

# Facebook Announces ‘Home’, A Homescreen Replacement Android App Designed Around People



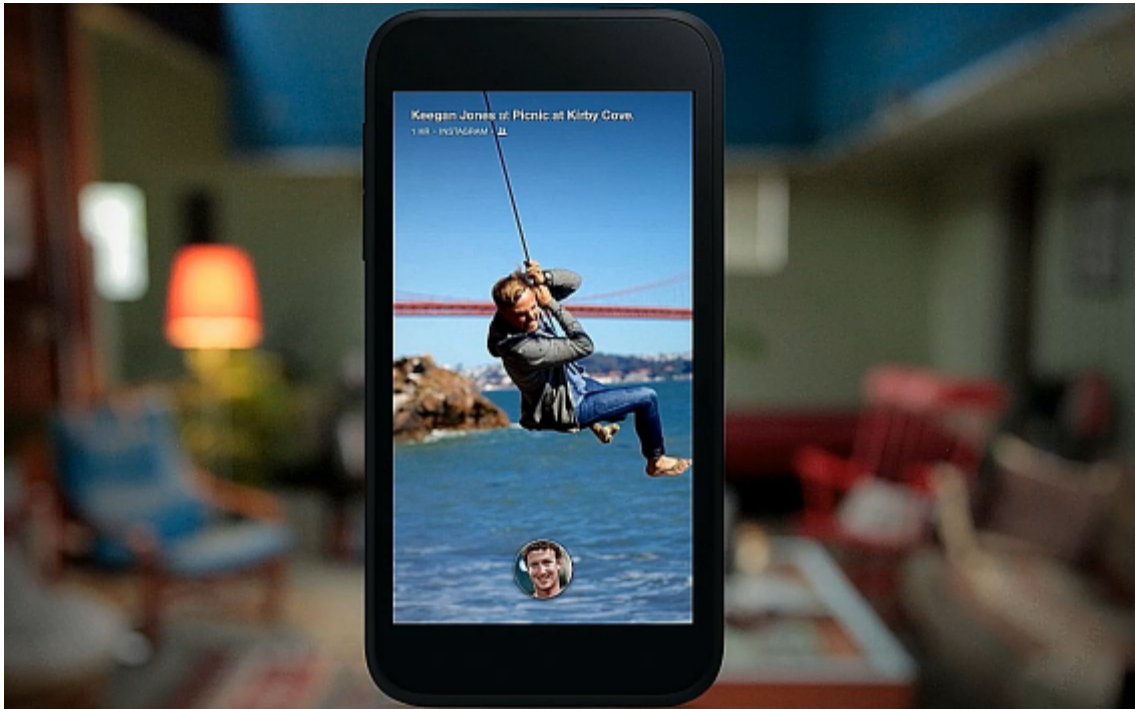
**JOSH CONSTINE**

**Thursday, April 4th, 2013**

TechCrunch:

<http://techcrunch.com/2013/04/04/facebook-home-launch/>

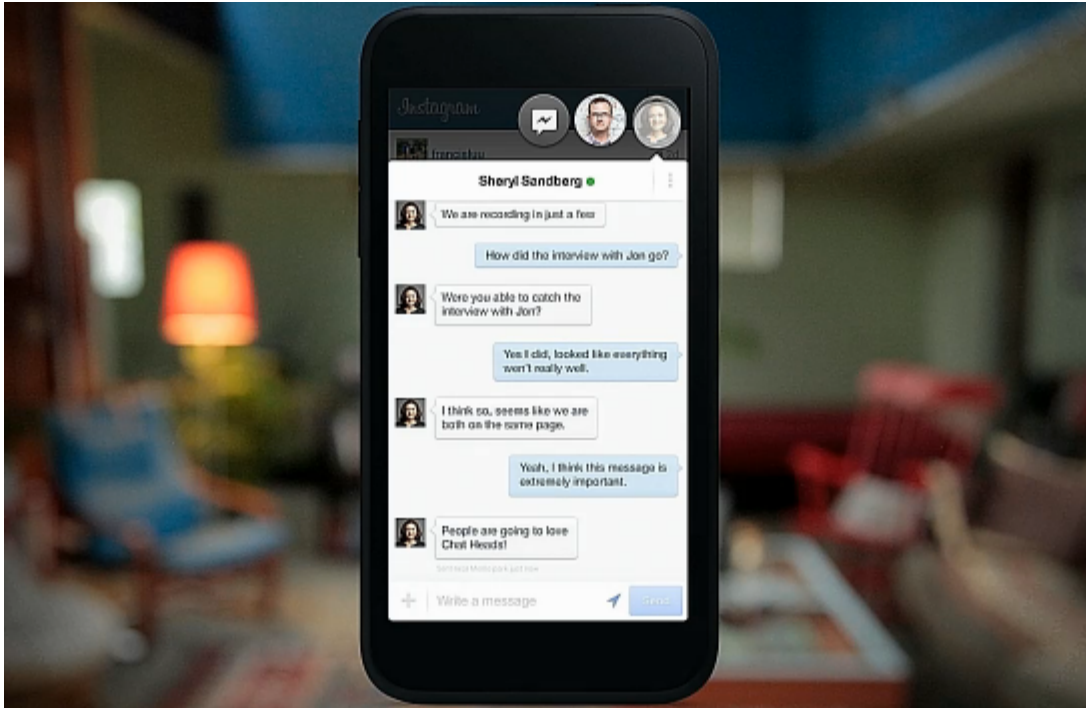
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Facebook today announced a new apps called **Facebook Home** that replaces your standard Android’s homescreen with an immersive Facebook experience featuring full-screen photos, status updates, and notifications. Facebook also announced a special version of Home will come pre-installed on the new HTC First phone on AT&T.

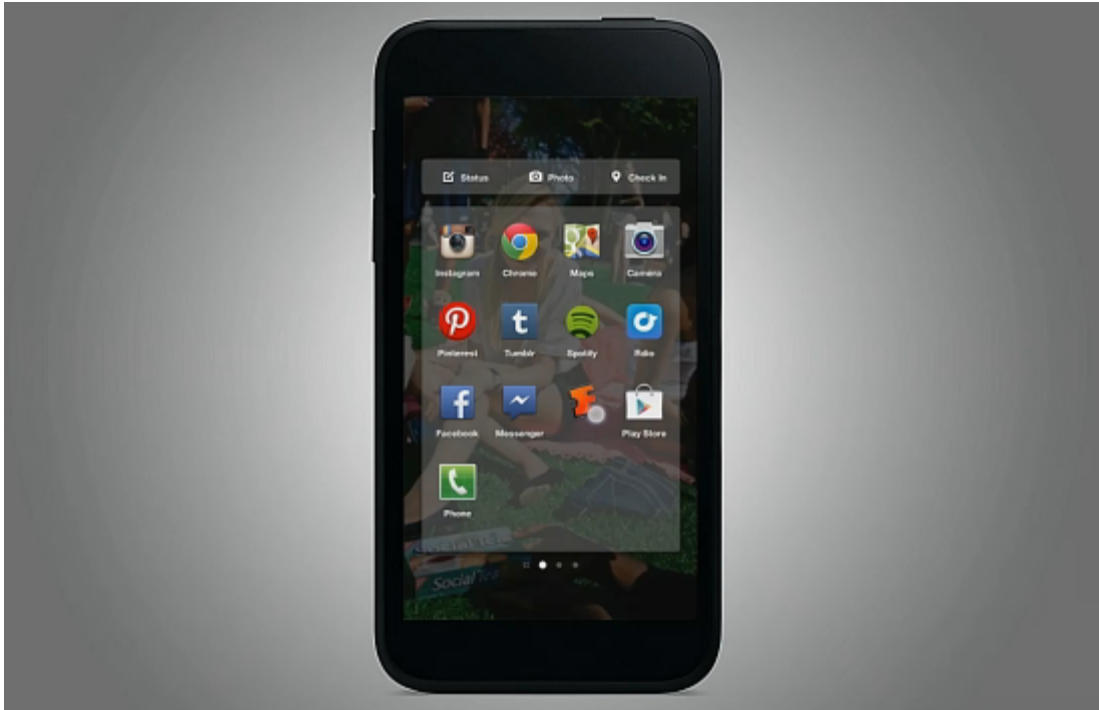
Home will launches on April 12th in the US, and will be available to

users of Android Jelly Bean and Ice Cream Sandwich, but not Gingerbread. The international rollout will come later. It won't require a forked or modified version of Android, though that's what the HTC First runs. Facebook will try to make Home available on tablets within a few months, and it's supposed to be a great experience there. Every month, Facebook will release a Home update to add new features and make it accessible to new devices.



You'll be able to download Home if you have the most recent Facebook and Facebook Messenger apps on your Android phone. You'll see a banner alert to download Home from the Google Play store. When you launch it the first time, you can decide to "try once", or choose "always" to swap in Home for your homescreen from then on.

The Home home screen experience is focused on Cover Feed, which shows a constant stream of full-screen photos and stories you can just sit back and watch. Demo'd by Adam Mosseri, Director of Product, Home also features a new notifications system that lets you scrub through multiple alerts at once. Check out our hands-on video with Facebook Home for a better idea of how it actually works.



Apps are important too, Zuckerberg says, so you can still add apps to your device. One swipe away from the home screen is the launcher for apps. Messaging is at the forefront. Phones are communication devices and we spend all day message, in today's appcentric world, messaging is treated like another app. Switching between apps is annoying. We want to talk to people, not apps.

When a friend messages you, Home brings up the Facebook Chat Heads feature. It pops up a person's face and you can tap on their face and bring up a conversation without losing any context of what you're doing in the app behind. Chat Heads means you don't have to decide whether to read a message or keep using your current app. It lets communication flow across the phone experience. It's designed to let you tap in between multiple message threads.

"Today we're going to finally talk about that Facebook Phone, More accurately, we're gonna talk about how you can turn your phone into a Facebook Phone" Mark Zuckerberg said to start the event. After noting we spend more than 20% of our mobile time on social apps, Zuckerberg said "We asked ourselves — if we're already spending this much time on our phones, how can we make it easier? What if they were designed around people first, and you could also just

happen to interact with apps?”



Facebook has created the Facebook Home Program to allow a handset makers to optimize the Home experience. Partners include AT&T, Orange, Qualcomm, HTC, Samsung, Huawei, Sony, EE, ZTE, Lenovo, and Alcatel.

HTC and AT&T will release one of the first phones with Facebook Home on it. The handset is called the HTC First. The device's operating system will be "optimized" to give users unique experiences like notifications for email and calendars on Facebook Home. It will run on an AT&T LTE connection. It will be available on April 12th for \$99.99. You'll be able to pre-order the HTC First starting today at <http://www.att.com/facebookhome>.



Zuckerberg closed the event by discussing developing markets and Facebook's international potential. "Only about a third of the world is on the Internet" but in five to ten years legions of feature phone users will be on smartphones. Zuckerman left a cliffhanger, asking the crowd to think about what that will mean for social networking and the web as a whole.

Overall, Facebook Home will trim down the time it takes you to check Facebook. Considering Zuckerberg said we spend 20% of our mobile time on social and open our phones 100 times a day, those shaved seconds can really add up. Home and the HTC First will mostly appeal to hardcore networkers, but they give us a vision of Facebook's ideal experience, how it wants us be perpetually connected. It'll be each user's decision just how social they want to be.

*Now that you've read about Facebook Home, see it in action in our [hands-on video](#).*

