

Facebook names a new CTO with a major focus on hardware



Facebook is serious about being a long-term player in hardware. On Wednesday, the company promoted Andrew Bosworth, the current head of its hardware division that makes Oculus and other consumer devices, to the role of chief technology officer, replacing outgoing CTO Mike Schroepfer when he becomes a senior fellow next year.

In his new role, Bosworth, who goes by Boz, will continue to lead the hardware group, called Facebook Reality Labs, while also assuming responsibility for Facebook's broader software engineering organization and artificial intelligence efforts. He'll report directly to CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who has taken a keen interest in developing AR glasses and the metaverse.

Facebook is still a relative newcomer to selling consumer hardware, and it faces steep skepticism from potential customers given its long litany of privacy scandals. Even still, the company has significantly ramped up its hardware efforts in recent years under Bosworth's watch. His Reality Labs team already has over 10,000 employees, making it the

largest after the engineering organization he's subsuming that supports Facebook's suite of apps and infrastructure.

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"As our next CTO, Boz will continue leading Facebook Reality Labs and overseeing our work in augmented reality, virtual reality and more, and as part of this transition, a few other groups will join Boz's team as well," Zuckerberg said in a statement. "This is all foundational to our broader efforts helping to build the metaverse, and I'm excited about the future of this work under Boz's leadership."

Schroepfer, who has been CTO since 2013, said in a Facebook post that he plans to stay "deeply connected to the company, working on key initiatives including recruiting and developing technical talent." He said stepping down next year will let him "dedicate more time to my family and my personal philanthropic efforts." He notified Facebook that he was resigning on September 20th, according to a filing with the SEC.

Facebook's current hardware products include the Oculus Quest VR headset, the Portal video chat device lineup, and its new camera-equipped smart glasses with Ray-Ban. The company is, in addition, developing AR glasses with displays in them, which Zuckerberg thinks will one day be as ubiquitous as mobile phones. A smartwatch with a detachable display and two cameras is also in the works for as soon as next year, I recently reported.

Bosworth is one of Facebook's longest-serving executives, having joined the company over 15 years ago. Before running Reality Labs, he led its ads division and worked on the first versions of key Facebook features like the News Feed, Messenger, and Groups.

He's an unusually public-facing Facebook executive who often

engages with critics directly on Twitter. A close confidant of Zuckerberg, he has been met with blowback over the years for controversial comments, such as a 2016 internal memo that bluntly said connecting people was worth the cost, even if it led to someone dying.

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