Mark Zuckerberg: The Face Of Facebook

In today's digital world, it is possible to gain access to communication all across the world through a click of a website and not a second thought. One of the most popular social networking sites, Facebook, is used by over one billion people every day, yet a small minority know much about the mastermind behind this iconic software, Mark Zuckerberg (Noyes, 2020). It takes a genius to invent a social media platform that shook the world almost 20 years ago and continues to be used more and more every year. Zuckerberg is the face behind Facebook, and has turned this one application into a successful company, earning himself the proud accomplishment of being one of the youngest billionaires in the world (Biography.com editors, 2019).

Mark Zuckerberg was not born a billionaire in the spotlight, however it was his younger years that shaped him so he could become so successful. He was born on May 14, 1984 in New York, to parents Edward and Karen, and has one older sister and two younger sisters (Biography.com editors, 2019). Ever since he was very young, he showed an interest in computers and technology and was proven to be very good at it (Biography.com editors, 2019). When he was just 12 years old, he programmed "Zucknet" through the Atari BASIC language, which was a messaging system that his father was able to use in his dental practice and the family used in their own house to make communication more direct (Biography.com editors, 2019). His family recognized that he was a computer programming prodigy, and he needed help in order to maximize his potential, so they hired a private computer tutor to come over once a week (Biography.com editors, 2019).

Besides the tutor that worked with him at home, he also attended school all the way until college as a child through young adulthood. "For two years, Zuckerberg attended public high school Ardsley and then transferred to the Phillips Exeter Academy" to better challenge him academically (Bellis, 2019). Not only did he excel in computers, but also classical studies and science and won awards for the subjects of math, astronomy and physics (Bellis, 2019). Furthermore, by his high school graduation, he had learned four languages, not to mention the many languages of code he knew, as well (Bellis, 2019). One of the projects he completed while at Exeter was Synapse, a music program similar to today's Pandora, "that used artificial intelligence to learn the user's listening habits and recommend other music" (Bellis, 2019). After posting it online, he got offers from Microsoft and AOL to purchase the company for $1 million as well as hire him as a developer, and while he did decline in order to attend Harvard University, that was the first time his talent and work was recognized on a large scale (Bellis, 2019).

In 2002, Zuckerberg began studying psychology and computer science at Harvard and quickly began to invent some more programs (Bellis, 2019). One of them was CourseMatch, which "helped students choose their classes based on the course selections of other users" (Biography.com editors, 2019). Another was Facemash, "which compared the pictures of two students on campus and allowed users to vote on which one was more attractive" and was very popular amongst his peers, but administration stopped it because they didn't think it was appropriate (Biography.com editors, 2019). Most (wikipedia.org) importantly, during his sophomore year, Mark Zuckerberg and a few friends invented TheFacebook, which "allowed

students to create their own profiles, upload photos and and communicate with other users", which they worked on in their dorms until June 2004 (Biography.com editors, 2019).

After his sophomore year, he knew that this program was way too important to put on hold for school, so he dropped out of Harvard in order to work full time on the company, which he moved to Palo Alto, California (Biography.com editors, 2019). This project had already become fairly popular and had 1 million students using it in colleges all throughout the country by the end of 2004 (Biography.com editors, 2019). In 2005, venture capital firm Accel invested $12.7 million ingo the company, which was a much needed financial boost (Biography.com editors, 2019). Soon after, Zuckerberg granted Facebook use to high schools, international schools, and Microsoft and Apple employees, which made its usage skyrocket into over 5.5 million users by late 2005 (Boyd, 2019). Not only did users want in on the site, advertisers did too, wanting to get their name out to the millions that were active on the site, which was a way for the company's profits to increase (Biography.com ediors, 2019). Also in 2005, the "the" was taken off of the company's name, leaving "Facebook" as the new title (Boyd, 2019). Through the years, Facebook has grown exponentially, and Mark Zuckerberg remains the CEO, even after many offers to buy the company have been presented (Biography.com editors, 2019).

While running Facebook takes up a great majority of Mark Zuckergberg's life, that didn't stop him from having a full personal life as well. Behind the screen, Zuckerberg has been known as a strong leader, as well as a very dedicated and down to Earth person (Tanwar, 2017). On May 19, 2012, he married Priscilla Chan, whom he met at Harvard when she was a medical student, and she is eager to admit it was Mark's (givingpledge.org) geeky humour that sealed the deal for her (Bellis, 2019). They have two children together, Máxima Chan Zuckerberg, born in 2015, and August Chan Zuckerberg, born in 2017 (Bellis, 2019). Together, they are the perfect example of a power couple, with Mark, CEO of Facebook, whose wealth accounts to over $75 billion, and Priscilla, a successful pediatrician and philanthropist (Bellis, 2019). The two of them have used their large platform and given back through the Zuckerberg and Chan initiative, whose purpose is to "advance human potential and promote equality in areas such as health, education, scientific research, and energy" (Candid, 2015). Furthermore, Zuckerberg has shown his appreciation for the fortune he has by signing the Giving Pledge, promising he "will donate at least 50% of his net worth to philanthropic causes before he dies (Taveri, 2020).

In 2020, it is evident of the power and influence Facebook has had on the world. It has become one of the most popular social networking platforms in the entire world, with over 1.5 billion users daily and over 7 million advertisers (Facebook Data,2019). Facebook has acquired 72 companies, some of the most notable being Instagram (2012) and WhatsApp Messenger (2015), and the total of all of the purchases amounts to over (www.cnet.com)

$23 billion (V, 2019). Facebook has become more technologically advanced every year, and uses complicated algorithms and user data to create one of the most comprehensive and personalized platforms seen to date (Boyd, 2019). With the immense amount of data Facebook holds about people all over the world comes an even greater responsibility. There have been numerous scandals and concerns over the past 5 years about personal information sharing, false information, and fake profiles as well, causing new regulations to form every so often in order to keep their power in check (Boyd, 2019).

Even though billions of people rely on Facebook daily in order to keep communication with people all over the world, many of them have no idea how this famous site came to be or of

Mark Zuckerberg, the computer prodigy inventor. Zuckerberg has shown his passion and genius talent in programming since a very young age, and his skills continued to develop until Facebook was invented when he was only a sophomore in college. He has used his gifts to not only create one of the largest and most successful businesses but also to give back and make a difference in the world of technology and the wider world as a whole. Throughout his career he has dealt with lawsuits and scandals as well as technical malfunctions in the software, but has proven his poise and excellent leadership skills to work through the kinks and make sure everything is going smoothly. When Facebook was created almost 20 years ago, it changed the way the world communicates and continues to shape and influence the world’s communication today.