

A thumb on the scale: Research says hiding likes can make Facebook fairer and reduce misinformation | Nieman Journalism Lab

By Marian-Andrei RizoIU

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You may have read about — or already seen, depending on where you are — the latest tweak to Facebook's interface: the disappearance of the likes counter.

Like Instagram (which it owns), Facebook is experimenting with hiding the number of likes that posts receive for users in some areas ([Australia](#) for Facebook, and [Canada](#) for Instagram). In the new design, the number of likes is no longer shown. But with a simple click you can see who liked the post and, if you'd like, count them.

It seems like a lot of trouble to hide a seemingly innocuous signal, especially when it is relatively easy to retrieve. Facebook's goal is reportedly to [make people comfortable expressing themselves](#) and to increase the quality of the content they share. There are also claims about ameliorating user insecurity when posting, perceived liberty of expression, and circumventing the herd mentality. But are there any scientific grounds for this change?

[...]

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