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Apple's Twitter integration for iOS 5 affects social media ads for mobile and tablets

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By [Tom Limongello](#)

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The hidden gem in Apple's WWDC conference keynote on Monday, June 6 is the significance that Apple's deep integration of Twitter could have for marketers.

With a combined reach of 425 million users –minus overlap, of course – this partnership makes greater brand engagement possible and opens the door for new, creative ways to integrate Twitter into mobile ads.

Apple did not focus on marketers at all during the WWDC keynote.

In fact, CEO Steve Jobs snubbed iAd saying that Apple users will not stand for ads in their mail application, while Apple exec Scott Forstall showed how ads can be stripped out of article pages via Safari Reader.

Even without Apple taking credit for what it unveiled for marketers, the company delivered the single most important feature in helping brands connect users to their social profiles.

Ante social

Apple is the first of the mobile operating system providers to do the heavy lifting to offer a

single sign-on for a major social network, rather than put all the work on the social network and publishers to figure out how to authenticate users.

Increased security on mobile for authenticating users via mobile Web or app login screens is a problem.

When coupled with touch typing long user names and passwords on a small phone, it spells doom for marketers who are looking for users to make the effort to interact with their brands.

There was hope that single sign-on would have come last year with Apple + Facebook when Apple was launching Ping and iOS 4.

However, due to “onerous” terms from Facebook, the winner of Apple’s groundbreaking single sign-on service is Twitter. Why is this groundbreaking?

Not because of “tweet sheets,” lovely as they are, since many apps had already created similar custom interfaces for making a Twitter update smoother and richer.

Instead the big step is the single sign-on feature itself.

If your phone remembers your Twitter ID, that means that when you want to share, or otherwise express yourself from one app to another, Twitter will be the identity that is most easy to use.

Apple made sure that the most important app on iOS, its Safari browser, will also be able to use the single sign-on to the Twitter feature.

Similar to how people who do not own a PC will get a welcome feeling when their new iOS 5 devices do not require a cord to register their device, Twitter users will get a welcome feeling when they do not have to login every time they see a Tweet button, whether that is in an app or on a publisher site.

Given the frequency of people following Twitter links to discover news and read content, being able to share great content simply is critical.

As of now, mobile social ads are pretty basic, consisting of just a link out to a Twitter profile or Facebook page.

The reason we are not seeing a deeper level of connection features – even though Facebook has quite a few ways to customize the way that a marketer could connect – is because marketers have found the login wall to be a huge barrier to delivering social ad features that users are willing to use.

As a comparison, advertisers who include Facebook buttons have often linked out to the full site rather than Facebook’s totally optimized touch.facebook.com site on iOS and Android because there is a fear of having to login to 'Like' things on the mobile page.

Tweetsomethings

With single sign-on for Twitter, I can see Twitter becoming the preferred choice over

Facebook for sharing content. Facebook will not be far behind. It has a team called “Platmobile” which has been working on it since at least Nov. 6, 2010 when I asked the question on Quora.

However, unless you are going to own an INQ Facebook phone, or Facebook launches single sign-on capability in a very clever way that is deployed to all Android devices OTA at once, even Facebook’s tremendous, 700 million user-size-advantage on Twitter will likely not matter to those in charge of pasting social media logos to advertising creative.

Once they see the difference in results earned by a Twitter unfettered by login constraints versus those from Facebook on mobile and not to mention tablets where Facebook has not developed an app, brands just might start giving Facebook the bird.

One more thing.

Since we will have an easier time integrating social features into mobile ads this fall, let us all think of some ideas to make them more interesting.

I wonder if Apple will let marketers use the new Reminders API to enable geo-fenced ads that finds all your friends in a specific location and output a reminder iMessage to drive group TV tune-in and movie ticket sales?

Tom Limongello is vice president of marketing at [Crisp](#), New York. Reach him at tom@crispmedia.com.

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