

[Click to Print](#)

A User's Guide to Facebook's New Timeline Feature

Posted by Mikal E. Belicove | December 12, 2011

URL: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/222425>

As Facebook begins rolling out its much-anticipated user interface, Timeline, now's the time to get to know what's so different about it -- and how to use it.

The Timeline interface, which will eventually replace the existing one for all personal Facebook profiles, is your Wall and Profile rolled into one with additional tools for documenting your life -- from the day you were born to the here and now. You can add a cover image at the top of your Timeline, add life events such as your high school graduation or your summer vacations, map places you've been, list pets you've owned, document relationships you started or ended and much more.

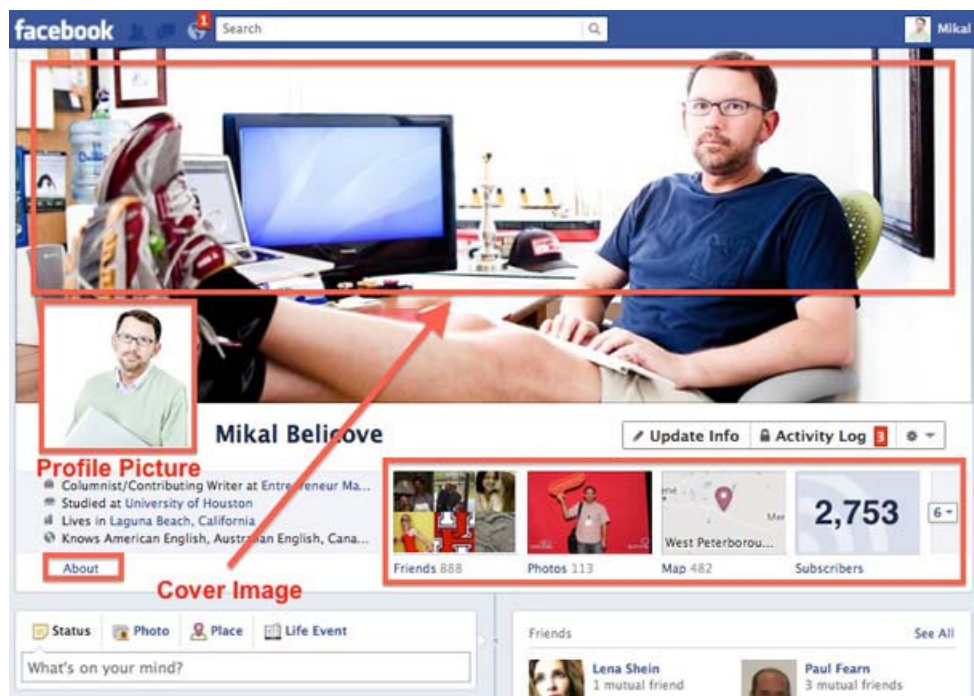
Facebook's new look is being rolled out worldwide for personal profiles only right now -- assuming, of course, they iron out that pesky [lawsuit from Timelines.com](#). But as the fluency with the new interface expands -- and the bugs get addressed -- Facebook will roll out similar capabilities for Business and Brand Pages. That being the case, my best advice is to take the time now to get used to what will inevitably become the standard look and feel across all of Facebook.

First thing's first, if you don't have the Timeline running on your Facebook account, head to [Facebook's Timeline page](#) and click "Sign Me Up." Then, here is a brief tutorial on how to maneuver Timeline:

Navigating the Timeline

The Timeline user interface is much more accessible if you break it down into its components.

Cover: The big block at the top of the page contains your cover image, profile picture, "about" information, and thumbnails for one-click access to Facebook features and apps you use most frequently.



Timeline navigator: You can scroll up and down your Timeline or select a year in the Timeline navigator, on the right,

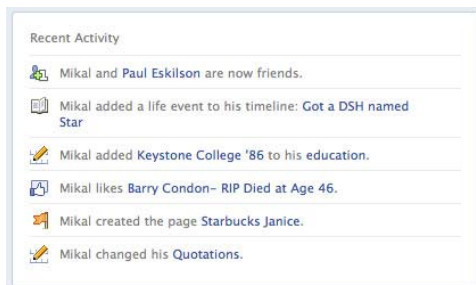
and then click a month in that year to go directly to that month.



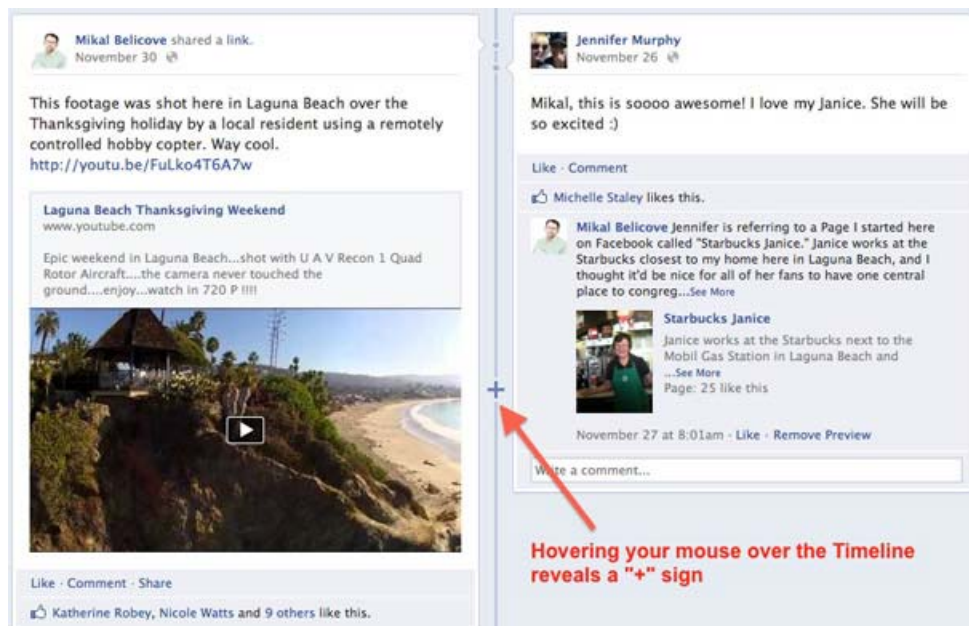
Timeline Publisher: Similar to the Publisher in your News Feed, Timeline Publisher lets you and your friends post content to your Timeline. Friends can post updates, photos or places. In addition to that, you can indicate life events, such as getting married, adopting a pet and more.



Recent activity: This box, on the opposite side of the Timeline from the Publisher displays recent actions you've performed on Facebook, such as friending someone and editing your profile.



The actual time line: The line that runs down the middle of the page represents your lifetime. Hover the mouse pointer over the line and a plus sign appears. Click the plus sign and the Publisher toolbar appears, enabling you to add a status update, photo/video, place or life event to the Timeline. Scroll to the bottom of the Timeline and click "+ Add a photo" to add a baby picture.



Stories: These are the boxed items on either side of the Timeline. If you look at your Timeline as a scrap book, these are the scraps of memories that document your life and activities on and off Facebook in photographs, maps, video and other media. Hover the mouse pointer over a story to display buttons in the story's upper right corner for featuring the story or editing it. If you feature a story, Facebook displays it in a wider box that spans both sides of the Timeline.



Feature/app thumbnails: Just below the cover image are thumbnails for one-click access to your Facebook friends, photos, likes and notes. Click the small button on the right to expand this area. Click the plus sign in the upper right corner of an empty block to add a thumbnail for one of your favorite Facebook games or apps.



Using the Timeline Publisher

Now that you know what everything is, let's move on to how it all works -- beginning with how to use the Timeline Publisher.

The Timeline Publisher is mainly used to post stories to your Timeline about current or past events. Click the type of content you want to publish: Status, Photo, Place or Life Event. If you click Life Event, you'll need to select the desired type of life event -- for instance, Work & Education, Family & Relationships, Home & Living, Health & Wellness, or Travel & Experiences. Then, follow the onscreen cues to enter your content.

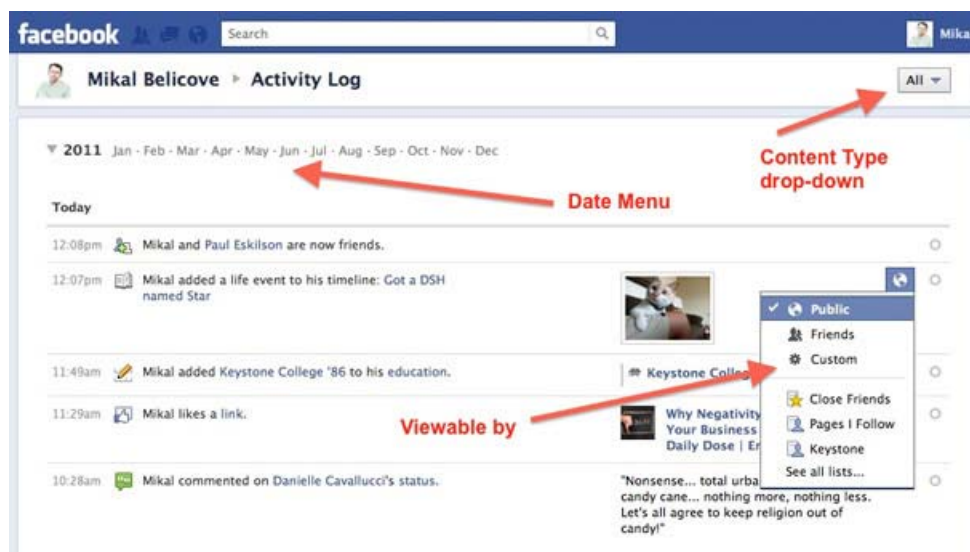


If you choose "Status" or "Place," options appear below the text box to specify whom you're with, where you are, and with whom you want to share the post: Public, Friends or Custom.

View Your Activity Log

Your activity log is your private, unfiltered Facebook Timeline, containing everything you have ever done on Facebook. You can use your activity log to choose whether to display certain Facebook activities on your Timeline.

To edit your activity log, click on where it says "Activity Log," just below your cover image. You can choose a year or month, just above your activities list, to display activity for a certain time period. You can click on "All" (upper right) to open a menu that enables you display only certain types of activities, such as photos, comments or likes.



To include or exclude an item from your Timeline, feature it on your Timeline, choose who can view it or enter other settings that pertain to the item. You can also click on the menu button to the right of the activity and choose the desired option: Feature on Timeline, Allow on Timeline, Hide from Timeline, and so on. (Options may vary depending on the type of content.)



Navigating a Friend's Timeline

A Facebook friend's Timeline is similar to yours, except you can't change the cover or edit the contents. Use the Timeline navigator (upper right) to go to a specific year and month on the Timeline.

You can click on the "Message" function to chat with or send a message to your friend. Use the tools menu to poke your friend, suggest friends, defriend your friend and more. (The tools menu is the one with the gear icon on it, just to the right of the Message button.)

To subscribe to a friend's posts, press the "Subscribe" button, which is just below the cover image. After you subscribe, hover the mouse pointer over the "Subscribed" button to view options for the type and quantity of updates you want to appear in your News Feed. You'll also see an option to "Unsubscribe."

You can also use the Timeline publisher to post status updates, photos and your location to your friend's Timeline.

Change, as they say, is inevitable, and nowhere is that more inescapable than on Facebook. At first, the Timeline user interface might feel foreign or clunky to you, but given time, you'll likely come to appreciate its subtleties and scalability.

Copyright © 2012 Entrepreneur Media, Inc. All rights reserved.