

WSJ: MySpace, apps share user IDs with advertisers

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The homepage of MySpace displayed on a computer monitor. The Wall Street Journal on Friday reported that sister News Corp. property MySpace has been giving advertising companies data that could identify members of the social networking service.

MySpace has been sharing with its advertisers data that can be used to identify user profile pages, but the company doesn't consider that to be a problem.

The company said it did not consider the data to be information that could identify a person, partly because MySpace doesn't require members to use their real names. The social networking site acknowledged transmitting information to advertisers that included a user ID and the last page viewed before a user clicked on an ad.

MySpace issued the statement following a report in The [Wall Street](#)

[Journal](#) on Friday disclosing the sharing. The Journal and MySpace are both owned by [News Corp.](#)

The Journal also said some MySpace applications developed by outside parties had been sharing user IDs in violation of MySpace's terms of use.

Although MySpace also shares user IDs with application developers, it does not allow them to share that data further. The social networking site said it found recently that an app called "Tagme" had again violated this prohibition, but that the developer, BitRhymes Inc., had "promptly complied."

"Tagme was briefly suspended at an earlier time due to a similar violation of our terms, but complied within a matter of hours before being reinstated," [MySpace](#) said.

BitRhymes said in a statement the sharing "was inadvertently done by an advertiser company we worked with," and said its policy was not to pass personally identifiable information to third parties.

"When we were informed of the issue, any suspect relationship was immediately dissolved," it said.

The Journal report was part of its continuing investigative series on online privacy. It came a week after a similar expose found that all of the top 10 applications on larger social networking site rival Facebook, including Zynga Game Network Inc.'s FarmVille, with 59 million users, have been transferring user IDs to outside companies. In both cases, the companies said knowledge of a user ID did not allow outside parties to view data the user had listed as private.

But the Journal found that data gathering firm RapLeaf Inc. had linked Facebook data with its own database of Internet users and sold it to other

firms. RapLeaf told the newspaper that those transmissions were unintentional.

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