

Parents furious with Facebook over Oculus account change

September 21 2020, by Jefferson Graham, Usa Today



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Parents are furious over a Facebook rule change: Kids who play the Oculus virtual reality games will soon need to have a Facebook account.

Even if parents didn't want their kids on social media, buying the Oculus player and games effectively puts them into a world of hustling for likes that they're just not ready for.

Last year's Oculus Quest was a surprise hit for Facebook, which had trouble keeping the units in stock. The sequel, Quest 2, will be in stores Oct. 13.

Stacey Luchs, whose 13-year-old son has been asking for Oculus for years, was ready to make the purchase until this wrinkle was added. "It really touched a nerve, and I feel very resentful towards Facebook," says Luchs, a single mom raising a 13-year-old and running the Los Angeles-based Dialogue PR marketing firm. "My son is not ready for social media, because of what it brings."

Facebook, which bought Oculus in 2014 for \$2 billion, had required users to have Oculus accounts, similar to how other gaming systems do it. For Xbox, a Microsoft account is required, similar to Sony and PlayStation and Nintendo games.

Those companies "don't operate [social media networks](#)," Luchs says. "This forces parents to make a choice, and it makes me uncomfortable."

Facebook says the change becomes effective in October, but people can continue using their Oculus accounts until Jan. 1, 2023.

"Giving people a single way to log into Oculus—using their Facebook account and password—will make it easier to find, connect and play with friends in VR," Facebook says.

Kids and [young adults](#) are the target audience for Oculus games, and Facebook's rules put a minimum age of 13 to qualify for an account. The social network posted a lengthy FAQ on its website about the changes,

where it admitted that when young players sign in with a Facebook account, the social network can start tracking their behavior.

"This information is also used to show you personalized content, including ads," Facebook says.

Walnut Creek, California-based Elizabeth Boukis says she preordered a unit this week, then found about the rule change. She doesn't allow her 11-year-old on social media and is "contemplating what to do. ... Aside from being on social media, between Facebook's less than stellar privacy and the fact that they have already confirmed that they track Oculus activity to feed advertising to users outside of the headset ... they have really put us in a corner if our kids want to experience Oculus."

Dara Pressley, a Seattle-based product designer, noted that just because you're giving an account to your kid to play the game, it doesn't mean "your child has to or should be using Facebook or Instagram."

One option for parents, beyond saying no: a new account, under their name, which they share with their kids.

"For example: you might be Monique Smith on Facebook, but WarriorMama365 in VR," Facebook says on its FAQ page.

What Facebook didn't do in its FAQ was address parents' concerns about having their kids on [social media](#) with the required Facebook account. U.S. TODAY asked the social network to comment.

The social network said it will put "special protections" in place for minors to "limit contact" from adults they aren't connected to.

It added that people do not need to be active on Facebook to use their [account](#) to log-into their Oculus device.

Facebook, the world's most popular social network, has come under greater scrutiny in recent years for allowing manipulated media and conspiracy theory-laden political posts. The corporate policy is not to police politicians. Facebook has run into hot water with regulators over data breaches that compromised users' sensitive information.

Facebook says, "by integrating Oculus with Facebook's infrastructure, we're able to provide even more safety protections—including for young people. Oculus devices have always been designed for ages 13 and up. We encourage families to make the choices that feel right to them when it comes to online activity."

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Citation: Parents furious with Facebook over Oculus account change (2020, September 21)
retrieved 8 December 2023 from

<https://techxplore.com/news/2020-09-parents-furious-facebook-oculus-account.html>

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