

# Facebook switches off facial recognition tool

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A view of Facebook's logo in May 2012 in Washington, DC. Facebook said Friday it had switched off in Europe the facial-recognition tool that prompts users to "tag" photographs uploaded to its website following a privacy investigation.

Facebook said Friday it had switched off the facial-recognition tool that prompts users to "tag" photographs uploaded to its website following a privacy investigation.

The feature was identified by regulators as one of the main privacy threats posed by the social networking site.

Ireland's [Data Protection Commissioner](#), Billy Hawkes, who launched the probe because Facebook's European operations are based in Ireland, said he was happy that the site had agreed to remove the tool in Europe by October 15.

New users are already unable to access it.

Hawkes said: "I am satisfied that the review has demonstrated a clear and ongoing commitment on the part of FB-I to comply with its data protection responsibilities."

He added: "By doing so it is sending a clear signal of its wish to demonstrate its commitment to best practice in data protection compliance."

Facebook said in a statement: "In light of discussions with our regulator in Ireland, we have agreed to suspend the Tag Suggest feature in Europe."

It said it would work with the Irish authorities "on the appropriate way to obtain user consent for this kind of technology under European rules".

[Facebook](#) was keen to encourage members to "tag" their friends in photographs because it ensures they are shared more widely, but it has been a controversial addition to the site.

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