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**INDUSTRIES**[✉ Email this article](#) [🖨️ Printable format](#) [✍ Letter to the editor](#)**Facebook Open to Outside Programers*****Social networking leader decides to play nice with the other children.***

May 24, 2007

By Leah Messinger

Facebook today launched a development platform that lets third party developers build and embed software applications, as well as other tools and services, directly on the social networking site.

The Palo Alto, California-based company's decision to open up its site to such partnerships comes amid an ongoing debate between leading social networking MySpace and widget makers about how to share—or not share—advertising revenue generated by widgets, tiny plug-in windows that users can add to web pages so they can keep track of news, the weather, or perhaps the latest airline fares.

Facebook said it had formed partnerships with 65 developers, including Microsoft, Amazon.com, and box.net, to create more than 85 applications for the site. But the social network said it has not reached any revenue sharing arrangements with its partners, but added that it is "looking into ways to share advertising revenue with developers."

MySpace boasts nearly 80 percent of social networking site visits, according to metrics company Hitwise. Facebook is second, with approximately 11 percent of the social networking audience.

The company's new platform, called f8, will let developers embed their applications on Facebook pages or within user profiles. Developers can also offer them as desktop applications. Partners can now incorporate advertising to their services, though that advertising cannot appear on the versions of the applications embedded in user's profiles.

But Facebook's strategy differs in one key difference: Other social networks let users pimp their profile pages with widgets from a wide variety of sources, but Facebook members will only be allowed to choose embeddable applications developed through the site's new platform.

Several widget companies say they have been kicked off MySpace or been limited in what they can do with their widgets. Berkeley, CA-based MOG and San Francisco, CA-based Sonific said their widgets are still allowed on MySpace, but links to their external home pages have been rendered inactive.

Each Facebook partner is expected to use the new platform in a different way. Microsoft Popfly will run on the site to provide lay people the ability to develop their own Facebook applications using Silverlight, Microsoft's browser plug-in. Amazon.com has developed a book review application for Facebook. A link in the widget will connect users to the online bookseller's site.

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