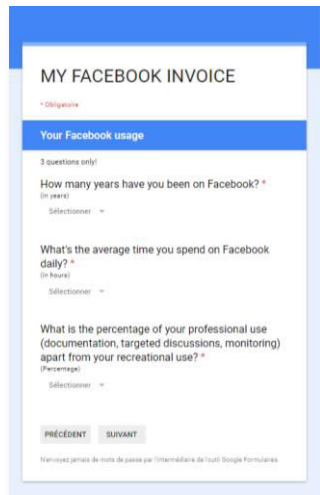Press Release
#MyFacebookInvoice

Want to know how much money Facebook owes you for your digital labor?
Try #MyFacebookInvoice Generator!

Create your own Facebook Invoice in two minutes: https://goo.gl/EEDDcv
Check the global bill here: https://goo.gl/wfZbc4

Check an example (PDF)
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The #MyFacebookInvoice Generator has been launched by artist and researcher Olivier Auber on January 24, 2018 and spread throughout social platforms in order to raise awareness about Data Portability and Digital Labor issues. Each Facebook user is invited to fill an online form that asks three simple questions:

1)   How many years have you been on Facebook?
2)   What's the average time you spend on Facebook daily?
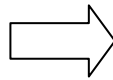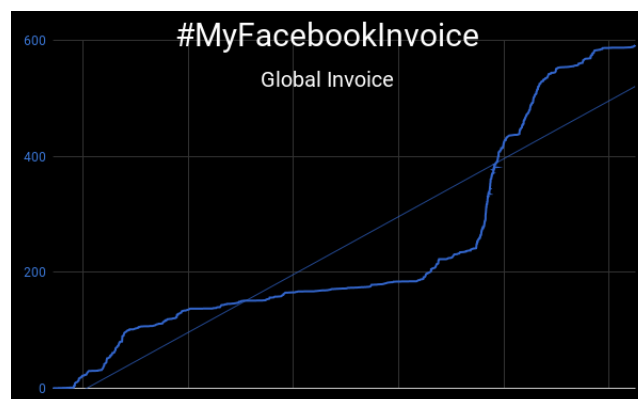3)   What is the percentage of your professional use (documentation, targeted discussions, monitoring) apart from your recreational use?

The MyFacebookInvoice Generator creates a personalized invoice addressed to Mark Zuckerberg. You can download it, share it, print it and frame it. Or you can actually send it to the CEO of Facebook. The MyFacebookInvoice Generator also compiles all invoices into a single bill that hit USD 100.000.000 after 24 hours, and **USD 600,000,000** after eight days. And that's just the beginning!

Check full MyFacebookInvoice Data

Why #MyFacebookInvoice?

The principle underlying the bill is explained in an open letter by Olivier Auber to Mark Zuckerberg written a few days before the former announced his decision of quitting Facebook. "Before leaving Facebook, here's the bill: USD 350,000,000,000,000 (Three hundred Fifty Thousand Billion Dollar)". Another letter complaining about Facebook failure to comply with Data Portability was sent to Yann LeCun, head of Facebook Artificial Intelligence Research (FAIR). (See below).

#MyFacebookInvoiceGenerator is a social commentary designed to start a conversation about data, Big Platforms and users' rights. The project aims:

1) to raise awareness on the issues of #Digitallabor, #Dataportability, as well as #MonetaryCreation and true #NetworkNeutrality (neutrality of protocols, not only of information flows).
2) to push Facebook and other tech giants to implement Data Portability.
3) to promote all distributed network alternatives, invite people to join them, and also urge governments to support them.

"Contrary to what a quick reading of my open letters might suggest", artist Olivier Auber explains, "I am not in favor of Facebook paying its users, either directly - perhaps with a currency of its own - or indirectly through taxes collected by Nation States and possibly redistributed in the form of a basic income as some argue. Furthermore, I am not in favor of the marketing of personal data, quite the contrary!"

"Why ? Well because Facebook, regardless of the number of subscribers, is not legitimate in terms of networks and money creation. States (or supranational entities such as the European Union) that would deal with Facebook aren't either!"

Indeed, as Olivier Auber explains in a video, both Big Platforms and Nation-States derive their power from "the asymmetry of networks". Extrapolating network trends and leveraging their power, platforms head straight to an explosive social, economic and political situation. This perilous drift cannot be corrected by paying platform users, which would imply introducing even more network asymmetry. The direct or indirect remuneration of users by GAFAM would lead to a sort of "triangular trade" of our personal data, that is, purely and simply a form of slavery.

Apart from being a cultural provocation and a kind of art work, Olivier Auber's project prompts users to follow the light at the end of the tunnel: Soon the centralized networks, like that of Facebook, but also those of the States, will be totally obsolete! By showing how Big Platform business models are not sustainable, the #MyFacebookInvoiceGenerator aims to rectify network asymmetry and reformulate societal issues in a new light, especially that of the Basic Income.

After all, isn't a collective, messy and surreal artistic performance better than a tedious and interminable class action?

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See below the open letters to Mark Zuckerberg and Yann LeCun

Open letter to Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook Inc.

Olivier Auber <olivier.auber@vub.ac.be>
To: Mark Zuckerberg <markzuckerberg@facebook.com>

Hi Mark!

Best wishes and congratulations on your good resolutions 2018!

1) you tell us that you have realized that "with the rise of a small number of big tech companies — and governments using technology to watch their citizens — many people now believe technology only centralizes power rather than decentralizes it."

Only a belief? Isn't it a little real? And you're here for something, aren't you?

On top of that, you tell us that you are "interested to go deeper and study the positive and negative aspects of these technologies (of decentralization)"

That's cool! You should know that others have been working on decentralized networks for a long time - already long before Facebook was created - to create the conditions for a more equitable and healthy society. If your awareness is real, you can probably help us. We lack developers!

2) You also seem to have understood that your algorithms made people crazy by flooding them with sponsored posts and fake news. You say: "strengthening our relationships improves our well-being and happiness." So you're going to modify some lines of code to reinforce what you call our "strong ties" that have a lot of "value" according to you. In the end you want "the time we all spend on Facebook is time well spent".

That's cool! However, my dear Mark, you must understand that this time is even more precious than what you imagine.

For my part, let's say I spend(t) about an hour a day on Facebook developing these strong ties and my own professional documentation. Apart from that, I also spend(t) some "recreational time". This point is mentioned below*.

As my strong ties and my documentation are irrecoverable by the Facebook backup system as I explained to your colleague Yann LeCun, I must note that Facebook stole them from me. Let's see how much it costs ...

365 hours a year, that's round to 50 days. If I count my day price at USD 1,000 (it's very reasonable, FB's lawyers are paid USD 1,000 per hour), that's USD 50,000 a year. Since I have been on Facebook for 7 years, I will send you a USD 350,000 bill

All the statistics indicate that I am an average user of Facebook in terms of duration of use. Hence we can multiply this cost by the number of users (not the current 2 billion but say 1 billion as an average number during the past seven years). Thus we obtain the figure of:

USD 350,000,000,000,000
Three hundred Fifty Thousand Billion Dollar

In conclusion, my dear Mark, you provide a true interoperability of personal data that would allow people not to be hostages of Facebook and its centralization, or you repay all of them!

Yours

Olivier Auber
Attached document: MyFacebookInvoice

(*) The recreational time is not counted. Indeed, the entertainment provided by Facebook is funded by advertising. That is to say that everyone pays for this entertainment through its daily consumption of products overcharged because of the advertising budgets of the brands captured to a large extent by Facebook.

Mark Zuckerberg's resolution#1:
https://www.facebook.com/zuck/posts/10104380170714571
Mark Zuckerberg's resolution#2:
https://www.facebook.com/zuck/posts/10104413015393571

Open letter to Yann Le Cun, former Professor at College de France, Head of Research in Artificial Intelligence at Facebook Inc.

From Olivier Auber, researcher, Free University of Brussels (VUB)

Olivier Auber <Olivier.auber@vub.ac.be>
To: Yann LeCun <yannlecun@facebook.com>

Dear Yann

as a researcher as you are too, but in another field, that is Natural Intelligence (NI), I would like to address you publicly to let you know that I'm leaving Facebook, probably definitely.

The reason is simple. Facebook is obviously a powerful tool of communication. Many researchers I work with have become accustomed to using it without asking too much questions for their informal exchanges. The conversations that are conducted there are sometimes futile, but often also of the greatest interest.

But I realize that these conversations, in a way, no longer belong to us when they are conducted on Facebook!

The proof is that when you want to leave Facebook, the platform offers to bring with you a summary archive. But this archive does not contain:

- Links included in your personal posts (just that!).
- Links that are supposed to be saved (disappeared!)
- Discussions following your personal posts.
- Comments left on other posts.
- Links of posts that you repost.
- Your address book (you get the names, not the emails and other coordinates theoretically shared with you).

Facebook retains about 90% of the data we are interested in!
In addition, when you leave Facebook, beyond a certain number, messaging forbids sending a word to each of the contacts to inform them and collect their details! It's a real hostage taking!

In other words, Facebook looks like a sort of Far West saloon in which alcohol would be free. If you go in, not to drink, but to simply chat with your friends, you realize when you go out that your conversations and your address book no longer belong to you. They belong to the boss of the saloon! To top it off, when you leave the saloon, the boss forbids you to say goodbye your friends!

By this open letter, I wish to alert my colleagues and more generally all professional or independent intellectual workers. Do not post your ideas on Facebook! Do not lead any interesting conversation on Facebook! Instead, choose to chat on free distributed social networks such as Diaspora or Mastodon, shared intelligence platforms like Seenthis, collective drafting tools such as Cryptpad that gives its provider no rights or visibility into what users write!

In particular, my friends, independent researchers or independent artists, do not wait until Mark Zuckerberg, enriched to the extreme by your free work, wants to pay you a basic income. He has no legitimacy to do that at all! Instead, experiment with distributed free money creation networks such as Duniter.

Dear Yann, to conclude, I do not doubt that thanks to your talent and that of the researchers you have gathered, Facebook can one day realize the most powerful Artificial Intelligence. On this day, however, your AI might reign on a desert. Indeed, by behaving like this, Facebook is likely to be emptied of its users. Gone!

Cheers

Olivier Auber

Attached document: MyFacebookInvoice