



Facebook News Feed Favors Native Content On A Fan Page Over Shared Viral Content Between Pages - A Meta Analysis of Facebook Post Data

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Intro: In a few blog posts earlier this year, Facebook announced that they would be handling local news links in a different manner than what was currently occurring, in an effort to increase readership of authentic news. It was unclear as to when Facebook would be implementing this change and how it would affect the reach of native and shared links on Facebook Pages, as well as native and shared videos, images, and other content.

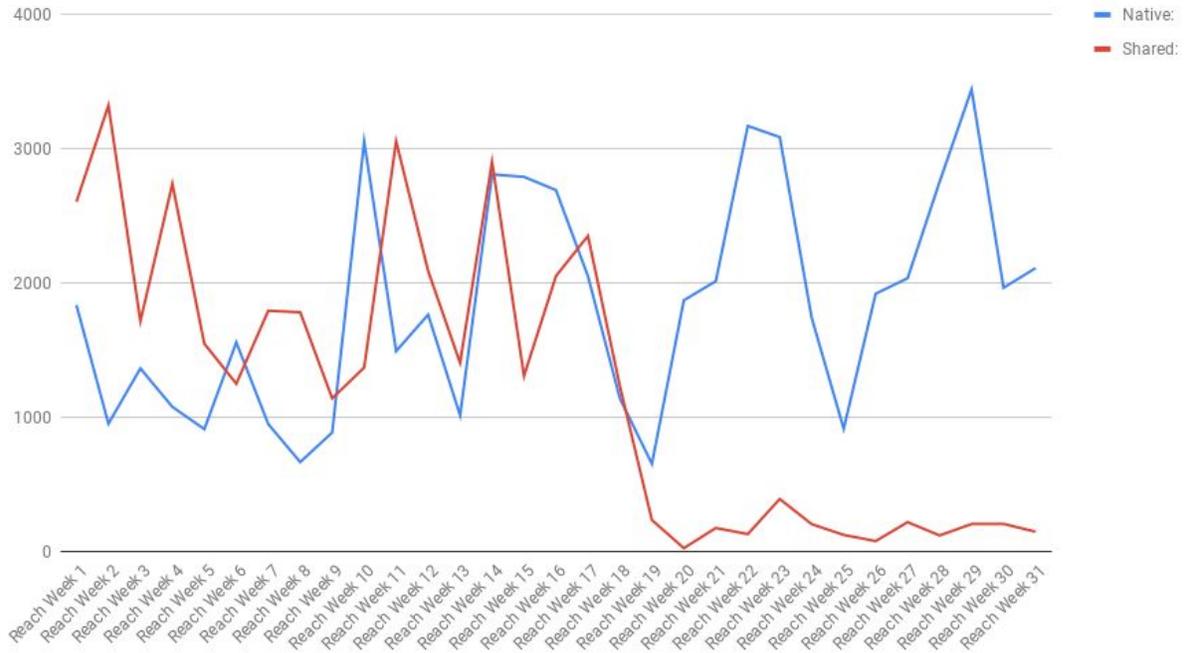
Hypothesis: On March 26th, 2018 [\[ref\]](#) Facebook announced plans to update its “News Feed” algorithm in an effort to promote local news links natively uploaded on the platform, and in turn it is believed they would grant higher reach to these types of posts and lower reach to shared content in order to achieve their stated goal of helping Facebook users find more more topics that impact their local community and events to participate in.

Methodology: We analyzed data from 2 geographic focused Facebook pages that are part of the Winner Winner Chicken Dinner content network known as “Explore Media”. The Facebook pages that were used in this study had a regular posting schedule that consisted of two posts a day, one morning post at 10:30 a.m. that is either an image or a video, natively uploaded or shared from another Page, and one evening post at either 6:30 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. that is a local news link, natively shared. The data was collected by documenting the Total Reach and Average Reach per Post of each post made on the Pages and organizing this data by type of content included in a specific post. The types of posts included natively uploaded images, local news links, and natively uploaded videos, as well as shared images, links, and videos from other Facebook Pages that produce viral content.

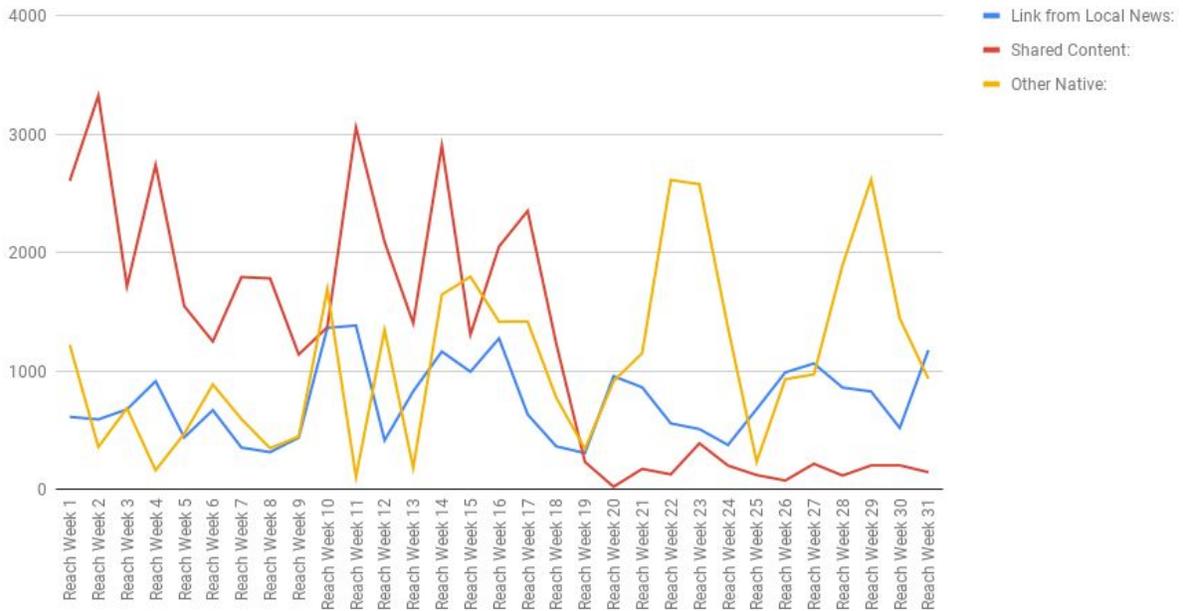
Data: In the following charts, the data is comparing the reach on each post made from week to week of native versus shared content. From what is seen in the charts, shared data on the Dallas Page had the highest reach of all of the post types at the start of 2018, while the Fort Worth Page showed that native and shared content were reaching almost the same amount of people when the year started. In the combined data for native versus shared posts on the Pages, it can be seen that around the 14th week, there is an increased reach for native posts, and from then on, a decrease in reach for shared posts.

Combined Data

Dallas Page and Fort Worth Page - Native vs. Shared Average Reach Per Post

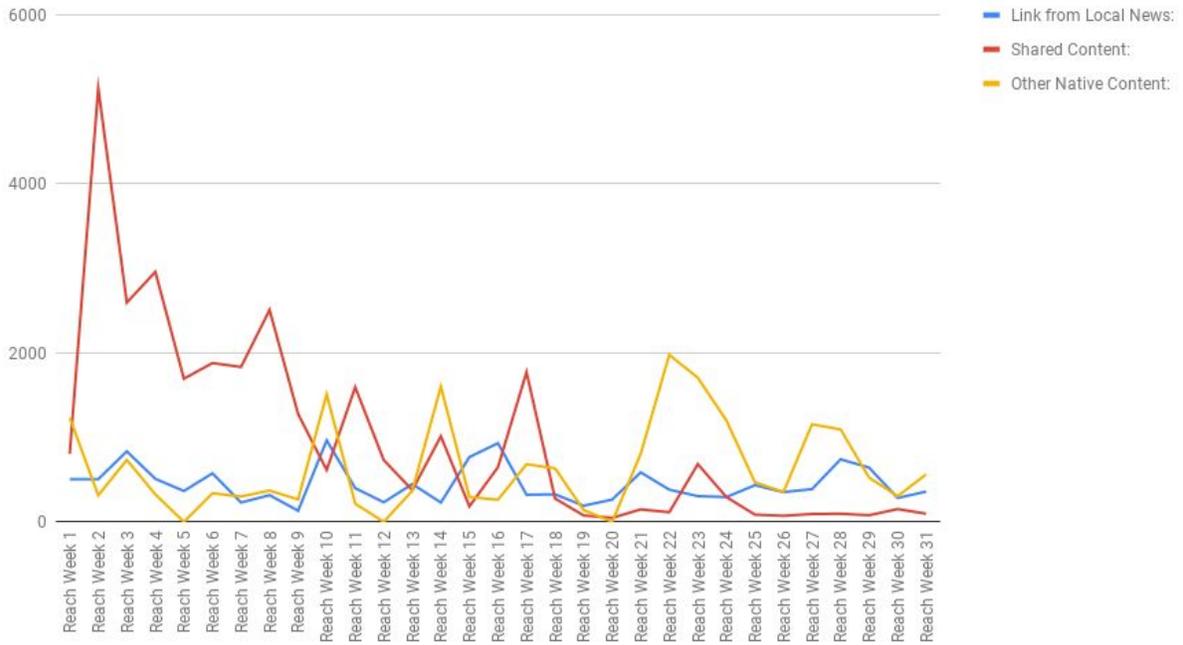


Dallas and Fort Worth Page - Links vs. Shared vs. Other Native Content Average Reach Per Post

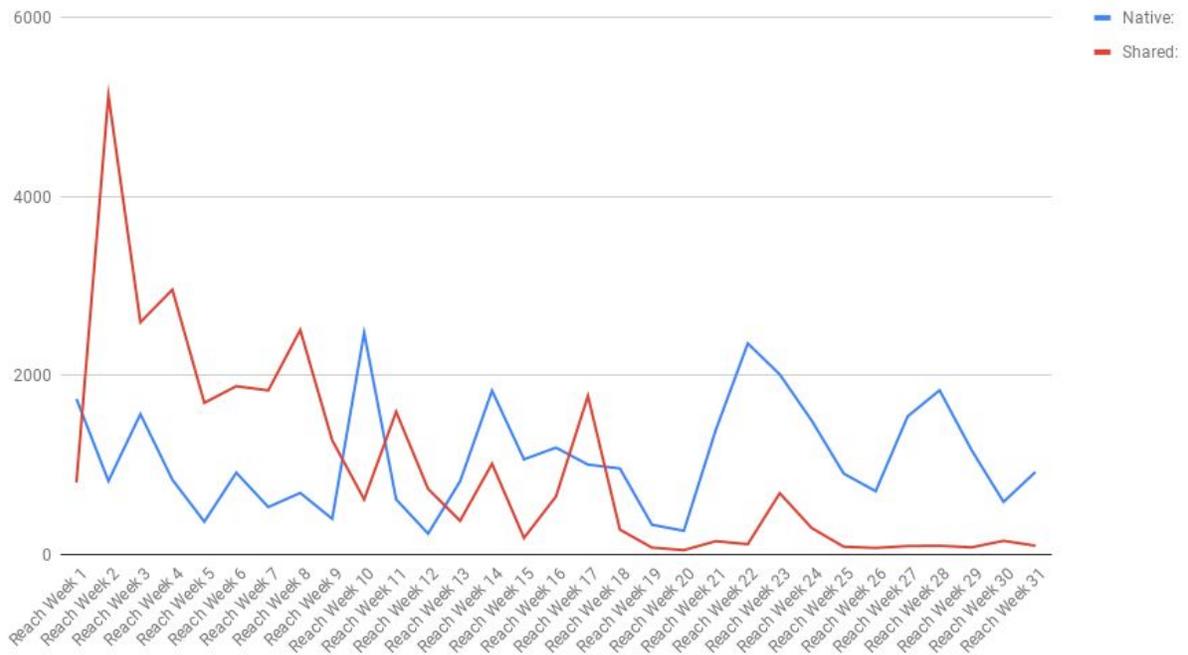


Dallas Page Data

Dallas Page - Links vs. Shared vs. Other Native Content Average Reach Per Post

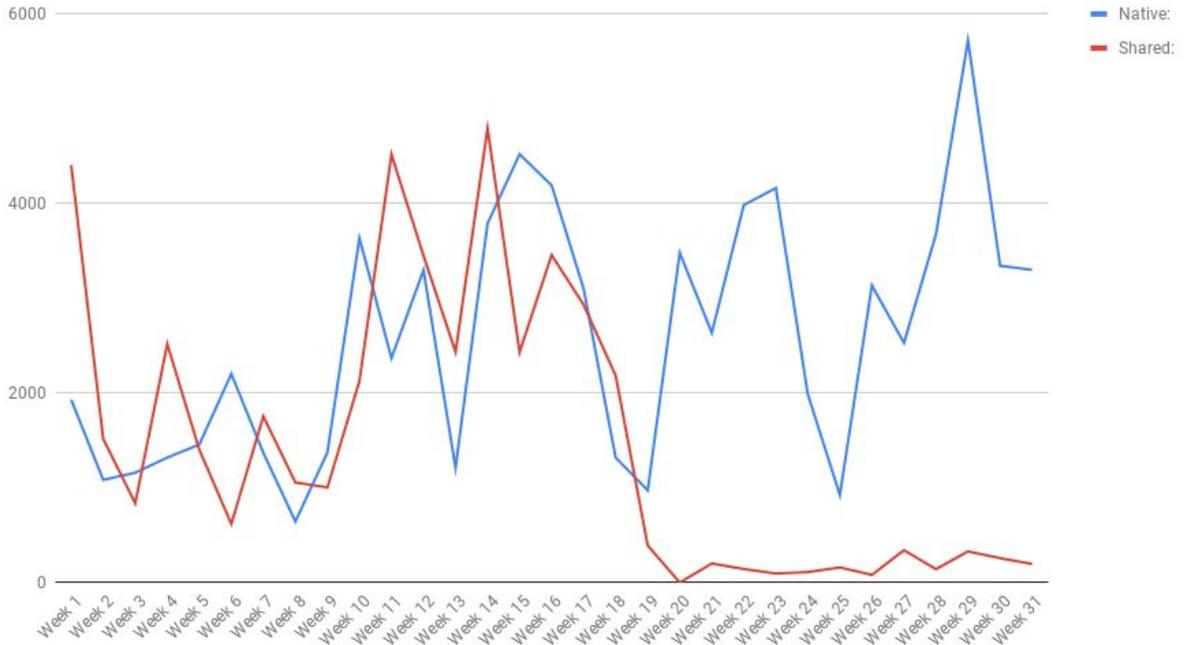


Dallas Page - Native vs. Shared Average Reach Per Post

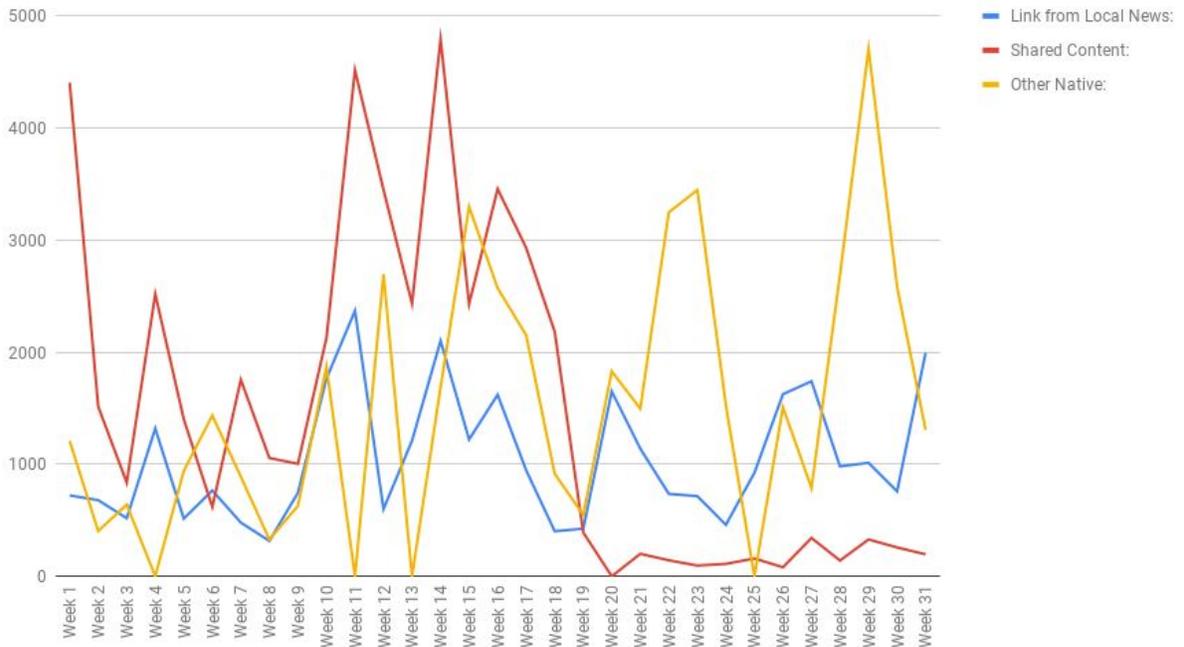


Fort Worth Page Data

Fort Worth Page - Native vs. Shared Average Reach Per Post



Fort Worth Page - Links vs. Shared vs. Other Native Content Average Reach Per Post



Conclusion: At the start of 2018 it was evident that shared viral content from large Pages gained the most post reach for a Business Page (also known as a “Fan Page”) on Facebook. However, it appears that during week 14 of this year (April 1st through April 7th) Average Reach per Post began to shift and by Week 19 (May 6th through the 12th) native content had gained more Average Reach per Post than shared viral content. We know that this change in reach was not due to the popularity of the shared content or other factors that would have triggered reductions in Facebook’s algorithm such as ‘engagement baiting’ and therefore can surmise that it was due to changes made to Facebook’s News Feed Algorithm.

During this period we also noticed a slight increase in Average Reach Per Post for links to local news stories, however; this only appears to have impacted the reach of posts on the Fort Worth Page and not the Dallas Page. This may be explained by other factors and not an algorithmic change, although the increases were noted just before and just after Facebook’s March 26th announcement that they would improve the visibility of local news in the News Feed. While overall, the Average Reach per Post for native content was remarkably higher than the shared viral content, by week 31 total Average Reach per Post had dropped 49.14% from the beginning of the year.

Reviewing this data it is evident that Facebook wants Business / Fan Pages to create unique original content on par with the viral content that often originates from much larger, better funded, or more well established media brands in order to gain significant reach in to the News Feed of their audience. It is also clear that Facebook has not yet fully made good on its promise to promote more local news sources in the News Feed.

References:

“Helping Ensure News on Facebook Is From Trusted Sources.” *Facebook Newsroom*, newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/01/trusted-sources/.

“More Local News on Facebook.” *Facebook Newsroom*, newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/01/news-feed-fyi-local-news/.