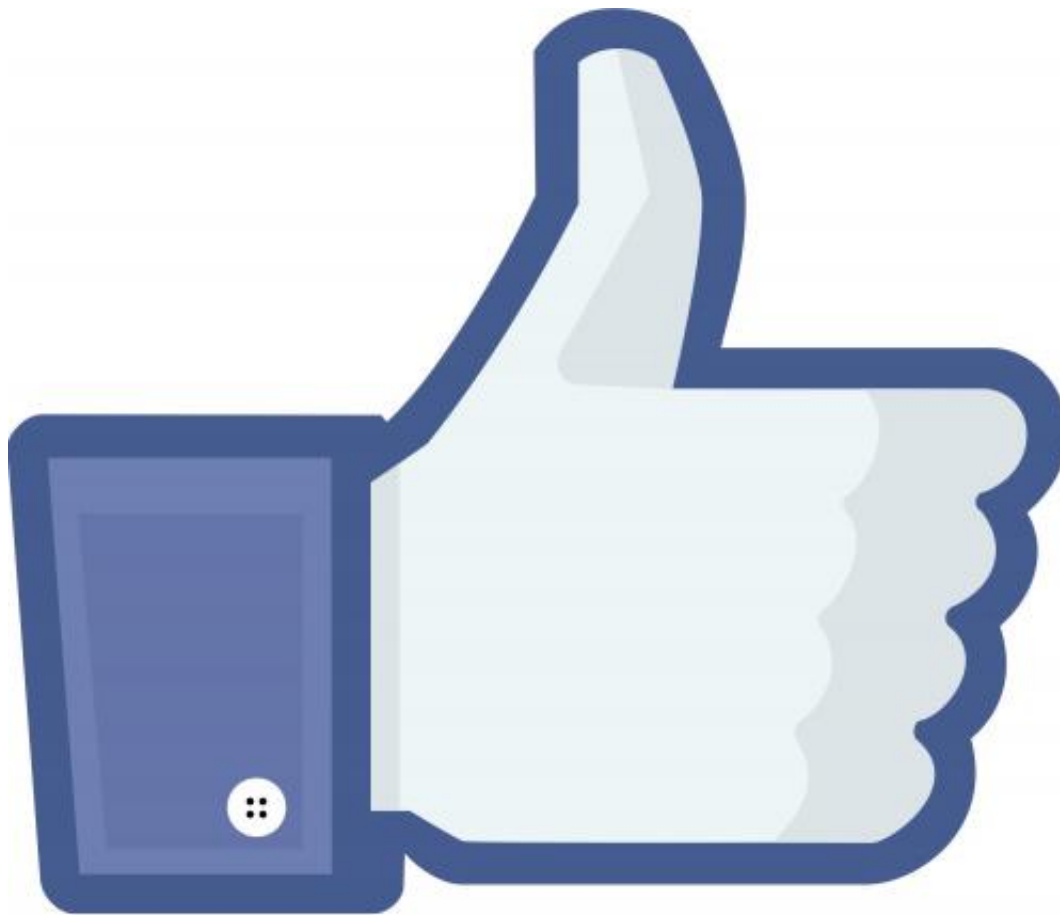


Facebook reportedly thinking about a concierge-like service

July 16 2015, by Nancy Owano



On Tuesday, sites were buzzing with a story from *The Information*. Its reporter Amir Efrati said on Tuesday that Facebook is prepping a type

of [assistance](#) as a feature within Facebook Messenger. Efrati said the undertaking is known internally as "Money Penny," according to those who were briefed on it.

We already have seen the debut of digital assistants such as Siri, Google Now and Cortana. From Apple to Google to Microsoft, the three share the fact that they are machine-driven. Facebook would be shaking things up—in the form of assistance from real people.

CNET contributor Lance Whitney wrote on Tuesday that the assistant idea is to allow people to ask for help with tasks including ordering products and [services](#).

Its instant-messaging application Facebook Messenger allows chat and, according to a Facebook posting in November last year, Messenger had drawn more than 500 million Messenger users each [month](#).

"Messenger was the first of our standalone apps, and unlike our core Facebook apps, it focused on one use case – messaging. With Messenger, you can reach people instantly. It is just as fast as SMS but gives you the ability to express yourself in ways that SMS can't. You can send stickers or videos, take selfies, chat with groups and make free calls," said Peter Martinazzi, product management director.

Whitney reported that "The social network is purportedly testing a new virtual assistant that would work within its Facebook Messenger app."

James Vincent, writing in *The Verge*, said, based on the description thus far, Money Penny would be closer to a traditional concierge system.

Whitney said that "Money Penny seems like a natural evolution in expanding Messenger's skills."

Vincent said similarly that the move would indicate Facebook's keen interest in building Messenger into a fully-fledged platform with new added services. "It's not too surprising then for Facebook to explore the [digital](#) assistant arena," he said.

There are no details about when and how this would be launched, but Whitney said it is reportedly at a tryout stage among Facebook employees.

Jay McGregor in *Forbes* saw how people might be drawn to such a service for help. "[Buying](#) anything these days, with the glut of information available, makes doing any sort of sensible pre-purchase research painstaking and arduous."

"A spokesperson for Facebook said the company does not comment on rumors or speculation," said CNET.

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