

The Facebook users redefining the 20-year-old social network

February 1 2024, by Julie JAMMOT



Nina Vukicevic, manager at Common Roots Farm, takes pictures of sheep for the farm's Facebook page in Santa Cruz, California.

From California to Southeast Asia, Facebook is capturing a new generation of users who see it as a commercial tool rather than a fun

networking platform.

They are more likely to be promoting their businesses than connecting with friends.

As the veteran social media platform celebrates its 20th birthday, four users share their experiences with AFP.

Nina Vukicevic, 31, California

"I have a personal Facebook page, I can't tell you the last time I really looked at it," said Nina Vukicevic.

Vukicevic is farm manager at Common Roots Farm, a non-profit in Santa Cruz that produces [organic food](#) and runs courses in gardening and farming.

Vukicevic said Facebook did have many uses for the business—whether sharing ideas in specialist groups or posting updates to the farm's pages.

"With the groups, I was able to find more local connections, but also resources from around the world on things I'm interested in," they said.

"I get to talk to market gardeners in Switzerland that I wouldn't otherwise be able to connect to because we're all part of this group."

"To be honest, (if Facebook vanished) I would be bummed to not have these resources."

Dao Manh Toan, 33, Hanoi

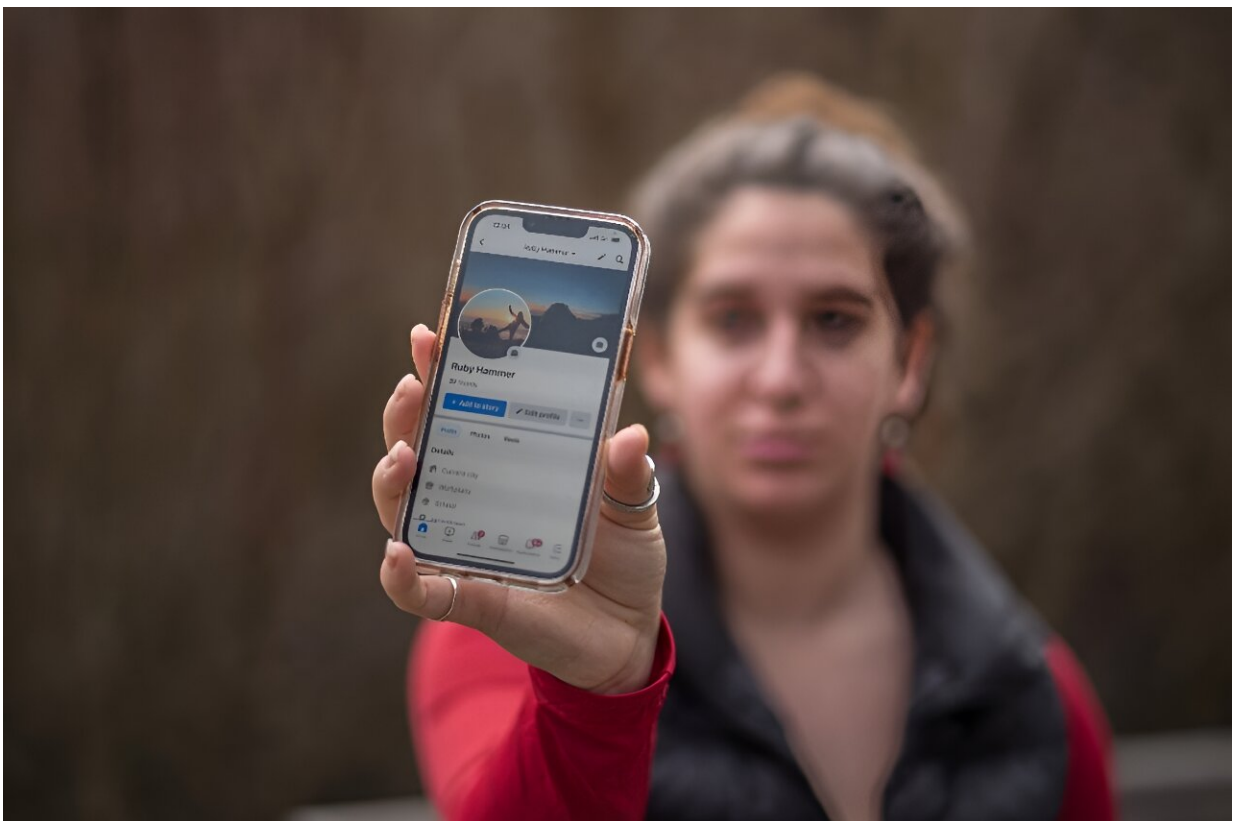
Dao Manh Toan has about 1,000 followers on his personal Facebook

page, but 38,000 on his professional account.

"No one can deny the benefits of Facebook because it connects so many people," he said.

Toan runs a business selling technology products like keyboards and other hardware and uses the platform to advertise and set up sales through Messenger.

But he said there were downsides with the platform, particularly when other sellers make dishonest claims about their products.



Ruby Hammer shows off her Facebook profile near her home in Felton, California.

And he said other platforms, such as Alibaba-owned specialist e-commerce tool Lazada, have better livestreaming functions and allow direct sales.

Natcha Ramingwong, 21, Bangkok

University student Natcha Ramingwong has found Facebook to be good for her niche business—she designs and sells novelty keycaps that allow people to customize their keyboards.

The Facebook page of BungkeeCaps proudly displays a banner image of tiny pink pigs wrapped in blankets held together with safety pins.

"I knew that there were a group of people... who were really into keyboards," she said.

Ramingwong first used the platform when her teacher set up a group for her classroom about 10 years ago, and she is glad to have had the experience.

"I started by designing my first keycap and I posted in the group... and people seemed to like it," she said.

Ruby Hammer, 18, California

Ruby Hammer is younger than Facebook.

"That's crazy to think that an app has been able to sustain itself for that long," said the 18-year-old.

She started using the platform a year ago mostly to offer her services as a house-sitter and babysitter.

"I use Facebook specifically to target a certain audience because I knew my mom's friends would be interested," she said.

"Facebook is well versed with the older generation."

She said she would not use it as a social tool as she did not want to see the "embarrassing" stuff her parents post about her.

Like many younger people, Instagram and Snapchat are her more likely destinations for socializing.

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Citation: The Facebook users redefining the 20-year-old social network (2024, February 1) retrieved 13 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2024-02-facebook-users-redefining-year-social.html>

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