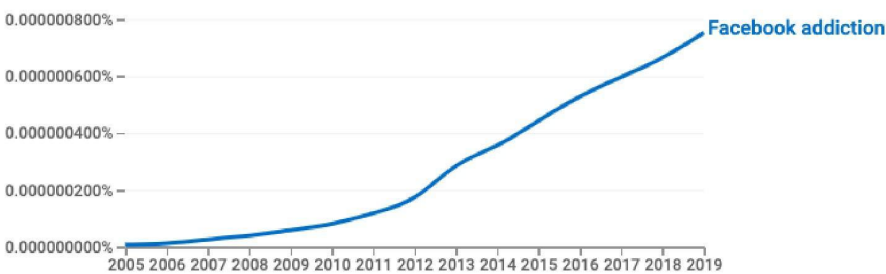


Problematic Use POV

tl;dr

- People with problematic use have issues controlling social media usage that then has negative impacts on their life. 12.5% of Facebook users are affected by problematic use.
- Your Time on Facebook and Your Activity (on Instagram) were two products launched to address problematic use. However, they were deprioritized despite successful launches, positive reception by users, and increased engagement over time.
- We have a wealth of research and product ideas that we can act on to reduce problematic use. We should support existing products and create new products to mitigate problematic use in the Facebook Family of Apps.

History of problematic use at Facebook



Google Ngram of the phrase "Facebook addiction" showing sharp, continued increases in concerns about excessive Facebook use.

As the number of Facebook users raced past 1 billion in 2012, an increasing number of people became concerned with the possibility of Facebook "addiction". News articles about spending too much time on social media began to emerge, accompanied by an increase of academic studies reporting negative impacts of social media use on mental health. In 2018, the BBC published an [[HYPERLINK "https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20180118-how-much-is-too-much-time-on-social-media"](https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20180118-how-much-is-too-much-time-on-social-media)] about spending too much time on social media. It was followed later in the year by a [[HYPERLINK "https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-44640959"](https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-44640959)] with interviews with Silicon Valley engineers and former Facebook employees stating that "There was definitely an awareness of the fact that [Facebook] was habit-forming and addictive" and "[Facebook] set out to consume as much user time as possible... It was 'exploiting a vulnerability in human psychology'".

In response to concerns voiced in the media, Chris Cox expressed interest in building products to help people who felt that they spent excessive time on Facebook. The Well-being team, known at the time as the Compassion team, took on the task. A new Facebook product called *Your Time on Facebook* was launched in 2018 that included options to set time reminders and mute notifications. Soon after, Instagram created *Your Activity*, a product with identical functionality to its Facebook counterpart. The Well-being team listed “problematic use” on Facebook as a major well-being priority to address in a Q1 2019 [[HYPERLINK "https://fb.quip.com/pEXgAxaRINhg" \h](https://fb.quip.com/pEXgAxaRINhg)] to Sheryl Sandberg. Despite the buy-in from leadership, both products on Facebook and Instagram were eventually deprioritized. The remainder of this report will discuss problematic use in more detail, the products created to address problematic use, and the future of problematic use within the Facebook Family of Apps.

Problematic use, not addiction

[[HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/Idemj8vebe/" \h](https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/Idemj8vebe/)] for *Your Time on Facebook* quickly revealed that self-reported excessive use of Facebook did not always mean a person thought Facebook was negatively impacting their life or that they had a problem. [[HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/groups/ResearchInsights/permalink/2042922635756341/" \h](https://fb.workplace.com/groups/ResearchInsights/permalink/2042922635756341/)] suggested that the label “Facebook addiction” was imprecise and using Facebook in excess could not be clinically classified as an addiction. Instead, “problematic use” was a more accurate term to describe habitual, undesired, excessive use of Facebook. As a result, the Well-being team shifted towards a goal of reducing problematic use by **helping people who felt like they had problems controlling their Facebook usage, resulting in negative impacts on their lives, to create better Facebook habits** ([[HYPERLINK "https://dl.acm.org/dol/abs/10.1145/3290605.3300429" \h](https://dl.acm.org/dol/abs/10.1145/3290605.3300429)]).

Measuring Facebook problematic use

A person is classified as a problematic user through self-reported survey measures. Internally, we define problematic use as experiencing both of the following issues either “very often” or “all the time”:

- Lack of control or feelings of guilt over Facebook use.
- Negative impact in at least one of the following areas: sleep, parenting, social relationships, or productivity.

12.5% of people, worldwide, are affected by problematic use ([[HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/notes/anneke-buffone/facebooks-measurement-strategy-for-problematic-use-well-being-survey-first-resul/164034771370608/" \h](https://fb.workplace.com/notes/anneke-buffone/facebooks-measurement-strategy-for-problematic-use-well-being-survey-first-resul/164034771370608/)]). Problematic use rates are higher in countries like the Philippines (25%) and India (24%).

Problematic use and Facebook

People rated Facebook as being one of the [[HYPERLINK](#)

"<https://fb.workplace.com/photo?fbid=153237582450327&set=a.153237359117016>" \h]. 20% of people who experience problematic use [<https://fb.workplace.com/notes/anneke-buffone/facebooks-measurement-strategy-for-problematic-use-well-being-survey-first-resul/164034771370608/>" \h], a much higher percentage than people who do not have problematic use (< 5%). It is notable though, that people who are classified as having [[HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/photo?fbid=153237615783657&set=a.153237359117016"](https://fb.workplace.com/photo?fbid=153237615783657&set=a.153237359117016) \h] (see full [[HYPERLINK](#)

"<https://fb.workplace.com/groups/product.foundation/permalink/1378745485634147/>" \h]). In summary, this means a high proportion of people who use the Facebook app like using the application, but also are negatively affected to the extent that they consider deleting or deactivating their accounts. The Facebook Family of Apps should provide people with the ability to control their time and mitigate negative impacts so they can continue to enjoy using the platforms.

Overview of products

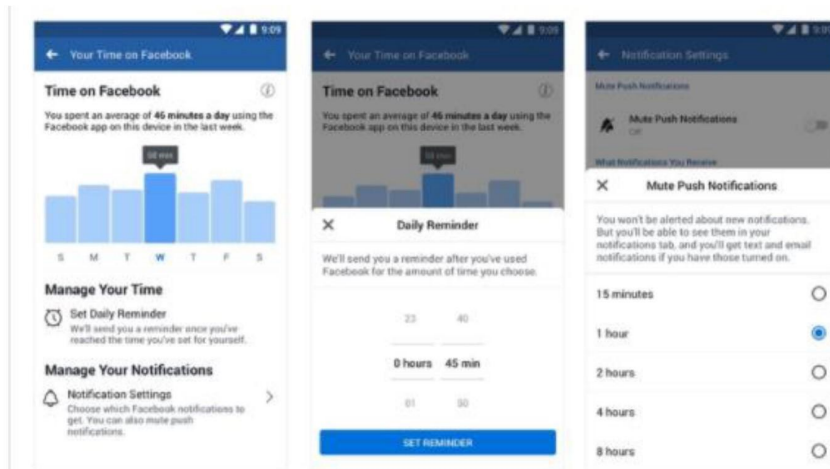
Your Time on Facebook

Your Time on Facebook v1 (2018)

During Q1 2018, product testing on a new suite of features called *Control Your Time* kicked off (research reports part [<https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/idemj8vebe/>" \h], [[HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/1wta0n9mwo/"](https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/1wta0n9mwo/) \h], [[HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/2elbj3zft0/"](https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/2elbj3zft0/) \h], [[HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/jvml6kcp80/"](https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/jvml6kcp80/) \h]). With its success, a MVP called *Your Time on Facebook* (YToF) was launched by mid-2018. YToF displayed a dashboard where time logged while using Facebook on a mobile device was shown. YToF included two types of controls:

1. "Manage Your Time" had a feature called "Set Daily Reminder". This tool allowed people to set a self-imposed time limit that would display an alert once this time was exceeded.
2. "Manage your Notifications" was a shortcut to access "Notification settings" which muted notifications for up to 8 hours.





"Time on Facebook", released in 2018, allowed users to set reminders and mute notifications.
Find it in the Facebook App under Menu >> Settings & Privacy >> Your Time on Facebook

Your Time on Facebook v2 (2019)

The Compassion team originally responsible for launching YToF was re-org'd shortly after the product launch, but its well-being research division remained intact. In 2019, following the successful [[HYPERLINK "https://fb.quip.com/pEXgAxaRiNhg"](https://fb.quip.com/pEXgAxaRiNhg)] written by the Well-being team, a new product team in Product Foundation was quickly spun up with the goal to reduce the number of people classified with problematic Facebook use. A wealth of usability testing and quantitative research quickly followed ([[HYPERLINK "https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V6a-wXcMJBwDxl02XgjZB5GVyrH1LogoTV5LFCXAU/edit"](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V6a-wXcMJBwDxl02XgjZB5GVyrH1LogoTV5LFCXAU/edit)]). The team chose to focus on leveraging the existing YToF surface with the goal to convert it to a surface that would hold additional tools for addressing problematic use.

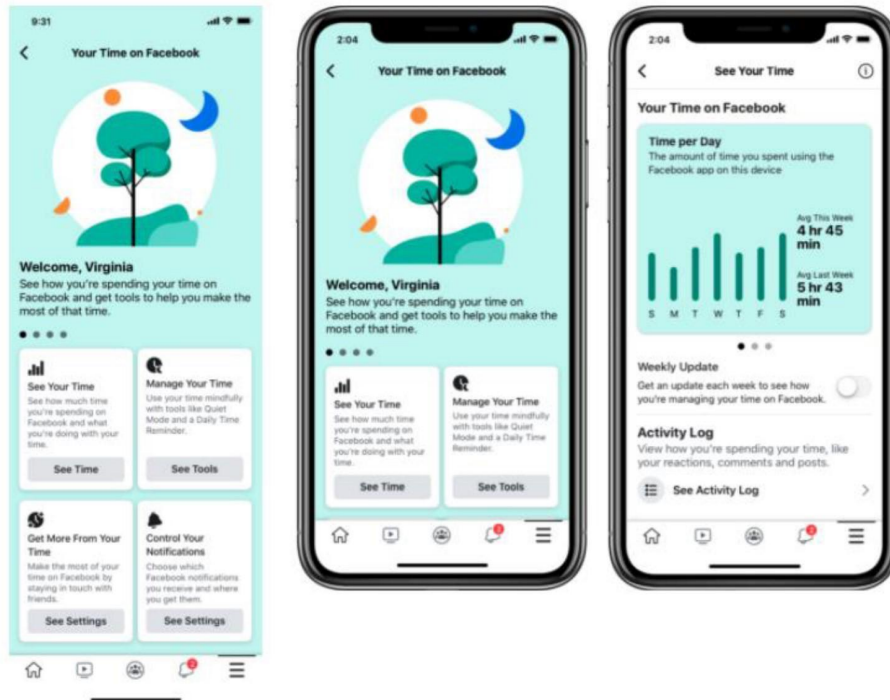
[[HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/wiki/Your_Time_on_Facebook/Intro/"](https://www.internalfb.com/intern/wiki/Your_Time_on_Facebook/Intro/)] was launched in mid-2019. It included a sleek redesign, new features, and centralized controls for controlling Facebook settings (see [[HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/px/project/wellbeing/"](https://www.internalfb.com/intern/px/project/wellbeing/)]). The features were categorized into four topic areas:

1. "See Your Time"
 - Time spent dashboard with three views (1) overall, (2) day vs night time use, (3) sessions
 - Toggle weekly time spent summary
 - Quick access to "Activity Log"
2. "Manage Your Time"

- “Quiet Mode”: mute notifications for a set time paired with a reminder that the mode is activated when a person accesses Facebook.
 - “Scheduled Quiet Mode”: Controls to set recurring quiet hours.
 - “Daily Time Reminder”: the original feature from YToF v1. Alerts a person when they have exceeded a set amount of time on Facebook.
3. “Get More From Your Time”
- “News Feed Preferences”: Options to control who to follow, unfollow, or snooze.
 - “Friends on Facebook”: Shortcut to People You May know and new friend requests.
4. “Control your Notifications”
- “Notification settings”: Change where and when a person receives notifications
 - “Notification dots”: Enable or disable notification dots on shortcut icons

The Product Foundation team supporting YToF v2 lost funding at the end of 2019 and the product team was dissolved. A small team on Product Foundation is continuing to support YToF v2 for its final release on Android in H2 2020. Afterwards, the Navigation team will take ownership of YToF; currently there are no plans for further development.

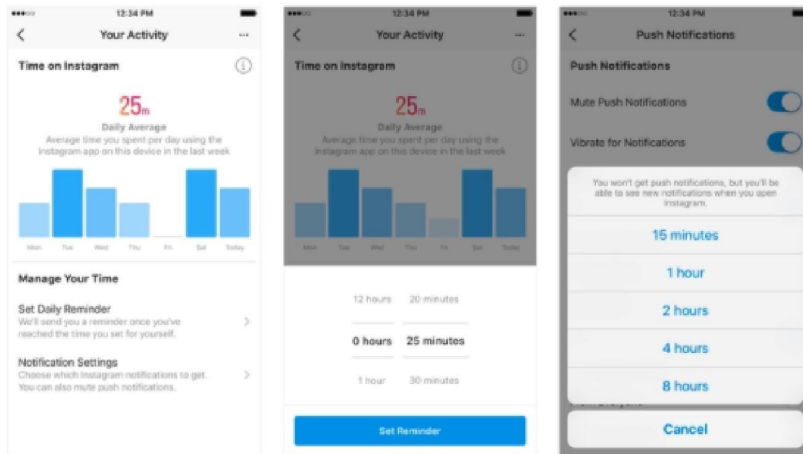
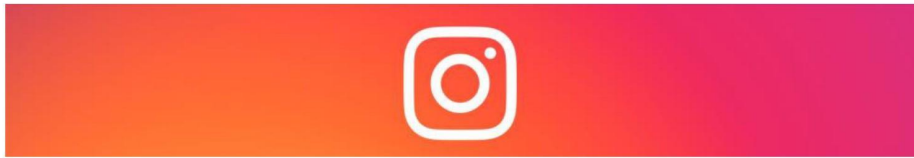




Your Time on Facebook v2 was released in 2019. It included a collection of new tools and shortcuts to controls for time management.

Your Activity (Instagram)

When YToF v1 launched at the end of H1 2018, Instagram also developed a time monitoring tool for the app called *Your Activity*. The tool included similar features to set a daily reminder and an option to mute Instagram notifications. This tool was deprioritized at the end of H2 2018 due to (1) iOS rolling out their operating system level time management tool and (2) inaccuracies in time tracking within *Your Activity*. There was a spark of renewed interest for *Your Activity* when YToF v2 was in development ([[HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/groups/184250878939438/"](https://fb.workplace.com/groups/184250878939438/) \h]), but ultimately support was not renewed. *Your Activity* still exists on Instagram today although it is unsupported and there have been considerations to unship it.



Your Activity was launched on Instagram in mid-2018. It contains the same layout and features as the 2018 version of *Your Time* on Facebook.

Find Your Activity in the Instagram App in Profile >> Menu >> Your Activity.

Product Impacts

Support for both *Your Time* on Facebook and *Your Activity* on Instagram was short-lived. However, the two products had a good reception when they launched and continue to have impact to this day.

Impact of *Your Time* on Facebook

- YToF is helping the people who use it. 70% of respondents (n = 437) to a recent survey considered [[HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/notes/malkeet-singh/moving-the-needle-on-problematic-fb-use-with-your-time-on-facebook-v2/156189899306793/" \h](https://fb.workplace.com/notes/malkeet-singh/moving-the-needle-on-problematic-fb-use-with-your-time-on-facebook-v2/156189899306793/)].
- Over 1M (iOS) users visit YToF each day (see [[HYPERLINK "https://fburl.com/unidash/v9ocqu5b" \h](https://fburl.com/unidash/v9ocqu5b)]). YToF v2 will be rolled out to all Android users by the end of 2020 and these numbers are expected to rise.
- People on Facebook are very interested in learning more about controlling their time on Facebook. During the YToF v1 launch, click through rates (CTR) of the accompanying QP

reached 4.4% (average CTRs for most QPs is between 1-4%). Within the product, CTRs for YTOF v2 features reached as high as 54% ([HYPERLINK "https://fb.quip.com/22IEA8oHTMwD" \h]).

- Internally there was also a high interest in YToF as a time management tool. A dogfooding event for YToF v2 held a record for largest attendance for Facebook App. Over a hundred employees attended.

Comms & press response

Your Time on Facebook v2 was included in a Facebook Newsroom announcement for “Keeping People Safe and Informed About the Coronavirus” in April 2020. Compared to the other announcements released at the same time, YToF was the most well-received. Notable press coverage include [HYPERLINK "https://www.adweek.com/digital/facebook-begins-rolling-out-quiet-mode-to-encourage-users-to-take-breaks/" \h], [HYPERLINK "https://fortune.com/2020/04/09/facebook-quiet-mode-debut-coronavirus-covid-19/" \h], and [HYPERLINK "https://venturebeat.com/2020/04/09/facebook-launches-quiet-mode-for-muting-alerts-and-scheduling-downtime/" \h] (see full press coverage [HYPERLINK "https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RsLWygVXImBAHB3n0TrgR9ARt804Sthp5NCAHcMgh/edit" \h]).

Commented [1]: Reached out to Gauri and Jimmy. They forwarded me the email called “Your Time on Facebook Coverage Report” from April 90, 2020

Impact of Your Activity (Instagram)

- The number of people who have set a “Daily Time Reminder” has doubled since the product launch in 2018. As of December 2019, 1% Android and 1.8% of iOS users have set a reminder for themselves – a daily average of 500k and 2.1M users each day, respectively ([HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/groups/184250878939438/permalink/389725418391982/" \h]).
Note: Your Activity was only rolled out to 50% of Android users. These values could double if the product is fully rolled out.
- Your Activity is helping people reduce their time on Instagram. 25% of people who set a “Daily Time Reminder” trigger their reminders. Their time spent on Instagram decreases by an average of 12% the following day.
- Instagram hosted a [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/groups/432156973909421/permalink/606168779841572/" \h] in partnership with NGOs in the UK after the release of Your Activity. Key stakeholders and leaders in the digital well-being fields recognized Instagram’s commitment to well-being.

Comms & press response

Commented [2]: Unable to find any and Lori didn't have anything but she might get back to me.

Future opportunities for problematic use

Currently, no teams in the Facebook Family of Apps are working on problematic use. Nevertheless, multiple years of research and development have left a clear trail to pick up where it was left off.

Product

Your Time on Facebook

UX researchers for YToF v2 left a detailed set of [[\h](https://fb.alpha.workplace.com/profile.php?id=100013195998758&sk=media_set&set=a.888316751618183&type=3&force_galahad=1)] for future development of YToF. They tested 13 concepts for YToF during usability interviews. Future opportunity spaces include:

- Increasing people's awareness of problematic use and how to manage it
- Increasing time well spent on Facebook and reducing distractions
- Features that communicate availability to others
- Encouraging rest by building features focused on night time usage and winding down
- Supporting healthy commitments to put down Facebook during quality time with others
- Removing the pressure of seeing content or fear of missing content

Your Activity (Instagram)

Rising engagement with the "Daily Time Reminder" suggests that *Your Activity* is valuable and gaining traction. Support should be given to this tool to improve it both technically and from a user experience perspective.

- Fix inaccurate time spent estimates on the surface (high priority).
- Finish Android roll out (high priority).
- Leverage existing YToF v2 research to give *Your Activity* a facelift and increase functionality.

Other Apps

- Create time tools for other platforms in the FoA such as WhatsApp and Oculus.

Research

Foundational research

- We can be proactive about stemming problematic use before it develops further on our platforms. Deeper understanding of problematic use on other apps (Instagram, WhatsApp, and Oculus) is still needed.
- We need to examine the efficacy of our existing time management tools (YToF and *Your Activity*) for reducing the prevalence of problematic use to continue improving them.

Commented [3]: Wondering what you had in mind for the distinction between Research and Product because there is overlap for the case of product research.

Summary

The Facebook Family of Apps are responsible for problematic use -- without these platforms problematic use would not exist. However, the Family of Apps also provides meaningful connections for many of its users. Therefore, we have a responsibility to mitigate the harm that is associated with problematic use by providing tools for users to take control of their usage. Facebook and Instagram already have two products that can be used to help people manage their time. However, without resources, we cannot continue to support these tools or measure their efficacy. It is the Well-being team's hope that moving forward we can provide resources to support existing products, build new ones, and alleviate problematic use.

Relevant Docs for us to create POV:

History

How this work came to be

- [[HYPERLINK "https://fb.quip.com/svduAz4Yp6rv"](https://fb.quip.com/svduAz4Yp6rv) \h]

Definition

- [[HYPERLINK "https://www.dropbox.com/s/c4gvss9okfds9ho/Problematic%20use%20research%20summary%20April%202019.key?dl=0"](https://www.dropbox.com/s/c4gvss9okfds9ho/Problematic%20use%20research%20summary%20April%202019.key?dl=0) \h] (Elena)
- [[HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/notes/anneke-buffone/facebooks-measurement-strategy-for-problematic-use-well-being-survey-first-resul/164034771370608/"](https://fb.workplace.com/notes/anneke-buffone/facebooks-measurement-strategy-for-problematic-use-well-being-survey-first-resul/164034771370608/) \h] - Anneke on measuring PU

Relationship to "FB addiction" topic / why we focus on PU and not "excessive use"

- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/groups/ResearchInsights/permalink/2042922635756341/" \h] - Elena
 - Longer version in PDF
- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/notes/justin-cheng/problematic-facebook-use-when-people-feel-like-facebook-negatively-affects-their/299978474089479/" \h] (Maira, Justin, Elena)

What Products Have Been Built

V1

- Control your time: part [HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/idevj8vebe/" \h], [HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/1wta0n9mwo/" \h], [HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/2elbj3zft0/" \h], [HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/research/p/jvml6kcp80/" \h]
- [HYPERLINK "https://about.fb.com/news/2018/08/manage-your-time/" \h]

V2

- [HYPERLINK "https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V6a-wXcMJBIwDxi02XgjZB5GVyrH1LlgoTV5LFCXAU/edit" \h] - Qualitative
- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.quip.com/bQpCAnoOEgXY" \h]
- [HYPERLINK "https://www.internalfb.com/intern/px/project/wellbeing/" \h] - Designers' compilation of YToF material
- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/notes/gregory-sarkis-kelly/your-time-on-facebook-v2/240776663982833/" \h]

Your Activity

- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/groups/243894009320301/permalink/615889418787423/" \h]
- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/groups/432156973909421/permalink/576190296172754/" \h]
- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/groups/184250878939438/permalink/389725418391982/" \h]

Product Impact

YToF

- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/notes/malkeet-singh/moving-the-needle-on-problematic-fb-use-with-your-time-on-facebook-v2/156189899306793/" \h] - Latest results of survey of usefulness of YToF
- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/groups/fy/permalink/3025591654164641/" \h]
- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.quip.com/22IEA8oHTMwD" \h]

Your Activity

- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/groups/432156973909421/permalink/606168779841572/" \h]

Next steps

YToF

- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.alpha.workplace.com/profile.php?id=100013195998758&sk=media__set&set=a.888316751618183&type=3&force__galahad=1" \h]

Misc

- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.workplace.com/photo.php?fbid=275698576785911&set=pcb.275703340118768&type=3&theater" \h] - Scott Freeman
- [HYPERLINK "https://fb.quip.com/JRaWARrUVFZg" \h] (unpublished) - Broader statements about well-being and social media
- [HYPERLINK "https://www.fastcompany.com/90453873/googles-new-digital-wellbeing-tools-ranked-from-ingenuous-to-offensive" \h]

DOCUMENT SLIPSHEET

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