

Management of conflicts between Facebook community users¹

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ABSTRACT

Composed of more than 2 billion members worldwide, Facebook must be prepared to solve disputes between its users. From the amicable statement to the arbitration, resolution processes may vary but must ensure efficiency. Mandatory acceptance of Terms and Conditions makes all users concerned by these resolution processes, which are not fully described, reason why an analysis and comparison should be done to understand how they work and their viability. To ensure that, the report focusses on the four resolution processes' analysis of the network. An understanding through testing, comparing and ranking these methods to have a clear vision of each. The author's analysis highlights the pertinence of a precise process which ensures the better way to solve a conflict between users, with the possibility of an amicable solution or a Facebook's arbitration. Through its internal resolution processes, the famous social network found several ways to be fully adapted to its users' needs and solve their disputes. Although an unequal pertinence depending the method chosen, users will always have the means to find an adapted solution.

Key words: conflict, dispute, issue, claim, resolution

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 2004, Facebook is a social network allowing interaction through 2 billion users worldwide. Publication of articles, pictures, videos, information sharing, private and public messages made the website one of the most used in the world. It's a new way to communicate, inform, maintain and develop virtual relations with others.

According to the network's unique principle and Terms and Conditions agreed to each account creation, the user manages his own actions on the website, is responsible for the linked consequences through the network's community. Years after years, Facebook became more than a social network, it became a virtual life with social interactions and community belonging's feeling. Although the management of our own actions and their consequences, it's difficult to have the control on other members' actions, behaviors and decisions, according to the free-expression principle of the network. The problem is this one: members actions can have negative repercussions which lead to disputes to solve. Conflicts which can emerge from Facebook

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interactions may take several forms (Provocation, humiliation, bullying, threats) through diverse ways of communication (Pictures, Messages, Articles, Videos...). In order to struggle against it, **how does Facebook allow the management of Disputes/Conflicts between Facebook members of its community and is this method ensuring viability?**

Some criticisms appear with the Facebook's approach of conflicts, like the lack of involvement of the company or any mediator to lead the conflict's resolution. Although the conscious of risks which can occur, the Network bases principally its approach on a user-to-user arrangement, as specified on its terms and conditions, which doesn't directly involve the company and can raise the question of the process' credibility and viability.

How does the system exactly work? How can both parties have agreement on the resolution? What if one party refuses an agreement? The involvement's degree of Facebook seems unclear according to Terms and Conditions but has to be understood by all user. Facebook is recent and its solution to mitigate conflicts is too. This situation raises the question of its performance analysis through time and the efficiency of the method.

Problem Statement

Through this International Contract Management report will be understood, analyzed and compared the Facebook's methods and abilities to solve conflicts between its users.

The examination of this subject will be based on the prereduced acceptance of the website's Terms and Conditions by users in order to beneficiate of its functionalities and will highlight advantages and disadvantages of a method which encourages the parties' involvement in disputes resolution.

According to these points and problems, this report will be based on Facebook's user's conflicts resolution analysis through several aspects:

- The methodology understanding of Facebook's involvement in the conflict's resolution process through the network's Terms and Conditions.
- The credibility, viability and ability of the process to solve user's conflicts and both roles of Facebook and user in it.

METHODOLOGY

In order to ensure the progress of this report, the analysis of several documents from Facebook (Terms and Conditions, Standards...) was done and resolution's alternatives of Facebook were tested in real situations.

The development of feasible alternatives

According to the website's principles, a dispute between users is initiated when one party decides to report a publication for several reasons which can be:

- 1) *Annoying or not interesting*: In this kind of publication, the user considers that he/she is indirectly concerned by a publication, which he/she considers as not necessary on Facebook. It can take several forms such as a picture, a message, an article... User who reports a publication for this reason as several opportunities: Block the author, Unfollow the author, Unfriend the author or Message the author in order to let him/her know about our personal consideration of the publication and ask for its deleting. This alternative focuses on an Amicable statement.
- 2) *I'm in this publication and I don't like it*: In this kind of situation, the user considers that he/she is directly concerned by the publication, which mentioned his/her name, is posted on his/her profile or make the user physically appearing on it. It can take several forms such as a picture, a message, an article and has the particularity to be visible to the community. When the user decides to report this publication he/she has the possibility to be more precise about the reason (Inappropriate, embarrassing, Sad, Bad...) and let the initiator know about this point. The resolution principle is based on the possibility to block, unfriend or unfollow the author or send him/her a message to start a negotiation process between users to make it disappear. This alternative focuses on an Amicable Statement.
- 3) *I think it shouldn't be on Facebook*: In this case of conflict between users, the problem appears as a serious issue and can be used in two cases: To make it disappear with the possibility of a Facebook's authority intervention or as a following step if the previous negotiations between users have failed. It can take several forms against the Facebook principles, standards (Defined in Terms & Conditions and Standards accepted) such as Pornography, humiliation, bullying... In order to solve it, the user can use the classical alternatives (Unfriend, Unfollow, Block or send a message to ask the deleting) or ask a Facebook's intervention to solve the dispute. In this case, Facebook will appear as an impartial mediator to examine the justification of the conflicts and determine the final solution applicable to both (or more) involved people in the dispute. This alternative focuses on an Arbitration of a third party (Facebook).
- 4) *It's spam*: Spams are developed against the community standards and have a negative impact on user's navigation. In this kind of situation, the user reports the spam's publication and user to Facebook, which will start its own analysis and determine the correspondence between the report and the nature of the publication. Facebook is a judge in this situation and has the full power to decide to make an intervention and punish or not. This alternative focuses on an Arbitration without any possible amicable statement. *Because of the nature of the claim, which is focused on a user-to-company's dispute (and not user-user), this conflict's resolution method will not be considered on the following analysis*

Resume of alternatives for user-to-user dispute: Amicable resolution or Arbitration through 3 different kinds of resolution methods.

Each possible alternative to solve the dispute between users has the advantage to be free, easily understandable for all users because of the template guide and can provide an acceptable solution without the necessary intervention of a third party. In order to simplify the analysis, it's possible to make a classification of possible issues as following:

Mild-annoyance issues: Conflicts which focus only an amicable statement

- 1) *Annoying or not interesting:* Allow a resolution within users. It can result in two ways, resolution of the conflict or no resolution (Necessity to ask for a Facebook's arbitration)
- 2) *I'm in this publication and I don't like it:* Allow a resolution between users through more specific messages to ensure the resolution. It can result in two ways, resolution of the conflict or no resolution (Necessity to ask for a Facebook's arbitration)

Serious Issues: Can have an important negative impact on reputation, community, personal situation... These problems can be solved in an amicable manner but are more focused on an arbitration system from Facebook to be solved.

- 3) *I think it shouldn't be on Facebook:* Allow a resolution between users and an arbitration with Facebook to evaluate the dispute and solve it. It can result in a single way, resolution of the conflict (By amicable process or arbitration process)

Selection of a criteria

According to a user's dispute resolution, some methods seem more adapted because of their correspondence to specific characteristics. The ones which were chosen for the analysis are:

- Time for resolution: An important point to keep in mind is the time needed to solve the dispute. A faster solution with a positive result will always be preferable.
- Quality of the process: This point is concerning the ability to clearly define the source of the conflict and follow logical steps which ensure a facilitated resolution.
- Follow-up of the process: Facebook developed for SOME of its methods the possibility to keep an eye on the progress of the resolution step by step through a dedicated platform. This follow-up can be visible to all parties involved in the process in case of Facebook's arbitration.
- Precision: In order to ensure a successful process, causes of the dispute must be clearly defined. Facebook allows to precise the specific reason at the beginning of the dispute with several precision's degrees depending the method
- Internal alternatives: This characteristic considers all the alternatives available for the user in order to solve the conflict, from the possibility to block, unfollow another user, to ask for a Facebook's arbitration.

- Convenience: Depending on the kind of issue between users, it's necessary to propose adapted solutions, which perfectly suits the parties' requirements to ensure the right solution to the right problem.

Attribute	Annoying or Not-interested	I'm in this publication and I don't like it	I think it shouldn't be on Facebook
Time for resolution	Fast	Quite long	Long
Quality of the process	Poor	Fair	Excellent
Follow-up of the process	No possibility	Complete	Complete
Precision	Fair	Poor	Good
Internal alternatives	Poor	Excellent	Excellent
Convenience	Poor	Fair	Excellent

I think it shouldn't be on Facebook > I'm in this publication and I don't like it > Annoying or Not-interested

According to this analysis, an obvious solution appears as the best one and is "*I think it shouldn't be on Facebook*" with many green marks. Although many red marks for "*Annoying or Not-interested resolution's method*", it's possible to see that an important point is to highlight, the low-time needed to find a solution. For this reason, the three solutions will be analyzed and compared to the next phase.

FINDINGS

Analysis and comparison of alternatives

- 1) *Annoying or not interesting solution*: This solution has the advantage to be fast in comparison to others which ensures it a real advantage. But, the quality of the process is not enough developed, doesn't ensure a real precision concerning the sources of the conflicts and internal alternatives to solve them. The impossibility to follow-up the process is a huge inconvenient for this alternative, with an impossibility for the user to be informed about the evolution of the resolution process. This solution seems to poor to efficiently solve a conflict.
- 2) *I'm in this publication and I don't like it*: More developed than the previous solution, this solution has the advantage to be composed of a large number of internal alternatives like the possibility to involve Facebook in the process as an arbitrator if the amicable negotiation fails. The possibility to follow-up the process is an excellent point to ensure the user the possibility to be informed about the resolution's steps accomplishment. This solution is quite-long because of the Facebook's arbitration which can take time to move from a step to another one, then the quality of the global process is impacted.
- 3) *I think it shouldn't be on Facebook*: This solution is the best one, with a large range of internal alternatives which cover many possible disputes. The precision of the process is well-developed and the following of the resolution step-by-step is the most developed of

the website (With a dedicated platform). This alternative can solve all kinds of conflicts easily but has the inconvenient to take a long time, because of the Facebook’s arbitration it generates from the beginning to the end.

Quality	
Excellent	0
Fair	1
Poor	2

Convenience	
Excellent	2
Fair	1
Poor	0

Attribute	Annoying or Not-interested	I'm in this publication and I don't like it	I think it shouldn't be on Facebook
Time for resolution	0	0,33	0,67
Quality of the process	0,67	0,33	0
Follow-up of the process	0,67	0	0
Precisions	0,33	0,67	0
Alternatives to solve	0,67	0	0
Convenience	0,67	0,33	0
Totals	3,01	1,66	0,67
Attribute	Value	Formula	Dimension less value
Time for resolution	Fast	Relative rank = (1-1)/3	0
	Quite Long	Relative rank = (2-1)/3	0,33
	Long	Relative rank = (3-1)/3	0,67
Quality of the process	Poor	Relative rank = (3-1)/3	0,67
	Fair	Relative rank = (2-1)/3	0,33
	Excellent	Relative rank = (1-1)/3	0
Follow-up of process	No possibility	Relative rank = (3-1)/3	0,67
	Limited	Relative rank = (1-1)/3	0
	Complete	Relative rank = (1-1)/3	0
Precision	Fair	Relative rank = (2-1)/3	0,33
	Poor	Relative rank = (3-1)/3	0,67
	Excellent	Relative rank = (1-1)/3	0
Internal alternatives	Poor	Relative rank = (3-1)/3	0,67
	Good	Relative rank = (1-1)/3	0
	Excellent	Relative rank = (1-1)/3	0
Convenience	Poor	Relative rank = (3-1)/3	0,67
	Fair	Relative rank = (2-1)/3	0,33
	Excellent	Relative rank = (1-1)/3	0

Selection of the preferred alternative

According to selected criteria and complete analysis below, the best alternative of dispute’s resolution between Facebook’s users is “*I think it shouldn't be on Facebook*”.

CONCLUSION

This research paper had the aim to answer two important questions:

1- How does the Facebook’s methodology to solve conflicts work?

We saw that Facebook developed an internal resolution system based on four methodologies supported by an intuitive Template. This system allows to clearly define sources of the conflict, the kind of resolution and the steps of the process. Depending the reason of the user-to-user conflict, the right alternative must be chosen (*Annoying or not interesting; I'm in this publication and I don't like it; I think it shouldn't be on Facebook*) and the process may result on an amicable statement or an arbitration by the network, which can take the final resolution.

2- Does this system ensure credibility, viability and ability to solve the user-to-user conflict?

Tests, analyzes and comparisons made for this research paper have shown that Facebook developed an efficient system to solve conflicts between users. The system credibility is ensured by the website's capability to propose many internal alternatives to perfectly suit the solution to the problem and the possible intervention of Facebook as an arbitrator in case of non-amicable resolution.

Although the credibility of tools used, the viability of the process and its ability to solve a user-to-user conflict may vary, depending on the alternative chosen to bring the solution. In the case of "*Annoying or Not-interested*" alternative, the lack of involvement of the website, the low quality and the impossibility to follow-up the process doesn't provide a safe solution to the user despite its capacity to be fast. For "*I'm in this publication and I don't like it*", although a lot of internal alternatives to clearly define sources of the conflict and the possibility to follow-up the process, the long time for resolution, and the lack of precision doesn't ensure a perfect process. The viability and credibility of the Facebook's conflicts resolution method are principally supported by the "*I think it shouldn't be on Facebook*" alternative. This method is complete, brings the means to define the sources of the conflict, involves parties for an amicable or arbitrated solution. Although the long time of the process, its quality and certitude to solve the problem is ensured.

We can conclude that the Facebook's process to solve conflicts between users can be considered as credible, viable through some of its internal tools and should be focused on a limited number of solutions but more effective ones like, for example "*I think it shouldn't be on Facebook*".

FOLLOW ON RESEARCH

This paper allows one to understand, analyze a user-to-user conflict's resolution with the Facebook's tools from an internal point of view and determine the methods which allow the network to propose viable and credible solutions. By considering the possible repercussions of Facebook's publications on real personal life, social reputation, it may be interesting to consider what are the possibilities and limits of Facebook in this domain. From a legal and ethical aspect, may user-to-user conflicts be externalized and solve by an independent arbitration in case of extended repercussions outside of Facebook's control? Should Facebook let available conflict's information to the new arbitration? Some questions may appear and need to be fully analyzed to

understand the Facebook's implication in user-to-user conflict's repercussions outside its platform.

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Florian Dalino is a 23 years old French MSc student in Skema Business School Paris, major Project and Programme Management & Business Development (PPMBD). He is a former student of North Carolina State University in the USA and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Management in 2015. He had the opportunity to live several professional experiences through internships in France, United Kingdom and the United States.

His professional background is particularly business development oriented with three years of experiences in this sector, including a year as Business Development Manager in Digital Transformation market. He had the opportunity to manage teams, build complete business strategies, negotiate partnerships and bring companies the means to develop their activities and their performances in a “Uberization” context. Many activities allowed him to use theoretical methods learned during his studies.

Several experiences as project manager allowed him to develop an appreciation for this activity and confirmed his ambition to continue on this way. For this reason, he decided to choose a specialization in Project Management and integrated Skema Business School in September 2016. Since this time, he has personally invested in many projects with multicultural teams to create innovative concepts, develop companies' performance. He has successfully passed Prince2 and AgilePM certification exams.

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Florian is an optimistic person, always looking for opportunities to take part in new adventures, from a personal and a professional point of view. He is particularly motivated by new challenges and always ready to perform. Florian can be contacted at florian.dalino@skema.edu