

« [Microsoft Launches The Facebook Silverlight Client](#) [Sid Meier's Civilization Coming To Facebook Around June](#) »

## Facebook Groups Vs Pages: The Definitive Guide

Posted by [Nick O'Neill](#) on February 2nd, 2010 10:49 AM

[Share](#) 77 [12 Comments](#)

Over the past couple years the Facebook Pages and Groups products have moved closer together, forcing marketers to ask themselves: which one should they use? After writing a complete [guide to Facebook Pages](#), we thought it would be useful to highlight the core differences between Facebook Pages and Facebook Groups. If you had any lingering questions, this guide should completely clear things up for you!

	Groups	Pages
Mass Messaging	✓	✗
Indexed By Google	✓	✓
Stream Publishing	✓	✓
Targeted Stream Posts	✗	✓
Targeted Updates	✗	✓
Support For Applications	✗	✓
Membership Restrictions	✓	✗
Event Inbox Messaging	✓	✗
Engagement Metrics	✗	✓
Promotional Widgets	✗	✓
Vanity URLs	✗	✓

\* messaging is restricted once a group grows past 5,000 members  
Source: AllFacebook.com

### What Are Facebook Groups?

If you don't know what Facebook groups are, there's a good chance you haven't spent more than an hour on Facebook. However if you are a rare exception, we thought it would be useful to explain groups. According to Facebook, groups are "for members of groups to connect, share and even collaborate on a given topic or idea". While the company continues to make a distinction between groups and Facebook Pages, we see these products eventually merging over time.

Groups can serve as an extremely effective marketing tool. Most importantly, groups serve as a tool for building awareness around various ideas. We've rapidly seen many users use Facebook Pages for the same purpose, but this is what groups were initially intended for. The key feature behind Facebook groups is the ability to make them "invite only" or limited to specific networks.

### What Are Facebook Pages?

In contrast to Facebook groups, which are focused on organizing around topics or ideas, Facebook Pages "allow entities such as public figures and organizations to broadcast information to their fans." If you are looking to set up your company's "official Facebook presence" you would opt for Facebook Pages. We've previously highlighted the features of Pages in our [Facebook Pages guide](#) and a number of other articles.

Simply put, Facebook Pages are a tool for companies and public figures to engage their fans and customers. With the eventual launch of the [Open Graph API](#), Facebook Pages will continue to serve as a tool for Facebook users to interact with companies and public figures around the web.

## Groups Vs Pages: A Feature Comparison

For those looking to determine whether or not groups or Pages will more effectively serve their needs, we've decided to highlight the various features that the two products have and how they differ from one another. After reading through this guide you should be able to make a decision about which product will best serve you.

#### Mass Messaging

One of the best features of groups is the ability to send messages directly to members' Facebook inboxes. As the table at the end of this post highlights, messages are restricted once a group surpasses 5,000 members. If you are looking to build a group for marketing purposes, this feature will quickly become useless as the group surpasses a certain level. However the ability to send messages directly to a user's inbox results in higher conversions over Facebook Page notifications, something we'll highlight later.

#### Indexed By Search Engines

Both groups and Facebook Pages are indexed by search engines, however Facebook Pages provide administrators with greater search engine optimization opportunities (see our [Facebook Page SEO](#) guide) when used in conjunction with the [Static FBML](#) application. That doesn't mean Facebook groups have zero Google juice. You can control the content within the information area of your group, which is sufficient for showing up in Google and other search engines.

#### Stream Publishing

#### Follow All Facebook

[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [RSS](#)

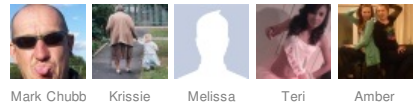
Daily Email  [SIGN-UP](#)

Send us a Tip [tips@allfacebook.com](mailto:tips@allfacebook.com)

[Interested in advertising on All Facebook?](#)

[AllFacebook.com](#)  
[Become a Fan](#)

AllFacebook.com has 40,144 Fans



[Become a sponsor](#)

#### Top developers [Also View Top Applications](#)

<p><b>Zynga</b></p> <p><b>230,861,036</b></p> <p>+ 1,108,132 (0.48%)</p>	<p><b>FarmVille</b> </p> <p>76,039,329 MAU</p> <p><b>Café World</b> </p> <p>30,412,714 MAU</p>
--	--

[BookYou!](#) [Birthday Cards](#)

One of the most significant features of groups and Pages is the ability to publish stories to members' and fans' news feeds. While stories will not be visible to all users, stream stories can obtain a significant reach. Just as Facebook users have their status updates displayed in their friends' feeds, groups and Facebook Pages can do the exact same thing. While I don't know how Facebook prioritizes group stream stories versus Facebook Page stories, Facebook Pages provide [post insights](#), which adds a little more value to administrators.

### Targeted Stream Posts

In addition to being able to publish to fans' streams, Facebook Pages also have the ability to target stream posts based on location in language. If you have successfully attracted fans from around the world, you may want to distribute your English content directly to English speaking fans. Alternatively, you may want to limit the content you publish international content to international users, rather than bombarding your domestic fans with irrelevant content.

### Targeted Updates

While Facebook has continued to de-emphasize the importance of Facebook Page updates (or notifications), they still remain as a valuable communication channel for Facebook Page administrators. If you want to learn how to send Page updates you can [read more here](#). Facebook Page updates show up in your fans' inboxes under a separate tab named "Updates". Since moving updates to this area from the Facebook requests page, the open rate (and response rate) on updates [has increased dramatically](#).

### Support For Applications

One of the most significant differentiators between Facebook groups and Pages is the ability for Pages to include applications. Applications enable Facebook Page administrators to extensively customize their Pages. For example, the [Static FBML application](#) lets Pages administrators create custom page tabs. Some Facebook Page administrators have opted to use more interactive applications. For example, Einstein Bagels is [giving away bagels](#) to users that become fans of their Facebook Page. A BMW dealer in Minnesota [published their entire lot inventory](#) on their Facebook Page.

The point is that custom applications provide Facebook Page administrators with infinite customization opportunities.

### Membership Restrictions

One of the few benefits of groups over Facebook Pages is the ability to restrict who can access them. There are three types of groups: open, closed, and secret. Open groups function just like Facebook Pages: anybody can join them. Closed groups appear in Facebook search results, however group administrators must approve all members of the group. Secret groups are not visible in Facebook search results and are accessed by invite only. In contrast to groups, Facebook Pages are always public and there is no option to make them private. This is a

key differentiator between the two products.

### Event Inbox Messaging

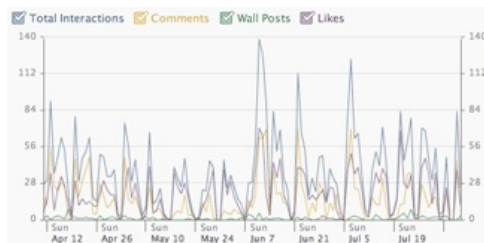
One of the greatest weaknesses of Facebook events created by Facebook Page administrators is that you cannot send inbox messages to your fans. Instead, users are sent Page updates. While a decent percentage of your Facebook Page

fan base will see the update about new events, many fans will not see the notification. While you can use Facebook ads to promote the event, it's more challenging to reach all fans.

In contrast, Facebook groups can send event invites to their members. As usual there are still restrictions even to group administrators. As is the case with mass messages, Facebook group admins are restricted from sending event invites to members once the group is beyond 5,000 members. As is the case with Facebook Page, the best way to ensure your members are aware of the event is by using Facebook ads.

## Engagement Metrics

One of the greatest values of Facebook Pages is a feature called "[Page insights](#)". Page Insights provide administrators with information about the demographic break down of their Facebook Page fan base as well as engagement information. Whether it's the number of people viewing media (photos and videos) on your Facebook Page or the number of likes and comments, Page Insights provides administrators with a lot of detail about user interactions.



This in itself may be the one reason you choose Facebook Pages over groups, however some individuals have no interest in detailed analytics. If you want detailed information about how your fans are engaging with you and who your fans are, Facebook Page insights should be a reason to choose Pages over groups.

## Promotional Widgets



Want to convert visitors to your company website into fans of your Facebook Page? Facebook provides all administrators with Facebook Fanbox widget (as pictured to the left) to help promote their Facebook Pages. Facebook groups on the other hand, have no similar feature. Simply put, Facebook Page are developed for organizations and public figures to engage with their fans, which is why Facebook is working to help administrators promote their Facebook Pages as much as possible.

While Facebook provides other widgets for webmasters, the fan box widget is the only widget that is currently available for Facebook Page administrators. [Learn more about Facebook fan box widget.](#)

## Vanity URLs

The final feature is vanity URLs (also called "usernames"). Vanity URLs are the unique URLs that redirect users to your Facebook Page. Facebook groups do not have this functionality as they are simply tools for discussion but not a place for brands and public figures to engage with their fan base. The idea is that by having a vanity URL, you can more easily promote your Facebook Page. When you are talking to your customers you can say "Just visit facebook dot com slash 'my business' to learn more about us".

If you want a vanity URL for your personal Facebook profile or your Facebook Page, you can visit the [username assignment page](#).

## Conclusion

If you are trying to determine whether to use a Facebook Page or a Facebook group to promote your company or spread ideas, this guide should help you make a decision. We've also created a handy chart below, that breaks down the various features of Facebook pages versus Facebook groups. If you have any other questions about the difference between the two products, feel free to post them in the comments!

	Groups	Pages
Mass Messaging	✓*	✗
Indexed By Google	✓	✓
Stream Publishing	✓	✓
Targeted Stream Posts	✗	✓
Targeted Updates	✗	✓
Support For Applications	✗	✓
Membership Restrictions	✓	✗
Event Inbox Messaging	✓	✗
Engagement Metrics	✗	✓
Promotional Widgets	✗	✓
Vanity URLs	✗	✓

\* messaging is restricted once a group grows past 5,000 members  
Source: AllFacebook.com



Tags: Groups, Guides, Pages

## Comments (12 Responses)



Marc Rosell - February 2nd, 2010 at 11:31 am

I Agree with the benefits of having a page, but to improve them Facebook should permit mass messaging in order to be able to make the page grows



Marc Rosell - February 2nd, 2010 at 11:34 am

There is an important thing that you forgot, is about inviting people when ypu create an event at pages, you can only invite your friends, is not possible to invite your fans. At least the pages owners should be able to invite all fans to the events.

Thanks



Andrew - February 2nd, 2010 at 11:48 am

I've always been annoyed that Facebook didn't make some sort of tool for transforming groups into pages. My organization has kept a group because they don't want the hassle of getting everyone moved from one place to another. But I guess I understand why Facebook can't make a tool like that, what with the differing privacy settings between groups and pages.



len mauricio - February 2nd, 2010 at 11:48 am

Why wouldn't you use both?



Judy M. Baker - February 2nd, 2010 at 12:03 pm

Thank you for comparing and contrasting Facebook Groups and Fan Pages.



Sam Lu - February 2nd, 2010 at 12:34 pm

A Taipei citizen who has consistently spreading facebook's value to the world through Chinese Types.  
A Google Preacher since 2002  
An Android Preacher since 2008  
Sam Lu/Taipei, TW



Bruce - February 2nd, 2010 at 12:45 pm

You didn't mention the difference between Pages and groups as to how they handle photos. On a Page you can organize the photos you add into albums, and create an almost unlimited number of albums. In a group you can add photos, but you can not create albums, so all of the photos are dumped into one large area, with

the most recent ones at the top of the pile.



Facebook User - [February 2nd, 2010 at 1:03 pm](#)

As a user of both the Fan Page and Group, there really seems to be a disconnect that the two exist as different aspects of the same thing. I publish group events weekly for users to interact with that are totally lost to the fan page until I update the blog which then publishes via networked feeds into the fan page. It would make WAY MORE SENSE to allow users to push the Group tool onto the fan page, so that you can get the best of both worlds.  
Seems like a really missed opportunity.



Rooturaj Pattanaik - [February 2nd, 2010 at 1:31 pm](#)

Thanks for the nice compilation. I have been using groups a lot. But never had a page yet. Now I am gonna hit it.



bob - [February 2nd, 2010 at 3:21 pm](#)

I don't think they should charge to use facebook. It is not fair.



Mark - [February 2nd, 2010 at 5:00 pm](#)

Groups do not publish updates into the stream. Posts from group admins show up from a personal Facebook account and not the Group itself. However when a group member comments on something in the Group stream the action may show up in the homepage stream of their friends. Correct me if I'm wrong.



Mark - [February 2nd, 2010 at 5:02 pm](#)

Addendum: Same goes for friends posting to the Group stream, it will show up on the homepage streams of their friends.

## Leave a comment

Name \*

E-Mail \*

Website

Connect with your Facebook Account



Submit Comment

Design by JESS3

WebMediaBrands™



learnnetwork

freelanceconnect

SemanticWeb

[Jobs](#) | [Events](#) | [News](#)

Copyright 2010 WebMediaBrands Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Advertise](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)