

## Flu Epidemic Spreads Country-Wide

MEGHAN REILLY

A flu epidemic has swept the nation, with 41 states reporting moderate to severe outbreaks, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has stated that the 2013 flu may become one of the worst epidemics seen in the United States in the past decade. There have been 37 reported pediatric deaths through the CDC and 23,079 lab positive patients reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Health since the beginning of the year. Many hospitals in hard struck states have resorted to turning away patients due to the sheer amount of emergency room visits. One hospital in LeHigh county in Pennsylvania set up a pseudo-emergency room tent outside

the hospital for overflow.

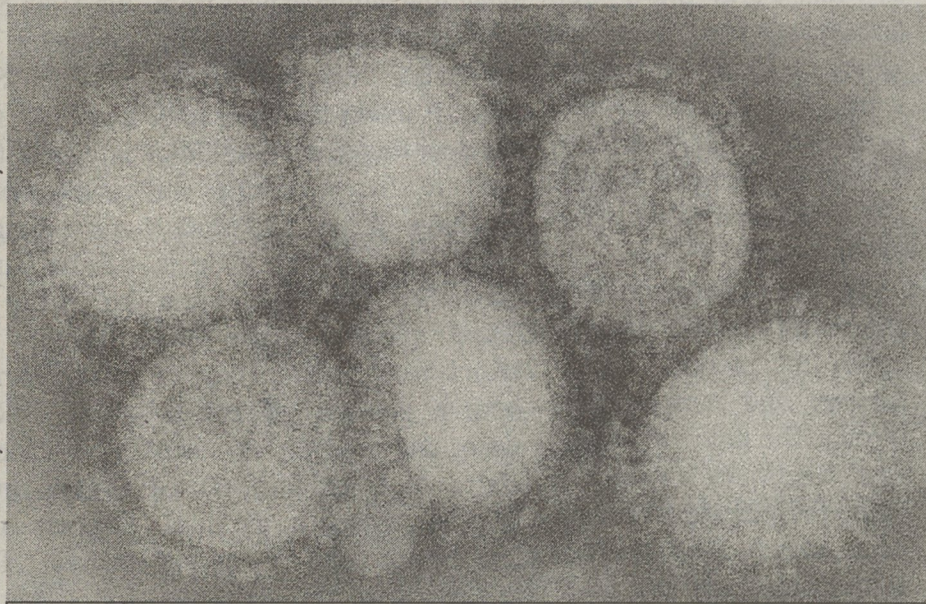
CDC officials have pinpointed that the H3N2 strain of influenza is the predominate strain of the season, although cases of Influenza A and B have been reported as well. Although numbers of reported cases are on the decline, health officials continue to urge the public that it is not too late to get the vaccine, which is said to be 62% percent effective. Even if it does not prevent the contraction of the flu, the vaccine can reduce the severity and prevents complications such as pneumonia or heart failure. Those among the most at risk include the elderly, pregnant women, children under the age of four and those with compromised immune sys-

tems. According to public health officials there should be enough dosages of the vaccine available with 128 million of the 135 million vaccines having been shipped out.

It is presumed that the epidemic has reached it's peak in week three of the new year. Numbers of reported cases have dropped from 5,069 cases in week 2 to 903 in week 3 for the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Only 24 states remain in the "high activity" stage of the epi-

demic, whereas the remaining states have moved to moderate or minimal. According to ABC News, many doctors and professionals believe that the epidemic is waning and will soon die out. Never the

less, one can be certain that this flu season is a great one to take the extra time to get a flu shot.



*A microscopic view of the H3N2 virus.*

## Facebook Looks to Redefine Searching

MICHAEL PERSCH

Social media giant Facebook is preparing its newest feature change named 'Graph Search', a more developed tool than the current search function. But before everyone goes screaming to their computer to post about how they hate change, it might be helpful to figure out how this new search could be helpful.

The Facebook search is currently backed by Bing, if you search for something that Facebook does not have a page for then it will default to Bing results. So, when someone searches for something like "Places to eat in Mont Alto" you will get a link of anything site that says "Restaurant" and "Mont Alto". You are then faced with nearly countless different websites that vaguely summarize what you want.

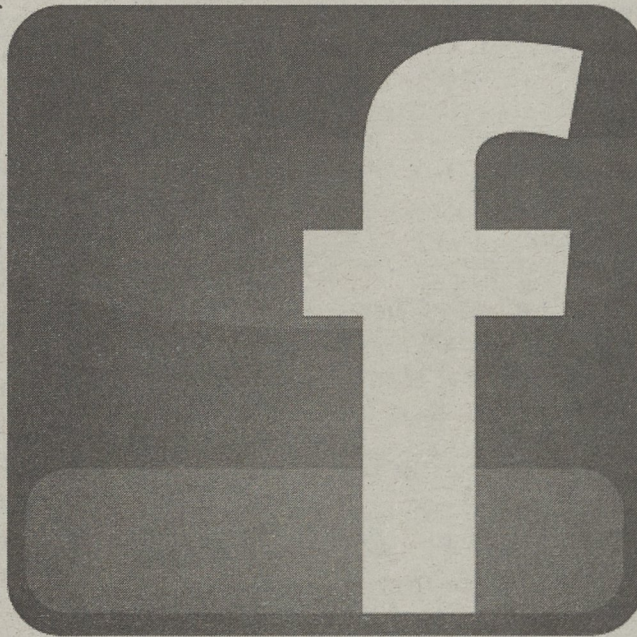
Anyone who has grown up

using a search engine expects this kind of response for a computer, helpful but not very direct. If you ask the same question of where to eat to a person you would expect an answer along the lines of "You have the Millstream Café, and Frank's Pizza, that's about it." Facebook's new Graph Search is aimed at trying to bring back search results the way a person would deliver them.

This feature is only being tested in a Beta-English version so far, but the results seem to be going well. The goal is that if a person searches where to get food in Mont Alto then Facebook will return the Facebook pages for Penn State Housing and Food Services and Frank's Pizza and

any other local business that might have a profile.

The new search is looking to be very dynamic in terms of searching looking for multiple



categories. If someone searches "Friends from my college who enjoy hiking" the results should be friends of yours who go the University that you

have listed and who have 'Hiking' as an interest. You could also be specific and search for "John Smith's photos from 2007" and receive a collection of all the photos posted or labeled with 2007.

Many people who have already been able to review the feature seem to be optimistic about the potential advancements in the ease of using a search engine that this is likely to provide. However, there is one drawback with this planned release. People will only be able to get good information out of it if the users put good information in.

If you have not been on your settings for a while to update your favorite activities and movies, or maybe you don't frequently check in when you go places, this will exclude you from any search results that someone could be looking for. Some speculations expect this feature to start being helpful with things that make LinkedIn, Yelp, and Four-square popular. Meaning someday Facebook might not only be where employers go for a background check but also to search for "Penn State University graduates in my town" who could fill a job opening.