Facebook says it will launch experimental apps under NPE Team name

Facebook is launching a new brand of experimental apps for consumers, developed under the “NPE Team, from Facebook” label. (NPE stands for “new product experimentation.”) The team will be developing new apps for iOS, Android, and the web, with a specific focus on consumer services, which is similar to Microsoft’s Garage group.

In a blog post announcing the new team, the company notes that it “decided to use this separate brand name to help set the appropriate expectations with users that NPE Team apps will change very rapidly and will be shut down if we learn that they’re not useful to people.”

Facebook is no stranger to odd experimental apps
Facebook is no stranger to odd experimental apps. The company’s past is littered with abandoned products that Facebook has either launched or bought over the years, including things like Moments (a photo-harvesting service designed to collect all your pictures in one place), Notify (for subscribing to notifications), Lifestage (a Snapchat clone), Poke (another Snapchat clone), Slingshot (a third, different Snapchat clone), Tbh (a anonymous social media app), Moves (a fitness tracking app), and Hello (a custom Android dialer), just to name a few.

Having a dedicated group that can experiment with new services like these at a faster rate that’s also further removed from the core Facebook brand seems like a smart idea. It allows Facebook to try new things with less pressure and without the

concern that if it decides something isn’t working, it won’t disrupt the entire Facebook brand. It also sets expectations low. Facebook is being up front about the fact that it “expect[s] many failures” and that apps will be shut down if they’re not useful.

There’s no word yet about what kind of apps the NPE Team will be launching or when to expect them. But with the announcement of the brand, odds are, we won’t be waiting long for the first services to pop up.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/7/9/20687760/facebook-experimental-apps-npe-team-label-launch-ios-android-web