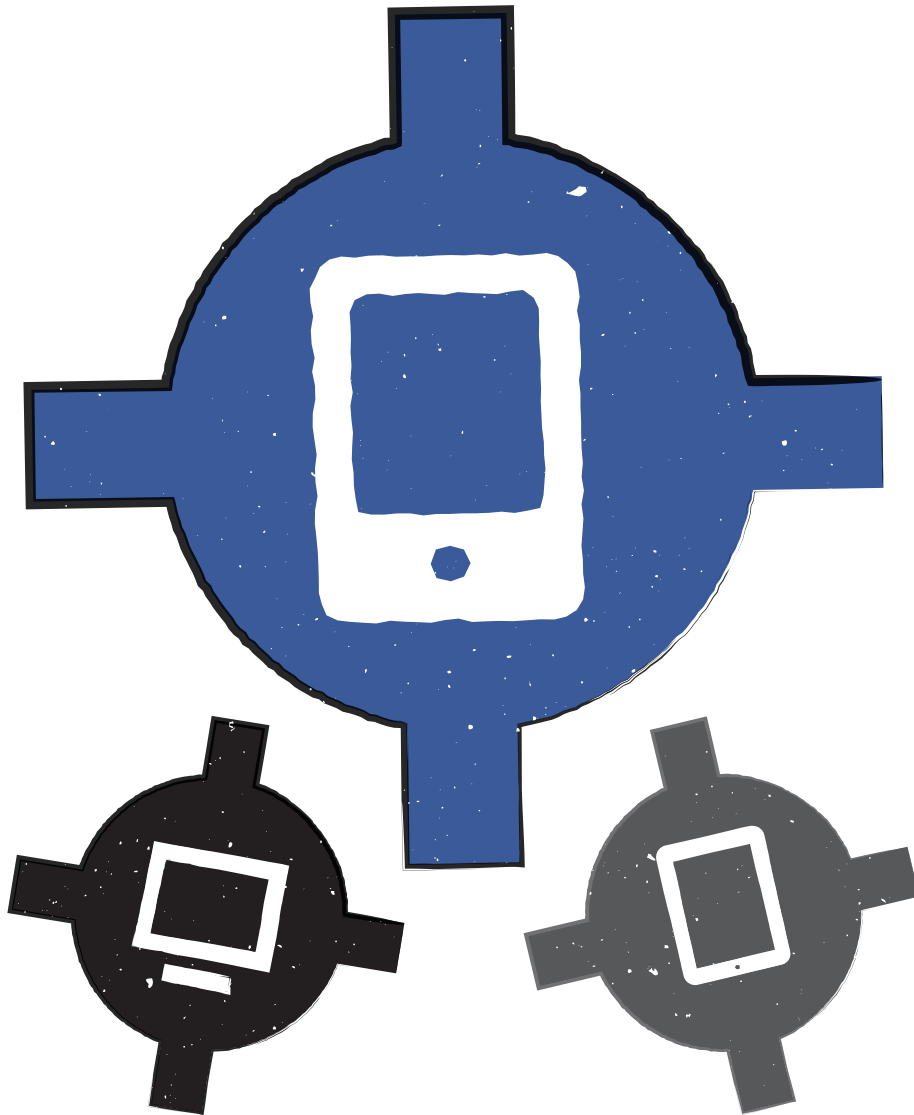
How Facebook is tackling the issue of consumer tracking with innovative technology

Providing personalised and targeted content to consumers across devices is becoming more challenging due to the industry's reliance on browser cookies, which are incompatible with mobile. Most publishers are unable to match behaviour and identify people across desktop and mobile. A big opportunity for Facebook is to help marketers understand the value of targeting consumers across devices - over 60% of consumers say that they use two or more connected devices in any given day.

Through Facebook's targeting platform, we enable marketers to accurately reach people in meaningful numbers to drive scalable results across devices. Via persistent sign-on, marketers can have a high degree of confidence that they are consistently reaching the same person seamlessly across screens.

Facebook can more accurately attribute conversions and measure which are incremental to a client's business, regardless of where the consumer saw an ad and converted across devices. And, we enable marketers to optimise delivery based on what they care about (the online sale, the install) with oCPM.

To attribute conversions or optimise delivery, marketers can use our conversion pixel for their website, or our software development kit (SDK) for their mobile app. Both capture activities consumers' exhibit on a marketer's site or app and use that information for attribution and optimisation.

Facebook is committed to protecting people's information. The company has industry standard and proprietary network monitoring tools constantly running in their system in order to prevent security breaches and protect the security of people's data. Additionally, Facebook never sells people's information and does not give their information to marketers.

THE FUTURE
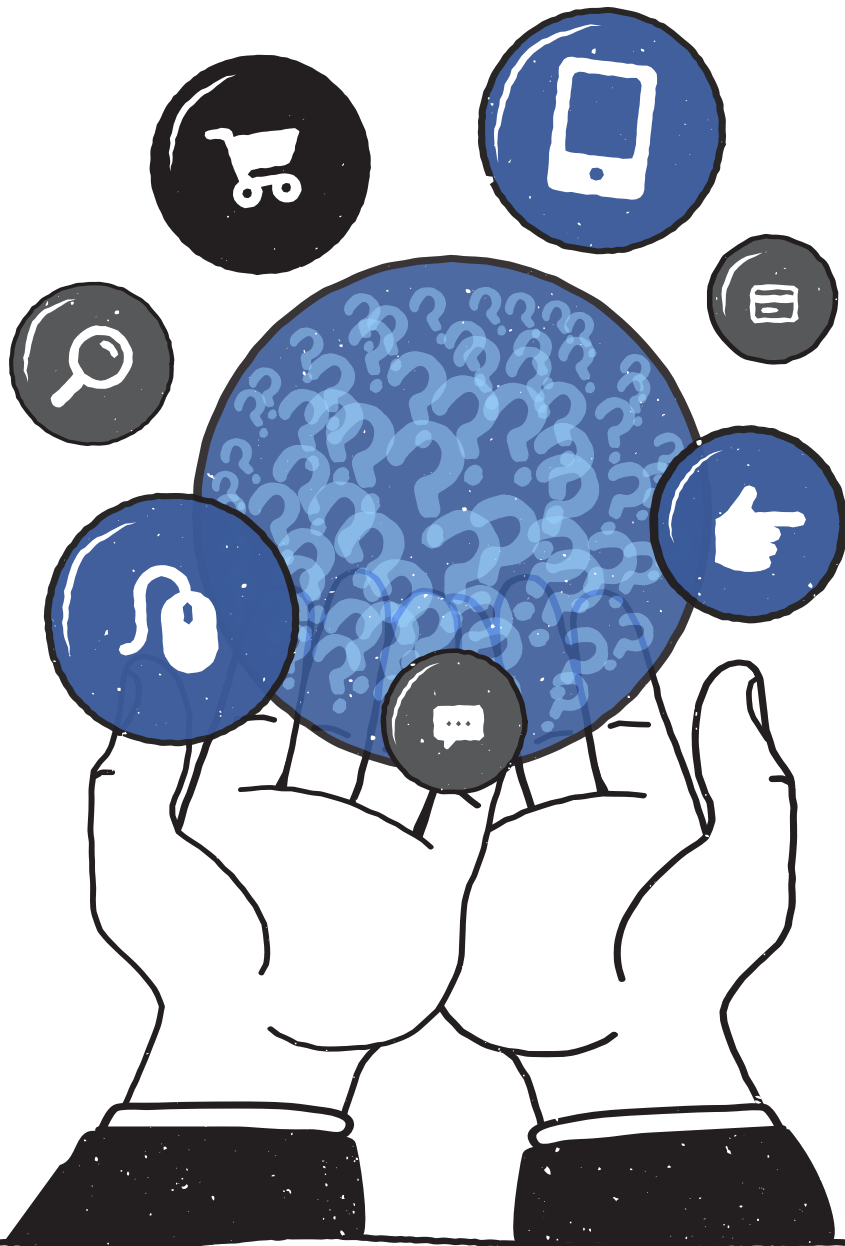
Facebook's future mobile strategy

Facebook has a clear mission for the future: "Making the world more open and connected". High–growth countries are central to that mission. Facebook thinks about this mission in the following ways:

• Internet.org is a global partnership between leaders, non-profit organisations, local communities and experts who are working together to bring the internet to the two thirds of the world's population that don't currently have online connectivity. Ultimately, Internet.org is about removing barriers and giving billions of people the power to connect.

• As people become connected, we are building advertising solutions for marketers to reach the previously unreachable population at scale.

• Facebook has learned that people in high-growth markets increasingly want to be connected to the world around them and mobile is providing unprecedented ways for people to connect. Different products that will improve peoples' lives dramatically will be discovered in these markets.

ZenithOptimedia
The ROI Agency

facebook